

...a friend spirit, and he looked older than he does now, for he had not mounted a horse in three days. But I was, even at that period of infancy, a lieutenant in a regiment of light infantry, which, from one cause and another, was short of officers, that I found myself one fine morning, in command of an unimportant outpost, close to the enemy's line. There was a mill near my position, and a rapid stream, pretty deep, too, which looked to me a tempting sort of a place to throw a bridge, a sort of bridge, that, in my humble opinion, beats lock-fighting! Well, I was smoking my weed, after a light and wholesome dinner off a piece of black bread and the outside of an onion, when a brown dirty-looking fellow, who swore he was a miller, and who talked Spanish, and stunk of garlic like a true "patriot," asked to have an interview with "my Excellency;" and with many compliments, and a great deal of translating by signs—for my knowledge of Spanish was not quite to my taste in sherry—he begged of me to allow him to place a couple of planks across the stream, to enable him to carry his sacks to the mill. I never suspected a "plant" of any kind, and gave the beggar leave to do what he wished, more particularly as I could see the man grinning at his cursed volubility, and my bad Spanish and queer gestures, and I was in a hurry to get rid of him. Off he went, apparently well satisfied; and in an hour's time I saw a couple of planks had been placed across the mill-tread, and a very commodious foot-bridge, constructed by their means. Whether my old colon thought me too young for "the situation," or whether it was accidental, I know not, but I was providentially relieved that very evening by my own captain—poor fellow, I saw him afterwards killed at Badajoz—and the very first thing he did, on reconnoitring his ground, was to kick the miller's planks into the stream, and put two extra sentries within sight of the spot where he made his foot-bridge. Would you believe it?—the very next morning his post was threatened by a squadron of chasseurs, who, finding themselves unsupported, retired, after exchanging a shot or two; and a large body of French infantry marched down to the exact spot where the foot-bridge had been erected, commanded by the Spanish miller in person, attired in the uniform of "Capitaine of the Deuxieme Leger." The clever rascal had disguised himself as a Spaniard, and a miller to boot, and having to do with a young one, almost succeeded in his ingenious plan of forming a means of transport for his company, which he hoped on the morrow to lead to victory, in a brilliant affair of outposts. "That fellow was born to be an actor," concluded the Major; "and I daresay he is one by this time, for a Frenchman can turn his hand to anything. Pass the liquor, Spooner, talking always makes me so devilish thirsty."

That evening, like many others in the 101st Foot, concluded with broiled bones, brandy and water, cigars, songs, and choraf accompaniments, woefully out of tune. I have, even at this distant period, a dim recollection of an imposing war-dance, performed round the mess-table, to the heroic air of the Irish Grenadiers' and of our carrying Spooner to bed, in a sort of triumphal procession, in which, as the soberest of the party, I bore the huge silver candelabrum and its load of wax-lights. After parade at nine the next morning I again met my comrades, Spooner included, clean, fresh, and merry, as though they lived on toast-and-water, and went to bed at ten o'clock.

Let me pass over the first two months of military life, taken up, as it was, with my initiation into all the mysteries of war,—"goose-step," "extension motions," "manual and platoon exercises," and all the other in triner—of war is termed "squad drill." My principal instructor was a stalwart sergeant of the light company, whose heart and soul were bound up in the profession he had adopted. "Carry the butt of your firelock half an inch more to the rear, Mr. Grand,

nature of the parents and amusements they afforded. A struggle to get up and be dressed in time for parade at nine, was the inevitable commencement. I buckled my sword belt and tied my sash as I run down stairs, and made my appearance on parade in time to salute the Major before the officers proceeded to inspect their respective companies. The rear-rank of No. 2 is my special charge, and I walk down the front and up the rear with the air of a perfect martinet. Brown's knapsack is hung too high, Smith's pouch is put on too low, and Mar-puy is sent to drill 'for unsteadiness in the ranks.' The Major walks down, and compliments me on the progress I make in my duty. The bugles sound—the band plays—the four companies we boast of form, and march past, saluting Major O'Tool as if he were the Duke of York; the officers fall out, the parade is dismissed, and I go to break fast. When that elaborate meal is finished, Levanter kindly accepts one of my cigars, links his arm in mine, and we proceed down the town to play out our match at billiards in which he gives me five out of a hundred, and wins by a stroke. (Levantier can play billiards better than any man in England, and what I have learnt of this crafty game I owe to his tuition, though I must confess my instructor did not teach me gratis). The admiring Spooner looks on, and in his regard and affection for myself, loses a five-pound note, or as he calls it, 'a fiver,' to my antagonist. We return to the barracks to readjust our toilets before appearing at 'the gardens,' where our drums and fifes will diligit the fair admirers of the military with all the last year's waltzes and polkas, and an occasional quick-step or 'gallop'; and here I devote my attentions to Miss Jones, the fort-major's daughter, a crafty young lady of two or three and thirty, with whom I fancy myself in love. Miss Jones hovers undecided between Levanter and myself, but thinks she has the most chance with the young one, and, as she herself would say, 'rather inclines to Grand.' Like all boys, I am not very good at love-making, and the more I find I care for Miss Jones, or 'Fanny,' as I began to call her to myself, the greater difficulty I have, notwithstanding much encouragement on her part, in telling her so. On the afternoon I am now describing, I got rather further than usual, and found courage to inquire 'for what fortunate individual Miss Jones intended the small nosegay of violets she was carrying?' 'Oh, my! Mr. Grand, I'm sure I don't know. Pa asked me for one, and I wouldn't give it him. Are you fond of violets?' Of course ere I escorted Miss Jones to her home, with its green blinds and brass knocker, one of the half-withered, early smelling violets had found its way to the inside of my blue coat. But we had not yet got much farther than this sort of harmless flirtation.

'Are you nearly dressed, Grand?—the trap is at the door,' said Levanter, some half-hour after our return from the gardens, as he made his appearance in my barrack-room, 'got up' most elaborately, in plain cloth, adapted for a very smart dinner party. He was a fresh-coloured, good-looking man, above the middle size, and inclined to be stout; and as, with the dark hair immensely brushed, his whiskers curled to the very tips, a stupendous white neckcloth, gold-embroidered waistcoat, and blue coat with gilt buttons, he burst into my room, he looked a handsome fellow enough, but wanted a something I could not describe—a sort of finish, to give him the real air of a gentleman.

'Let me put on my driving coat,' was the reply, 'and then forward.' Another five minutes saw us bowling along outside the town with two quick, high-stepping horses, my property, the leader of an easy canter, the wheeler trotting some twelve miles an hour, on our way to ex-provost McIntyre's villa, to which he had been invited, on the occasion of one of that municipal grandee's great fods.

'What snobs these fellows are,' said Le-

vantier for some opportunity of giving vent to the wild excitement that was boiling in my veins. Hotter waxed our argument as we galloped on, and ere we neared the town, personalities were freely exchanged, though with a sort of mock-civility, that to a listener would have been inexpressibly ludicrous. At last, stung to the quick by the cool reply of Levanter to some proposition I made about the horse in question—'Perhaps he might, if you had nerve to ride him'—I burst out, 'Nerve! will you have nerve to sit still, if I drive him at the turnpike gate? I'll show you whether he can jump.'

I thought Levanter's cheek turned a shade paler in the moonlight, as he caught sight of the gate we were now rapidly approaching, looking most forbidding with its series of strong white-painted bars; but though his lip quivered for an instant, he only said, 'Drive on, and try; but hold them straight.' And ere the words were spoken, we were too near to be able to pull up at the pace we were going, even had we wished it. I shouted to my horses, and flogged the wheeler, who appeared inclined to waver in his desperate career, the calumniated leader pulling hard, and pointing his ears at the obstacle which he seemed determined to overcome. We were close upon the gate—I heard Levanter draw his breath hard, and felt the tension of the muscle of his leg against mine, I saw my leader's back, as he rose high in the air, and surmounted the barrier; I heard a tremendous crash, and two fearful bangs against the bottom of the dog-cart, as my wheeler strove to follow his example—and in another instant I was lying in the middle of the road, the surface of which, white as chalk in the moonlight, seemed spinning round and round—one grasp with my hands, to endeavor to keep my position on what appeared a sloping and revolving plane, and that is all I can recollect of my ill-advised attempt to jump a turnpike-gate in a tandem.

If there is a dangerous period for youth—if there is a time when the morbid feelings of a false and fevered passion—the creature of the imagination, and not of the heart—exercise their most unbridled sway, it is surely when the frame is languidly recovering from a violent and dangerous illness; when the brain has been excited by fever, the reason weakened by debility, and the affections roused by conscious helplessness. Heaven help the youth, if, in addition to all this, his recovery should take place, as mine did, during the balmy sunny days of a late spring, and be attended, as mine was, by a handsome woman, who has made up her own mind on a subject in the carrying out of which it requires two to constitute a 'quorum.' Let the victim, besides all this, drink green tea and read Byron; let him find himself quoting largely from *The Giaour*, *Parisina*, and the *Bride of Abydos*, whilst he eschews with a conscious sensitiveness the bantering pages of *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, and we may safely vote him in that hopeless, helpless state which our astute brother Jonathan describes by the graphic title of 'gone coon.' And so it was with me. Picked up by the turnpike man and Levanter, with a fractured wrist, a sprained shoulder, and a concussion of the brain, I was carried into the fort-major's house, which overlooked the scene of action, and to which the master happened to be returning from a late sitting at mess. My companion escaped, as was but just, with no greater injury than a black eye and a scraped shin; but the unfortunate wheeler was so much damaged that it was found necessary to destroy him; whilst the leader, the *lectissima* cause of all, kicked himself clear of everything, and galloped scathless home to his own stable. Of all these facts I was informed in due course of time; as my first attempt at consciousness was some six and thirty hours after the 'smash,' when I found myself lying bandaged and helpless on a sofa bedstead, in the major's sitting-room; while Fanny's long dark ringlets trailed over my face, and

ed her graceful head bending over the work that those long, drooping ringlets half concealed—as I noticed the smothered sigh that would sometimes break up these long delicious silences—as I almost shrank from that upward glance that thrilled to my very soul—the poison gradually but surely worked its insidious way into my being; and ere my convalescence was declared established—ere I was removed by the doctor's fiat from that cherished scene, I had poured my love-tale into no unwilling ear, and had plighted my faith, the faith of a scapegrace of eighteen, to Fanny Jones. Well might I have said, with the sluggard who so quaintly reproves the undue punctuality of his valet: 'You have waked me too soon; let me slumber again.' Well might I have wished to dream on, though ruin and disgrace had been the penalty, rather than be awakened so roughly, as was my lot, from that delirious trance.

I have said that Levanter assisted me much in arranging that my interviews with my lady-love might be uninterrupted; and many a time did he detain the old fort-major over his eternal backgammon-board, whilst she and I enjoyed our lover-like tete-a-tetes in what was now considered my own apartment. The captain generally appeared after parade, and kindly relieved the tedium of my convalescence by a quiet game at 'ecarte' or 'lansquenet,' which, in the impossibility of the 'billiard lesson,' served well enough as a pastime to the instructor, who repaid himself to a very sufficient tune for his time and trouble. After this, he would good-naturedly devote himself to backgammon and the fort-major, by which means we were left in uninterrupted bliss; as my brother officers who would otherwise have kindly come to sit with me, thought I was in very good hands during the long visits of Levanter.

Things went on in this way prosperously enough. Fanny and I talked over our loves and our future *menage*: I quite made up my mind to leave the army, having been a soldier about two months, and actually determined to apply for a fortnight's leave of absence, that I might visit Sir Peregrine, on the hopeless task of gaining his consent to marriage, when the merest accident discovered to the infatuated victim the trap which had been so judiciously concealed, and so temptingly baited for his destruction.

After my thorough recovery left no excuse for remaining any longer under the fort-major's roof, I returned to my own barrack-room—no, how dreary a solitude!—but morning after morning, directly the parade was dismissed, I sped, like a bird to its mate, down to the well-known house, there to spend the long summer's day with Fanny in her boudoir; and how wearily passed the dull hours of that on which my duty as orderly confined me to the barracks, when my only consolation was a crossed and re-crossed epistle from my fiancée.

One bright May morning, it was again my turn of duty to remain a close prisoner within the barrack-gate, to see the men's dinners properly cooked, their rooms and passages properly cleaned, and dismiss their afternoon parade in *propria persona*, when, as luck would have it, Spooner, whose expectation of some visitor would keep him all day in his quarters, kindly volunteered to take the irksome duty off my hands, and the major, contrary to custom, allowed the exchange to take place after guard-mounting at ten o'clock; consequently I was not expected at the fort-major's, and thither I sped with even more than my usual alacrity, as soon as Spooner was installed in my place. The birds sang, the flowers bloomed, and the fresh breeze blithely fanned my cheek, as I hurried down to the dwelling of my love. How happy I was! I might have known by that very fact, by the exuberance, the bounding delight of my excited spirits, that a damp must be in store for this excess of joy. So has it ever been with me—so, I suppose, in this equally-balanced world, it

madness. The whole of that day and night appear to me now to have been passed under the influence of some horrid night-mare, and it was not till the bugles sounded the Reveille the following morning that I returned to a thorough consciousness of my identity and my position. The worldling may sneer at woes such as were then mine—the boarding-school miss, with her overwrought sensibility, may wonder that I ever recovered from them; but he who studies human nature carefully—who looks below the surface—while he appreciates and pities my boyish agony, will see in my very youth the best restorative, the most potent antidote to despair.

My brother officers behaved most kindly to me in my distress. They saw I was afflicted, though they knew not, or only partially guessed, the cause. Major Halbord, whom I had the sense to take into my confidence, scouted the idea of 'calling out' Levanter, which was the first intention of my inexperience; and ere long his judicious kindness and sympathy won from me the confession that I had had an escape for which I ought indeed to be thankful. 'Better hush it all up, my boy,' said the old campaigner: 'Levantier is gone on leave, and when you meet again, I advise you not to allude to this ticklish subject; take my word for it, he won't, and this will be a good opportunity for you to break off your intimacy with him. I don't wish to say a word against a comrade, but Levanter knows a good deal, and you are just as well out of his hands. As for Miss Jones—whew! And here the major gave vent to his feelings in a prolonged whistle, which cleverly showed his opinion of my faithless flame. But well-meant as all this consolation assuredly was, I confess that I was not thoroughly cured till, having officiated at a board, which granted our drum-major his discharge from the service one fine summer's day, the next morning startled the town with the intelligence, that that stout, well-whiskered, and musical individual had eloped with the fort-major's daughter. Fanny Jones, who might have been Lady Grand at some future time, became Mrs. Dubbs; and it is whispered that Dubbs, since he has left his harmonious command, has taken to drinking!

It cured me of love for many a day; and when I embarked with a draft to join the head-quarters of my regiment in America, I was once more as devil-may-care an ensign as ever made a rally from sea-sickness at the commencement of his 'life on the ocean wave.'

(To be Continued.)

INTERESTING TO HUNTERS.

A correspondent of an exchange, writing from the back part of the County of Essex, says:—'There is no doubt that this winter (at least in this section) will be very destructive to game, &c. Foxes have been killed that were so poor that, as a hunter expressed it, "the skin stuck to the bones." Quail are "snowed under," and when found can be caught easily and are driven into the barnyards and stacks, where the cats and boys destroy them. Partridges are obliged to "bud" for a living. Turkeys cannot travel on the snow, as there is no crust, and when it does come will easily fall prey to all four-footed animals that can manage to survive until then. Deer at this time are driven into the "choppings" to browse for a living, and if the snow continues to fall will be destroyed in spite of the "game law." It is believed, also, that along the rivers and creeks the muskrat will be destroyed, as the ice covers most of the cabins, and being solid—no air-holes, and some days the water is over ice—so the muskrat must drown, as they can live under water a short time only. All this is bad for the trapper and sportsman.'