

LITERATURE.

ANSWER TO "DINNA FORGET."

And did ye say unto me, Dinna forget?
Oh! Lassie, I hae na forgiven ye yet,
To doubt for a moment my true faith to thee,
To think that thou'd e'er be forgotten by me.

Ye never hae loved me—ye ne'er could love
Ane whom ye could e'en suspect would e'er rove?
Oh, why did ye wrong me sae—why did ye let
Our parting be marred by that "dinna forget."

Had I loved thee less kindly, less deeply and true,
I might then hae expected suspicion frae you;
But have I by word or by action e'er let
You believe for a moment that I could forget.

You know full well lassie my heart has been thine,
Sin' the days o' our childhood—the days o' lang syne—
And nae true son o' Scotland e'er brak his faith yet,
Or needed the warning o' "dinna forget."

Charlottetown, 1848.

TOM THORNE.

A TALE OF THE MASORCHIA CLUB,
AT BUENOS AYRES.

CHAPTER III.

About the time our story commences, 1841, Rosas was beginning that system of terrorism, espionage, confiscation and secret assassination, which has since made his government so notorious abroad and so dreaded at home. The Monto Videans were in his province of Santa Fe, in the north; and his political opponents, the Unitarians,* were supposed to be plotting in the capital; but Rosas was not the man to stick to the common modes of war. If he could not inspire confidence among friends, he could at least inspire terror among his foes.

A club, calling themselves the friends of public security, the sons of liberty, or some such name, but called by others 'Masorcheros,' was established, and many enrolled themselves in this murderous body to save themselves. Rosas betook himself to the encampment he called the 'sacros lugares,' holy places; and thence issued secret orders to his myrmidons, to whose fury the town was completely abandoned.

There are few darker pages in the modern annals of South America than the records of the month of October, 1841, and April, 1842, in the devoted town of Buenos Ayres. Rosas, himself secure amid his savage soldiery, issued his secret death-roll.

The chief of the Masorcheros, anxious to secure their own safety, rivalled each other in their zeal to capture; and the work of death itself was intrusted to hands whose trade was blood.

Without trial, for offences, without warrants for apprehension, without even a knowledge of danger, houses were openly entered, men massacred, women flogged, and property destroyed; victims were decoyed out by friends, from theatres and ball-rooms; men were followed in the streets, and stabbed at their own doors; and concerted signals were arranged to tell the police carts, that wandered about the streets at night, where to find out the victims. We shall not give any more harrassing details here.

There is no doubt that there were more massacres committed than ever were ordered by authority; the machinery of murder, once set agoing, revolved of itself, and knives were sometimes made to settle old quarrels and long accounts. Rosas, when he found things going on too far, easily put a stop to them by disposing of some of the Masorcheros themselves, among others, the chief, who was thus forever prevented from telling any tales against his master.

Such unheard-of and unexpected scenes suddenly occurring in the midst of a happy, prosperous, and orderly city, were accompanied by strange anomalies. Foreigners could scarcely conceive the existence of a regular organized body of assassins. Natives, not yet schooled into distrust of their best friends, and perhaps not even conscious of guilt, could not, all at once, throw aside their habits of social conviviality.

The churches were open for their usual services, the markets still crowded; there was no rioting in the streets, which the police paraded as usual. Ministers and consuls still displayed their flags, and balls and dinners were as numerous as ever; and those who had not seen or suffered were unwilling to believe the horrid reports that circulated in secret whispers; and many who knew, or had seen some of the fearful goings-on around them, probably deemed an affectation of ignorance or indifference their best policy.

Such was the state of the city until the frequency of

* Unitarian, in the political dictionary of South America, is opposed to 'Federal.' Rosas pretends to govern on Federal principles—that is, the separate legislative independence of each province of the Confederation; but in fact he has made himself a Unitarian, since he 'unites' in himself (by extraordinary powers, given to him only for a season but retained ever since) a supremacy over the other provinces, and over the law and constitution.

* Maza, the president of the Sala of Representatives, and a high officer in one of the courts of justice, was murdered in (or close to) the senate house; his son was murdered the same evening; and no judicial inquiries ever took place in consequence. Why? Because, of course, it was done by authority.

outrage forced the natives to keep their houses, take refuge under the roofs of foreigners, smuggle themselves on board merchant vessels or men-of-war, or sneak through the deserted streets like doomed men shunning the contact of their fellows as if it had been a city of the plague.

It was at the beginning of this reign of terrorism, and the morning after the ball at Senora Tertulia's, that our friend Tom Thorne awoke in a room by no means so snug, airy, or odorous as his own well-appointed bedroom in the Calle Derecho. Close beside him, busily engaged in brushing his clothes with his hands, and alternately muttering maledictions against sanguinary Spaniards, and mumbling over odds and ends of old songs, was a strong-built ruddy-looking gentleman of about twenty-eight or thirty.

'Holla, Griffin?' cried Tom, 'where the deuce is this, and how came you here?'

'Faith, Mr. Thorne, I came here for much the same reason as you did; and, though not in a very creditable place, I can thank my stars I'm in good company anyhow.'

'But how came we here, Griffin?'

'Faith, Thorne, except your nerves are very steady (and in virtue of Senora Tertulia's champagne, mine are not) I think it would be as well to defer that same story until you have shaved, or you may run the risk of having some of the cuts in your face which were intended for your throat last night. You see, sir, I left La Senora's about the same time you did. They say the cool air is refreshing, but I never found it so after drinking champagne. Well, as I was stumbling along, I fell over a body stretched across the pavement. 'You have taken mighty convenient quarters for a cold night,' thought I, 'bad luck to you;' and, intending to do him a good turn, as I might require it myself soon, I was trying to raise him up, when two men, who were standing in the shadow of a door-way, within a foot of me, cried, 'Hist, hist, passa adelante, amigo.' 'Come and help me with this poor devil here,' said I. 'Pass a head, friend, if you do not want the same accommodation,' said they, throwing the light of a dark lantern suddenly, and only for a moment, on the object of my attention. I required no second bidding, Thorne. The pavement was soft and warm enough for a corpse! My first thought was for a pistol or a stick, but I had neither. I looked at the men—there they stood, as cool and careless as the door-posts, and me fixed staring at them as if they had been Gog and Magog. 'Passa adelante,' growled out one of them, drawing a knife at the same time. This brought me to my senses, and I passed on, and, mark me, Thorne, as sober as a judge.

'Well, sir, off I started, leaving Gog and Magog to keep their watch at the door-post, when who should I overtake but yourself, walking as proud as a prince and as bold as a lion. We did not walk far till three men met us, one of whom threw the light of his dark-lantern full into your face, scanning it for a few seconds with more freedom than manners. Although dazzled and stupefied by the light, I saw you grasping your stick, and beginning to break our, when I interposed. 'Gentlemen,' said I, in my best Spanish (for it is always best to be civil), 'Gentlemen,' said I, 'we are English gentlemen who have lost our way. I'll give you fifty dollars,* and thanks to boot, if you please to take us to the police office.' You appeared inclined to show fight at the mention of the police office, but I passed it off as if you had more money than sense, and promised them fifty from you too; so after a slight struggle we secured you, and here we are, without any solutions of continuity, as surgeons say, except in our raiment.'

'But why did you not tell them to take us to my house?' said Thorne.

'Why, in the first place,' said Griffin, 'I have not the honour of knowing where you live; and, by Castor and Pollux! I would not have left you with those ruffians for a world of coppers.'

'But then the disgrace of being lodged in the prison all night!'

'As for that,' said the imperturbable Griffin, 'in my opinion the prisons will soon be fuller than the hotels in this city; and wherever you and I condescend to take up our quarters becomes *de ipso facto* respectable.'

'Well, well, Griffin, it's no use telling you to keep it quiet, but don't tell the ladies of it, at any rate.'

'Don't trouble yourself, Thorne—I won't be such a bear as that. But by the way Gog and Magog, as I'm a sinner, were standing either at or close by Mendoza's door: they could not be watching for any of them, could they?'

'Never fear,' said Thorne; 'Mendoza is very thick with the Government; at all events he was not at the party, and the ladies are sure to be well convoyed.'

Just as they were talking, a messenger came from the commissary of police, to summon them to the presence of the functionary, into whose dread presence they were immediately ushered.

The Commissary (a stout, healthy-looking man about middle age) sat smoking a cigarito, dressed in a red

* Dollars in Buenos Ayres mean small notes manufactured in London!! they used to be made payable at a national bank, in metallic dollars, and then they represented a silver dollar. This bank has been abolished, thanks to the 'Great Restorer of Laws,' and these paper dollars now vary from 1½d. to 4d. The arrival or departure of a vessel of war, with important despatches, will in one day cause a doubloon (L3 8s.) to be worth, say three hundred dollars, and the next day worth four hundred, much to the embarrassment of trade—metallic dollars not being current money.

waistcoat, a braided jacket, and a slouching cap with a broad gilt band; from a button-hole of his jacket was the usual red ribbon with the head of Rosas upon it, and the favourite motto which he had caused to be inscribed on the national colours, and over every proclamation, 'Vivan los Federales—mueran los salvages mundos ascherosas Unitarios.*' He was listening attentively to the information given by a very precise, trim, well-dressed looking youth, if we might call him so, for his dress betokened youth more than his face, which at that moment appeared particularly pale. The conversation, whatever was its nature, appeared to be taken notes of by a clerk, who was sitting near them, and it dropped the moment they entered; whether it was that Thorne, who was the first to enter, had still the sound of Mendoza buzzing in his ears, or that, in the excited state of his nervous system, he was thinking of the frightful scene committed at his doors, certain it is, that on his appearance, Don Felipe Le Brun started and appeared agitated for a moment, and our friend thought he heard the name of Mendoza.

'Sorry to meet you here,' exclaimed Don Felipe, suddenly recovering from his start. 'Can I be of any service, sir? If so, command me.'

'I am sorry to meet you here, sir,' said Thorne in German, so as not to be understood by the Commissary, and viewing Le Brun with a keen and inquisitive look; 'I am sorry to find that you have such private business in these quarters. Pray, Senor,' he continued to the magistrate, who appeared on the point of interrupting him, 'do not allow me or my friend to disturb your correspondence with Don Felipe Le Brun.'

'My business with you, Senor Thorne,' said the magistrate, 'is confined to giving you the advice, which you may find of use, to keep more orderly hours, and thus you will save the police the trouble of providing you with night quarters. I have no complaint against you—you may go.'

Most men living in a community where a magistrate is not only the instrument but the interpreter of the law, and where there is no free press or public opinion to expose the injustice or temper the insolence of power, would have gladly and immediately availed themselves of the magisterial permission to withdraw, with thanks for the leniency extended to them. But Mr. Thorne was neither a selfish man nor a timid; and his was not the disposition humbly to accept that as a favour which he did not conceive could be withheld from him as a right. He knew that the most arrogant and imperative of the natives were only so to those who cringed to them as they themselves cringed to their superiors. As a proud and independant man, and a good citizen, he resolved to let the proud official know of the scene witnessed by his friend the preceding night; and he had hopes, by so doing, either to confirm or allay his suspicions of the nature of Brun's communication with the *Juez de Paz*. He therefore answered with a bold front—

'I thank the Senor *Juez de Paz* for his counsel, and I beg to inform him, that the officers of the police could scarcely be better, and have been much worse employed than affording protection to those who demanded it on a night like the last.'

The official started up—his eyes sparkling, his face suffused with passion. Before he could speak, Mr. Thorne proceeded—

'Sir, as a respectable citizen of this city, as an accredited consular agent to this government, I think it my duty to report to you, one of its chief magistrates, that last night a man was found murdered on the pavement in front of Mendoza's house, and two men standing close beside him; and these men, Signor *Juez de Paz*, were dressed the same as those who brought us here last night. Probably, Signor Le Brun, this may be the same information you were conveying to his honour.'

Signor Le Brun with great energy protested that it was the first he had heard of the affair.

But by this time the *Juez de paz* had recovered his command of temper. He was, in fact, somewhat cowed by the manly bearing of Thorne, who, as an Englishman, and in a kind of official capacity, was, in some respects, beyond his jurisdiction. Moreover, he was aware that Thorne had, in one instance, for some petty grievance, demanded and obtained redress from the 'Illustrious Restorer of Laws' in person; and thus, though he felt indignant at being bearded in his own hall—I had almost said *hell*; he rather considered Thorne as a person whose officious information was to be got rid of than as a culprit to be bullied. He therefore contented himself by saying, 'Don Thomas, this is not an affair that comes under my cognisance, or yours; and let me assure you, the less you trouble yourself with the affairs of others the better.'

'But, Sir, with respect to the man on the pavement,' commenced Griffin.

'Officers, take the fool away!' roared the magistrate, with his hand on the bell.

But the worthy Radamanthus and his myrmidons were saved the trouble; for Tom Thorne, with a bow to the exasperated official, and a kind of dubious glance at Le Brun, hurried Griffin out of the Sale Justice without extraneous assistance.

'By the powers of Molley Kelly and the bean stalk of Jack the giant-Killer!' said Griffin, when once they were out of sight and hearing, 'but that justice cares no more about the finding of dead men in the street than I would

* Let the Federals live,—let the savage, dirty, ruthless Unitarians die!—or, Up with the Federals; down with the Unitarians!