

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Hogg's Instructor.

WHEN THE MIND'S FREE.

BY CALDER CAMPBELL.

WHEN the mind's free from any weight
Which pain may press upon the frame,
How boldly can we scoff at fate—
How bravely grasp at topmost fame:
What care we then for common cares?
What guess we how such cares can be?
What heed no warnings—mock despairs—
When the mind's free!

The rose of life hath then no thorns
That feel not soft as cygnet's breast;
The world hath neither sneers nor scorns,
To mar our mirth, or wreck our rest:
The future daunts us not; no grief
Compels us then on bended knee
To plead for peace. All war is brief,
When the mind's free.

Free from all haunting ghosts, and free
From sickness, but than sin less sore!
Oh, bitter truth, that sin should be
A latent worm at life's sweet core!—
With present suffering, and o'er
The future clouds that menace worse,
The sea-like mind on earth's wild shore
Casts up a desolating curse.

With youth, then, doth all freedom flee?
With age, then, doth rank slavery come?
Nay! want, and pain, and grief may be,
Yet leave the voice of murmur dumb:
Age may be cheer'd beneath its load,
By Christian hopes, of heaven that tell;
And sorrow from its painful road
May find pure faith all thorns expel!

Oh! could I but sweet patience take
Unto my breast, a balm to pour!
Oh! could I but submission make
My meek companion on life's shore—
Then might I hope, 'midst all this pain,
(Which only God can heal, or see),
To feel youth's innocence again,
With mind as free!

THE CIRCASSIAN CAPTIVE.

A WILD TALE OF THE CAUCASUS.

In the summer of 18—, the plains of Circassia and Georgia were filled with a Russian host whom the autocrat, not contented with the already boundless empire, and not knowing the spirits with which he would have to deal, had sent for the subjugation of these favourite countries. The whole army, which numbered no less than thirty thousand, was divided into several detachments, which, advancing by different roads and passes, were to overrun all parts of the country, leave garrisons in the conquered towns, and afterwards unite at some locality, as circumstances might require.

One of these detachments had, with considerable difficulty, penetrated to the village of Tcherzi, which, itself on elevated ground, to be reached only by the hardest labor, over snow-covered summits, lay in the bosom of the Caucasian chain, and so completely surrounded by the loftiest mountains of that range, that it had been deemed impregnable. Nevertheless, with invincible valor and perseverance, had the Russian General Boroff, fought his way, until at last after a bloody struggle the enemy had yielded, retired to the mountain fastnesses, and thus acknowledged the foe masters of the field. Had it been winter, the Russian army could never have penetrated to this point, nor, having reached it, could they have survived the intense cold, and scarcity of provisions. It was now, however, hardly the middle of summer, a season which, in the Caucasus, brings with it the most delightful weather that can be imagined; the place abounded in provisions of all kinds, which the inhabitants, not anticipating such an issue to the battle, had not had time to destroy; and Boroff, though well aware of the necessity of speedy action, had determined to remain here a few days, to see to the wounded, and to refresh his army, which had suffered much during the arduous march. It was his intention to push a little further on, where there was another Circassian village, to station a garrison of some size there, to keep the vanquished in check, and return—all of which he hoped and expected to accomplish before the winter snows should set in or the cold become sufficiently severe to impede the operations of his army.

It was the day after the battle, and General Boroff was seated in a rude hut, which formed his quarters. He was a man who had seen much service, and whose experience in military matters peculiarly fitted him for the command of an expedition, like the present. He had given his orders for the day, had, with his own eyes, seen to the proper disposal of the soldiers, and had returned to his quarters, in company with Colonel Godinski a young, brave, noble looking man and one of his favourite officers.

'We may thank our saints, colonel, for escaping unhurt yesterday,' observed General Boroff, 'some of our brother officers have not fared so well; poor Troitz received a cut upon the cheek that will mar his beauty for life. By hea-

ven! these mountain savages fight like lions; their swords are as the keenest; their horses are strong and lithe as the Arabians; and though we conquer them, it is with little or no advantage, they are so fleet in escaping, and have such mountains to shelter them.'

'Your highness is right,' answered the colonel; 'though yesterday we taught them a lesson they will be some time in forgetting. They lost many a good swordsman, as the appearance of the field well testifies. If your highness had but another regiment here we would be more than a match for the ruffians.'

'The garrisons we have left behind have somewhat thinned our ranks,' answered the general; 'nevertheless, colonel, I think we can finish the campaign with honor. It is a pity that the most beautiful women the world can boast, should have for mates such fierce and blood-thirsty spirits.'

'Nay, general, you forget the adage, 'None but the brave deserve the fair.' But appropos of beautiful women; your highness must know that there was captured yesterday after the route, while betaking herself to the mountains with all the speed she could use, a lovely Circassian, charming as Circe, and majestic as the Queen of Sheba.' (Godinski had been to the University of St. Petersburg, and loved to show his learning.) 'She is yet undisposed of, and I would ask her as my share of the booty. She would make me a rare slave.'

'You are modest, colonel,' answered Boroff, 'to rate your value no higher than that it may be rewarded by a slave. Nevertheless, take her; I am too old for the delights of love, and I will swear that no other has half so good a claim as you. Take her, Godinski, but let her not keep you from your duties—we can not spare your services; and when this war is over, you will have abundant time for dalliance.'

'Fear not, your highness; an hour spent with Venus will give a keener relish to the pleasures of the field. With your permission, I will even now retire, to bestow her in my quarters, that she may be free from insult.'

Occurrences like this was not infrequent; the general gave away, in the present case, the honor of the prisoner, whom he regarded as in all respects a slave, without for a moment reflecting on the consequences which might arise from this simple act. It was the indulgence of such licentiousness by the Russian soldiers and officers that had called forth the fierce resistance they had met with from those mountain tribes. Nowhere, perhaps, in the old world, is the honor of women prized more highly than in the Caucasus. Beautiful to a proverb, yet it is not their beauty, but their chastity, on which they set the highest value. Outraged by the licentious cruelty of the invading host, many a mourner had registered in heaven a solemn vow of vengeance.

Scarcely had Godinski left the general's hut when the door was again darkened, and Boroff, looking up, beheld a tall, majestic figure in the act of entering.—His wild accoutrements, his singular dress, his peculiar sword, made in his native wilds, proclaimed him to be a native; while his air of command and step of dignity, told the Russian general he was in the presence of one by no means low in rank. He was a man who looked to be some five and twenty years of age, and his countenance was peculiarly prepossessing. The stranger slowly advanced, extended his right hand, which bore an olive branch.

Boroff, at first, started at this sudden apparition; but instantly recovering himself on perceiving that he was accompanied by two soldiers, who announced that he had presented himself at the outposts, and requested to confer with the general.

'Advance!' said Boroff, rising. 'Who are you, and upon what errand have you come?'

'I am Alexander!'

'Alexander—the Lesghini chief—who has contended with us, inch by inch, for the soil we hold? Alexander—the renegade Russian?'

'Hold!' cried the young man, fiercely.—'I am Alexander, the Lesghini chief, whom by the fortune of war you have thus far conquered. I am Alexander, the banished Russian, who is still hunted like a beast. I have fore sworn a land of tyranny. I am no longer a Russian exile, but a Circassian chief.'

'It seems to me that you are bold to throw yourself into our hands, young man.'

'I know the honor of a Russian general,' answered Alexander. 'I come on an errand of peace. When I have finished I expect to depart as freely as I came; if not, there are swords in the mountains, and the destruction of a chief will not be likely to dull their sharpness.'

'By the saints! Alexander, traitor or chief, whatever you may call yourself, you have not misjudged us. I will pledge my word you shall return in safety. And now for your business.'

'Russian,' answered the young man, advancing nearer to the general, and speaking earnestly and slowly, 'you have felt the power of a fragment of the Lesghini as you advance hither. A few of us have taken the field to impede your march and delay your advance. Russian, the tocsin has now been sounded throughout the Caucasus, and thousands are marching hither.

Beware! push us not too far! it is easy to advance—it is hard to return.'

'To what end is this?' interrupted the Russian general impatiently. 'Am I so young and inexperienced that you have come forth to teach my duty?'

'Not so. Lesghini are a great tribe. I have influence with them. If they cease to resist, the conquest of the Caucasus will be easy.'

'And the upshot of all this is, that you will use your influence to bring about this result, for a good round sum,' again interrupted Gen. Boroff, contemptuously. 'Away, young traitor; our blood is the only coin with which we will buy our submission.'

'General Boroff,' answered the Circassian, with a dignified air, 'twice you have called me traitor, and twice most uncourtously interrupted me. This will I pass over; and now listen to the close. I hate your country—I hate every Russian—I hate you. Nevertheless will I smother this aversion, abandon my schemes of revenge, and leave you unmolested, provided you will restore unhurt, and in all honor, the daughter of a Circassian chief, who fell yesterday into your hands. He is dead; the Lesghini revere his memory, and to save from Russian lust the daughter whom in his dying moments he left to their protection, they will disband their forces, leave the field, and place no further obstacles in the way of your advance.' He paused.

'And what if I do not comply, Circassian?'

'We swear a war of extermination, till death shall take from us all hope of vengeance!'

General Boroff was silent a moment for reflection. The Lesghini was unquestionably the bravest and most powerful tribe of the Caucasus, their retiring from the contest was certainly a most desirable object, and to be gained by what seemed a trifling consideration. Yet he had pledged his word—he had given the slave to Col. Godinski. Could he retract? Could he ask for the Circassian without offending his friend? Impossible?

'I have considered your request,' at length answered Boroff, 'and must decline accepting your proposal.'

'One word more, General Boroff. That Circassian maid was my affianced bride. If you are a husband, if you are a father, I conjure you, by your wife and daughter, abandon not Zairah to the fate which awaits all your female prisoners! Free her, kill her, but disgrace her not!'

'Circassian,' said the general, 'you seem to be a gallant fellow. I would accede to your request, but to be plain with you, it is too late. Just as you entered my door, Colonel Godinski left it with my promise that this Circassian maid should be his slave. A Russian general cannot break his word.'

Not a muscle in the noble Circassian's face changed, as he heard, in these words, the consummation of his worst fears. Mutely he gazed for an instant on the speaker with an intensity before which the latter quailed. Then, slowly raising his hand, he drew from his girdle a small dagger. General Boroff, involuntarily started back, and seized a pistol which lay upon the table. The precaution was useless. The chief aimed not the blow at the Russian, but cast the blade upon the floor of the apartment with a force that imbedded it nearly to the hilt. Then turning, in the same silence he walked in dignity from the hut, found his way to his horse which was fastened near, and putting spurs to the noble animal, was soon seen in the far distance, making his way up the rugged mountain's side.

A week had elapsed since the occurrences narrated in our last chapter; a week which had been so well improved by the Russian leader, that he had found his army much refreshed, and in a condition to advance. Accordingly, as no time was to be lost, he had determined on the following day to take up his line of march. All the officers were in high spirits at the anticipated change, for the time had passed rather heavily at their encampment. One or two circumstances, indeed, had occurred to vary the monotony, but a soldier loves not to rest in the middle of a campaign, and even those who had suffered in previous engagements were anxious to press on.

It was early in the evening, and the officers were seated around the table in Gen. Boroff's hut. There was not there, to be sure, the magnificence of good cheer to which they were accustomed, but they strove by their hilarity to make up for this deficiency. A good dish of boiled mountain mutton was flanked by pickled sturgeon-roes, and that excellent cheese which can be found only in the Caucasus.

'How is Col. Godinski this evening?' enquired one at the lower end of the table. 'Has your highness heard?'

'I returned from his quarters at dark,' answered the general. 'He was somewhat better, although still in considerable danger.'

'General Boroff,' said Captain Troitz, whose face was still covered with bandages, though he was doing well, 'you are aware that this is my first appearance at the table. I have, therefore, missed all opportunity of receiving any accurate information concerning this accident of Col. Godinski; nothing has reached me but a few reports which have served only to increase my curiosity. May I ask how this wound was received?'

'That, my dear captain, is as great a mystery to us as to you. The second morning after

our battle here, Col. Godinski was found by his servant, lying upon the floor of his apartment, waltering in his blood. On examination he was found to have received a severe stab in the neighbourhood of the heart, which our surgeon has pronounced highly dangerous, though with due care he thinks it will not prove fatal. The Colonel has been in either a state of uneasiness or delirium ever since this disaster, so that we have been able to learn nothing from him respecting its origin. Were this all, we might suppose either that some assassin had been in the camp, or that our friend had attempted to terminate his own existence; but as to the first supposition, the murderer would in all probability have rifled the colonel's body of its valuables, whereas his watch and purse were found untouched; and as to the second, no one who knew our friend's happy disposition would for a moment entertain the idea of his being a suicide. There is another fact that affords a more likely key to the mystery. A beautiful Circassian, whom I have since learned was the daughter of a Lesghini chief, and affianced to the renegade Alexander, who leads the enemy, was, at Col. Godinski's request, assigned to him by me as his share of the booty. The colonel had her removed to his quarters, and her disappearance on the following morning leaves no doubt that she committed the act.'

'Your highness omits to mention another fact,' said an officer who sat immediately on his left. 'A dagger was found planted erect in the floor, by the side of the body, as if it had been cast there with considerable force.'

'And this dagger,' continued General Boroff, 'was of Caucasian manufacture, and the exact counterpart of one which Alexander himself, the Lesghini chief, threw down in the same manner in this very room.'

'Alexander, the renegade, here, your highness,' asked Troitz.

'Yes,' answered the general, 'he came to treat for the release of the fair maid, his bride that was to be; and when I declined, intimating that she had already been disposed of, he drew his dagger, and instead of aiming at me as I supposed he intended, the stupid fellow expressed his dissatisfaction by throwing it into the floor.'

'By the saints, gentlemen, there is more in this than you suppose,' exclaimed Troitz earnestly. 'I have served longer than any of you in the Caucasus, and I know the habits of the tribe well. The hurling of a dagger in this way is an expression of deadly defiance; and I have known them to follow up the object of their revenge, when threatened thus, for years, until at last, an opportunity offered of consummating it in the most terrible manner. Nay, if there seemed to be no other way of effecting it, they would accomplish it, even if their own death were the inevitable result. A Circassian considers himself cursed forever if he forgets this vow of vengeance.'

'Nay, Troitz,' interrupted the general, 'I'll wager you make more of than the result will warrant.'

'I trust I do, general,' answered the captain, 'but I have lived long in the Caucasus, and never have I seen this vow forgotten.'

Scarcely had he spoken when the door opened and a sentinel entered. 'Pardon, your highness,' exclaimed he hastily, 'but every height, as far northward as the eye can reach, is ruddy with a watch fire; and every moment as we look we see new flames springing up, and sending their crimson glow up to the very sky.'

'A chain of signal fires, your highness,' interrupted Troitz, 'these mountaineers resort to, when engaged in some great enterprise which renders communication necessary between different parts of the country. It is even so,' continued he, approaching the door: 'already I can count thirty, and see another flares up on yonder crag, not three miles from the camp. I am no false prophet, your Highness; the hour of their meditated vengeance is at hand.'

'To arms, then, gentlemen, cried Boroff, hurrying to the door. 'They shall find us prepared. Troitz, I see there is no blazing signal behind us. We must try to sever this burning chain, lest we be surrounded on all sides, and fare badly with the garrison we have left. Do you marshal the soldiers, and have them ready for action at the shortest notice. Scarcely a quarter of a mile off, I have noticed a strange looking rock so situated, and of such elevation, that a fire on its top would be visible for miles: they will not be likely to overlook such a beacon; while if we possess it, we will be able to cut off the communication, and prevent any action on the part of those in our rear. I will forward gentlemen, to occupy this all important point.'

'Nay, general, it will be a work of some peril, if these savages are in earnest,' said a grey-headed Major, 'let me go, and you remain and see that all is right in the camp.'

'Boroff will never send his soldiers where he will not go himself,' was the brave reply, as the general hastened to place himself at the head of a small detachment to effect the desired movement. The rest of the army was soon called from their quarters and under arms; they knew not the reason of these sudden orders, and could answer each other's questions only by pointing to the beacon fires which still fiercely sent up their ominous light to the heavens.

The general had in person reconnoitered the ground in the neighbourhood of the camp