

the way of the invaders. A proposal has been made to lay a mine under Monte Torrero, and explode the French camp, but it is too rash an experiment, we have not men to spare for so dangerous an undertaking, we must confine ourselves to the defensive, besides in its explosion it might destroy half our city, and we have already suffered enough. Our trust must be in our righteous cause and our Lady, who will not permit her chosen abiding place to be destroyed. But heard you not, sweet one, the rumour of surrender? The insulting Desmottes sent to our noble captain a demand for the giving up of the city; on the plea that as it could not possibly resist much longer, it would save many lives and much destruction of property, if it were quietly yielded, and he pledged himself to allow us great privileges, and almost the honours of conquerors, if we would submit."

"What was the answer of our general?" said Agostina, with an emotion which showed how dear was the honour of her native city to her proud Spanish heart.

"He drew his sabre from his belt, and holding it menacingly before the messenger: 'Say to your leader 'War to the knife!'' this was all the reply he vouchsafed, and, turning away, he resumed the directions he was giving for the erection of the palisades, and the mounting of the howitzers, on the side of the Ebro, for a rumour has reached us that Napoleon disapproves the mode of attack pursued by Lefebvre, and has ordered him to cross the river and attack us where we are supposed to be the weakest. The fell tyrant has been heard to say 'Saragossa must fall; he has decreed it, considering it the point of union for the three provinces; he feels that its possession is essential to secure his position, and I confess, Agostina, when I think what he is, who has said it, I tremble. What did he ever *will* yet, that failed? Every thing he looks upon becomes his prey, and nought can oppose him. My heart sinks at the dreary prospect for my country, Evil light upon the foul Godoy, who has brought this ruin upon us."

"Hope, hope, dear Pedro; trust in God, the right, and our Lady, we shall yet live to see tranquil days. A prophetic spirit seems to come upon me, showing me, as in a magic glass, the end of this struggle. I see you, dearest, sharing the honours with Palafox; welcomed with loud vivas wherever you appear. Saragossa is once more free, she raises her head triumphant; her vineyards and olive gardens flourish, and the sound of joyous revelry is heard where now echo the groans of the dying and the wail of the mourning. But it is time for you to seek rest, I will call you at day-break. Till then sleep in peace."

With graceful care she arranged a light couch which was in the room; her lover threw his wearied frame upon it; she knelt for a moment at his side, uttered a fervent prayer for his protection and safety, then noiselessly gliding from the room, she left him to that repose he so much needed. She herself slept not; her excited spirit could find no rest, and she listened to the many sounds, which rose from the different parts of the city, indicating the preparations which were going on for the morrow's combat. The hum and buzz grew louder and louder as the day dawned; and with the first grey light, the drums and trumpets sent forth their stirring appeal, rousing the sleeping soldiers, and summoning them to another day of bitter strife, where most of them were to lay down their lives, a willing sacrifice for their country's good. Refreshed and full of ardour, Pedro bade farewell to Agostina and her mother, and to relieve their anxiety and shorten the day to them, he promised, if it were possible, he would come to them at noon, to tell them how the fight was speeding with them.

With sad heart and tearful eye, Agostina watched his departing form, till a turn in the street hid him from her view; then prostrating herself before the image of the blessed Virgin, she poured out her full heart in an agony of supplication and prayer. Soon wild cries rose in the air; the roar of the cannon, the shouts of "Viva el Rey," "Avancé tirailleurs," "Viva Fernando Septimo," "Viva l'Empereur," "Morte, Morte;" the tramp of the cavalry as they forced their way down from Monte Torrero; the clashing of sabres; the shrieks of the wounded; the maddening yell of raging strife, grew hour by hour more fierce. The timid, appalled, crowded into the darkest corners of their homes, endeavouring to close their ears against the dread tumult, but in vain.

With feverish anxiety, Agostina waited for the promised visit from her lover; but he came not, and as the day wore on, remembering the half expressed wish of the day before, that he had had bread and wine from her hand to refresh his weary spirit, she filled a basket with delicious grapes and wine, and drawing her mantilla closely about her face, with a beating heart sallied forth to the gate of the Puertillo.

CHAPTER II.

"Her lover sinks—she sheds no ill-timed tear;
Her chief is slain—she fills his fatal post;
Her fellows flee—she checks their base career,
The foe retires—she heads the rallying host;
Who can appease like her, a lover's ghost?
Who can avenge so well a leader's fall?
What maid retrieve, when man's flushed hope is lost,
Who hung so fiercely on the flying Gail,
Fell'd by a woman's hand before a battered wall?"