

of the face. The extraordinary roads. Repairing to Oleron, therefore he procured himself a guide, and one of the small but surefooted horses of the Pyrenees, and after a wearisome march among the mountains, arrived about dusk at a cottage, or rather hovel, built on a ledge of rock within half an hour's walk of the Spanish frontier. Beyond this spot of the road was impracticable for a horse, and dangerous even for a pedestrian, and Don Ignacio had arranged to send back his guide and horse and proceed on foot; in which manner, also, it was easier to avoid falling in with the Spanish troops. The night was fine and having the road minutely explained to him by his peasant guide, Ignacio had no doubt of finding himself, in a few hours, at a village where shelter and concealment were prepared for him. Leaving the horse in a sort of shed that afforded shelter to two or three pigs, the Christiano officer faithful companion of his wanderings. It was some seconds, however, before their eyes got sufficiently accustomed to the dark and smoky atmosphere of the place, to distinguish the objects it contained. The smoke came from a fire of green wood, that was smouldering under an enormous chimney, and over which a decrepit old woman was frying *tallou* or maize cake, in grease of a most suspicious odour. The old lady was so intent on the preparation of this delicacy, a favourite food of the Pyrenean mountaineers, that it was with difficulty she could be prevailed upon to prepare something more substantial for the hungry travellers. Some smoked goats' flesh and wine were at length obtained, and after a hearty meal, Ignacio paid his guide and resumed his perilous journey. The moon had not risen—the night was dark—the paths rugged and difficult, and the troops on the alert; to avoid falling in with an enemy, or down a precipice, so much care and attention were necessary, that nearly three hours had elapsed before Ignacio perceived that his dog had not followed him from the cottage. The animal had gone into the stable and lain down beside his master's horse, doubtless imagining, by that sort of half-reasoning instinct which dogs possess, that as long as the horse was there, the rider would not be far off. Ignacio's first impulse, on discovering the absence of his four-footed companion, was to return to the cottage; but the risk in so doing was extreme, and as he felt certain his guide would take care of his dog, and that he should get him some future day, he resolved to pursue his journey. Meantime the night became darker and darker—thick clouds had gathered and hung low—there was no longer the slightest trace or indication of a path, and the darkness prevented him from finding certain landmarks he had been told to observe, he was obliged to walk on nearly at hazard, and soon became aware he had lost his way. To add to his difficulties, the low growlings of distant thunder were heard, and some large drops of rain fell. A violent storm was evidently approaching, and Ignacio quickened his pace in hopes of finding some shelter before it came on, resolving to take, at all risks, till daylight, before continuing his route, lest he should run, as it were, blindfold into the very danger he wished to avoid. A sort of cliff or wall of rock he had for some time on his left hand, now suddenly ended, and a scarce burst on his view, which to him was somewhat strange to a person unaccustomed to such sights. The mountain, which had been steep and difficult to descend, now began to slope more gradually as it approached its base. On a sort of shelving plateau of great extent, a number of charcoal burners had established themselves, and, as the most expeditious way of clearing the ground, had set fire in various places to the brushwood and furze that clothed this part of the mountain! To prevent, however, the conflagration from extending too far, they had previously wish their axes, cleared rings of several feet wide around the places to which they had set fire. The brushwood and furze they rooted up were thrown into the centre, and increased the blaze. In this manner the acres were overlooked from the spot where Ignacio stood, appeared dotted with brilliant fiery spots of some fifty feet in diameter, the look, seen through the fog and mist that had now gathered over the mountain. Ignacio approached the nearest of the fires, close to a crag that almost overhung it, and that offered a sufficient shelter from the rain which had begun to descend in torrents. Throwing himself on the ground with his feet towards the flames, he endeavoured to get a little sleep, of which he stood much in need. But it was in vain. The thoughts that he was unable to drive away, bore his "mind's eye," wherein the various events of his life, which, although a short one, had not the less been sadly eventful, were represented in vivid colours. He thought of his childhood, spent in the sunny *vegas* of Andalusia—of the companions of his military studies; high achieved honours and fame, but by far the greater part had died on the battle field—the insouciant soldier—the merry laugh of the *insouciant*—the exultation of the victory, and the well won and highly relished pleasures of the garri-pictures—her jetty hair braided over her pure white forehead, the light of her swimming "eye," that mocked her coal black veil, flashing from under the mantilla. Her father, with his portly figure and good humoured countenance, was beside her. They smiled at Ignacio, and seemed to beckon to him. So life like was the illusion of his fancy, he could almost have sprung forward to join them. But again there was a change. A large and handsome room, a well

covered table—all the appliances of modern luxury—plate and crystal sparkling in the brilliant lights—a happy cheerful party surrounding the board. Alas, for the tragedy played on this stage! The hand of the spoiler was there—blood and woman's screams, dishevelled hair and men's deep oaths, the wild and broken accents of despair, the coarse jest and ferocious exultation of gratified brutality. And then all dark and gloomy as a winter's night, and through the darkness was seen a grave stone, shadowy and spectral, and a man still young, but with heart crushed and hopes blighted, lying prostrate before it, his breast heaving with convulsive sobs of agony, until at length he rose and moved sadly away, to become an exile and a wanderer in a foreign land.

Maddened by these reflections, Ignacio started to his feet, and was about to rush into the storm, and fly, he knew not whither, from his own thoughts, when he suddenly became aware of the presence of a man within a few yards of him. The projecting crag, under which he had sought a shelter, extended all along one side of the fire. In one corner an angle of the rock threw a deep shadow, in which Ignacio now stood, and was thus enabled, without being seen himself, to observe a new comer, who seated himself on a block of stone close to the fire. As he did so, the flame, which had been deadened by the rain, again burned up brightly, and threw a strong light on the features of the stranger. They were those of *El Sangrador*.

With stealthy pace, and trembling at every step, lest his prey should take the alarm, and even yet escape him, Ignacio stole towards his mortal foe. The noise of the storm, that still raged furiously, enabled him to get within five paces of him without being heard. He then halted, and silently cocking his pistol, remained for some time motionless as a statue. Now that his revenge was within his grasp, he hesitated to take it, not from any relenting weakness, but because the speedy death it was in his power to give, appeared an inadequate punishment—a paltry vengeance. Had he seen his enemy torn by wild horses, or broken on the wheel, his burning thirst for revenge would hardly have been slaked; and an easy, painless death by knife or bullet, he looked upon as a boon rather than punishment. An end was put to his hesitation by the Carlist himself, who either tormented by an evil conscience, or oppressed by one of those unaccountable and mysterious presentiments that sometimes warn us of impending danger, became restless, cast uneasy glances about him, and at last turning round, found himself face to face with Ignacio.

Almost before he recognized him, a hand was on his collar, and the muzzle of a pistol crammed into his ear. The click of the lock was heard, but no discharge ensued. The rain had damped the powder. Before Ignacio could draw his other pistol, the Carlist grasped him fiercely, and a terrible struggle commenced. Their feet soon slipped upon the wet rock, and they fell, still grasping each other's throats, foaming with rage, and hate, and desperation. The fire, now nearly out, afforded little light for the contest; but as they rolled over the smouldering embers, clouds of sparks arose, their clothes and hair were scorched, and their faces scorched by the heat. The Carlist was unarmed, save with a clasp knife, which being in his pocket, was useless to him; for had he ventured to remove one hand from the struggle even for a moment, he would have given his antagonist a fatal advantage. At length the contest seemed about to terminate in favour of Ignacio. He got his enemy under, and knelt upon his breast, while with a charred, half-burned branch which he found at hand, he dealt furious blows upon his head. Half-blinded by the smoke and heat, and by his own blood the Carlist felt the sickness of death coming over him. By a last effort he slipped one hand, which was now at liberty, into his pocket, and immediately withdrawing it, raised it to his mouth. His teeth grated upon the blade of the knife as he opened it, and the next instant Ignacio, with a long deep sob, rolled over among the ashes. The Carlist rose painfully and with difficulty into a sitting posture, and with a grim smile gazed upon his enemy, whose eyes were glaring, and features settling into the rigidity of death. But the conqueror's triumph was short lived. A deep bark was heard, and a moment afterwards a wolf dog, drenched with mud and rain, leaped into the middle of the embers. Placing his black muzzle on Ignacio's face, he gave a long deep howl, which was succeeded by a growl like that of a lion, as he sprang upon the Carlist.

The morning after the storm, when the charcoal-burners returned to their fires they found two dead bodies amidst the ashes. One of them had a stab in his breast, which had caused his death. The other was disfigured, and bore marks of the fangs of some savage animal. In that wild district, the skirmishing-ground of smugglers and *deanaires*, the mountaineers think little of such occurrences. A hole was dug, the bodies thrown into it; and a cross, rudely cut upon the rock, alone marks the spot where the midnight conflict took place.

SPRING

The Spring had come with gentle showers, And herbs, and plants, and trees and flowers, Sprang into life as south winds blew, Soft on their bursting pulses, and dew Moistened their lips, whilst one by one They opened their buds to the morning sun, Inhaling with pleasure the genial glow Of his golden beams; for they seem'd to know That their beautiful bloom from his light must flow.

As his rays on their bosoms danced awhile, You might hear them grow as you saw them smile;

The humblest flower with its crimson streak Display'd by the blush of its velvet cheek, How deep it felt, though it could not speak!

SUMMER.

The Summer came with the summer's joy, As merry at heart as a laughing boy As he runs, and bounds, and laughs, and sings, Till the joyous tear in his bright eye springs; On came she bounding in sunshine and rain, Dancing in music o'er mountain and plain; Blithe was her life, led in greenwood and bow-ers,

Sweet was the music she drew from the flow-ers, As she hung them and swung them on bending trees,

Homes for the insects and food for the bees; Their petals were nourish'd with sunlight and dew

Till her love was return'd in the odors they threw;

She bath'd all their lips on the fading of light, And tenderly folded them up for the night, Fond watch o'er their pillows untiring she kept, And kisses gave all till they slumbered and slept.

AUTUMN.

But Summer was robb'd of her garments so green

When sunny-brow'd Autumn arose on the scene;

Ripe was his ruddy face, firm was his tread, His mantle was purple, and yellow, and red, And brown; and the locks on his lofty brow In richness and beauty were seen to grow Like the yellowing ears of the ripening corn War'd by the breath of the joyous morn.

Those locks in their glory were fair to see As the sunny waves of a golden sea.

He stretched out his arms and shook his head, Till the luscious fruits of the year were spread.

WINTER.

The spirit of Winter arose on the air, With shivering limbs all naked and bare!

Born in the depths of an Iceland cave, Cradled and nursed on a stormy wave,

He slumber'd a season, and then came forth; His steeds were the bitterest winds of the north;

A frozen cloud was his whirling car; Darkness and Fear were his heralds of war;

His icicle-teeth did rattle and shake Like a hurdling stone on a frozen lake,

Or the clattering bones of a jibbered form, That is driven about by the merciless storm;

His long skinny arms he wav'd in the breeze, And stripp'd of their verdure the plants and the trees.

Wherever he snorted, his withering breath All delicate beings crumbled in death!

FRANCIS BENNOCH.

CROSSING THE URAL.

A NIGHT ATTACK BY WOLVES.

On reaching the foot of the Ural mountains, the cold had so much increased that it had become advisable to substitute a sledge for our wheels. We stopped at a miserable village, composed of a score of hovels, in order to effect this exchange, and entered a wretched hut, which did duty both as posting house and as the only inn in the place. Eight or nine men, carriers by trade, were crowded round a large fire, lighted in the centre of the room, and the smoke of which found a vent through a hole in the roof. They paid no attention to our entrance; but when I had taken off my cloak, my uniform at once obtained for us the best place at the hearth. The landlord of this wretched hostelry met my enquiries about supper with a stare of astonishment, and offered me a huge loaf of hard black bread as the whole contents of his larder. Ivan, however, presently appeared, having managed to forego out a couple of fowls, which, in an inconceivably short space of time, were plucked, and one of them simmering in an iron pot over the fire, while the other hung suspended by a string in front of the blaze. Supper over, we wrapped ourselves in our furs, and lay down upon the floor, beds in such a place being of course out of the question.

Before daybreak, I awoke, and found Ivan and the carriers already afoot, and in consultation as to the practicability of continuing our journey. The question was at last decided in favour of the march; the waggoners hastened to harness their horses, and I went to inspect our carriage, which the village blacksmith had taken off its wheels and mounted upon a sledge. Ivan meantime was foregoing for provisions, and shortly returned with a ham, some tolerable bread, and half a dozen bottles of a sort of reddish brandy, made, I believe, out of the bark of the birchtree.

At length all was ready, and off we set, our sledge going first, followed by the carriers' waggons. Our new companions, according to a custom existing among them, had chosen one of their number as a chief, whose experience and judgment were to direct the movements of the party, and whose orders were to be obeyed in all things. Their choice had fallen on a man named George, whose age I should have guessed to be fifty, but who, I learned with astonishment, was upwards of seventy years old. He was a powerful and muscular man, with black piercing eyes, overhung by thick shaggy eyebrows, which, as well as his long beard, were of an iron grey. His dress consisted of a woolen shirt and trousers, a fur cap, and a sheepskin with the wool turned inside. To the leathern belt round his waist were suspended two or three horse shoes, a metal fork and spoon, a long-bladed knife, a small hatchet, and a sort of wallet, in which he carried pipe, tobacco, flint, steel, nails, money, and a variety of other things useful or necessary in his mode of life. The garb and equipment of the other carriers were, with some small differences, the same.

The first day's journey passed without incident. Our march was slow and even dangerous, all trace of the road being obliterated, and we were obliged to feel our way, as it were, by

sending men forward with long pikes to sound the depth of snow before us. At night fall, however, we found ourselves in safety on a sort of platform surmounted by a few pine trees. Here we established our bivouac. Branches were cut, and a sort of hut built; and, with the aid of enormous fires, the night passed in much greater comfort than might have been expected on a mountain side, and with snow many feet deep around us.

At daybreak we were again in movement. Our difficulties increased as we ascended the mountain: the snow lay in prodigious masses, and more than once we were delayed by having to rescue one or other of our advanced guard from some hole or ravine into which he had fallen. No serious accident, however, occurred, and we had at length the satisfaction of finding ourselves descending. We had passed the highest point of the road.

We had been going downhill for some three hours, the way zig-zagging among rocks and precipices, when suddenly we were startled by a loud cracking, followed by a noise that resembled a clap of thunder repeated by many echoes.

At the same moment a sort of whirlwind swept by us, and the air was darkened by a cloud of snow-dust. "An avalanche!" cried George, stopping his waggon. Every body halted. In another instant the noise ceased, the air became clear, and the avalanche continued its downward course, breaking as it passed, a couple of gigantic pines that grew upon a rock, some five hundred feet below us. The carriers gave a hurra of joy at their escape, nor was it without reason. Had we been only half a verst further on the road, our journey had been at an end.

The avalanche had not passed, however, without doing us some harm, for, on reaching the part of the road over which it had swept, we found it blocked up by a wall of snow thirty feet thick and of great height. There were several hours' work for all of us to clear it away; but unfortunately it was already night-fall, and we were obliged to make up our minds to remain where we were till morning.

No wood was to be had either for fire or for fuel. The want of the latter was most unfortunate; for independently of the cold rendering it very necessary, it was our chief protection against the wolves. Doing the best we could under such unfavorable circumstances, we drew up the carts in the form of a half circle, of which the two extremities rested against the wall of snow in our rear, and within the sort of fortification thus formed we placed the horses and our sledge. Our arrangements were scarcely completed when it became perfectly dark.

In the absence of fire Louise's supper and mine consisted of dry bread. The carriers, however, made a hearty meal on the flesh of a bear which they had killed that morning, and which they seemed to consider as good raw as cooked.

I was regretting the want of any description of light in case of an attack from the wolves, when Louise suddenly regretted that Ivan had put the lanterns belonging to the travelling carriage into our *telegue* when we changed horses. On searching I found them under the seat, each furnished with a thick wax taper.

This was, indeed a treasure. We could not hope to scare away the wolves by the light of our two candles; but it would enable us to see them coming, and to give them a proper reception. We tied the lanterns to the top of two poles fixed firmly in the snow, and saw with pleasure that they cast their clear pale light nearly fifty yards around our encampment.

We were ten men in all. Two stood sentry on the carts, while the remainder set to work to pierce through the obstacle left by the avalanche. The snow had already become slightly frozen, so that they were able to cut a passage through it. I joined the working party, as being a warmer occupation than standing sentry. For three or four hours we toiled incessantly, and the birch-tree brandy, with which I had provided myself, and which we had carefully economized, was now found most useful in giving strength and courage to the labourers.

It was about eleven o'clock at night when a long howl was heard, which sounded so close and startling, that with one accord we suspended our work. At the same moment, old George, who was on sentry called to us. We ran to the waggons and jumped upon them. A dozen enormous wolves were prowling about the outside edge of the bright circle thrown by our lanterns. Fear of the light kept them off; but each moment they were growing bolder, and it was easy to see that they would not be long without attacking us.

I looked to the priming of my carbine and pistols. Ivan was similarly armed; but the carriers had only their pikes, hatchets and knives. With these weapons, however, they boldly awaited the attack.

Half an hour passed in this state of suspense, the wolves occasionally advancing a pace or two into the circle of light, but always retreating again. At length one of them approached so near that I asked George if it would not be advisable to reward his temerity with a bullet.

"Yes," was the answer, "if you are certain of hitting him."

"Why must I be certain?"

"Because if you kill him his companions will amuse themselves with eating him; to be sure," added he to himself, "if once they taste blood they will be mad for more."

"The mark is so good," said I, "I can hardly miss him."

"Fire, then, in God's name!" returned George; "all this must have an end one way or the other."

Before the words were out of his mouth I fired, and the wolf writhed in agony on the snow. In an instant half a dozen wolves dashed forward, and, seizing their comrade, carried him off into the darkness.