

## GROWING UP.

Oh to keep them still around us, baby darlings, fresh and pure,  
 "Mother's" smile their pleasures crowning, "mother's" kiss  
 their sorrows' cure;  
 Oh to keep the waxen touches, sunny curls, and radiant eyes,  
 Pattering feet, and eager prattle—all young life's lost Paradise;

One bright head above the other, tiny hands that clung and  
 clasped,  
 Little forms, that close enfolding, all of Love's best gifts were  
 grasped;  
 Sporting in the summer sunshine, glancing round the winter  
 hearth,  
 Bidding all the bright world echo with their fearless, careless  
 mirth.

Oh to keep them; how they gladdened all the path from day to  
 day,  
 What gay dream we fashioned of them, as in rosy sleep they  
 lay;  
 How each broken word was welcomed, how each struggling  
 thought was hailed,  
 As each bark went floating seaward, love-bedecked and fancy-  
 sailed!

Gilding from our jealous watching, gliding from our clinging  
 hold,  
 Lo! the brave leaves bloom and burgeon; lo! the shy sweet  
 buds unfold;  
 Fast to lip, and cheek, and tresses steals the maiden's bashful  
 joy;  
 Fast the frank bold man's assertion tones the accents of the  
 boy.

Neither love nor longing keeps them; soon in other shape than  
 ours  
 Those young hands will seize their weapons, build their castles,  
 plant their flowers;  
 Soon a fresher hope will brighten the dear eyes we trained to  
 see;  
 Soon a closer love than ours in those wakening hearts will be.

So it is, and well it is so; fast the river nears the main,  
 Backward yearnings are but idle; dawning never glows again;  
 Slow and sure the distance deepens, slow and sure the links are  
 rent;  
 Let us pluck our autumn roses, with their sober bloom content.

## NINETY-THREE.

BY VICTOR HUGO.

## PART THE THIRD.

IN VENDEE.

## BOOK THE FIRST.

## II.—DOL.

Although very difficult to astonish he was stupefied. He had not been prepared for anything of the sort. Who could it be? Evidently it was not Gauvain. No man would attack a force that numbered four to his one. Was it Lechelle? But could he have made such a forced march? Lechelle was improbable, Gauvain, impossible.

Lantenac urged on his horse; as he rode forward he encountered the flying inhabitants; he questioned them; they were mad with terror; they cried, "The Blues! The Blues!" When he arrived the situation was a bad one.

This is what happened.

## III.—SMALL ARMIES AND GREAT BATTLES.

As we have just seen, the peasants, on arriving at Dol, dispersed themselves through the town, each man following his own fancy, as happens when troops "obey from friendship"—a favourite expression with the Vendéans—a species of obedience which makes heroes but not troopers. They thrust the artillery out of the way along with the baggage, under the arches of the old market-hall. They were weary; they ate, drank, counted their rosaries, and lay down pell-mell across the principal street, which was encumbered rather than guarded.

As night came on the greater portion fell asleep, with their heads on their knapsacks, some having their wives beside them, for the peasant women often followed their husbands, and the robust ones acted as spies. It was a mild July evening; the constellations glittered in the deep purple of the sky. The entire bivouac, which resembled rather the halt of a caravan than an army encamped, gave itself up to repose. Suddenly, amid the dull gleams of twilight, such as had not yet closed their eyes saw three pieces of ordnance pointed at the entrance of the street.

It was Gauvain's artillery. He had surprised the main guard. He was in the town, and his column held the top of the street.

A peasant started up, cried, "Who goes there?" and fired his musket; a cannon shot replied. Then a furious discharge of musketry burst forth. The whole drowsy crowd sprang up with a start. A rude shock, to fall asleep under the stars and wake under a volley of grape-shot. The first moments were terrific. There is nothing so tragic as the aimless swearing of a thunder-stricken crowd. They flung themselves on their arms. They yelled, they ran; many fell. The assaulted peasants no longer knew what they were about, and blindly shot each other. The townspeople, stunned with fright, rushed in and out of their houses, and wandered frantically amid the hubbub. Families shrieked to one another. A dismal combat, in which women and children were mingled. The balls, as they whistled overhead, streaked the darkness with rays of light. A fusillade poured from every dark corner. There was nothing but smoke and tumult. The entanglement of the baggage-waggons and the cannon-carriages was added to the confusion. The horses became unmanageable. The wounded were trampled under foot. The groans of the poor wretches, helpless on the ground, filled the air. Horror here—stupefaction there. Soldiers and officers sought for one another. In the midst of all this could be seen creatures made indifferent to the awful scene by personal preoccupations. A woman sat nursing her new-born babe, seated on a bit of wall, against which her husband leaned with his leg broken; and he, while

his blood was flowing, tranquilly loaded his rifle and fired at random, straight before him into the darkness. Men lying flat on the ground fired across the spokes of the waggon-wheels. At moments there rose a hideous din of clamours, then the great voices of the cannon drowned all. It was awful.

It was like a felling of trees; they dropped one upon another. Gauvain poured out a deadly fire from his ambush, and suffered little loss.

Still the peasants, courageous amid their disorder, ended by putting themselves on the defensive; they retreated into the market—a vast obscure redoubt, a forest of stone pillars. There they again made a stand; anything which resembled a wood gave them confidence. Imánus supplied the absence of Lantenac as best he could. They had cannon, but, to the great astonishment of Gauvain, they did not make use of it; that was owing to the fact that the artillery officers had gone with the marquis to reconnoitre Mont Dol, and the peasants did not know how to manage the culverins and demi-culverins; but they riddled with balls the Blues who cannonaded them. They replied to the grapeshot by volleys of musketry. It was now they who were sheltered. They had heaped together the drays, the tumbrils, the casks, all the litter of the old market, and improvised a lofty barricade, with openings through which they could pass their carbines. From these holes their fusillade was murderous. The whole was quickly arranged. In a quarter of an hour the market presented an impregnable front.

This became a serious matter for Gauvain. This market suddenly transformed into a citadel was unexpected. The peasants were inside it, massed and solid. Gauvain's surprise had succeeded, but he ran the risk of defeat. He got down from his saddle. He stood attentively studying the darkness, his arms folded, clutching his sword in one hand, erect, in the glare of a torch which lighted his battery.

The gleam, falling on his tall figure, made him visible to the men behind the barricade. He became an aim for them, but he did not notice it.

The shower of balls sent out from the barricade fell about him as he stood there, lost in thought.

But he could oppose cannon to all these carbines, and cannon always ends by getting the advantage. Victory rests with him who has the artillery. His battery, well manned, insured him the superiority.

Suddenly a lightning-like flash burst from the shadowy market; there was a sound like a peal of thunder, and a ball broke through a house above Gauvain's head. The barricade was replying to the cannon with its own voice. What had happened? Something new had occurred. The artillery was no longer confined to one side.

A second ball followed the first and buried itself in the wall close to Gauvain. A third knocked his hat off on the ground.

These balls were of a heavy calibre. It was a sixteen-pounder that fired.

"They are aiming at you, commandant," cried the artillerymen.

They extinguished the torch. Gauvain, as if in a reverie, picked up his hat.

Some one had in fact aimed at Gauvain—it was Lantenac. The marquis had just arrived within the barricade from the opposite side.

Imánus had hurried to meet him.

"Monsieur, we are surprised."

"By whom?"

"I do not know."

"Is the route to Dinan free?"

"I think so."

"We must begin a retreat."

"It has commenced. A good many have run away."

"We must not run; we must fall back. Why are you not making use of this artillery?"

"The men lost their heads; besides, the officers were not here."

"I am come."

"Monseigneur, I have sent towards Fougères all I could of the baggage, the women, everything useless. What is to be done with the three little prisoners?"

"Ah, those children!"

"Yes."

"They are our hostages. Have them taken to La Tourgue."

This said, the marquis rushed to the barricade. With the arrival of the chief the whole face of affairs changed. The barricade was ill-constructed for artillery; there was only room for two cannon; the marquis put in position a couple of sixteen pounders, for which loopholes were made. As he leaned over one of the guns, watching the enemy's battery through the opening, he perceived Gauvain.

"Is it he!" cried the marquis.

Then he took the swab and rammer himself, loaded the piece, sighted it, and fired.

Thrice he aimed at Gauvain and missed. The third time he only succeeded in knocking his hat off.

"Numskull!" muttered Lantenac; "a little lower, and I should have taken his head."

Suddenly the torch went out and he had only darkness before him.

"So be it," said he.

Then turning toward the peasant gunners, he cried, "Now let them have it."

Gauvain, on his side, was not less in earnest. The seriousness of the situation increased. A new phase of the combat developed itself. The barricade had begun to use cannon. Who could tell if it was not about to pass from the defensive to the offensive? He had before him, after deducting the killed and fugitives, at least five thousand combatants, and he had left only twelve hundred serviceable men. What would happen to the Republicans if the enemy perceived their paucity of numbers? The rôles were reversed. He had been the assailant—he would become the assailed. If the barricade were to make a sortie, everything might be lost.

What was to be done? He could no longer think of attacking the barricade in front; an attempt at main force would be foolhardy; twelve hundred men cannot dislodge five thousand. To rush upon them was impossible; to wait would be fatal. He must make an end. But how?

Gauvain belonged to the neighbourhood; he was acquainted with the town; he knew that the old market-house where the Vendéans were entrenched was backed by a labyrinth of narrow and crooked streets.

He turned toward his lieutenant, who was that valiant Captain Guéchamp, afterwards famous for clearing out the forest of Concise, where Jean Chouan was born, and for preventing

the capture of Bourgneuf by holding the dyke of La Chaine against the rebels.

"Guéchamp," said he, "I leave you in command. Fire as fast as you can. Riddle the barricade with cannon balls. Keep all those fellows over yonder busy."

"I understand," said Guéchamp.

"Mass the whole column with their guns loaded, and hold them ready to make an onslaught."

He added a few words in Guéchamp's ear.

"I hear," said Guéchamp.

Gauvain resumed: "Are all our drummers on foot?"

"Yes."

"We have nine. Keep two and give me seven."

The seven drummers ranged themselves in silence in front of Gauvain.

Then he said: "Battalion of the Bonnet Rouge!"

Twelve men, of whom one was a sergeant, stepped out from the main body of the troop.

"I demand the whole battalion," said Gauvain.

"Here it is," replied the sergeant.

"You are twelve!"

"There are twelve of us left."

"It is well," said Gauvain.

This sergeant was the good, rude trooper Radoub, who had adopted, in the name of the battalion, the three children they had encountered in the wood of La Saudrale.

It will be remembered that only a demi-battalion had been exterminated at Herbe-en-Pail, and Radoub was fortunate enough not to have been among the number.

There was a forage waggon standing near; Gauvain pointed towards it with his finger.

"Sergeant, order your men to make some straw-ropes and twist them about their guns, so that there will be no noise if they knock together."

A minute passed; the order was silently executed in the darkness.

"It is done," said the sergeant.

"Soldiers, take off your shoes," commanded Gauvain.

"We have none," returned the sergeant.

They numbered, counting the drummers, nineteen men; Gauvain made the twentieth.

He cried: "Follow me! Single file! The drummers next to me—the battalion behind them. Sergeant, you will command the battalion."

He put himself at the head of the column, and while the firing on both sides continued these twenty men, gliding along like shadows, plunged into the deserted lanes. The line marched thus for some time, twisting along the fronts of the houses. The whole town seemed dead; the citizens were hidden in their cellars. Every door was barred, every shutter closed. No light to be seen anywhere.

Amid this silence the principal street kept up its din; the cannonading continued; the republican battery and the royalist barricade spit forth their volleys with undiminished fury.

After twenty minutes of this tortuous march Gauvain, who kept his way unerringly through the darkness, reached the end of a lane which led into the broad street, but on the other side of the market-house.

The position was altered. In this direction there was no intrenchment, according to the eternal imprudence of barricade-builders; the market was open and the entrance free, among the pillars where some baggage-waggons stood ready to depart. Gauvain and his nineteen men had the five thousand Vendéans before them, but their backs instead of their faces.

Gauvain spoke in a low voice to the sergeant; the soldiers untwisted the straw from their guns; the twelve grenadiers posted themselves in line behind the lane, and the seven drummers waited with their drumsticks lifted. The artillery firing was intermittent. Suddenly, in a pause between the discharges, Gauvain waved his sword, and cried, in a voice which rang like a trumpet through the silence: "Two hundred men to the right—two hundred men to the left—all the rest in the centre."

The twelve muskets fired, and the seven drums beat.

Gauvain uttered the formidable battle-cry of the Blues—"To your bayonets! Down upon them!"

The effect was prodigious.

This whole peasant mass felt itself surprised in the rear, and believed that it had a fresh army at its back. At the same instant, on hearing the drums, the column which Guéchamp commanded at the head of the street began to move, sounding the charge in its turn, and flung itself at a run on the barricade. The peasants found themselves between two fires. Panic magnifies; a pistol-shot sounds like the report of a cannon; in moments of terror the imagination heightens every noise; the barking of a dog sounds like the roar of a lion. Add to this the fact that the peasant catches fright as easily as thatch catches fire, and as quickly as a blazing thatch becomes a conflagration a panic among peasants becomes a rout. An indescribably confused flight ensued.

In a few instants the market-hall was empty; the terrified rustics broke away in all directions; the officers were powerless; Imánus uselessly killed two or three fugitives; nothing was to be heard but the cry: "Save ourselves!" The army poured through the streets of the town like water through the holes of a sieve, and dispersed into the open country with the rapidity of a cloud carried along by a whirlwind. Some fled toward Châteauneuf, some towards Plerguer, others toward Autrain.

The Marquis de Lantenac watched this stampede. He spiked the guns with his own hands and then retreated—the last of all, slowly, composedly, saying to himself: "Decidedly the peasants will not stand. We must have the English."

## IV.—"IT IS THE SECOND TIME."

The victory was complete.

Gauvain moved toward the men of the Bonnet Rouge battalion; and said, "You are twelve, but you are equal to a thousand."

Praise from a chief was the cross of honour of those times.

Guéchamp, despatched beyond the town of Gauvain, pursued the fugitives and captured a great number.

Torches were lighted and the town was searched. All who could not escape surrendered. They illuminated the principal street with fire-pots. It was strewn with dead and dying. The root of a combat must always be torn out; a few desperate groups here and there still resisted—they were surrounded, and threw down their arms.

Gauvain had remarked, amid the frantic pell-mell of the retreat, an intrepid man, a sort of agile and robust form, who