

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

HOW THE BRIGADIER SLEW THE BROTHER OF AJACCIO.

When I told you some little time ago how it was that I won the special medal for valour, I finished, as you will doubtless remember, by repeating the saying of the Emperor that I had the stoutest heart in all his armies. In making that remark Napoleon was showing the insight for which he was so famous. He disfigured his sentence, however, by adding something about the thickness of my head. We will pass that over. It is ungenerous to dwell upon the weaker moments of a great man. I will only say this, that when the Emperor needed an agent he was always very ready to do me the honour of recalling the name of Etienne Gerard, though it occasionally escaped him when rewards were to be distributed. Still, I was a colonel at twenty-eight, and the chief of a brigade at thirty-one, so that I have no reason to be dissatisfied with my career. Had the wars lasted another two or three years I might have grasped my baton, and the man who had his hand upon that was only one stride from a throne. Murat had changed his hussar's cap for a crown, and another light cavalry man might have done as much. However, all those dreams were driven away by Waterloo, and, although I was not able to write my name upon history, it is sufficiently well known by all who served with me in the great wars of the Empire.

What I want to tell you to-night is about the very singular affair which first started me upon my rapid upward course, and which had the effect of establishing a secret bond between the Emperor and myself. There is just one little word of warning which I must give you before I begin. When you hear me speak, you must always bear in mind that you are listening to one who has seen history from the inside. I am talking about what my ears have heard and my eyes have seen, so you must not try to confuse me by quoting the opinions of some student or man of the pen, who has written a book of history or memoirs. There is much which is unknown by such people, and much which never will be known by the world. For my own part, I could tell you some very surprising things were it discreet to do so. The facts which I am about to relate to you to-night were kept secret by me during the Emperor's lifetime, because I gave him my promise that it should be so but I do not think that there can be any harm now in my telling the remarkable part which I played.

You must know, then, that at the time of the Treaty of Tilsit I was a simple lieutenant in the 10th Hussars, without money or interest. It is true that my appearance and my gallantry were in my favour, and that I had already won a reputation as being one of the best swordsmen in the army; but among the host of brave men who surrounded the Emperor it needed more than this to insure a rapid career. I was confident, however, that my chance would come though I never dreamed that it would take so remarkable a form.

When the Emperor returned to Paris, after the declaration of peace in the year 1807, he spent much of his time with the Empress and the Court at Fontainebleau. It was the time when he was at the pinnacle of his career. He had in three successive campaigns humbled Austria, crushed Prussia, and made the Russians very glad to get upon the right side of the Niemen. The old Bulldog over the Channel was still growling, but he could not get very far from his kennel. If we could have made a perpetual peace at that moment, France would have taken a higher place than any nation since the days of the Romans. So I have heard the wise folk say, though for my part I had other things to think of. All the girls were glad to see the army back after its long absence, and you may be sure that I had my share of any favours that were going. You may judge how far I was a favorite in those days when I say that even now, in my sixtieth year—but why should I dwell upon that which is already sufficiently well known?

Our regiment of hussars was quartered with the horse chassours of the guard at Fontainebleau. It is, as you know, but a little place, buried in the heart of the forest, and it was wonderful at this time to see it crowded with Grand Dukes and Electors and Princes, who thronged round Napoleon like puppies round their master, each hoping that some bonemight be thrown to him. There were more Germans than French to be heard in the street, for those who had helped us in the late war had come to beg for a reward, and those who had opposed us had come to try to escape punishment. And all the time our little man, with his pale face and his cold, grey eyes, was riding to the hunt every morning silent and brooding, all of them following in his train, in the hope that some word would escape him. And then when the humours seized him, he would throw a hundred square miles to that man, or tear as much off the other, round off one kingdom by a river, or cut off another by a chain of mountains. That was how he used to do business, this little artilleryman, whom we had raised so high with our sabres and our bayonets. He was very civil to us always, for he knew where his power came from. We knew also, and showed it by the way in which we carried ourselves. We were agreed, you understand, that he was the finest leader in the world, but we did not forget that he had the finest men to lead.

Well, one day I was seated in my quarters playing cards with young Morat, of the horse chassours when the door opened and in walked Lasalle, who was our Colonel. You know what a fine, swaggering fellow he was, and the sky-blue uniform of the Lenth suited him to a marvel. My faith, we youngsters were so taken by him that we all swore and died and drank and played the deuce whether we liked it or no, just that we

might resemble our Colonel! We forgot that it was not because he drank or gambled that the Emperor was going to make him the head of the light cavalry, but because he had the surest eye for the nature of a position or for the strength of a column, and the best judgment as to when infantry could be broken or whether guns were exposed, of any man in the army. We were too young to understand all that, however, so we waxed our moustaches and clinked our spurs and let the ferrules of our scabbards wear out by trailing them along the pavement in the hope that we should all become Lasalles. When he came clanking into my quarters, both Morat and I sprang to our feet.

"My boy," said he, clapping me on the shoulder, "the Emperor wants to see you at four o'clock."

The room whirled round me at the words, and I had to lean my hands upon the edge of the card-table.

"What?" I cried. "The Emperor?"

"Precisely," said he, smiling at my astonishment.

"But the Emperor does not know of my existence, Colonel," I protested. "Why should he care for me?"

"Well, that's just what puzzles me," cried Lasalle, twirling his moustache. "If he wanted the help of a good sabre, why should he descend to one of my lieutenants when he might have found all that he needed at the head of the regiment? However," he added, clapping me upon the shoulder again in his hearty fashion, "every man has his chance. I have had mine, otherwise I should not be Colonel of the Tenth. I must not grudge you yours. Forwards, my boy, and may it be the first step towards changing your busy for a cocked hat."

It was but two o'clock, so he left me, promising to come back and to accompany me to the palace. My faith, what a time I passed, and how many conjectures did I make as to what it was that the Emperor could want of me! I paced up and down in a fever of anticipation. Sometimes I thought that perhaps he had heard of the guns which we had taken at Austerlitz; but then there were so many who had taken guns at Austerlitz, and two years had passed since the battle. Or it might be that he wished to reward me for my affair with the aide-de-camp of the Russian Emperor. But then a cold fit would seize me, and I would fancy that he had sent for me to reprimand me. There were a few duels which he might have taken in ill part, and there were one or two little jokes in Paris since the peace.

But, no! I considered the words of Lasalle. "If he had need of a brave man," said Lasalle. "It was obvious that my Colonel had some idea of what was in the wind. If he had not known that it was to my advantage, he would not have been so cruel as to congratulate me. My heart glowed with joy as this conviction grew upon me; and I sat down to write to my mother and to tell her that the Emperor was waiting, at that very moment, to have my opinion upon a matter of importance. It made me smile as I wrote it to think that wonderful as it appeared to me, it would probably only confirm my mother in her opinion of the Emperor's good sense.

At half past three I heard a sabre come clanking against every step of my wooden stair. It was Lasalle, and with him was a little gentleman, very neatly dressed in black with dapper ruffles and cuffs. We did not know many civilians, we of the army, but my word, this was one whom we could not afford to ignore! I had only to glance at those twinkling eyes, the comical upturned nose, and the straight, precise mouth, to know that I was in the presence of the one man in France whom even the Emperor had to consider.

"This is Monsieur Etienne Gerard, Monsieur de Talleyrand," said Lasalle.

I saluted, and the statesman took me in from the top of my panache to the rowel of my spur, with a glance that played over me like a rapier point.

"Have you explained to the Lieutenant the circumstances under which he is summoned to the Emperor's presence?" he asked in his dry, creaking voice.

They were such a contrast, these two men, that I could not help glancing from one to the other of them; the little, black, sly politician, and the big, sky-blue hussar, with one fist on his hip and the other on the hilt of his sabre. They both took their seats as I looked, Talleyrand without a sound, and Lasalle with a clash and jingle like a prancing charger.

"It's this way, youngster," said he, in his brusque fashion; "I was with the Emperor in his private cabinet this morning when a note was brought to him. He opened it, and as he did so he gave such a start that it fluttered down onto the floor. I handed it up to him again, but he was staring at the wall in front of him as if he had seen a ghost. 'Frattelli dell' Ajaccio,' he muttered; and then again, 'Frattelli dell' Ajaccio.' I don't pretend to know more Italian than a man can pick up in two campaigns, and I could make nothing of this. It seemed to me that he had gone out of his mind; and you would have said so also, Monsieur de Talleyrand, if you had seen the look in his eyes. He read the note, and then he sat for half an hour or more without moving."

"Just one word of advice before you go, Monsieur Gerard," said he: "you are now coming into troubled waters, and you might find a worse pilot than myself. We have none of us any ideas as to what this little affair means, and between ourselves, it is very important for us, who have the destinies of France upon our shoulders, to keep ourselves in touch with all that goes on. You understand me, Monsieur Gerard?"

I had not the least idea what he was driving at, but I bowed and tried to look as if it was clear to me.

"Act very guardedly, then, and say nothing to anybody," said Talleyrand. "Colonel de Lasalle and I will not show ourselves in public with you, but we will await you here, and we will give you our advice when you have told us what has passed between the Emperor and yourself. It is time that you started now, for the Emperor never forgives unpunctuality."

Off I went on foot to the palace, which was only a hundred paces off. I made my way to the antechamber, where Duroc, with his grand new scarlet and gold coat, was fusing about among the crowd of people who were waiting. I heard him whisper to Monsieur de Caulaincourt that half of them were German Dukes who expected to be made Kings, and the other half German Duke who expected to be made paupers. Duroc, when he heard my name, showed me straight in, and I found myself in the Emperor's presence.

I had, of course, seen him in camp a hundred times, but I had never been face to face with him before. I have no doubt that if you had met him without knowing in the least who he was, you would simply have said that he was a tall little fellow with a good forehead and fairly well-turned calves. His tight white cashmere breeches and white stockings showed off his legs to advantage. But even a stranger must have been struck by the singular look of his eyes which could harden into an expression which would frighten a grenadier. It is said that even Angereau, who was a man who had never known what fear was, quailed before Napoleon's gaze, at a time, too, when the Emperor was but an unknown soldier. He looked mildly enough at me, however, and motioned me to remain by the door. De Meneval was writing to his dictation, looking up at him between each sentence with his spaniel eyes.

"That will do. You can go," said the Emperor, abruptly. Then, when the secretary had left the room, he strode across with his hands behind his back, and he looked me up and down without a word. Though he was a small man himself, he was very fond of having fine-looking fellows about him, and so I think that my appearance gave him pleasure. For my own part, I raised one hand to the salute and held the other upon the hilt of my sabre, looking straight ahead of me, as a good soldier should.

"Well, Monsieur Gerard," said he, at last, tapping his forefinger upon one of the brandebourgs of gold braid upon the front of my pelisse, "I am informed that you are a very deserving young officer. Your colonel gives me an excellent account of you."

I wished to make a brilliant reply, but I could think of nothing save Lasalle's phrase that I was allspurs and moustaches, so it ended in my saying nothing at all. The Emperor watched the struggle which must have shown itself upon my features, and when, finally, no answer came he did not appear to be displeased.

"I believe that you are the very man that I want," said he. "Brave and clever man with his hands upon every side. But a brave man who—? He did not finish his sentence, and for my own part I could not understand what he was driving at. I contented myself with assuring him that he could count upon me to the death."

"You are, as I understand a good swordsman," said he.

"Tolerable, sire," I answered.

"You were chosen by your regiment to fight the champion of the Hussars of Chamarant?" said he.

"I was not sorry to find that he knew so much of my exploits."

"My comrades, sire, did me that honor," said I.

"And for the sake of practice you insulted six fencing masters in the week before your duel?"

"I had the privilege of being out seven times in as many days, sire," said I.

"And escaped without a scratch?"

"The fencing master of the 23rd Light Infantry touched me on the left elbow, sire."

"Let us have no more child's play of the sort, monsieur," he cried, turning suddenly to that cold rage of his which was so appalling. "Do you imagine that I place veteran soldiers in these positions that you may practice quarte and tierce upon them? How am I to face Europe if my soldiers turn their points upon each other? Another word of your duelling, and I break you between these fingers."

I saw his plump white hands flash before my eyes as he spoke, and his voice had turned to the most discordant hissing and growling. My word, my skin pringed all over as I listened to him, and I would gladly have changed my position for that of the first man in the steepest and narrowest breach that ever swallowed up a storming party. He turned to the table, drank off a cup of coffee, and then when he faced me again every trace of this storm had vanished, and he wore that singular smile which came from his lips but never from his eyes.

"I have need of your services, Monsieur Gerard," said he. "I may be safer with a good sword at my side, and there are reasons why yours should be the one which I select. But first of all I must bind you to secrecy. Whilst I live what passes between us to-day must be known to none but ourselves."

"Very good. You will meet me there at ten o'clock to-night."

I had got past being surprised at anything which might happen. If he had asked me to take his place upon the Imperial throne I could only have nodded my bushy.

"We shall then proceed into the wood together," said the Emperor. "You will be armed with a sword, but not with pistols. You must address no remark to me, and I shall say nothing to you. We will advance in silence. You understand?"

"I understand, sire."

"After a time we shall see a man, or more probably two men, under a certain tree. We shall approach them together. If I signal to you to defend me, you will have your sword ready. If, on the other hand, I speak to these men, you will wait and see what happens. If you are called upon to draw, you must see that neither of them, in the event of there being two, escapes from us. I shall myself assist you."

"But, sire," I cried, "I have no doubt that two would not be too many for my sword; but would it not be better that I should bring a comrade than that you should be forced to join in such a struggle?"

"Ta, ta, ta," said he. "I was a soldier before I was an Emperor. Do you think, then, that artillery men have not swords as well as the hussars? But I ordered you not to argue with me. You will do exactly what I tell you. If swords are once out, neither of these men is to get away alive."

"They shall not, sire," said I.

"Very good. I have no more instructions for you. You can go."

I turned to the door, and then an idea occurred to me I turned.

"I have been thinking, sire—," said I.

He sprang at me with the ferocity of a wild beast. I really thought he would have struck me.

"Thinking!" he cried. "You, you! Do you imagine I chose you out because you could think? Let me hear of your doing such a thing again! You, the one man—but, there! You meet me at the fire at ten o'clock."

My faith, I was right glad to get out of the room. If I have a good horse under me, and a sword clanking against my stirrup-iron, I know where I am. And in all that relates to green fodder or dry, barley and oats and rye, and the handling of squadrons upon the march, there is no one who can teach me very much. But when I meet a Chamberlain and a Marshal of the Palace, and have to pick my words with an Emperor, and find that everybody hints instead of talking straight out, I feel like a troop-horse who has been put in a lady's calèche. It is not my trade, all this mincing and pretending. I have learned the manners of a gentleman, but never those of a courtier. I was right glad then to get into the fresh air again, and I ran away up to my quarters like a schoolboy who has just escaped from the seminary master.

But as I opened the door, the very first thing that my eye rested upon was a long pair of sky-blue legs with hussar boots, and a short pair of black ones with knee-breeches and buckles. They both sprang up together to greet me.

"Well, what news?" they cried, the two of them.

"None," I answered.

"The Emperor refused to see you?"

"No, I have seen him."

"And what did he say?"

"Monsieur de Talleyrand," I answered, "I regret to say that it is quite impossible for me to tell you anything about it. I have promised the Emperor."

"Pooh, pooh, my dear young man," said he, sidling up to me, as a cat does when it is about to rub itself against you. "This is all among friends, you understand, and goes no farther than these four walls. Besides, the Emperor never meant to include me in this promise."

"It is but a minute's walk to the palace, Monsieur de Talleyrand," I answered; "if it would not be troubling you too much to ask you to step up to it and bring back the Emperor's written statement that he did not mean to include you in this promise, I shall be happy to tell you every word that passed."

He showed his teeth at me then like the old fox that he was.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

WATCH ADJUSTERS.

Men Who Study Timepieces as Physicians Study Their Old Patients.

Perhaps the most lightly skilled and best paid men in the watchmaking business are the watch adjusters. One adjuster in a great factory used to receive \$10,000 a year.

The adjuster's work is one of the important elements of cost in the making of a fine watch, and a \$10,000 adjuster should be competent to perfect any watch, whatever its delicacy and cost. It is the business of the adjuster to take a new watch and carefully go over all its parts, fitting them together so that the watch may be regulated to keep time accurately to the fraction of a minute a month. Regulating is a very different process from adjusting and much simpler. A watch that cannot be regulated so as to keep accurate time may be the hand of the adjuster, and if it is valuable, the owner will be advised to have it adjusted. There are watch adjusters in large cities, working on their own account and earning very comfortable incomes.

To the adjuster every watch that comes under his hands gets to have a character of its own. He knows every wheel and screw and spindle that help to constitute the watch. He knows its constitution as a physician knows that of an old patient. He can say what the watch needs after an accident, and can advise as to whether it is worth adjusting.

No new watch can be depended upon until it has passed through the hands of the adjuster for however admirable the individual parts of the works, their perfect balance is to be obtained only by such study and experiment as it is the business of the adjuster to make. The adjuster is a highly skilled mechanic, with wide knowledge of his trade, and the utmost deftness in its prosecution.

Willing to Give Him His Choice.

Mudge—See here, what do you mean by saying I met half-witted?

Yablesy—What shall I say? That you are half-witted?

ABOUT THE HOUSE.

Dried Fruits Wholesome and Palatable.

Apples, peaches, prunes, prunelles, raspberries and blueberries are used commonly in the dried form. All of them are inexpensive, and when rightly prepared, wholesome and palatable. Of course much time is needed to prepare them so that they will tempt both eye and palate, but the result usually amply repays one for the labor.

The apples and prunes require the addition of lemon juice to give the needed acid. All of these fruits require long soaking and slow cooking, with the addition of sugar when nearly done if you wish to have them in perfection. Many, almost endless in fact are, the ways in which you can use these fruits, either alone or in combination; pies, puddings, cakes and sauces are made from them. Hygienically, of course you should serve all fruit in the simplest possible way, but simple combinations may be used which are extremely wholesome and will tempt oftentimes an appetite which otherwise would take nothing. Many housekeepers still dry the windfall apples, sweet and sour, and thus have their own supply ready for spring. Blueberries are also prepared in the same way, although now the majority can them, a method, it seems to me, far preferable to the first.

Dates and figs are usually classed under the dried fruits and they are by far the most important so far as the amount of nourishment is concerned. The ordinary fruits furnish us with a certain flavor and some laxative properties which render them very important. In the figs and dates, however, we find a large amount of real nourishment, and they furnish in their simplest form one of our most wholesome desserts. To those who do not care for the pressed fig, there is the pulled fig which can be steamed and served with cream and sugar.

If people who must economize closely would make use of the inexpensive dried fruits and use them for their desserts the greater part of the year, I believe their health would be much better than it is at present, and the cost of living would be reduced in a perceptible degree.

Drying is very simple. The fruit is simply pared, cored and sliced, then spread on boards or cloths in the sun, being taken in at night and turned from day to day until perfectly dry. The prepared product is then placed in a moderate oven and thoroughly heated; care must be taken that it does not scorch or brown. It is then, while hot, turned into bags and closely tied. Late in the fall some farmers place immense racks high over the kitchen stove and continue the drying far into the winter. Evaporators are sometimes fitted up in the house, but many do not like the result so well as the simpler "dried apple." The flavor is not so natural. Pumpkin or squash, stewed until very dry, is sometimes spread thinly on tins and placed in a moderate oven until perfectly dry. It will then keep for any length of time. Great care must be taken in drying it that it does not brown, otherwise it will have a bitter taste.

Fruits.

Plums.—To every pound of fruit allow three quarters of a pound of sugar. Prick the fruit with a fine fork to prevent their bursting. Let them simmer in this syrup for five minutes. Put plums in jars and pour over them the hot syrup.

Spiced Grapes.—Five pounds of grapes, three of sugar, two teaspoonfuls each of cinnamon, allspice, half a teaspoonful cloves; pulp grapes, boil skins until tender, cook pulps and strain through a sieve, add it to the skins, put in sugar and vinegar to taste, add spices; boil thoroughly.

Pears.—For ten pounds of fruit take five pounds of sugar. Peel, halve, and core the pears, add a little water to the sugar to make the syrup, and add one sliced lemon; skim, add the pears and simmer until they begin to change color, then can and seal hot.

Pear Marmalade.—Boil the fruit to a pulp, weigh it and take half the weight of sugar. Put the sugar with as little water as possible to boil and skim while boiling. When boiled to a crack add the pulp and boil. To every half dozen pears add two drops or so of essence of cloves.

Plum Jelly.—Take blue or white plums, put in a little kettle with a little water; let boil till soft and the skins crack, then strain through a jelly bag, measure it and return to the kettle and let boil fifteen minutes; add a pint of sugar to every pint of juice, and boil twenty-five minutes, or until it begins to jelly from the spoon.

Rhubarb Jam.—To every pound of rhubarb allow a pound of sugar and two ounces of candied lemon peel. Cut up the rhubarb, add the sugar to it, and let it stand for twenty-four hours, or until all the sugar is dissolved. Pour off the syrup, and boil it for three quarters of an hour; then add the rhubarb and the lemon peel cut fine; and boil the whole for at least an hour.

Sweet Pickled Pears.—Take one quart of good cider vinegar, put it into a porcelain kettle and add to it four pounds of sugar, and when it has come to a boil, skim and add two ounces of stick cinnamon, one ounce of whole cloves, and one ounce whole allspice. Put the spices into a muslin bag, and when the vinegar is spiced to taste, remove and put into the syrup a few pears at a time, and when they can easily be pierced with a fork, put them in a stone jar, after sticking a couple of cloves into each pear. Then add more to the vinegar until all are used. Then skim the syrup again and pour over the pears. Seal when cold.

Apple Butter.—One-half a bushel of Peppin apples and one gallon of fresh sweet cider. Cook thoroughly and put through a colander; then place on the fire and add six pounds granulated sugar. Stir constantly to prevent burning, and cook until quite thick, say two or three hours. Try a little in a dish and if it looks watery cook longer. When cold put in stone jars and cover closely. Do not boil in brass or metal kettle.