

my hand, and fell to talking with such good will, that he was evidently amused. I asked him to look at our view from the garden terrace.

"There, sir," said I, (for everyone called him "sir," as if he were a royal duke) "that is your lodge, and there are your trees."

"How far off do you call it?" says he.

"Two miles, sir," I replied, "as a bird flies over the river."

"Yes," said he, looking hard at it, "it is more than a mile, and I will tell you why. Look at that white lodge of mine; it is but a white mass. If it were less than a mile, you would see an angle. This is a rule in distance which you should always remember."

A vision of the Duke peering with his keen grey eyes, over the barren Sierras of Spain, or the grassy folds of Belgian plains, flitted before me. How often must he have had occasion to put this rule into practice when calculating the distance from the enemy; arranging troops for battle, or looking out for his bivouac!

From this day forward, nothing could exceed his kindness. I was too young to dine out, but my mother was constantly his guest. He was one of the first who introduced the Russian mode of dining with only flowers and fruit upon the table; and this, perhaps, because he was proud of his garden and its fine produce. The dinner was always served to the minute. If any guests were but five minutes late, woe betide them! Watch in hand the Duke's keen eyes met them in no dulcet mood; nor did he fail to give them some verbal intimation of his displeasure. The house was always full, for he loved the society of beautiful, high-born ladies—loved to hear them sing, or to play with them at little games. Especially did he enjoy the song of "Miss Myrtle, the wonderful woman," which he would nightly call for, and nightly encore. It was Hercules surrounded by many Omphales—the warrior resting from his toils, and sunning himself in the rays of beauty. Still, now and then, the rough side would peep out, especially in his letters; and well as he liked my mother, Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington could, and did, write her many a curt epistle. Once she asked his intercession for lengthened leave for a young officer whose regiment was serving in India. "F. M., the Duke of Wellington," in reply, "assured his

dear Mrs.—, that if he applied for leave of absence for all the young officers who wished it, he would have nothing else to do. F. M., the Duke of Wellington, must decline to make any such application on any pretext whatever."

But when asked by her to give an introduction to the brother of an old comrade he had much esteemed at Madras, and who was since dead, he furnished such a letter to the Governor General of India as assured that officer's advancement for life.

The Duke's correspondence occupied a large portion of his day; for, when out of office, he made it a point of conscience to reply to every note or letter he received. Hence the curious specimens of his style, which are extant in his own handwriting; for as his habits were generally known, every autograph-hunter provoked him to an immediate and characteristic reply.

In order to write undisturbed, he used to retire for several hours each day to his library—a pleasant, irregular room on the ground-floor, opening into a conservatory, and thence upon the well-trimmed gravel walks of the garden-plaisance. Adjoining was his bedroom, furnished with Spartan simplicity, containing only a shabby iron sofa-bedstead, and all the scanty appurtenances of his camp life. This love of simplicity in dress, furniture, and habits, was the outward index of his character.

His conversation was singularly straightforward, and his views on men and things presented a curious compound of dictatorial assertion and simple expression. The habit of command was always present with him, and the possibility of contradiction or opposition never entered his head for an instant. Ordinarily courteous, and really benevolent when unprovoked, he could, even in the most familiar converse, become exceedingly stern, both in look and manner; and it was thus, in a perfectly *naïve* assumption of infallibility, that the conscious supremacy of the Commander-in-Chief asserted itself.

Flattered, loved, consulted as an oracle, by every man, woman and child who came in contact with him, from his gamekeepers and gardeners to the Ministers and the Queen, it is only surprising that he should have preserved, even to extreme old age, his mental equilibrium, and escaped to the extent he did the pitfalls of vanity. As years went by, I en-