

FLAG OF WATERLOO.

"The last annual tribute of the flag of Waterloo to the crown of England was made to William the Fourth a few hours before his Majesty's lamented death; on receiving the banner, the king pressed it to his heart, saying 'It was a glorious day for England.' and expressed a wish he might survive the day, that the Duke of Wellington's commemorative fete of the victory of Waterloo might take place. A dying Monarch receiving the banner commemorative of a National Conquest, and wishing at the same time, that his death might not disturb the triumphal banquet, is at once so heroic and poetic, that it naturally suggests a poem. The following lines were written immediately after the event, but the publication of the song has been delayed through a feeling of respect: the laurel should not be placed too close to the cypress, nor the sound of the lyre be heard too near the grave of a king.

'Twas the day of the feast in the chieftain's hall,
'Twas the day he had seen the foe-man fall,
'Twas the day that his country's valour stood
Against steel, and fire, and the tide of blood,
And the day was mark'd by his country well,
For they gave him broad valleys, the hill and the dell;
And they ask'd as a tribute, the hero should bring
The flag of the foe to the foot of the king.

'Twas the day of the feast in the chieftain's hall,
And the banner was brought at the chieftain's call,
And he went in his glory the tribute to bring,
And lay at the foot of the brave old king;
But the hall of the king was in silence and grief,
And smiles, as of old, did not greet the chief,
For he came on the Angel of Victory's wing,
While the Angel of Death was awaiting the king.

The chieftain he knelt by the couch of the king;
'I know,' said the monarch, 'the tribute you bring;
Give me the banner ere life depart.'
And he press'd the flag to his fainting heart.
'It is joy ev'n in death,' cried the monarch, say'
That my country hath known such a glorious day!
Heaven grant I may live 'till the midnight's fall,
That my chieftain may feast in his warrior hall!"

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AN HISTORICAL BALL.

The time has not yet fully arrived for making the last war the theme of grandfathers' tales or historical romances; but yet it is surprising with what a new zest we occasionally hear or read of incidents, and associations of persons, to which that contest gave rise. Turned as the public mind of Britain now is towards the social improvements which benefit a state of peace, a reminiscence of Bonaparte or Wellington startles the ear like the blare of the trumpets suddenly arising in the midst of a commercial street, to call attention to some state proclamation. We were forcibly struck with the fact a few months ago, when, at an evening party a gentleman of no more than middle age chanced to give an account of a certain ball at which he was present in Paris in the year 1815. The narrative, briefly and modestly as it was expressed, related to circumstances so uncommon, and so unlike any thing which has since occurred, or is likely ever to occur again, that the whole party, after listening to it in almost breathless silence, declared it to be more like a chapter of romance than any thing which a living man might be supposed to have passed through in his own proper person. In compliance with our request, the narrator has thrown his story into the following shape, for the benefit of a more numerous audience.

On arriving in Paris about the end of July, 1815, from an intensely interesting sojourn of some time in the region of the memorable contest of Waterloo, and full of curiosity to see the men who had achieved that great victory, by which the capital of France had fallen into their hands about a fortnight before my arrival, I was informed by my friend Sir John Malcolm, who had been a companion in arms of the Duke of Wellington in India, that, in two days, his grace was to give a splendid ball to the monarchs, princes, generals, and statesmen, who were then, from so many countries of Europe, met in Paris; though, for obvious reasons, none of the royal family of France were expected to be present. My friend of his own accord promised to endeavour to obtain for me, late as it was, a ticket of admission. This prospect, enough to raise any one's hopes, had its full effect on mine, and my disappointment was great indeed when informed on the morning of the day itself that I was too late; the duke had peremptorily refused to issue one admission more—too many for even his spacious saloons having been given out already. There was nothing for it but resignation, and the whole day was passed by me in seeing sights, with an occasional sigh for the ball, not less sincere than that heaved on similar occasions by many a ticketless damsel, whose case is aggravated by having to assist in dressing a more fortunate sister for the treat which has been denied to herself. It was nine at night of a hot and most fatiguing day, my only remaining ambition then being to be lifted by some good angel, and put into bed without the labour of even undressing. I could not move a muscle without the greatest reluctance, but lay on a sofa, a capital subject for the experiment of the power of mind over body, which was the next moment to be made upon me.

A note arrived, which I had just strength to unseal and read. It said, "Put on your silk stockings speedily, get a chapeau-bras, jump into a fiacre which waits for you at your hotel gate, and come off to the Place Vendome without asking a question!" This spoke too plainly to be misinterpreted. Fatigue fled as if by magical influence; I could have leapt over the house; and in an incredibly short time I was stockinged, hatted, and away, as directed by my good genius, and literally without having put a single interrogation to my conductor. Arriving at my excellent and most considerate friend's hotel, I was considerably cooled down by finding that he and a large party, of which Sir Walter Scott was one, had departed for the ball, leaving only a verbal message for me to follow, to make my way, and, if I should find any difficulty in gaining admission, to call him out, when he would set all to rights. My first feeling was that the game was up. Make my way! call him out! with the halls, corridors, and staircases of the palace before my embarrassed imagination—crowded with guards and attendants speaking all the languages of Europe—and a splendid multitude in the saloons themselves, amidst which my friend appeared lost beyond recall—the thing seemed impossible. I therefore gave orders to the driver of the fiacre to return to my hotel, when it occurred to me that at the worst it was only failing. The object was well worth a bold stroke, and, if I should not succeed, I should at least, like Phæton, or Napoleon himself on the late occasion, fail in an undertaking of no common kind. To the palace, then, of Marshal Junot, in the corner of the Place Louis XV., then the residence of the Duke of Wellington, I heroically drove.

In my doubtful state of mind I desired that my fiacre might wait five minutes for the chance of a fare home, and entered the court-yard. A guard of honour from each of the allied powers, displayed by a blaze of torchlight, was the first of the striking scenes of the night. The mixture of troops and nations was as splendid as it was friendly. In approaching the door of entrance, an accidental circumstance "set all to rights," without the intervention of Sir John Malcolm. An English carriage, with a coronet on its panel, drove up, and discharged a gentleman and two ladies; I stepped back to give them the lead, but followed so closely, without intending the effect, that I became, to the perceptions of all the persons who had to pass, a fourth component of my lord's party. His name alone was announced, and the two ladies and I passed halls and staircases with him, and entered, without question, into the saloon, where the duke was receiving his illustrious guests, the first party, within the door of which was my friend's. "Well, you have made your way." "Yes, I have, and done the most impudent thing I ever did in my life." "Never mind, you are really an invited guest, and I will by and by tell you how. In the mean time, take your place with us, and you will learn to know the guests, by hearing them announced." We were fortunately early, and no very illustrious visitor had yet arrived. As we gazed with intense curiosity at the door, nobles, statesmen, generals, marshals, entered it in rapid succession. Schwartzburg, Benningsen, Platoff, Prince Wrede, the hero of Hanau, Barclay de Tolly, Metternich, Castlereagh, Bulow, Humboldt, and many others of not less note, passed, announced in French. The Company included, as might be expected, every British officer of distinction. Amidst a splendid display of scarlet, mingled with rich foreign uniforms, we readily distinguished a profusion of the uniform of Austria, which, being white, gives its wearers, to a British eye, the appearance of the musicians of a band. Diamonds blazed, and stars, crosses, and ribbons, were seen in every direction. "Son Altesse le Prince de Benevento" was declared, and for the first time I saw, close to me, the celebrated Talleyrand. The wily politician's appearance surprised us all. It did not indicate that superior talent and vigour which had politically survived repeated revolutions, and warned Napoleon himself of the commencement of the downward movement which hurried him to his fate. All seemed old-beau-like about him—a powdered, old-fashioned gentleman, something younger, but much resembling Lord Ogilby in the play, and as unfit apparently, to govern the diplomacy of Europe. But we did not allow his countenance to go unscrutinised, and we saw, or thought we saw, in its very calm and mildness, the practised tranquillity of the prince of diplomatists. Fouché soon followed, and we beheld the minister of police, the mover of the most tremendous engine of tyranny known to modern times. He looked the office well, and it was very exciting to see, almost to touch, a man whose name had exercised a sway of terror not exceeded by Napoleon's own. A bustling cortege of officers and aids-do-camp, with a veteran at their head, were explained by the announcement, "Son Altesse Serenissime le Prince Blucher." On his entry there was a rush to gaze upon him, and a strong feeling experienced when the Duke of Wellington met him half way down the saloon with a hearty shake of both hands. Sir Walter Scott was, I remember, moved to tears, and said to me. "Look at that—a few weeks ago these two men delivered Europe!" The spectacle, by the way, seemed to make an unusually deep impression upon this illustrious person. Wonder and veneration sat upon his countenance during the most of the evening, to the marked diminution of its usual intelligent expression, and he appeared like a man engrossed by mastering feelings,

as was the Frenchman who, overpowered by the beauties of Loch Katrine, when asked what he thought, answered, "I do not think—I only feel." Our common Edinburgh friends remarked his extraordinary aspect though we were not then so well able to account for it as we might be now, when the character of the great master of modern fiction has been so well explained by himself and others.

Crowds of every-day rank and nameless beauty continued to arrive, and we all acknowledged our ungallant indifference to what is the chief adornment of ordinary balls, and charms of the ladies, with a virtuous reservation that it was for once only in our lives. In the midst of some gay chat upon this subject, our eyes were suddenly called to the folding doors, when, on their flying open, we learned that the next entrant was to be a monarch. In louder accents than usual, we heard the following announcement: Sa Majeste le Roi de Prusse—leur Altesse Royales les Princes Royal de Prusse—le Duc de Mecklingburg." The king entered with his splendid cortege, and, after being solemnly received by the illustrious host of the night, and shortly conversing with him, passed on among the gay crowd, and joined a circle, the centre of which was Lady Castlereagh, and one of its components the veteran Blucher. This monarch had been remarked in Paris for his gentleman-like appearance and great plainness of circumstances. He seemed about forty-five years of age, and would have passed for a well-bred English gentleman. There was also observed a sober and rather melancholy expression of countenance, imputed to his great loss in his amiable queen. His two sons were mere youths. The Prince of Orange followed, pale from his recent wound, and with his arm in a sling. He spoke some time with the Duke of Wellington, and then joined the circle of Lady Castlereagh. I observed General Alava much beside the duke; he had distinguished himself by writing a spirited account of the battle, and has since been ambassador from Spain, his native country, to Britain. After all had assembled, there was no figure present which commanded a larger share of attention than the Duke of Wellington. His person was new to the bulk of the company. Familiar as that is now as he walks the streets of London in his blue surtout, it was a most exciting novelty to those who had followed him only in the gazette in his career of victory, and there was an eagerness to get his form into memory by studying it well. He was in field-marshal's uniform, and seemed in remarkably good and even high spirits, as befitted the gay occasion. He was seen in every room, noticing every one whom he at all knew, and conversing with many in the most frank and easy manner. It was said that he was induced to dance; but I did not witness this proof that the hero of Waterloo, the pacificator of Europe, was, after all, a mortal man. The most powerful sovereigns of Europe seemed to shrink beside this son of an English baron, mere external rank being felt as little or nothing in comparison with the greatness of commanding intellect, and the merit of having wrought out the deliverance of many nations.

One of the most striking and significant features of the scene was the appearance of a portrait of Napoleon, which had been recently finished for Junot, and was left leaning against the wall in one of the rooms. The duke, with true magnanimity, had allowed this picture to remain, so that the fallen emperor also seemed to form a part of the company. I saw the King of Prussia and one or two other personages whose fates had been strangely connected with his, stand for a few seconds before the portrait, and make a few remarks on the fidelity of the likeness. At this time, the original was on his passage to St. Helena, dis-crowned and a prisoner—for life, as it afterwards proved—while here was one of his palaces occupied in triumph by his conquerors—men who, a few months before, would have compounded with him for one of the earth's best kingdoms, but had now put his neck beneath their yoke, and were amusing themselves by criticising his picture, which was all that remained of him to his country. Can such vicissitudes of fortune ever again be witnessed on earth! Walter Scott observed to me, that if he should venture, in fiction, to depict such a scene as was here presented to our eyes with all its circumstances and associations, brilliant, noble, and affecting, he should be charged with unpardonable exaggeration. He was right. Only reality is privileged to bring such wonderful things under observation.

When wearied to a certain degree with the feelings excited by what we saw in the rooms, we strayed out into the gardens, which were lighted up gorgeously, in a serene starry night, and enlivened by the performances of jugglers and grimaciers. A sumptuous supper was spread out in the gardens under elegant awnings, and, on returning into the rooms, we learned that this meal had just been announced. I made an effort to enter the grand salle-a-manger; and here I expected to see the duke presiding over monarchs and princes, but it was already full, and I failed. A little disappointed, I went into a small room close at hand, and here supper was spread on several small round tables. At the next to that where I was seated, sat two very beautiful English ladies, keeping a chair vacant between them. One of them was the wife of a great minister then present, and the other the wife of a minister who has since borne a conspicuous part in the affairs of England. In a few minutes the Duke of Wellington himself