hollow of his arm, was pacing to and fro in the portico, and the remaining warriors of the post were lounging about, cigarette in mouth, much as our own fellows do outside the guard-house on Commercial Square, at Gibraltar. I was curious to see the Carlist uniform. Assuredly the uniform does not make the soldier, but it goes a great way towards it. Uniformity was the least striking feature in the dress of the men before me. They were clad in the ordinary garb of the mountain-peasants. Short coarse jackets and loose trousers, confined at the waist by a faja, or girdle of bright-coloured woollen stuff, were worn by some; blouses of serge, knee-breeches, and stockings or gaiters, by others; but all, without exception, had the boina, or pancake-shaped woollen cap of the Basque provinces, and the alpargatas, or flat-soled canvas shoes. By-and-by was heard a bugle-blast and the quick, regular tread of marching men, and the head of a company came in sight. In perfect time the company paced, four deep, into the Plaza, halted, and fell into line in two ranks. Thus, in succession, seven other companies arrived, form-

ing the fifth battalion of Navarre, a vigorous, wiry set of men, impressing the experienced eye as excellent raw material for soldiers, albeit got up in costume very much resembling that of brigands of the Comic Opera. Physically, the natives of the hilly northern provinces are the pick of Spain. The battalion had its flag, white between two stripes of scarlet, on which was inscribed the name of the corps, and the legend, "The country for ever, but always in honour." This was, of course, written in Basque, of which my rendering is rather free, but it gives exactly the sense of the sentiment. It was soon palpable to anybody, who knows anything of such matters, that the Chicos were weak in officers of the proper stamp, and still more so in under-officers. Smoking was common in the ranks, and when the men stood at ease, they stood very much at ease indeed. The officers, in some cases, were distinguished in dress from the privates solely by gold or silver tassels dependent from their boinas, and their boinas were of blue, white, brown, or even Republican red, according to the fancy of the wearer. All the officers had revolvers and swords.

The men were armed somewhat indiscriminately, one company with Chassepots, another with Remingtons; there were carbines, and percussion rifles, and smooth-bores, and even a few flint-locks; but I failed to discern a single specimen of the trabuco, the bell-mouthed blunderbuss we are accustomed to associate with the Spanish knight of the road. Ammunition was carried in a waist-belt, with a surrounding row of leather tubes lined with tin, each of which held a cartridge—in fact, the Circassian cartouch-case. There were many grizzled weather-stained veterans in the ranks who had fought with Zumalacárregui and Mina in the Seven Years' War; but as a rule the Chicos were literally boys in age, and here and there a child of twelve or fourteen might be seen measuring himself beside a patriotic musket. In relief to the peasant dresses were to be noticed frequent attempts at more soldierly costume in the shape of worn tunics of the French National Guards or Moblots, and some half-dozen uniforms of the Spanish Line, with the glazed képi exchanged for the boina. On the top of many of the boinas, fastening the tassel, was a

huge brass button, with the monogram of the "King," and the inscription, "Voluntarios, Dios, Patria, y Rey." Another sign particular of this irregular force that impressed me much was a bleeding heart embroidered on a small scrap of cloth, and sewn on the left breasts of nearly all on the ground. This appeared to be worn as a charm against bullets; and with a strong notion that it would protect them in the hour of danger, I am convinced nine out of ten of those peasants carried it. It may be as well to add that inside that embroidered patch were written, in Spanish, the words, "Stop; the heart of Jesus is here; defend me, Jesus." Many others of the Carlists carried scapulars, rosary beads, and blessed medals as pious reminders. The habit of wearing this representation of the heart of the Saviour over the region of the human heart dates so far back as the Vendean War, and had been introduced in the present instance by M. Cathelineau, grandson of the celebrated French Royalist leader.

The battalion had assembled on the Plaza to give up their old arms, and to receive a portion of

those which had been landed from the *San Margarita.* They deposited those they had with them by sections in the Municipality, and emerged with the others, bright, brand-new Berdan breechloaders. They seemed proud of their weapons; some went so far as to kiss them; and, if looks were any criterion of feelings, their glowing faces said, as emphatically as it could be said, "Now that we have good tools, we shall show what good work we can do." Boxes of metallic ball-cartridges, centre-primed, were piled on the Plaza, and were quickly and quietly opened and distributed. Not an accident occurred in the process. Many a less wonderful phenomenon has been advertised as a miracle. I fully expected to have my coat spattered with some warrior's brains every other moment, with such a reckless rashness were the rifle-muzzles poked about. One shot did go off, while a high private was trying if his cartridge fitted to the chamber; the charge singed the hair of a captain, and the bullet lodged in the middle of the word "Prudencia" on the façade of the Municipality. The captain would have it that he was killed,

spun round on his own centre like a humming-top, and finally, coming to himself, shook out his clothes in search of the lead. There was a roar of laughter, and the careless soldier who had endangered the life of his officer was allowed to pass without rebuke. That was the worst point in Carlist discipline I had seen yet. There was too much familiarity towards superiors; the rank and file lacked that fear and respect for the officers which are the strongest cement of the military fabric. This was to be explained partly because the officers were not above the men in social position, and partly because any enterprising gentleman who bought gold braid and tassels, sported a sword, and appraised himself an officer, was accepted at his own valuation.

CHAPTER IX.

The Cura of Vera—Fueros of the Basques—Carlist Discipline—Fate of the *San Margarita*—The Squadron of Vigilance—How a Capture was Effected—The Sea-Rovers in the Dungeon—Visit to the Prisoners—San Sebastian—A Dead Season—The Defences of a Threatened City—Souvenirs of War—The Miqueletes—In a Fix—A German Doctor's Warning.

THESE horrible and bloodthirsty Carlists turned out to be amiable individuals on acquaintance. I suppose they could put on a frown for their enemies, but for my companions and myself they had nothing but open smiles and hearty hand-grips. One great recommendation was our being billeted on the parish priest. His reverence had none of the Santa Cruz in him; he was a gentle, zealous, studious clergyman, yet was filled with the purest enthusiasm for the cause of what he regarded as legitimacy. The Don Carlos who raised the standard in

1833, he maintained, was the rightful heir to the throne of Spain. The law by which the succession had been changed was an *ex post facto* law, passed after his birth, and not promulgated until Ferdinand VII. had a female child. In May, 1845, that Don Carlos, really Charles V., resigned in favour of his son, Charles VI., and in September, 1868, he, in his turn, relinquished his rights to the present claimant to the throne, Charles VII., whom might God preserve.

The Cura was unusually civil towards us because we were Irish, and as Irish were presumably of clean lineage—that is to say, free from kinship with Jews or infidels. As reputed descendants of settlers from Bilbao, we were entitled to a full share in all the privileges of the province of Biscay. This was as well to know. It was a consolation to us to learn that it was an advantage to be Irish somewhere under the sun. The King of Spain is but Lord of Biscay, and has to swear under the oak-tree of Guernica to respect the fueros or customs of the province. Don Carlos had so done; he was in Spain, it was true, but where he was at the moment

the Cura was unable to say; his court was perambulatory.

The fueros were abolished by the Cortes in 1841 and but partially restored in 1844, so that in inscribing them as one of the watchwords on their banner, the Basques were fighting for something more solid than glory. They cling to their rights as Britons do to Magna Charta, only with this difference—they have a clearer conception of what they are. I had been trying to arrive at some knowledge of the fueros, and obtained much information from a volume by the late Earl of Carnarvon.* Guipúzcoa, Alava, and Biscay, though an integral part of the Spanish monarchy, for ages enjoyed their own laws, and a recapitulation of some which were in force in Biscay will be a fair sample of all. Biscay was governed by its own national assemblies, arranged its own taxation, yielded contributions to the Sovereign as a free gift, had no militia laws, was exempt from naval

* Review of the social and political state of the Basque Provinces, at the end of a book on "Portugal and Galicia," published in 1848 by John Murray.

impressment, provided for its own police in peace and its own defence in war. No monopoly, public or private, could be established there. Only Biscayans by birth could be nominated to ecclesiastical appointments; every Biscayan was noble, and his house was inviolable; there was perfect equality of civil rights. In short, those Basques flourished under the amplest measure of Home Rule, and had all the benefits of the Habeas Corpus Act under another name long before that Bill was legalized by the Parliament of Charles II. The liberty-loving Basques were tolerant as well as independent. The Inquisition was never vouchsafed breathing-room in their midst. When Protestants escaped from France after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, they were treated to asylum amongst them.*

We moved about among the guerrilleros. They were mostly light-limbed and stalwart men, and were none the worse for the sprinkling of seniors of sixty and lads of sixteen. Many had the bow-legs of the mountaineer, built like the hinder pair

* It should be noted that in July, 1876, directly after the war was over, the fueros were entirely done away with by a special law.

of artillery-horses—the legs that tell of muscularity and lasting stamina. Their drill was very loose, and skill in musketry left much to be desired. They had no perception of distance-judging, and some were so grossly ignorant of the mechanism of their weapons that they knocked off the back-sights of their rifles, alleging that they hindered them from taking correct aim. The Marquis de la Hormazas—a meagre, tall, elderly man—was commandant of the battalion, and was stern in the exaction of discipline. During the stay of the Navarrese at Vera, a captain was degraded to the ranks for having entered the lists of illicit love. The Frenchwoman who was the partner of his amour was politely shown over the mountain and warned not to return.

The battalion left for the interior of the province. Leader was still too weak to enter on a campaign; Sheehan had to look after the belongings of his comrade Taylor, and break the news of his death to his mother; and I saw plainly that it was out of the question attempting to catch up the flitting headquarters of Don Carlos without a horse.

Besides, I had to complete arrangements for the transmission of letters and telegraphic messages when I had any to send, and for the reception of money; in sum, to open up communication with a base. So we returned to France as we came.

On arriving at St. Jean de Luz, a startling rumour awaited us. The steel-built Carlist privateer had been captured at the mouth of the Adour; she had been taken a prize to San Sebastian; Stuart and Travers were in close custody; and there were alarmists who whispered that they would be tried by drum-head as pirates, and hung up in chains in the cause of humanity. It was well for me I did not accept the invitation to that water-party. I ran over to Bayonne to ascertain what particulars I could, saw the Carlist Junta, the British and Spanish Vice-Consuls, and from their combined and conflicting narratives was able to sift some grains of the authentic. But the sudden first report was undeniable. The weasel had been caught asleep.

The *San Margarita* was a serious loss to the cause. She had cost £3,500. She was very fast,

being capable of a speed of between ten and eleven knots an hour, and should be equal to fourteen knots if her lifting screw had another blade. A three-bladed screw had been provided, and was to have been fitted to her stern on her return from the ill-fated expedition which put an end to her roving career. It was true that the descendant of kings was under bolts and bars. The French journals described him as a "Monsieur Stuart, a Scotch colonel, entrusted by the English Catholics with collections for the Carlist cause." They had never heard of his royal lineage, of his connection with the Austrian cavalry, or of his exploits by the side of the unhappy Maximilian in Mexico. He assumed the responsibility of ownership of the vessel. The hue-and-cry description of him was "a man of forty to forty-five years of age, over middle height, figure spare, features thin, and resolute in expression."

The burly bronzed Corkonian was also in durance, and with the pair of officers were a picked crew of thirteen Englishmen, including engineers, steward, stokers, and able-bodied seamen, and

one Spanish cabin-boy. A Basque pilot, an old smuggler, familiar with every nook and crevice of the Bay of Biscay, had escaped.

If reports were credible, the *San Margarita* had already landed two millions of cartridges, and an immense quantity of arms. Much vexation was caused to the officers of the Spanish navy in those quarters by the stories of the daring feats she had achieved, absolutely discharging a cargo once on the very wharf of Lequeieto, as if she were a peaceful merchantman, and on another occasion sending off rifles and ammunition by small boats in the dead of night, a man-of-war lying sleepily oblivious of what was going on just outside her. It was felt that her continued impunity was a reproach, and three small vessels of the Spanish navy were commissioned to cruise between Bilbao and Bayonne on the look-out for her. This little squadron of vigilance consisted of *El Aspirante* and *El Capricho*, gun-boats, and the *Buenaventura*, a three-gun steam-brig. On Tuesday, August 12th, the *Buenaventura*, flying a George's Jack at her peak, was off Fontarabia for a portion of the day,

close in shore. At nightfall she disappeared—it is now supposed into the sheltered and almost invisible inlet of Los Pasages, between Fontarabia and San Sebastian. Before daybreak on Wednesday, the Carlists under Dorregarray swarmed down from the hills covering Cape Higuer. The *San Margarita* came in sight, and began landing arms in the same spot where the undisturbed landing of the 28th July had been effected. Not more than three hundred stand had been put on shore, and about one hundred thousand cartridges in boxes, labelled in English "metallic rolled cartridges, centre-primed," when she had to get away, as the daylight began to play the informer. She dropped down towards Bayonne, and appears to have reached a point some four miles from the French shore (the exact distance is a moot question), where she laid to and allowed her furnaces to cool. The men were "dead tired out" after their night's work, and the captain considered that he was within the protection of French waters. But there is a very ancient proverb about a pitcher and a well, and the period of its realization had been

reached at last. Whilst the *San Margarita* was effecting the landing, a coastguard's boat had slipped from under the heights of Fontarabia, and given notice of what was going on to the *Buenaventura* in Los Pasages, and the brig steamed out, still with the British colours at her peak. Whilst the Carlist privateer was motionless in fancied security—there was some want of prudence or vigilance there, surely—the gun-brig crept down and overhauled her before alarm could be given, and the rakish schooner-yacht, the skimmer of the seas, had the humiliation of falling a prey to a wretched slow boat that she could laugh at with steam up in the open sea. The arrest was made in the usual manner, and the captors behaved with the customary naval courtesy. They were overjoyed at their good fortune, and gave their prisoners to eat and to drink—champagne to the officers and chacoli to the men. They towed their prize into the bay of St. Sebastian, and there was triumph. The yellow and scarlet flag of Spain was over the wee *San Margarita* as she entered, and Colonel Stuart and Captain Travers and their com-

panions must have felt sore, for all the good cheer and generous wine. Still there was quite a courtly scene on board—hand-shakings and reciprocal compliments—as they were marched off to the dungeon of the Castillo de la Mota on a hill in the city, where they were incarcerated. There they did not fall on such pleasant lines as afloat. The Republicans lost no time in unloading the vessel. They took off her, with a hurry that betrayed apprehension, 1,545 carbines and six Berdan breech-loaders, with a number of armourer's tools. It was remarked that the rifles supplied to the regular troops from Madrid were sighted to eight hundred metres, but that the range of those seized from the Carlists did not exceed five hundred.

I went over to San Sebastian by tug from Socoa on the 16th of August, and sent up my card to M. de Brunet, the British Vice-Consul. He said he had called on the prisoners, and that the sailors murmured at their treatment. If I went to the citadel, after three—as it was Saturday afternoon, and visiting hours commenced then—I could see them without difficulty. I did clamber up the hill,

and found this was not the case. On owning that I had no pass from the military governor, I was denied admittance. Happening to meet the commandant, I represented what I wanted, and he very civilly granted me leave to visit the prisoners "para un momento." As the gates were thrown open Stuart advanced and met me, grasping my hand cordially, and slipping a letter up the sleeve of my coat. He had caught sight of me labouring up the hill, and had immediately hastened to scribble a few lines which he trusted to my sympathy with misfortune to smuggle to their destination for him. He was not mistaken, and in so doing I had no qualm of conscience. I accompanied him to his cell, and he told me the story of the capture of the *San Margarita.* It was substantially as I have related; they thought they were in a *mare clausum,* at all events they had drifted out of it on the tide of fate; but there was a nice question of international law. The *ruse* of hoisting the British flag was legitimate if the *Buenaventura* substituted her own flag before proceeding to board them. The *San Margarita* had the flags of more

than one nation in her lockers; but the gun-brig had no power to act the policeman in neutral waters. There was the point. Travers was in a separate lodging; they had been accommodated at first in the one cell, but they could not agree—ashore as afloat the old feud existed. However, both assented to a truce in order to have a talk with me. They were cheerful, had cigars *ad libitum* (at their own expense, of course), and were permitted to get their rations from the Hôtel de Londres in the city. The cells they occupied were bare, whitewashed, low-ceiled rooms, some eight paces by six. They were not so clean or well-ventilated as Newgate cells, and the beds were spread on the floor. The captives had access to newspapers and writing materials, and it is but the due of the officers in charge to testify that they were extremely affable and disposed to make their prisoners as comfortable as possible. Still, in the close, stifling weather, to be locked up within the narrow circuit of a dungeon was limbo. The pair wore their own clothes, Travers still retaining a navy-jacket with brass buttons engraved with the initials of some yacht

club, and did not complain of having been subjected to indignities. While I was with them the shadow of a face darkened the window; it was a Carlist prisoner who had hoisted himself up on the shoulders of a comrade from a yard below; he had a letter in his mouth. I took it, and slipped him a bundle of cigars for distribution among his fellow cage-birds. From this it may be deduced that the gaol regulations were not very stringent. The Carlists were treated as forfeit of war, not felons, and had no honest chance of illuminating their brows with the martyr halo of Baron von Trenck or Silvio Pellico.

San Sebastian is the most modern town in the Peninsula, having been re-built in 1816, three years after its destruction by the incensed allied troops. It is a great summer resort of wealthy Spanish idlers—a sort of Madrid-super-Mare. The attractions of the capital are to be had there, with the supplementary advantages of pure air, mountain scenery, and luxurious sea-bathing on a level sandy beach. There is a public casino, and a score of clandestine hells where a fortune can be lost in a

night at monté—in short, every infernal facility for Satanic gambling. Cigarettes are cheap, and so are knives. There is an Alameda, where the band plays, and a passable imitation of the Puerta del Sol, less the fountain, in the broad arcaded Plaza de la Constitucion. There is a small theatre, a spacious bull-ring, and several commodious churches, where Pepita can talk the language of fans to her heart's content. Every attraction of Madrid which could reasonably be expected is to be had, I repeat, and hidalgos and sloe-eyed señoras speckle the promenades in the gloaming, and impart a mingled aroma of garlic and gentility, pomade and pretentiousness, to the chief town of Guipúzcoa. San Sebastian would be for Madrileños what Paris is for Bostonians, if a few of the attractions of the "only court," which could not reasonably be expected, were not lacking—say an occasional walk round of the Intransigentes, to show their political muscles; a grandiloquent, frothy word-tempest in the Congress, and the Sunday cock-fight. I am speaking, be it understood, of San Sebastian in ordinary summers. A short twelvemonth before

my visit, a pair of pouting English lips told me it was "awfully jolly."

At the date with which I am concerned, it was anything but "awfully jolly." The fifteen thousand rich visitors who were wont to flock into the city during the season had gone elsewhere to recruit their health on the sands and lose their money at the gaming-tables. They had been frightened to the coasts of France by the apparition of Carlism, and San Sebastian was plaintive. Her streets and her coffers were empty. The campamento of bathing-huts was ranged as usual on the velvet rim of the ear-like bay, but no bathers were there. There were more domestics than guests in the hotels; and at the *table d'hôte* three sat down in a saloon designed for a hundred to breakfast in; and we had no butter. The peasants in the country round were afraid to bring in the produce of their dairies and barn-yards. The bull-ring was to let; conscientious barbers shaved each other or dressed the hair on the wax busts in their windows, in order to keep alive the traditions of their craft; the fiddlers in the concert-room of the casino scraped

lamentations to imaginary listeners. A Sahara of dust had settled on the curtain of the theatre, and fleet-footed spiders made forages athwart it from one cobwebby stronghold to another. The once festive resort had lost its spirits completely, and all on account of this civil war. It was summer, but the city was in a state of hibernation. No business was done in the shops, the cafés were empty, most of the resident population who could afford it had emigrated, and the public squares were as vacant as if there were a perpetual siesta. There was no sign of animation, as we understand it in England. There were but three vessels in the west bay—the *Buenaventura*, a merchant steamer, and the *San Margarita*, pinioned at last, her yellow funnel cold. Sojourn in the place was insupportable. I knew not how to kill the tedious hours. I climbed again to the Castle of the Mota, inspected some English tombs on the slope of the acclivity, and noticed that if the citadel is still a position of strength, nature deserves much of the credit. The defences recently thrown up had been devised and executed carefully, and if the defenders

were only true to themselves, the Carlists, with no better artillery than they possessed, might as well think of taking the moon as of entering San Sebastian. They would have a formidable fire from well-planted cannon to face; stockades, and strong earthworks, and more than one blockhouse cunningly pierced with loopholes, to carry. Even if San Sebastian was entered, the configuration of the streets was such as to give every aid to disciplined men as opposed to mere guerrilleros. The city is built in blocks, on the American system; the wide thoroughfares cross each other at right-angles, and all of them could be swept as with a besom by a few guns *en barbette* behind a breastwork at either end. In this sort of work, accuracy of aim is not called for, as in that warfare up in the mountains. If it were, not much reliance could be placed on the Republican artillery. General Hidalgo had well-nigh nullified that arm of the service. A Carlist leader, in whose information and whose word confidence could be reposed, assured me that not a single Carlist had yet been killed or wounded by the Republican

gunners. The estimated lists of the enemy's casualties given by both parties during the struggle, I may remark *en passant*, were grossly exaggerated. The butcher's bill was very small in proportion to the expenditure of gunpowder. Returning to the question of the defence of San Sebastian—even on the supposition that the main works and town were to fall into the hands of the Carlists, the citadel still remained, where a determined leader could hold out till relief came, as long as his provisions lasted. This lofty citadel is almost impregnable. It was hither the French retired in 1813, and it took General Graham all that he knew to dislodge them. If I were asked what were the prospects of the Carlists getting into the place, I should say there was but one—by crossing over a golden bridge. But that implied the possession of money, and money was precisely what the Carlists declared they needed most.

There was always the remote hazard of a Carlist rising in San Sebastian, for there were in the city the children of settlers from the rural districts