

CHAPTER II.

THE last chapter closed with a portrayal of the calm and peaceful termination of the day in the dwelling of Captain Walters. We will now introduce the reader to a very different scene. It is the officers' mess-room of the same regiment to which Captain Walters belonged.

The band of the regiment, under the able leadership of the German bandmaster, had just closed their exercises for the evening, as usual, with the national air of "God save the King." The officers had just partaken of a sumptuous repast, which term it is intended shall convey a more than ordinary significance; for each of the gentlemen composing that company may be supposed to occupy a high position as to his capacity, judging from the quality and quantity of the viands placed before them, and the amount of culinary skill expended in their preparation. And any defect or deficiency as to either, or in the manipulation of the French cook, would have been detected by the veriest tyro present; and then, judging from the antecedents of the parties, could any flaw have been detected, they were not the men to allow it to pass unnoticed, or, however innocent the man or trifling the cause, to suffer any fault or deficiency to pass unproved; nor did they, under any circumstance, use the most gentle or refined language. For these gentlemen (we had almost said these men, but perhaps that term might be considered discourteous