

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

By midday I had got as far as the village of Sasfeldt, but as I was on the direct road for Osterode, where the Emperor was wintering, and also for the main camp of seven divisions of infantry, the highway was choked with carriages and carts. What with artillery caissons and waggons and couriers and the ever-thickening stream of recruits and stragglers, it seemed to me that it would be a very long time before I should join my comrades. The plains, however, were five feet deep in snow, so there was nothing for it but to plod upon our way. It was with joy, therefore, that I found a second road which branched away from the other, trending through a fir-wood towards the north. There was a small arnberge at the cross-roads, and a patrol of the Third Hussars of Conflans—the very regiment of which I was afterwards colonel—were mounting their horses at the door. On the steps stood their officer, a slight, pale young man, who looked more like a young priest from a seminary than leader of the devil-may-care rascals before him.

"Good day, sir," said he, seeing that I pulled up my horse.

"Good-day," I answered. "I am Lieutenant Etienne Gerard, of the Tenth."

I could see by his face that he heard of me. Everybody had heard of me since my duel with the six fencing-masters. My manner, however, seemed to put him at his ease with me.

"I am Sub-Lieutenant Duroc, of the Third," said he.

"Newly joined?" I asked.

"Last week."

I had thought as much, from his white face and from the way in which he let his men lounge upon their horses. It was not so long, however, since I had learned myself what it was like when a schoolboy has to give orders to veteran troopers. It made me blush, I remember, to shout abrupt commands to men who had seen more battles than I had years, and it would have come more natural for me to say, "With your permission, we shall now wheel into line," or, "If you think it best, we shall trot." I did not think the less of the lad, therefore, when I observed that his men were sometimes out of hand, but I gave them a glance which stiffened them in their saddles.

"May I ask, monsieur, whether you are going by this northern road?" I asked.

"My orders are to patrol it as far as Arensdorf," said he.

"Then I will, with your permission, ride so far with you," said I. "It is very clear that the longer way will be the faster."

So it proved, for this road led away from the army into a country which was given over to Cossacks and marauders, and it was as bare as the other was crowded. Duroc and I rode in front, with our six troopers clattering in the rear. He was a good boy, this Duroc, with his head full of the nonsense that they teach at St. Cyr, knowing more about Alexander and Pompey than how to mix a horse's fodder or care for a horse's feet. Still, he was, as I have said, a good boy, unspoiled as yet by the camp. It pleased me to hear him prattle away about his sister Marie and about his mother in Amiens. Presently we found ourselves at the village of Hayenau. Duroc rode up to the post-house and asked to see the master.

"Can you tell me," said he, "whether the man who calls himself the Baron Straubenthal lives in these parts?"

The postmaster shook his head, and we rode upon our way.

I took no notice to this, but when, at the next village, my comrade repeated the same question, with the same result, I could not help asking him who this Baron Straubenthal might be.

"He is a man," said Duroc, with a sudden flush upon his boyish face, "to whom I have a very important message to convey."

Well, this was not satisfactory, but there was something in my companion's manner which told me that any further questioning would be distant to him. I said nothing more, therefore, but Duroc would still ask every peasant whom we met whether he gave him any news of the Baron called Straubenthal.

For my own part I was endeavouring, as an officer of light cavalry should, to form an idea of the lay of the country, to note the course of the streams, and to mark the places where there should be for a Every step was taking us farther from the camp round the flanks of which we were traveling. Far to the south a few plumes of grey smoke in the frosty air marked the position of some of our outposts. To the north, however, there was nothing between ourselves and the Russian winter quarters. Twice on the extreme horizon I caught a glimpse of the glitter of steel, and pointed it out to my companion. It was too distant for us to tell whence it came, but we had little doubt that it was from the lance-heads of marauding Cossacks.

The sun was just setting when we rode over a low hill and saw a small village upon our right, and on our left a high black castle, which jutted out from amongst the pine-woods. A farmer with his cart was approaching us—a matted-haired, down-cast fellow, in a sheepskin jacket.

"What village is this?" asked Duroc.

"It is Arensdorf," he answered, in his barbarous German dialect.

"Then here I am to stay the night," said my young companion. Then, turning to the farmer, he asked his eternal question, "Can you tell me where the Baron Straubenthal lives?"

"Why, it is he who owns the Castle of Gloom," said the farmer pointing to the dark turrets over the distant fir forest.

Duroc gave a shout like the sportsman who sees his game rising in front of him. The lad seemed to have gone off his head—his eyes shining, his face deathly white, and such a grim set about his mouth as made the farmer shrink away from him. I can see him now, leaning forward on his brown horse, with his eager gaze fixed upon the great black tower.

"Why do you call it the Castle of Gloom?" I asked.

"Well it's the name it bears upon the country side," said the farmer. "By all accounts there have been some black doings up yonder. It's not for nothing that the wickedest man in Poland has been living there these fourteen years past."

"A Polish nobleman?" I asked.

"Nay we breed no such men in Poland," he answered.

"A Frenchman, then?" cried Duroc.

"They say that he came from France."

"And with red hair?"

"As red as a fox."

"Yes, it is my man," cried my companion, quivering all over in his excitement.

"It is the hand of Providence which has led me here. Who can say there is not justice in this world? Come, Monsieur Gerard, for I must see the men safely quartered before I can attend to his private matter."

He spurred on his horse, and ten minutes later we were at the door of the inn of Arensdorf, where his men were to find their quarters for the night.

Well, all this was no affair of mine, and I could not imagine what the meaning of it might be. Rosset was still far off, but I determined to ride on for a few hours and take my chance of some wayside barn in which I could find shelter for Ratanap and myself. I had mounted my horse, therefore, after tossing off a cup of wine, when young Duroc came running out of the door and laid his hand upon my knee.

"Monsieur Gerard," he panted, "I beg of you not to abandon me like this!"

"My good sir," said I, "if you would tell me what is the matter and what you would wish me to do, I should be better able to tell you if I could be of any assistance to you."

"You can be of the very greatest," he cried. "Indeed, from all that I have heard of you, Monsieur Gerard, you are the one man whom I should wish to have by my side to-night."

"You forget that I am riding to join my regiment."

"You cannot, in any case, reach it to-night. To-morrow will bring you to Rosset. By staying with me you will confer the very greatest kindness upon me, and you will aid me in a matter which concerns my own honour and the honour of my family. I am compelled, however, to confess to you that some personal danger may possibly be involved."

It was a crafty thing for him to say. Of course, I sprang from Ratanap's back and ordered the groom to lead him back into the stables.

"Come into the inn," said I, "and let me know exactly what it is that you wish me to do."

He led the way into a sitting-room, and fastened the door lest we should be interrupted. He was a well-grown lad, and as he stood in the glare of the lamp, with the light beaming upon his earnest face and upon his uniform of silver gray, which suited him to a marvel, I felt my heart warm towards him. Without going so far as to say that he carried himself as I had done at his age, there was at least similarity enough to make me feel in sympathy with him.

"I can explain it all in a few words," said he. "If I have not already satisfied your very natural curiosity, it is because the subject is so painful a one to me that I can hardly bring myself to allude to it. I cannot, however, ask for your assistance without explaining to you exactly how the matter lies."

"You must know, then, that my father was the well-known banker, Christophe Duroc, who was murdered by the people during the September massacres. As you are aware the mob took possession of the prisons, chose three so-called judges to pass sentence upon the unhappy aristocrats, and then tore them to pieces when they were passed out into the street. My father had been a benefactor of the poor all his life. There were many to plead for him. He had the fever, too, and was carried in, half-dead, upon a blanket. Two of the judges were in favour of acquitting him; the third, a young Jacobin, whose huge body and brutal mind had made him a leader among these wretches, dragged him, with his own hands, from the litter, kicked him again and again with his heavy boots, and hurled him out of the door, where in an instant he was torn limb by limb under circumstances which are too horrible for me to describe. This, as you perceive, was murder, even under their own unlawful laws, for two of their own judges had pronounced in my father's favour."

"Well, when the days of order came back again, my elder brother began to make inquiries about this man. I was only a child then, but it was a family matter, and it was discussed in my presence. The fellow's name was Carabin. He was one of Santerre's Guard, and a noted duellist. A foreign lady named the Baroness Straubenthal having been dragged before the Jacobins, he had gained her liberty for her on the promise that she with her money and estates should be his. He had married her, taken her name and title, and escaped out of France at the time of the fall of Robespierre. What had become of him we had no means of learning."

"You will think, doubtless, that it would be easy for us to find him, since we had his name and his title. You must remember, however, that the Revolution left us without money, and that without money such a search is very difficult. Then came the Empire and it became more difficult still, for, as you are aware, the Emperor considered that the 18th Brumaire brought all accounts to settlement, and that on that day a veil had been drawn across the past. None the less, we kept our own family story and our own family plans."

"My brother joined the army, and passed it through all Southern Europe, asking everywhere for the Baron Straubenthal. Last October he was killed at Jena, with his mission still unfulfilled. Then it became my turn, and I have the good fortune to hear of the very man of whom I am in search at one of the first Polish villages which I have to visit, and within a fortnight of joining my regiment. And then, to make the matter even better, I find myself in the company of one whose name is never mentioned throughout the army save in connection with some daring and generous deed."

This was all very well, and I listened to it with the greatest interest, but I was none the clearer as to what young Duroc wished me to do.

"How can I be of service to you?" I asked.

"By coming up with me."

"To the Castle?"

"Precisely."

"When?"

"At once."

"But what do you intend to do?"

"I shall know what to do. But I wish you to be with me, all the same."

Well, it was never in my nature to refuse an adventure, and, besides, I had every sympathy with the lad's feelings. It is very well to forgive one's enemies, but one wishes to give them something to forgive also. I held out my hand to him, therefore.

"I must be on my way for Rosset to-morrow morning, but to-night I am yours," said I.

We left our troopers in snug quarters, and, as it was but a mile to the Castle, we did not disturb our horses. To tell the truth, I hate to see a cavalry man walk, and I held that just as he is the most gallant thing upon earth when he has his saddle-flaps between his knees, so he is the most clumsy when he has to loop up his sabre and his sabre-tasche in one hand turn in his toes for fear of catching the rowels of his spurs. Still, Duroc and I were of the age when one can carry things off, and I dare swear that no woman at least would have quarreled with the appearance of the two young hussars, one in blue and one in grey, who set out that night from the Arensdorf post-house. We both carried our swords, and for my own part I slipped a pistol from my holster into the inside of my pelisse, for it seemed to me that there might be some wild work before us.

The track which led to the Castle wound through a pitch-black fir-wood, where we could see nothing save the ragged patch of stars above our head. Presently, however, it opened up, and there was the Castle right in front of us, about as far as a carbine would carry. It was a huge, uncouth place, and bore every mark of being exceedingly old, with turrets at every corner, and a square keep on the side which was nearest to us. In all its great shadow there was no sign of light save for a single window, and no sound came from it. To me there was something awful in its size and its silence, which corresponded so well with its sinister name. My companion passed on eagerly, and I followed him along the ill-kept path which led to the gate.

There was no bell or knocker upon the great, iron-studded door, and it was only by pounding with the hilts of our sabres that we could attract attention. A thin hawk-faced man, with a beard up to his temples, opened it at last. He carried a lantern in one hand and in the other a chain which held an enormous black hound. His manner at the first moment was threatening, but the sight of our uniforms and our faces turned it into one of sulky reserve.

"The Baron Straubenthal does not receive visitors at so late an hour," said he, speaking in very excellent French.

"You can inform Baron Straubenthal that I have come eight hundred leagues to see him, and that I will not leave until I have done so," said my companion. I could not myself have said it with a better voice and manner.

The fellow took a sidelong look at us, and tugged at his black beard in his perplexity.

"To tell the truth, gentlemen," said he, "the baron has a cup or two of wine in him at this hour, and you would certainly find him a more entertaining companion if you were to come again in the morning."

He had opened the door a little wider as he spoke, and I saw by the light of the lamp in the hall behind him that three other rough fellows were standing there, one of whom held another of those monstrous hounds. Duroc must have seen it also, but it made no difference to his resolution.

"Enough talk," said he, pushing the man to one side. "It is with your master that I have to deal."

The fellows in the hall made way for him as he strode in among them, so great is the power of one man who knows what he wants over several who are not sure of themselves. My companion tapped one of them upon the shoulder with as much assurance as though he owned him.

"Show me to the Baron," said he.

The man shrugged his shoulders, and answered something in Polish. The fellow with the beard, who had shut and barred the front door, appeared to be the only one among them who could speak French.

"Well, you shall have your way," said he, with a sinister smile. "You shall see the baron. And perhaps, before you have finished, you will wish that you had taken my advice."

We followed him down the hall, which was stone-flagged and very spacious, with skins scattered upon the floor, and the heads of wild beasts upon the walls. At the farther end he threw open a door, and we entered.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

AN UNDERGROUND CITY.

Interesting Discovery Made by Russian Explorers in Asia.

The Russians have made a singular discovery in Central Asia. In Turkestan, on the right bank of the Amu Daria, is a chain of rocky hills near the Bokharan town of Karki, and a number of large caves which, upon examination, were found to lead to an underground city, built apparently long before the Christian era. According to effigies, inscriptions and designs upon the gold and silver money unearthed from among the ruins, the existence of the town dates back to some two centuries before the birth of Christ. The underground Bokharan city is about two versts long, and is composed of an enormous labyrinth of corridors, streets and squares, surrounded by houses and other buildings two or three stories high. The edifices contain all kinds of domestic utensils, pots, urns, vases and so forth. In some of the streets falls of earth and rock have obstructed the passages, but, generally, the visitor can walk about freely without so much as lowering his head.

The high degree of civilization attained by the inhabitants of the city is shown by the fact that they built in several stories, by the symmetry of the streets and squares, and by the beauty of the baked clay and metal utensils, and of the ornaments and coins which have been found. It is supposed that long centuries ago this city, so carefully concealed in the bowels of the earth, provided an entire population with a refuge from the incursions of nomadic savages and robbers.

THE HOME.

Pickles That Will Make Your Mouth Water.

The general rules to be observed are: Avoid the use of metal vessels; when necessary to boil the vinegar use a porcelain-lined or agate preserving Kettle. Use wooden forks and spoons. Be sure the pickles are always completely covered with vinegar, and if symptoms of mold appear, boil the vinegar again, adding more spices; if the vinegar is weak take fresh. Do not boil the vinegar with spices above five minutes. Vessels or cooking utensils should be very clean; anything greasy will spoil the pickles. Also have the jars covered, as exposure to the air will render the pickles soft.

Gherkins.—Choose young cucumbers and let them be freshly gathered. Pour over them a strong brine of salt and water boiling hot, cover them close and allow to stand until next day. Stir them gently to remove any sand; drain on a sieve. To every quart of vinegar use $\frac{1}{2}$ oz each of whole black pepper, ginger and allspice, 1 oz mustard seed and 2 cloves of garlic. Allow the vinegar to become boiling hot, place the pickles in a jar and pour the boiling water over them. Cover the top of pickles with vine leaves, allow to stand for a day; if the pickles are not of a good green in color, heat the vinegar to almost boiling and pour it over them again, covering with fresh vine leaves. (As an additional reason for preparing them at home, it is well known that the fine green color of "store" pickles is due to the use of copper.) When the pickles are cold put in a sprig of dill and be sure to cover closely. They will be exceedingly crisp and of a fine green.

India Pickle.—The vegetables to be employed for this favorite pickle are small, hard knots of tender white cabbage, cauliflower in flakes, small cucumbers, green beans, small onions, white radishes half grown, radish pods, small green peppers, celery, horse-radish, nasturtiums and garlic. As all these vegetables do not come in season together, the best method of doing this is to prepare a large jar of pickle at such time of the year as most of the things may be obtained, and add others as they come in season. Thus the pickle will be nearly a year in making, and ought to stand another six months before using, when, if properly managed, it will be excellent, and will keep and continue to improve for years. One advantage of this plan is, that those who grow their own vegetables may gather them from day to day when they are exactly of the proper growth. These are very much better if pickled quite fresh and all of a size, which can scarcely be obtained if they are all pickled at the same time. The radish pods, peppers, nasturtiums, onions and eschallots are placed in the spiced vinegar raw, the horse-radish is scraped a little and cut in slices half an inch thick. Cauliflower (broken in flakes), beans, cabbage, radishes and gherkins are placed in a strong hot brine, and allowed to remain two days, when they are drained, and over them is poured a small quantity of hot vinegar without spice. Cover closely and when cold drain, and put the vegetables in the general jar. Be very careful that every ingredient be perfectly clean and dry, and that the jar be very closely covered every time it has been opened for the addition of fresh vegetables. For the pickle, to every gallon of good strong vinegar use 3 oz of bruised ginger, 1 oz cloves, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz each of mace, whole black pepper, and cayenne, 2 oz each of garlic and eschallots, 3 oz salt, 2 oz turmeric and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb ground mustard. Rub the mustard and turmeric smooth with a little cold vinegar. Place all the spices in vinegar and place over the fire to heat, allow it to become as hot as possible, without boiling, then stir in a little mustard and turmeric. Allow it to become very cold, when put in the vegetables as directed. This process is very simple and the result is a fine pickle. It is not essential to have every variety of vegetable here mentioned, but all are admissible, and the greater variety the more it is improved.

Mangoes.—Although any melon may be used before it is quite ripe, there is a particular variety for this purpose. Cut the top partly off, leaving it hanging by a bit of rind to serve as a hinge. Place in strong brine for two days, first scooping out all the seeds. Chop separately some white cabbage, and for every quart of cabbage four onions and two cloves of garlic, with three green peppers. Sprinkle with salt, allow to remain for two days. Drain off very dry and mix with it some mustard seed. Drain the mangoes, and stuff with the chopped mixture. The lid is now sewed down or tied, by passing a white thread through the lid and around the mango. Prepare a pickle as for gherkins and pour boiling hot over the mangoes during four successive days; and on the last add a little scraped horse-radish to the vinegar just as it boils up. Always cover well while cooling. Place in small jars well covered with vinegar and seal. The large bell peppers are excellent substituted for mangoes.

Household Hints.

It is worth while to get rid of wooden pails and tubs that dry up, as well as the dishpans and basins of metal, and replace them with the light and cheap, as well as durable, paper pails, tubs and dishes. Do away with the heavy iron pots and kettles and buy some kind of patent ware that washes easily and is then as clean as a cup and saucer.

A dainty woman's table should always be supplied with a trio of brushes, namely, a stiff whisk, to keep walking skirts free of dust; one of hair for silk gowns and a soft fine one for lace, velvet and delicate materials of hats. A little oval work basket ought also to stand near at hand, containing a full supply of fresh shoe and corset laces, as well as every sort of button, including black and white ones, for gloves.

It should also contain a small reel, holding silks of every shade for glove mending, and threads silks ready to take that stitch in time. In the small closet she should have bottles of ammonia, alcohol, benzine, besides rolls of linen and flannel and a nail brush to remove stains, which

will get on the most carefully cared for garments.

The comfort of car travel demands a loose robe, of either silk or flannel, for the sleeper. Soft felt hats on a long journey are recommended in place of the stiff toque, or turban, which may be kept with in easy reach. Gloves and shoes should be comfortable, while lingerie is out of place. A black silk petticoat is really indispensable, or one of black mohair, trimmed with silk ruffles. Black hosiery is preferable at all times.

A pie-crust roller of glass, made hollow to receive the packed ice necessary in handling puff paste, is very cheap—so is the glass lemon squeezer, which is durable, if only handled carefully.

Instead of putting big dabs of butter upon the table, which always takes one's appetite away in hot weather, the little crimped butter balls, which we all admire so much, can be easily had by paying eight cents for a pair of butter ladies and keeping them in cold water for a few minutes before they are to be used.

SCENE OF THEIR LABOURS.

How the Martyred Missionaries Spent Their Lives—Efforts to Improve the Condition of Chinese Women and Children—Adopted the Native Mode of Living.

Rev. R. W. Stewart, who, with his wife and five children, was murdered at Ku-Cheng on July 31st, was the head of the Church Missionary Society's mission. Of the English ladies who were butchered Miss Elsie Marshall, Miss Annie Gordon, Miss Bessie Newcombe, and Miss Flora Stewart belonging to the Church of England Zenana Society. Ku-Cheng was the headquarters of Misses Nisbet, Weller, Gordon, Marshall, and Stewart. Miss Nisbet had charge of the founding institution, built at the expense of an Irish clergyman for the accommodation of baby girls deserted by their parents. Miss Weller had charge of the Girls' Boarding school, erected and supported chiefly through the exertions of Miss Bessie Newcombe. This place, according to recent advices, was occupied with nearly sixty girls. Miss Stewart had allotted to her the western section. Miss Gordon spent the greater part of the year at Dong-Gio, the chief centre of the Ping-Nang district. This district had

NO OTHER LADY WORKER.

and usually the Sunday services at Dong-Gio was attended by eighty or ninety women. Miss Elsie Marshall's work lay also in the country, and she only returned occasionally to Ku-Cheng as headquarters. Her section, covering more than 300 square miles, lay north of Ku-Cheng. There were several centres in her district at which she was in the habit of stopping for a few weeks or two months at a time. Then she would collect the native women together and talk to them, and visit from house to house.

According to a recent report the other ladies were employed as follows:—"The other fixed station in Ku-Cheng district is Sa-Yong, where Miss Codrington and Miss Tolley are located, the latter still learning the language, while at the same time doing many little bits of useful work. The chief feature in Miss Codrington's work is her station class; this is a new departure in our mission, and she is the first to try it. The idea is to gather a class of women from the neighboring villages, and keep them for three months at a time in her house, and assisted by a well-instructed Bible woman, to teach them, day by day, the fundamental truths of Christianity and the chief incidents of the Bible, and then send them back to their homes to be voluntary workers among their people. Besides this station class, Miss Codrington visits regularly the surrounding villages, within a radius of

SIX OR EIGHT MILES.

sometimes travelling even further, and holding small classes in these places; thus Sa-Yong, from being so hopeless a station that we had actually withdrawn our catechist, has now a congregation of from fifty to one hundred, and the interest is steadily increasing.

Ten miles further east, across the mountains, lies the large town of Sang-Yong, and here Miss Maude Newcombe and Miss Burroughs have been working for a year. Station classes have been held at Sa-Yong, a girls' school established, and villages visited, and visible and wonderful success has followed.

In the far north-west Nang-Wa is the centre mission for your ladies. It is four days' journey over high mountains from Ku-Cheng. Miss Johnson, Miss Bessie Newcombe, Miss Rodd, Miss Bryer, and Miss Fleming were at work there. These ladies are living as nearly like the native women as possible; no knives or forks are seen in the house. One knife was kept for any unhappy guest who cannot manage chop-sticks, and though the locality is far from healthy, and the C.M.S. missionaries have one after another felt the effects of malaria, the ladies have in a surprising degree maintained their strength."

Beneficial Exercise.

Clara—I have not seen Mr. Niccelfello with you lately.

Maud—He is practising at the boat club.

I did not know he cared for rowing.

He doesn't, but he joined a crew to please me.

To please you?

Yes, I thought rowing would strengthen his arms.

The Old Man Won.

Playing the old game, I see, said the Disagreeable Father to the Charming Youth who was making love to his daughter.

Yes, sir, and hearts are trumps, glibly responded the C. Y.

I make it clubs, retorted the D. F., and closed the game.