

Written for The Amaranth.

THE MAID OF SAINT VINCENT.

A TALE.—By J. M. 69TH REGT.

[Concluded from page 224.]

"I would here throw a veil over the mental misery which succeeded, but I am obliged to continue my sorrowful history.

"Time rolled rapidly on, and the regiment to which I belonged was ordered to the continent. The 'modern Alexander' was then in the zenith of power: power which England was destined to crush, and that eagle which proudly spread his pinions over a moiety of the earth, soon sank beneath the paw of the 'lion of Albion,' never again to rise.

"It would be tedious to inform you of the numerous sieges, &c., in which I was engaged. There was scarcely a forlorn hope ordered for which I did not volunteer;—my courage was considered superhuman, alas! it was the courage of despair, for I still could not forbear thinking of the sudden bereavement of my adored Isabella, and my dear little Charles;—but alas! it was useless to give way to grief; and for this purpose I sought every opportunity which presented of active employment, yet I could not banish the thoughts of them from my mind.

"I would here attempt to give you a description of some of the scenes through which I passed, but as you can at any time read accounts of the Peninsular campaigns, by some excellent writers who have served there, it would be a work of supererogation for me to take up the subject; it may not, however, be out of place to relate a circumstance which occurred to myself, and to which, on account of the part I had the good fortune to enact in it, I shall ever look back with a feeling of satisfaction.

"The morning after the storming of Badajoz, was one of the most heart-rending I have ever witnessed; heaps of dead bodies were piled together in horrible confusion. After all was settled, I walked forth to view the town. The troops had three days allowed for the purpose of plunder, and as I promenaded the place, I was disgusted at the scenes of confusion and riot which every where presented themselves. Here might be seen, soldiers wives, who but the day previous, had scarce a rag to cover them, or a shoe to their feet, now rolling in rags, with large jewels adorning their ears and fingers, while the scenes of devastation baffled description.

"I stood for some time watching the pro-

gress of the plunder, and to the shame of the sex, be it recorded, that the wives of the soldiers were the greater plunderers. My heart sickened at the sight, and I unwittingly proceeded to the suburbs of the town, where I thought I might have been able to pursue my reflections uninterrupted by such scenes as those I had witnessed. Suddenly my senses were assailed by the piercing shrieks of a female, from a lonely house in the vicinity of my walk; repeatedly the cry of 'mercy' rang upon my ear, and I rushed to the spot, resolved to ascertain the cause. I entered the house when a scene opened upon my astonished sight, which was truly heart-rending. There stood a poor old man whose hoary locks alone might have claimed compassion, with a rope round his neck, while the other end was thrown over a beam, which extended across the building, and a beautiful young woman holding by his knees, rent the air with her cries. A Portuguese drummer who held the other end of the rope, annoyed the poor man, by now and then giving it a sudden pull, so as to compress the muscles of his neck, another fellow of forbidding appearance, was endeavouring to force the young woman from the old man's feet, while a third was continually demanding money, while the unfortunate man made the most solemn asseverations that he had not any to give them. To the honour of British soldiers, I must do them the justice to state that neither of the three was English, although they belonged to the allied army. I asked their reasons for attempting to take the poor old man's life, when the drummer exclaimed 'why does not the old — tell where he has hidden his money?' I turned to the poor man, who gazed at me with the most lively expression of countenance, while the young woman, whom I afterwards learned was his daughter, stood pale as a marble monument, and desired him if he had any money to give them a few dollars, and let them depart; but, with tears in his eyes, he informed me that he had already lost all he possessed in the general plunder, and had not a rial left. 'Oh, signior,' added he, 'for the sake of the blessed mother of God, if you have any influence over these men do not permit them to dishonour my child—do not permit them to leave her without a protector.'

"Moved by the old man's entreaties, as well as the tears of his daughter, I turned to the drummer, and addressing him in Portuguese, told him that, 'being a British officer, I could not stand by and see the orders of the Commander of the Forces disobeyed, which were