

How Nicol Sought His Fortune Elsewhere

gate. One man in particular, a Scot, as I have heard, Nicolo Plenderleet by name, with two others who were both slain, made his way to the battlements. The gate was shut, and, to all appearance, his death was certain. But they knew not the temper of their enemy, for springing on the summit of the wall, he dared all to attack him. When the defenders pressed on he laid about him so sturdily that three fell under his sword.

“Then when he could no longer make resistance, and bullets were pattering around him like hail, and his cheek was bleeding with a deep wound, his spirit seemed to rise the higher. For, shouting out taunts to his opponents, he broke into a song, keeping time all the while with the thrusts of his sword. Then bowing gallantly, and saluting with his blade his ring of foes, he sheathed his weapon, and joining his hands above his head, dived sheer and straight into the river, and, swimming easily, reached the French lines. At the sight those of his own side cheered, and even our men, whom he had so tricked, could scarce keep from joining.

“Touching the editions which you desired, I have given orders to the bookseller on the quay at Rotterdam to send them to you. I shall be glad, indeed, to give you my poor advice on the difficult matters you speak of, if you will do me the return favour of reading through my excursus to Longinus, and giving me your veracious opinion. Of this I send you a copy.