
A SQUADRON OF GUARDS

the man is dead, nor what he may have told us: nor do I mean she shall. I 'll match her wits, the vixen, before she faces the duke. It's my faith there is a tale here worth telling. Oh! Saunders, bring me a bottle, and search the larder: there will be three at table here."

Encouraged by the shuffling of feet, I crept out of the straw covert, and across to the head of the ladder. Here, crouched in the darkness, I could gaze down on the scene in the room below with slight danger of discovery. The lanthorn sat upon the large table, but it was the glow of the fire which lighted the apartment. A soldier still poked this into brighter flame, while another, short and slender as a boy, was busy at the row of kegs. I could not see distinctly the faces of either, but their uniform was that of the English Guard.

The officer sat alone, half sprawled on the bench, bottle and glass already before him, his jack-boots spattered with mud, and his face shaded by one arm. He was a man of forty I judged, a big fellow, with bronzed cheeks, and