

THE CASTLE BY THE SEA.

(From the German of 'Umland.)

BY GOWAN LEE.

Hast seen you castle standing
Beside the crystal sea,
Around its towers commanding
The white clouds wandering free.

Hast seen it downward bending
To kiss the water clear,
Its summit high ascending
To touch the heavenly sphere?

"Ah yes, I know its seeming—
That castle by the sea—
The moon above it gleaming,
The mist about the sea."

Did breeze and crested billow
Sound loudly forth and long,
And from the festive chambers
Came there a mirthful song?

"The wind and 'e'en the ocean
But uttered plaintive sighs,
A wail of deep emotion
Called tears into my eyes."

O didst thou see the waving
Of the monarch's crimson gown,
The precious jewelled setting
Of the fair queen's golden crown?

A maiden were they leading
With rapture and with grace,
Celestial glory beaming
Upon her lovely face.

"The regal pair were sitting
Without a chaplet rare,
In mourning robes and frowning
The maiden was not there."

POWDER AND GOLD.

CHAPTER IV. — (Continued.)

LOVE, BURGUNDY AND DUTY.

We passed through the court-yard of the farm, into which the sun, already low in the heavens, began to cast long shadows. A short consultation arose as to whether we should go to the pavilion first or proceed at once to the castle. I earnestly urged the latter course, as the walk up the somewhat rugged height would afford a much better opportunity for conversation, and twilight would soon gather. They yielded to my wishes and we began our walk, while Friedrich was left behind with the provision basket, to see that the farm servants opened the pavilion and prepared everything properly for our comfort.

I need not describe our ascent; every one knows that to reach ruined castles demands considerable effort from the knees and lungs. I will only say that we had to climb up by a wretched goat-path, but the expedition produced a pleasanter state of affairs. I ventured to offer Mlle. Blanche my arm, which she accepted without the slightest hesitation. When we reached the ruin and passed through the well-preserved door-way which had formerly divided the outer buildings from the citadel, we entered the court-yard. A most majestic view burst upon us—the dark, pine-circled valley, the river winding far below us, the neighbouring heights, and a broad expanse of the beautiful and fertile lands of ancient Burgundy.

I was in a singularly excited mood, a species of blissful intoxication in which the fact that Blanche, with a sort of submissiveness that was perhaps merely the result of fatigue, allowed her hand still to rest on my arm, bore no trifling share. We stood in silence for a long time, each apparently enchanted, ravished, absorbed by the beautiful scene before us; but I must acknowledge that in my heart I thought only of Blanche—was conscious only of her presence.

After a pause she said quietly: "Acknowledge that I was right."

"Right! Right in what? Have I not told you that I am in such a peaceful mood that I have totally forgotten war, and would acknowledge every one to be right? Do we differ in opinion about anything?"

"Oh! in a thousand things, I think," she replied in a soft, low tone which still rings in my ears.

"And yet I could not quarrel with you about any of them. If I could prove myself right a thousand times, what would it avail? You know that 'might makes right,' and you have the power."

"I have the power?" she said quickly, and then glowed with the girlish blushes, the embarrassment, caused by the consciousness of a thoughtlessly uttered word, which may call forth an answer that is not desired.

The abbé interrupted the conversation, which I would willingly have continued, and we spoke of other subjects. The priest mentioned the different objects and places which we perceived in the distance. He was very eloquent and communicative about them; but I saw with no little anxiety that the sun had already sunk so far in the horizon, that its lower edge almost touched the blue, cloudlike outlines of the distant mountain peaks.

At last I interrupted him to propose to return; but Blanche seemed unable to leave the spot, and stood motionless for a long time, as if fascinated by the sight of the exquisite landscape, to which the magical tints of the setting sun lent wondrous beauty. When we at last began to retrace our steps, twilight was already gathering, and the somewhat difficult descent of the mountain pathway, during which Mlle. Blanche resigned herself wholly to my guidance, as if

abstracted or lost in reverie, occupied a considerable space of time. As we emerged into the plain, light glowed from the pavilion, and through the open doorway we saw a lamp burning upon a well-supplied table. Friedrich, it seems, had arranged the supper, but the idea of lighting a fire in the parlour doubtless originated with the farmer. At all events it greatly enhanced the comfort of the handsomely furnished apartment, which, though of moderate size, was quite large enough for the accommodation of its present occupants. We seated ourselves at the round table in the centre of the room; the abbé did the honours of the little repast, and poured out for me a glass of fiery Burgundy, which was doubly exhilarating after our toilsome walk. Mlle. Blanche ate and drank very little, and soon turned away to watch the flickering glow of the firelight, leaving us to our gay conversation, which was sustained by the abbé with great volubility; it seemed as if the fiery Burgundy had completely melted his usual reserve. At times the eyes of Mlle. Blanche caught my face with a questioning glance that by no means lessened the feeling of secret happiness inspired by the strange, dreamlike situation in which I found myself. For was it not, in truth, as if I were wandering through the mazes of some dream—suddenly brought as if by enchantment into this quiet, rock-walled valley, where the rustling of the pine trees in the evening breeze, the splashing of the mountain stream, and the crackling of the fire, made a strange, weird music in the stranger's ears; while Mademoiselle Blanche, with her rare beauty, might well pass for the enchantress, over whom the tremulous flicker of the flames danced in elfish sport, to whom the rustling pine boughs warbled their mysterious songs, and the rushing foaming waves of the river, dashing down its deep, stony channel, spoke of life and motion, of all that was concealed in the dark chasms of the rocks.

I must confess that never during my whole life had I known an hour when my heart was so filled with poetic dreams, blissful fancies, and confident joy.

Ah! why must Friedrich appear at the door so soon, and give me a glance of warning! Yet he was right; no doubt it was very late. I looked at my watch; the hands pointed to a quarter past ten! The night was farther advanced than I had thought.

The abbé refilled my glass, then on my reminding him that it was time for us to return to the chateau, poured out one for Friedrich, looked at his watch and said:

"It will be half-past eleven before the horses are harnessed and we can set out; the drive is two hours long, so we shall not reach home until halfpast one. What do you think of it, Blanche?"

"If it is so late, we cannot return to-night," she replied. "We must not disturb my mother at such an hour; she had so bad a night yesterday that we ought not to deprive her of her sleep."

"You are right, cousin," exclaimed the abbé, eagerly. "We are perfectly comfortable here; why should we go home?"

"But I cannot be absent from my post all night," I interrupted, somewhat startled by this proposal.

"Your men will be perfectly safe at Chateau Giron," replied the priest. "I give you my word of honour that no harm shall befall them. You can submit to Mlle. Blanche's decision without the slightest anxiety. We have some cosy sleeping-rooms here, enough for a larger party than is to be accommodated to-night; look, this one is at your service."

He rose and opened a door, revealing a very handsomely furnished apartment with a recess containing a bed.

I must confess with shame that I was already too much under the spell of my enchantress, to make any very earnest protest against the arrangement. Who could have shortened such hours before it was necessary, and how could any one resist the plea that an invalid mother must not be disturbed! I allowed myself to be persuaded to remain, drank the freshly filled glass of wine, and accepted the cigar proffered by the abbé at the suggestion of Mlle. Blanche. We resumed our conversation, but Mlle. Kuhn soon rose, bade us good night, and went up stairs to her own apartments. The abbé occupied a room like mine on the opposite side of the drawing-room.

As Blanche passed, taking leave of us with a graceful bow, her eyes rested upon me with a very singular expression.

Strange! there was a shade of displeasure, dissatisfaction—I might almost call it contempt—in the look and the curve of the lip; what had I done?

CHAPTER V.

"DEATH TO THE PRUSSAINS!"

The glamour of the hour vanished after she left the room; I became taciturn, allowed the abbé to sustain the larger share of the conversation, and when he proposed that we should retire to our chambers, eagerly assented. Friedrich, who had remained near the door, instantly came in to help me remove my uniform, and we were soon alone in my sleeping-room.

"This was all a settled plan to detain us here," said Friedrich.

"Do you think so? Why?"

"Don't you see! the bed has been opened and the quilt removed; that must have been done by the servants at the farm before we arrived."

I sat down and looked at the open bed and folded "quilt," as Friedrich called it, very thoughtfully.

"What do you think of all this, Friedrich?" I asked at last.

"That they wished to get us out of our quarters, and that probably something will now occur there which we should prevent if we were present."

"Glauroth will not leave the room."

"During the whole night! Who knows! And he is alone."

"Pshaw!" I exclaimed; "I am sure that this young girl does not intend to deceive me. I would as soon thrust my hand into the fire as to believe her capable of such base treachery!"

"And can you also rely upon the honesty of the abbé?"

"The abbé is no very skilful schemer, Friedrich; he does whatever the young lady wishes. But all this does not concern me in the least. My military duty requires that I should not be absent from my post over night; so, no matter when or why this bed was opened, I shall certainly not sleep in it. We must march, Friedrich, and at once."

"Are we to return to the chateau?" exclaimed Friedrich.

"Did you doubt it?"

"It is a very long walk to take at night, sergeant."

"Yes, but it is not very dark, and the road is excellent. So come!"

"Without any leave-taking!"

"Ought we to disturb and alarm them—perhaps, after all, compel them as a matter of civility to return home when they do not desire to do so! Go across the court-yard and tell the people in the farm-house that we are obliged to return to the chateau; bring my overcoat from the carriage at the same time, and you can overtake me on the road. I shall set out at once."

I took up my hat and gloves and left the pavilion as noiselessly as possible. Friedrich ran to the farm house, and soon rejoined me after obeying my orders.

We walked quickly on. There was no moon, and the sky was partially obscured by clouds, but the stars were so bright that we could distinctly see our road and the surrounding landmarks. The cool night air made the walk easy, so we marched on at double-quick step, our sheathed swords carried on our shoulders, that they might not retard our speed, and our spurs ringing on the paved highway which led through the rocky valley of Colomier. The mountain stream dashed along at our feet, the precipices on the left overshadowed our path, and a light breeze sighing through the valley rustled the trees, shrubs, and bushes on the rugged cliffs.

We had marched about half an hour, and were approaching the little hamlet with the mill, which I have already mentioned; it was silent and mute, as if wrapped in the most profound repose, but to my great surprise we soon received a proof that we were greatly mistaken in supposing its inhabitants lost in slumber. When we had passed the mill, and were already approaching the end of the hamlet, where there was a turn in the road, a broad stream of light fell across our path. It came from one of the last houses, whose door stood wide open, and we heard loud, angry voices disputing as if in a drunken quarrel; at the same moment a dog rushed out barking angrily. The noise drew several men, clad in the blue blouses and leather belts of the Franc-tireurs, to the doorway, whom we were obliged to pass in the full glare of the light streaming from the house; they recognized us, uttered a loud shout, and rushed back into the house, which immediately resounded with a deafening uproar. We naturally quickened our steps as much as possible, loosening our swords—the only weapons we carried—as we went; but we had not advanced forty paces before a gun was fired, a bullet whistled past us, then another and another, then a half dozen; it seemed to me as if I felt a slight pain in my left arm, but the bullets did no further damage, nearly all of them whizzed through the air far above our heads. Friedrich's pace had long ago changed from a walk into the quickest possible trot—and, in truth, resistance to such a number of men armed with muskets was not to be thought of; I rushed after him, and when once again by my companion's side, said:

"We shall be shot after all if we remain here on the highway, in plain sight; we must separate—do you take the right, and I will escape through the vineyards on the left."

We had just reached a gently sloping piece of ground which occupied the space between the road and the steep cliffs that inclosed the valley. I turned into it, and hurried on between the trellises, through the clinging vines, over the low partition walls, amid a hundred impediments—I had at least the certainty that I could not be seen, and therefore was sheltered from the fire of my pursuers; but my task was nevertheless no easy one—in spite of every hindrance I must advance faster than they could do on the smooth highway; I already heard them running and shouting below me.

"Fire—fire—fire on the dogs! fire—death to the Prussians!" I heard them scream from the road beneath me. A short time after two shots were fired, evidently at random, unless they were aimed at Friedrich. I at least was untouched by the bullets, but all this was quite sufficient to make me use every effort to advance as rapidly as possible over the gravelly, stony soil, which afforded very insecure footing and made me stumble every instant against the trellises of the vines. I hurried to save myself I

must reach the end of the vineyards before my pursuers; if I were too late, if I should be compelled to enter the highway, in full view, I was a dead man.

It was a terrible chase. At one time, as I listened to the confused shouts of the Franc-tireurs, I almost decided to give up the race and throw myself flat on the ground in the hope that they would run beyond and leave me lying there, but just at that moment I heard a dog barking behind them—the animal would scent me out; I must go on, on, with failing strength and panting breath as long as my limbs would support me.

Fortunately the vineyards extended over a large tract of land, and it was perhaps a quarter of an hour or more before I reached open ground and stumbled, or flew rather than ran, down the steep slope that led to the highway. My pursuers had given up the chase; I heard nothing more from them except now and then the barking of the dog; they were evidently returning to the tavern in the hamlet, and I could once more breathe freely.

It was in vain that I looked for my comrade. I listened, called in a low tone, then louder, but not a sound was heard. I walked slowly on, then called again; at last a low whistle, imitating our gathering signal, answered me. Greatly delighted I whistled in reply, and heard the words "I am coming" from the opposite bank of the river. I walked quickly down to the water's edge, and as I reached the shore saw Friedrich step boldly into the stream. The water rose to his knees and foamed around his waist; I held my sheathed sabre towards him, he grasped it, and the next moment stood safely beside me.

"Thank God that you are alive and well," he panted. "What a chase that was! When we parted I dashed into the water at once—I knew very well that the rascals would not follow me there. Frenchmen are like cats, they don't like to wet their feet, and are dispirited by a very slight ducking. The miserable wretches! I thank heaven that I found you again so soon. You took to your heels splendidly! I lost sight of you in a trice when our race began, and was already reproaching myself bitterly for having left you, since I did not find you at once. If you had dashed against anything—but, thank God, we have escaped from the rascally gang with whole skins!"

Friedrich sputtered these words in the greatest excitement as we were climbing up the bank of the river to regain the highway.

I lagged a little behind him as we walked, for I suddenly experienced a strange feeling of exhaustion. "I fear I have not escaped with a whole skin," said I; "there is violent pain in my left arm, caused, I think, less by a harmless attack of rheumatism, brought on by the night air, than a Chassepot bullet which I have very unintentionally disturbed by my hasty flight."

"Ah! you are wounded! Let me see!" exclaimed Friedrich, anxiously.

I listened before pausing, but there was not even the faintest rustle to be heard—nothing but the distant bark of the dog, and the river plashing beneath us. We could halt and allow ourselves time to examine my arm with perfect safety.

The removal of my clothing caused me doubly violent pain. Friedrich carried some matches in his vest pocket; after lighting two or three, while I drew my shirt from down my shoulder and slowly loosened it from my arm, we discovered a slight flesh wound, scarcely deep enough to account for the pain I suffered, but very angry and sensitive. Friedrich ran down the bank to the river and brought some water in his cap to wash the arm; my handkerchief served as a bandage. I drew on my shirt. Friedrich made a sling of his handkerchief to support my left arm, drawing my right through his that I might lean upon him, and we then resumed our march through the darkness.

Friedrich was a clever, skilful fellow, but, like a thousand others, somewhat rough and careless. Yet he suddenly showed a brother's affection for me, and displayed a sympathy, zeal, and anxiety which touched me deeply. How much kindness, brotherly affection, self-sacrificing devotion, and warm sympathy sleeps in the hearts of thousands, nay almost all the vast multitude of mankind, always close at hand, but never displayed until the moment our need arouses it from its slumber! An inner war creates thousands of such moments, it is, although a source of cruelty and inhumanity, also a great apostolacy of kindly feelings, a harvest of brotherly affection and human love, surpassed by nothing else on earth. I have nowhere found more ready assistance, more gently uttered expressions of sympathy, than among soldiers.

We reached the end of the rocky valley and emerged into the broader one watered by the Oignon. The cool water relieved the pain of my wound; I strove to forget my exhaustion, and we proceeded on our way—very wearily, it is true, and more and more slowly as we approached Chateau Giron; but we at last reached it safely, and I breathed more freely as I saw a faint light gleaming from the windows of my room.

"Glauroth has not left his post!" I cried. "Thank God! I scarcely expected it."

Just at that moment we received a further proof of Glauroth's zeal and thoughtfulness. He had sent two scouts to look for us, who overtook us in the avenue before the chateau as they were returning home. Nevertheless, when I entered my room I found Glauroth in bed, locked in the arms of Morpheus—unless his ter-