

(ORIGINAL.)

THE GASCON'S TALE.

BY E. L. C.

Behold her gentle, delicate and frail,
 Where all around through rifted rock and wood,
 Grim features glare, huge helmed forms obscure,
 People the living gloom.

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— lovely stands she there,
 Like a blest angel 'mid th'accurst of hell.

Rev. H. H. Milman.

You have often desired, my friend, to learn some passages of my early life, but never till now have I felt myself equal to the task of calmly reviewing and systematically detailing the incidents of that strange eventful period, wherein was combined so much of happiness, mingled with a poignancy of suffering, that can never be forgotten. Even yet, after the lapse of so many years, does that vision of my youth dwell with all the vividness of reality upon my memory—in the bosom of domestic love, in the circle of social pleasure, amidst the *empressement* of the battle field, and the harassing duties of a soldier's life, does it obtrude itself upon me, and win my thoughts from the present, to dwell again among the scenes of the past. Waking or asleep, I see around me the boundless and pathless forests of the new world—I hear the sighing of the breeze among the branches of those mighty trees, that the suns and dews of centuries have nurtured into giants.—I stand beneath their umbrageous arms, and gaze upon the painted lineaments, and the naked forms of the savages, who lurk in those deep solitudes—I see the smoke of their sacrifices arise, and start at the thrilling sound of their wild and terrible war-whoop, till the blood curdles in my veins, and it seems as if the tide of time had rolled back, and transported me again to those far off regions, isolated, and remote from the abodes of civilized man—there too, mysteriously nurtured among barbarians, one of them, but partaking not their nature—I gaze untired upon that exquisite and youthful form which

But away with this softening reminiscence, and let me to my tale.

a Gascon sun, chequering with light and shade the marble floor of my apartment. The luxurious refinements of wealth surround me, soft voices mingle with sweet music, the fragrance of rare plants floats on the air that cools my brow, and beside me sits my own bright Florida, my eldest born, so named for that land which gave to me my earliest, if not my only love. But her history is identified with the adventure you so earnestly desire to learn, and which, turning at once to the eventful past, I now hasten to relate.

You have heard me speak, my friend, of that little band of French Huguenots, who, some five and twenty years since, established themselves on the soil of that vast American continent, whose boundaries yet remain unknown, and whose mysterious solitudes are peopled by a race that are the terror even of the enterprising and adventurous. You have heard too of that barbarous crusade, sent out by the proud Philip of Spain, to exterminate those peaceful Huguenots from Florida, the land of their adoption; to take possession of the forts they had erected, and to establish the Catholic, when they had overthrown the Protestant, faith. Pedro Melendez, the willing emissary of his bigoted king, was the commander of the fleet sent forth on this work of destruction; and cruelly did he execute the mandate of his sovereign—for his relentless sword spared neither sex nor age, and the few who survived to carry back to France the story of their wrongs, owed their escape to flight. Those who fell not by the sword were suspended like felons from the trees, and over their devoted heads the savage Melendez placed an inscription in the Spanish tongue, bearing these words: "I do not this as to Frenchmen, but as to Lutherans." To the shame of

The bland breezes of my native Gascony fan my cheek, while I write, and through the clustering vines that wreath my casement, steal the brilliant beams of