

who bit their thumbs at the sight of the muzzled *San Margarita*, and prayed that Charles VII. might have "his ain again." But they were in the minority. The Miqueletes, a soldierly body of men in scarlet Basque scones very like to the Carlist head-gear, and a blue capote with cape attached, garrisoned the citadel. They were brave and loyal to the Republic, and the object of deep grudge to the Chicos, for they were Basques of the towns. Many of these provincial militiamen had come in from the small pueblos in the neighbourhood, where they ran the risk of being eaten up by "the bhoys;" and this was the only accession to the population which redeemed the dismal, tradeless port from the appearance of having been stricken by plague and abandoned, and lent it at intervals an artificial bustle.

I sickened of San Sebastian, with its angular propriety; its high, haughty houses, holding up their heads in architectural primness; its wide geometrical streets, where there is no shade in the sun, no shelter in the wind. I began to hate it for its rectilinearity, and dub it a priggish, stuck-

up, arrogant upstart among cities. What business had it to be so straight and clean and airy? Fain would I shake the dust off my feet in testimony against it; but here was the trouble. How to get away—that was a knotty problem. The railway had been torn up for months, and the armour-vested locomotives were rusting on the sidings at Hendaye. The dirty hot little tug, the *Alcorta*, that plies between the quay and Socoa, had left; and I grieved not, for the thought of a passage by her was nausea. Three more torturing hours never dragged their slow length along for me than those I spent on board her coming over. Try and call up to yourself three hours in a low-class cook-shop, coated an inch thick with filth, and fitted over the boiler of a penny steamer dancing a marine breakdown on the Thames, opposite the outlet of the main-drainage pipes. That, intensified by strange oaths and slop-basins, was the passage by the *Alcorta*. But dreary, lonely San Sebastian was not to be endured. Those poor fellows above, accustomed to the wild freshness and freedom of the sea, how they must mourn and repine! By

some means or other I must get back to the world that is not petrified. No diligences dare to affront the dangers of the short journey to the Irun railway-station, since three were stopped some days before, the traces cut, the horses stolen, the windows shattered, the woodwork burned, and the charred wreck left on the roadside, a terror to those who neglect to obey the commands of the Royalist leaders.

“Royalist prigants, serr!” shouted a corpulent German doctor, connected with mines in the neighbourhood, who retained fierce recollections of having been robbed of a “boney, capitalest of boneys for crossing a mountain.”

I told the doctor I was about to trust to luck, and set out on foot if I could persuade nobody to provide me with a vehicle.

“Serr, you air mad, foolish mad,” said the doctor. “Those horrid beebles, I tell you, are worse than prigants; if you hayff money, they will dake it; if you hayff not money, they will stroke your pack fifty times, pecause you hayff it not. They will

cut your ears off; they will cut your nose off; they are plack tevils!"

I determined to trust to luck all the same. The black devils might not be all out so black as they were painted.

CHAPTER X.

Belcha's Brigands—Pale-Red Republicans—The Hyena—
More about the *San Margarita*—Arrival of a Republican
Column—The Jaunt to Los Pasages—A Sweet Surprise
—"The Prettiest Girl in Spain"—A Madrid Acquaint-
ance—A Costly Pull—The Diligence at Last—Renteria
and its Defences—A Furious Ride—In France Again—
Unearthing Santa Cruz—The Outlaw in his Lair—
Interviewed at Last—The Truth about the Enderlaza
Massacre—A Death-Warrant—The Buried Gun—
Fanaticism of the Partisan-Priest.

THERE is fine scope for exaggeration in civil war ;
but he who wants the truth about the Montagues
does not consult the Capulets. There must be bad
characters amongst the Carlists, I reflected ; and
when they are on outpost duty at a distance from
officers, and have taken a drop of aguardiente too
much, they may sometimes fail to appreciate the
nice distinction between *meum* and *tuum*. The
band of one Belcha, which was hovering in the

neighbourhood of San Sebastian, had a shady reputation. It would be unjust to tempt these simple-minded guerrilleros with the sight of a Derringer, a hunting-watch, a tobacco-pouch, or a reconnoitring-glass. All these articles are useful on the hills. But even Belcha's looters had some conscience; they drew the line at money and wedding-rings. Besides, in cases of robbery restitution was invariably made when the chiefs of the revolt were appealed to in proper form, so that on the whole the Carlists did not deserve the name the German doctor had given them. Regular soldiers do not always carry the Decalogue in their kit; there was marauding in the Peninsula, notwithstanding the iron discipline of the Iron Duke; the Summer Palace at Peking was despoiled of its treasures by gentlemen in epaulettes, and the Franco-German War was not entirely unconnected with stories about vanishing clocks. So I would not be diverted from my purpose.

Before leaving San Sebastian I tried to obtain permission for a second visit to the citadel-prison in order to see the crew of the *San Margarita*, but

without avail. Yet the officers in charge (all of the regular army), and indeed the privates of the local militia, were anything but truculent gaolers; they seemed willing to strain a point to oblige. The Republicanism of the officers was of a very pale red; but there was one hirsute Volunteer of Liberty who acted as chief warder, and took a delight in the occupation. He rattled his bunch of keys as if their metallic dissonance were music, grumbled at the urbanity of his superiors, and bore himself altogether as if their politics were suspicious; and he, a pure of the pure, were there as warder over that too. I nicknamed him the hyena in my own mind; but I could not conceive him laughing anywhere save in front of a garrote with a Royalist neck in the rundel, and then his laugh at best would be but the inward chuckle of a Modoc.

Stuart took the hyena coolly, regarding him as an amusing phenomenon; Travers surveyed him as he would the portrait of the Nabob on London hoardings, and pronounced him a whimsical illustration of Republican sauce. Stuart, I

should have stated, was anxious that it should be known that he had caused the name of the whilom *Deerhound* to be erased from the list of yachts, when he chartered her as a merchant-steamer, renamed her, and went into the contraband-of-war line. It was contrary to his wish to compromise any club. The confiscated cargo was the last he had intended delivering, but he told me with a smile that ten thousand stand of rifles had already found their way to Vera. There was no legitimate explanation of the capture of the hare by the tortoise, although Travers was prepared to swear he was in French waters—he thought he was, no doubt—but he was just on the wrong side of the limit. There was one comfort. On the way to Bayonne a boat-load of men had been landed at Socoa on leave, amongst them the Basque pilot, who might otherwise have been helped to a short shrift, and the dog's death from a yard-arm.

Carlist sympathizers endeavoured to procure me a conveyance to Irun, but nobody cared to affront the loss of horses, for Belcha's band requisitioned the cattle even of those identical in political feel-

ing—the good of the cause was their plea—so at last I was forced to say I should be glad of a trap to Los Pasages, a few miles off, whence I might be able to go forward on foot.

While I was waiting for the arrival of the vehicle, and reading *El Diario*, the local daily paper—a sheet the size of the palm of one's hand—until I had the contents by rote, an incident occurred to beguile suspense. The vanguard of the corps of Sanchez Bregua, the commander of the Republican Army of the North, rode into the city. They had come from Zarauz, a seaside village four leagues away—a section of mounted Chasseurs in a uniform like to that of the old British Light Dragoons. The troopers were in campaign order, with rifled carbines slung over their backs, pugarees hanging from their shakoes over their necks, and were dust-covered and sunburnt, but soldierly. They were horsed unevenly, and for light cavalry carried too great a burden. But that is not a fault peculiar to Spanish light cavalry. The average weight of the British Hussar equipped is eighteen stone. A quarter of an hour later the main body came in

sight, a long column of infantry marching by fours. It was headed by a party of Civil Guards, acting as guides. As the column reached the open space by the quay, it deployed into line of companies, a movement capitally executed. The men were bigger and tougher than those of the French Line. Their uniform was similar, except that they had wings to their capotes instead of worsted epaulettes. All wore mountain-shoes, but were not hampered with tenting equipage on their knapsacks. Each battalion was led by a staff-officer, who was splendidly, or wretchedly, mounted, as his luck had served him. The company officers carried alpenstocks, and their orderlies had officers' cast foraging-caps on top of their glazed shakoes. I noticed a battalion of Cazadores, distinguished by the emblematic brass horn of chase wrought on their collars, and two companies of Engineers in uniforms entirely blue, with towers on their collars. These latter were robust, sinewy young fellows. After the infantry came a company of the 2nd Regiment of Mountain Artillery with four small pieces, each drawn by a single mule, and behind them a

squadron of Mounted Chasseurs, and a long cavalcade of pack-horses and mules.

After a deal of exploration a driver was dug up, and after a deal of negotiation he consented to take me to Los Pasages. Thanks to Republican vigilance, but principally it may have been to the nature of the ground, the road thither was clear. We started at six o'clock in the evening, and after a lively spin through sylvan scenery drew up in less than an hour at the outskirts of a village on the edge of a quiet pool, which we had bordered for nigh a mile. No papers had been asked for, on leaving, at the bridge over the Urumea, where a post of volunteers kept guard by an antique and stumpy bronze howitzer, mounted on a siege-carriage, and furnished with the dolphin-handles to be seen on some of the last-century guns in the Tower Arsenal. No papers were asked for either at the Customs' station, some hundred yards farther on; but the Carabineros looked upon me as a lunatic, and significantly sibilated. None were asked for at the approach to the village. Scarcely had I alighted when a fishwife ran out of a cabin and

addressed me in Basque. I could not understand her, and motioned her away, when a winsome lassie of some eighteen summers, tripping up the road, came to my aid, and began speaking in French as if she were anticipating my arrival.

“Monsieur wants a shallop to go to France?”

I was taken aback, but answered, “Yes.”

“Monsieur will follow me.”

And she gave me a meaning sign—half a wink, half a monition. I followed, and examined my volunteer guide more attentively. What a prize of a girl! Hair black as night, but with a glossy blackness, was parted on her smooth forehead, and retained behind, after the fashion of the country, by a coloured snood, but two thick Gretchen plaits escaped, and hung down to her waist, making one wish that she had let her whole wealth of tresses wander free. Eyes blue-black, full by turns of soft love and sparkling mischief; Creole complexion, with blood rich as marriage-wine coursing in the dimpled cheeks; teeth white as the fox's; lips of clove-pink. And what a shape had she—ripe, firm,

and piquant! Do you wonder that I followed her with joy? Do you wonder that I began weaving a romance? If you do, I pity you. Did I want a shallop? Of course I did; but alas! might I not have echoed Bürger's lament:

"The shallop of my peace is wrecked
On Beauty's shore."

She was a Carlist, I was sure of that. All the comely maidens were Carlists. In the service of the King the most successful crimps were "dashing white sergeants" in garter and girdle. And she took me for an interesting Carlist fugitive, and she was determined to aid in my escape. How ravishing! She was a Flora Macdonald, and I—would be a Pretender. I had fully wound myself up to that as we entered Los Pasages.

Los Pasages consists of rows of houses built on either side of a basin of the sea, entered by a narrow chasm in the high rocky coast. Sailing by it, one would never imagine that that cleft in the shore-line was a gate to a natural harbour, locked against every wind, and large enough to accommo-

date fleets, and whose waters are generally placid as a lake. This secure haven, *statio benefida carinis*, is hidden away in the lap of the timbered hills, and is approached by a passage (from which its name is borrowed) which can be traversed in fifteen minutes. The change from the boisterous Bay of Biscay, with its "white horses" capering without, to this Venetian expanse of water in a Swiss valley, dotted with chalets and cottages, must have the effect of a magic transformation on the emotional tar who has never been here before, and whose chance it was to lie below when his ship entered. The refuge is not unknown to English seamen, for there is a stirring trade in minerals with Cardiff, in more tranquil times. But now Los Pasages is deserted from the bar down to the uttermost point of its long river-like stretch inland, except by the smacks and small boats of the native fishers, a tiny tug, and a large steamer from Seville which is lying by the wharf. There is no noise of traffic; the one narrow street echoes to our tramping feet as I follow my charming cicerone, who has started up for me like some good spirit of a fairy-

tale. She leads me to an inn, bids me enter, and flies in search of the owner of the shallop. The landlord comes to greet me, and I recognise in him an acquaintance—Maurice, a former waiter in the Fonda de Paris, in Madrid. I questioned Maurice as to my chances of getting across to Irun by land that night; but he assured me it was too late, and really dangerous; that the road was infested by gangs of desperadoes; and that it would be safer for me to travel, even in the day-time, without money or valuables. The owner of the shallop came, but as he had the audacity to ask eighty francs for transporting me round to Fontarabia, and as I had found Maurice, I resolved to stop in Los Pasages for the night.

“You have only to cross the water to-morrow morning,” said Maurice, “and you are in Renteria, where you will be sure to get a vehicle.”

The backs of the houses all overlook the port, and all are balconied and furnished with flowered terraces, from which one can fish, look at his reflection, or take a header into the water at pleasure. A glorious nook for a reading-party's holiday, Los

Pasages. Not if fair mysteries like my friend crop up there; but where is she, by-the-way? She does not re-appear; but Maurice will help me to discover who and what she is.

“Maurice, are there any pretty girls here?”

Maurice looks at me reproachfully.

“Señor, you have been conducted to my house by one who is acknowledged to be the prettiest in all Spain.”

That night I dreamt of Eugenia, the baker's daughter, the pride of Los Pasages, who was waiting for a husband, but would have none but one who helps Charles VII. to the throne. I recorded that dream for the bachelors of Britain, and conjured them to make haste to propose for her—not that the Carlist war was hurrying to a close; but I have remarked that girls inclined to be plump at eighteen sometimes develop excessive embonpoint about eight-and-twenty. On inquiry, I found a key to the enigma which had filled me with sweet excitement. Eugenia, who had been to the citadel-prison to carry provisions to a friend in trouble, had seen me speaking to Colonel Stuart, and was

anxious to serve me because of my supposed Carlist tincture. My supposed Carlist tincture did not prevent a lusty Basque boatman from charging five francs next morning for the five minutes' pull across the water to the road to Renteria, where I caught a huge yellow diligence, which had ventured to leave San Sebastian at last with the detained mails of a week. The machine was horsed in the usual manner—that is, with three mules and two nags—but how different from usual was the way-bill! With the exception of the driver and his aide, a youngster who jumped down from the box every hundred yards, and belaboured the beasts with a wattle, there was not one passenger fit to carry arms. We had a load of women and babies, a decrepit patriarch, and two boys under the fighting age. We halted at Renteria, harnessed a fresh team to our conveniency, and sent on a messenger to ascertain if the Carlists had been seen on the road. Everybody in Renteria carried a musket. All the approaches were defended by loopholed works, roofed with turf, and a perfect fortress was constructed in the centre of the town by a series

of communications which had been established between the church and a block of houses in front by *caponnières*. The church windows were built up and loopholed, and a semicircular *tambour*, banked with earth to protect it from artillery, was thrown up against the houses in the middle of the street, so as to enfilade it at either side in case of attack. There were troops of the line in Renteria, but no artillerymen, nor was there artillery to be served. Without artillery, however, the place, if properly provisioned, could not be taken, if the defending force was worth its salt.

The messenger having returned with word that all was right, we went ahead at a fearful pace on a very good road, lined with poplars, and running through a neat park-like country. Over to the right we could see the church-spire of Oyarzun, and the smoke curling from the chimneys; a little farther on we passed the debris of a diligence on the wayside; the telegraph wires along the route were broken down, and the poles taken away for firewood; we dived under a railway bridge, but never a Carlist saw we during the continuous brief

mad progress over the eight miles from Renteria to the rise into Irun.

We clattered up to the railway-station at a hand-gallop, the people rushing to the doors of the houses, and beaming welcome from smiling countenances. There was a faint attempt to cheer us. At the station a number of officials, a couple of Carabineros, and a knot of idlers were gathered. The driver descended with the gait of a conquering hero, and turned his glances in the direction of a cottage close by. An old man on crutches, a blooming matron with rosary beads at her waist, and a nut-brown maid with laughing eyes stood under the porch, embowered in tamarisk and laurel-rose. The driver strode over to them, crying out triumphantly:

“El primero! Lo! I am the first.”

“How valiant you are, Pedro!” said the nut-brown maid, advancing to meet him.

“How lucky you are!” said the matron, with a grave shake of the head.

“How rash you are!” mumbled the grandfather; “you were always so.”

I envied that driver, for the nut-brown maid kissed him, as she had the right to do, for she was his affianced, and had not seen him for five days.

From the Irun station to Hendaye was free from danger. I walked down through a field of maize to the Bidassoa, crossed by a ferry-boat to the other side, where a post of the 49th of the French Line were peacefully playing cards for buttons in the shade of a chestnut, and a few minutes afterwards was seated in front of a bottle of Dublin stout with the countryman who forwarded my letters and telegrams from over the border.

Naturally I had a desire to ascertain the whereabouts of Santa Cruz. The man had almost grown mythical with me. I had heard at San Sebastian that ten thousand crowns had been offered for his scalp at Tolosa, and the fondest yearning—the one satisfying aspiration of the hyena—was to tear him into shreds, chop him into sausage-meat, gouge out his eyes, or roast him before a slow fire. Which form of torment he would prefer, he had not quite settled. A sort of intuitive faculty, which has

seldom led me astray, said to me that Santa Cruz was somewhere near. I revolved the matter in my mind, and fixed upon the man under whose roof he was most likely to be concealed. I went to that man and requested him bluntly to take me to the outlawed priest—I wished very much to speak to him.

He smiled and answered, "He is not here."

"The bird is flown," I said, "but the nest is warm. He is not far away."

"True," he said, "come with me."

We drove some miles—I will not say how many—and drew up at an enclosed villa, which may have been in France, but was not of it. To be plain, it was neutral territory, and my host, who knew me thoroughly, disappeared for a few moments, and said Santa Cruz was sleeping, but that he had roused him, and that he would be with us presently.

I was sitting on a garden-seat in front of the house where he was stopping, when he presented himself on the threshold, bareheaded, and in his shirt-sleeves. The outlaw priest was no slave to

the conventionalities of society. He did not adjust his necktie before receiving visitors. I am not sure that he wore a necktie at all. Let me try and draw his portrait as he stood there in the doorway, in questioning attitude. A thick, burly man under thirty years of age, some five feet five in height, with broad sallow face, brawny bull-neck, and wide square-set shoulders—a squat Hercules; dark-brown hair, cut short, lies close to his head; he is bearded, and has a dark-brown pointed moustache; shaggy brows overhang his small steel-gray eyes; his nose is coarse and devoid of character; but his jaws are massive, his lips firm, and his chin determined. He is dressed like the better class of peasant, wears sandals, canvas trousers, a light brownish-gray waistcoat, and has a large leathern belt, like a horse's girth, round his waist. His expression is severe, as of one immersed in thought; with an occasional frown, as if the thought were disagreeable. His brows knit, and a shadow passes over his features when anything is mentioned that displeases him; but I was told when he smiled, the smile was of the sweetest and most amiable. I

cannot say I saw him in smiling mood, but I saw him frown, and never did anyone so truly translate to me the figure of speech of "looking black." He advanced with self-possession, returned my salute without coldness or *empressement*, as if it were a mere matter of form, and sat down beside me. We had a long chat. Santa Cruz did not take much active part in it, but listened as his host spoke, punctuating what was said with nods of assent, and now and again dropping a guttural sentence. His maxim was that deeds were of more value than words, and he adhered to it. His host, I may interpose, was the most devoted of Carlists, and had given largely of his means to aid the cause. He had great faith in Santa Cruz, and told me in his presence (but in French, which the Cura understood but slightly) that while Santa Cruz was in the northern provinces, the King had half-a-man in his service, and that if he would now call on Cabrera he would have a man and a half, for that Santa Cruz would act with Cabrera.

"If Don Carlos does not consent to that," said my host, "you will see that he will have to return

into France, and live in ignominy for the rest of his days !”

This Cura, represented in the Madrid play-house as half-drunk and dancing lewdly, was the most abstemious and chastest of men, and neither smoked nor drank wine. His fame went on increasing, as did the number of his followers. He effected prodigies with the means at his command. His friends in France supplied him with two cannon, which were smuggled across the border. He turned the foundry at Vera into a munition factory ; employed women to make uniforms for his men ; and insisted that the intervals between his expeditions should be given up to drill. He was dreaded, respected, admired by his band ; he was strong and hardy ; faced perils and privations in common with the lowest, but used no weapon but his walking-stick. The priest, the anointed of God, may not shed blood. The affair of Enderlasa was the coping-stone of his career. Various accounts were related of that event ; it is only fair to let Santa Cruz himself speak. This is what he told me :

At three one morning he opened fire on the

guard-house occupied by the Carabineros, at the bridge over the Bidassoa, between Vera and Irun. A white flag was hoisted on the guard-house. He ordered the fire to cease, and advanced to negotiate the conditions of surrender. The enemy, who had invited him to approach, by the white flag, fired and wounded one of his men. He issued directions to take the place, and spare nobody. The place was taken, and nobody was spared. Twenty-seven dead bodies littered the Vera road that morning.

"Is it true that you pardoned two?" I asked the priest.

"No, ninguno ! Porqué ?" he answered with astonishment. "Not one. Why should I?"

The reason I had asked was that I had been told that a couple of the Carabineros had plunged into the Bidassoa and tried to swim to the other side ; but the Cura, on his own avowal, with Rhadamanthine justice had commanded them to be shot as they breasted the current, and they were shot. He was no believer in half-measures.

A lady partisan of his, who had dined with him

the day before, told me he never breathed a syllable of the attack he meditated, to her or any of his band. An English gentleman, who visited the ground while the corpses were still upon it, assured me that the sight was horrifying, and, such was the panic in Irun, that he verily believed Santa Cruz might have taken the town the same afternoon, had he appeared before it with four men.

To pursue the story of the redoubtable Cura. The bruit of his exploits had gone abroad, and among certain Carlists it seemed to be the opinion, as one of them remarked to me, that "*Il a fait de grandes choses, mais de grandes bêtises aussi.*" He was making war altogether too seriously for their tastes. Antonio Lizarraga was appointed Commandant-General of Guipúzcoa about that period, and ordered Santa Cruz to report to him. Santa Cruz, who was in the field before him, and had five times as many men under his control, paid no heed to his orders. Lizarraga then sent him a death-warrant, which is so curious a document that I make no apology for appending it in full :