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SELECT POETRY.

THE BATTLE OF FREEDOM.

The true men have risen; the battle of freedom
Again must be fought by the true and the brave;
They come from the mountains, they come from the
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VIDOCQ:

OR,

The Charcoal Burner of Rouen.

A THRILLING SKETCH.

Not many miles from the city of Rouen, in France, is located a wild and somewhat extensive forest. This wood is chiefly inhabited by charcoal burners; and many are the dark legends in which they figure. Of course these tales are mostly exaggerated, and in most cases have no foundation at all.

During the year 183-, however, several travellers, whose way lay through this forest, mysteriously disappeared. The whole place was scoured, and the inhabitants rigorously examined, but no clue was obtained, and they were dismissed. For several months after this no travellers were missed, and finally the public excitement was allayed. It is at this time that the incidents related in this sketch occurred.

It was a fine morning in early autumn, and the woods presented a beautiful appearance. The birds were gaily singing, and the rays of an afternoon sun were gilding the tree tops. In the very heart of the forest, surrounded by the heaps of smoking earth, stood one of those burners. He was a splendid specimen of a man, as far as physical proportions are concerned; fully six feet in height, and stout in proportion. His broad shoulders might have contained the strength of a Hercules. His head was large and covered with a shaggy mass of hair, and his features were decidedly repulsive. His eyes were small and nearly covered with bushy eyebrows. He had, altogether, a cruel and malevolent appearance.

As we introduce him to the reader, he was leaning upon a large axe apparently in a listening position. The road ran by the place where he was standing, but he could not see far along it on account of a sudden turn a little distance from him. The clatter of a horse's hoofs, however, could be plainly heard, and in a few minutes horse and rider came in sight. The new comer was a small and active-looking man, and from his dress was a gentleman well off. His eyes were unusually keen and searching, and were bent upon the charcoal burner in such a

manner that the latter completely quailed before him.

"A far day, my good man," said the horseman, in the easy manner of one speaking to an inferior.

"Excellent, Monsieur, for one of my trade. I love not the boiling suns of summer, nor yet the bleak winds of winter."

"Since you are so nicely suited, I suppose you are what so few are in this world—happy?"

"You say truly, Monsieur—few, few indeed are truly happy. There is no happiness without contentment."

"And are you not content?"

"At times I think I am; but when I see the nobleman riding by in his coach and four, rolling in riches, with servants to obey his every wish, and I have to toil hard for my daily bread I cannot help thinking that God is sometimes unjust."

"And do you never think of appropriating any of these superfluous riches to yourself?"

"What does Monsieur mean? I trust that no thought of disobeying like the laws of God and man ever enter into my mind."

"I meant nothing; it was merely an idle question; but I did not stop to talk thus, but to ask the way to P—. It is getting late, and I must be on the move."

"If Monsieur is in a hurry I can direct him to P— in about half the time."

"I shall be much obliged to you my friend."

"This lane begins very near my home, which is about half a mile further on. You had better stop there, as my wife can point it out to you."

"I will do so. Here is a reward," exclaimed the horseman, offering him a piece of gold.

The other drew back and refused to take it, alleging he had done nothing to deserve it.

The horseman then put spurs to his horse and rode away, a bead in the road soon hiding him from sight. Having rode on until he imagined that his horse's hoofs could not be heard by the charcoal burner, should the latter be listening, he dismounted and retraced his steps. He arrived at the place where he had left his friend the charcoal burner, but the latter was not to be seen. The stranger hastened back to his horse and remounted.

"It is as I expected," he muttered. This road makes a large bend here, and by cutting across he can reach his hat before me. I care little, though, as I am far-armed. We shall see who'll come out first. I comprehend why he refused my gold piece, he considers it as his own, and he thinks he may as well take all together; but I must hurry on and finish this business before nightfall."

So saying he put spurs to his horse and rode on. Ten minutes' sharp riding brought the charcoal burner's hut in view. As he first caught sight of it, he thought he detected a man's face pressed against one of the windows. Of this, however, he could not be certain, as the face, if such it was, was instantly disappeared. At the sound of his horse's hoofs, an old woman appeared in the doorway, and gazing curiously at him, waited till he rode up. The horseman could not help thinking that the woman was a most fitting companion for her husband. The expression of her countenance was even more villainous. The stranger, however, did not stop to criticise her appearance, but courteously saluted her saying:

"I believe, madam, that you are the wife of the charcoal burner, whom I met up the road?"

The woman replied in the affirmative.

"Then I will tell you that I am bound for P—, which I wish to reach before nightfall. He told me of a lane which was much shorter than the regular road, which, he said, you could point out to me."

"Certainly! It is all Monsieur wishes, he is easily satisfied. You may see a little way up that large tree which towers above the rest; just beyond that large rock and the lane enters the road on the other side of it. As it is very narrow and grown up with bushes, you would hardly notice it. But with these directions you can hardly fail."

"Never you fear; I shall not miss the road."

"Is that all Monsieur wishes?"

"I believe so; but stop a minute. I offered your husband a piece of gold, and he refused to take it. Perhaps you may be more sensible."

The old woman greedily took the proffered coin, saying:

"Pierre is too sensitive. We might both starve before he would take a cent."

"I see you differ from him a little," returned the horseman, laughing. He then put spurs to his horse, and rode on. In a few minutes he reached the large rock alluded to, and could then perceive the entrance to a narrow lane, artfully concealed by bushes. He soon made his way through them, and when once in the lane, found it a little wider than he expected. It also became free of bushes, as he proceeded. He stopped a moment to examine the priming of his pistol, muttering:

"My worthy friends are rather sharp. They do not do their murdering in the open road, where spilled blood might lead to their detection, but inveigle the unfortunate traveller into the dark lane, where he may be safely put out of the way and none be the wiser of it. At any rate, I am fully prepared for them, and they will not put me out of the way without a struggle."

Having seen that his arms were ready for use, he rode slowly forward, keeping a careful watch on each side of the road, that he might not be surprised. As long as the woods kept open as they were, he had no fear, as there was no good hiding place for a man. Ere long the woods began to get thicker and more sombre. Little hillocks, covered with bushes became more frequent, until at last they became a long range skirting at each side of the road. The horseman felt that the time which was to try him was near at hand and he dropped the reins until his hand covered a holster pistol, which he firmly grasped, in such a manner as a per-

son would not notice, and he then assumed an air of carelessness, though his watch was now keener than ever. At length he came to a place which he felt contained his enemy. Nature seemed to have adapted this place for the purpose of concealment. The rocks which skirted the road at this place were about breast high, and so perpendicular as to be nearly impervious. The tall trees on each side of the road twined their tops together, forming a natural roof of leaves and branches, and rendering the place as dark and dismal as midnight.

It was a scene sufficient to appal the stoutest heart, but the horseman, although he knew that the next moment might be his last, rode on with as careless an air as he might have worn had he been traveling the streets of a populous city. His hand still grasped the butt of a pistol, and his keen eyes still searched each covert. Suddenly a pistol shot rung out upon the air, and his hat fell to the ground, with a bullet-hole through it, not more than an inch above where his head had been. Instantly turning in the direction of the sound, he beheld a slight wreath of smoke curling up from behind a bush, and without a moment's hesitation, he leveled his pistol and fired. The aim was terribly fatal. A wild shriek rang upon the air, and the next moment there sprang from behind the tree, not the charcoal burner, as he had expected, but his wife. She was flowing copiously from her forehead, and presented a horrible spectacle. She tottered to the edge of the wall of rocks and fell into the road, a corpse.

"Had I known it to be a woman," the horseman muttered, "I never would have fired. But it is too late to moralize. What can have become of my friend, the charcoal burner?"

As he spoke, he turned round quickly and encountered the object of his thought. It was luckily for him, that he was so quick. The charcoal burner held a gleaming knife in his hand, already uplifted to strike. While the horseman's attention had been engaged by the tragical end of the woman, he had silently crept up behind him, and the would-be assassin sprang forward, making a desperate leap at his breast. The horseman still held the discharged pistol in his hand, and with its long barrel managed to parry the blow.

He then buried his spurs deep into the horse's sides, and the goaded beast sprang forward so violently as to dash the charcoal burner to the ground, and completely spring over him dashing the knife from his hand, leaving him stunned in the middle of the road. The horseman turned hastily, and drawing his remaining pistol from his holster, waited for the other to rise. The latter staggered to his feet, and leaning against the rocks on the side of the road, gazed sullenly and revengefully on his conqueror. Thus the strange couple regarded each other for some time, until at last the horseman broke the silence:

"So my friend" he said, "your career is ended at last."

"Yes, curse you! I'd rend you asunder too if—"

"You dared, I presume," put in the stranger. "I doubt not your good intentions, and can only thank heaven that you have not a power proportionate to your will, but I am doubly thankful that I have been the means of ridding the earth of such a monster. I presume you can give a pretty good account of those mysterious disappearances of late?"

"Aye, that I can! you are the first richly freighted traveler who has entered that lane, and escaped the bullet or the knife."

"Pshaw! do you take me for one of those simpletons whose purses are better filled than their heads?"

"No," exclaimed the other with sudden energy. "I know better. From the very first you seemed to have read my very intention, and you must have been sent expressly to entrap me. In other words you are a detective in disguise. Well, you have come out best, but you have played a desperate part. Few would have escaped as you have, for my wife is a good shot. But you seemed from the first to be fortune's favorite."

"I certainly had a narrow escape," remarked the other, pointing to the bullet-hole in his hat.

"But it is not the first time that fortune has proved friendly to me."

"Well, who are you?" at length demanded the other.

"My name is Vidocq."

"Great heavens! the Parisian detective!—I might have known that it would be all up with me when you are pitted against me."

"Yes; business at the metropolis being rather dull, and having heard some rumors of your doings, I thought I would take a trip out here, if only for the good of my health. But, it is late, and you must be moving."

"Where must I go?"

"To the gallows, in the end," was the cool reply; "but at present, to the jail at P—."

"To the gallows?" returned the other fiercely. "Never! any death but that!"

"You shall have a bullet through your head, if you prefer it!"

The other ducked his head in expectation of the shot, and then made a desperate spring at the detective. The latter, however, was in no hurry to fire, and coolly awaited the other's attack. The charcoal burner grasped the reins with his left hand, and with his right endeavored to grasp the pistol. The detective, however, caught his right hand, with his own left, and holding it up with an iron grasp passed his right hand under, until his pistol pressed against the other's forehead, when he fired. The other instantly relaxed his hold, and, with a terrible cry, fell back a corpse.

The detective, having accomplished the purpose of his visit, did not delay his return to Paris, but having explained the affair to the authorities at P—, he departed.

And thus was the earth rid of two as great monsters in human form as ever lived.

WHAT IS A RATION?

For the information of numerous inquirers, we give the following list of articles constituting a ration, from the army regulations:

20 oz. fresh and salt beef or 12 oz. pork.
18 oz. soft bread or flour, or 12 oz. hard bread.

2½ oz. beans or 3-5 oz. rice.
1 5-6 oz. sugar.
1 oz. coffee, ground.
¼ gill vinegar.

1 oz. candles.
1 oz. soap.
1 oz. salt.

This must answer for the subsistence of a soldier during the day, and, properly husbanded, it is enough.

The rations for a company of seventy-seven men aggregate as follows:

961 lbs. fresh and salt beef, or 57½ lbs. pork.
86½ lbs. salt bread or flour, or 57½ lbs. hard bread.

11½ lbs. beans, or 7½ lbs. rice.
8½ lbs. sugar.
4½ lbs. coffee, ground.
3½ quarts vinegar.

3 pecks potatoes.
1 3-16 lbs. candles.
3½ lbs. soap.
1 quart salt.

3 pints soft soap.

Company rations are served daily, and each company has its own cooks, who can, with proper attention and care, supply the men well each meal, and have enough to spare. If they do not know how they will soon learn, by saving scraps, making mixed dishes, &c., to make the rations go as far as possible.

POETICAL VIEW OF CHILDHOOD.

We never could have loved the world so well if we had had no childhood in it—if it were not the earth where the same flowers came up again every Spring that we used to gather with our tiny fingers as we sat lipping to ourselves on the grass—the same hips and haws on the autumn hedge—roses—the same redbreasts that we used to call "God's bird," because they did no harm to the precious crops. What novelty is worth that sweet monotony where everything is known, and loved because it is known? The wood I walk in on this mild May day, with the young yellow brown foliage of the oaks between me and the blue sky, the white starflowers and the blue-eyed speedwell and the ground ivy at my feet—what grove of tropic palms, what strange ferns or splendid broad petalled blossoms, could ever thrill such deep and delicate fibres within me as these home scenes.

These familiar flowers, these well remembered bird notes, this sky with its fitful brightness, these furrowed and grassy fields, each with a sort of personality given to it by the capricious hedgerows—such things as these are the mother tongue of our imagination, the language that is laden with all the subtle inextricable associations, the fleeting hours of childhood left behind them. Our delight in the sunshine on the deep blades of grass to-day might be more than the faint perception of wearied souls, if it were not for the sunshine and the grass in far off years, which still live in us, and transform our perception into love.—*Mill on the Floss.*

THE ABSENT.—Of all the exercises of the unlettered mind, perhaps none is attended with a more benign influence than that of indulging in a kind remembrance of the absent.

Every loving word that fell from the lips of the absent is treasured with tenderness. Each kind act is recollected with affection. We look forward to a meeting with unbounded happiness.

Have we parted in anger? Time softens us into indifference—at length into a quiet acknowledgment of past friendship. Have we parted in silent estrangement? This, too, wears away, and we must meet again to forget the past in future communications. Have we parted in grief? The sorrow is mutually borne, and tenderly consigned to the corner of our hearts devoted to the absent sharer.

Have we parted in love? No joy so great as the remembrance of it—no event so delighted or sacred as the re-union.

Absent, but not forgotten, is a sweet and touching memorial.

SOMETIME.—It is a sweet, sweet song, flowing to and fro amongst the topmost boughs of the heart, and fills the whole air with joy and gladness, as the songs of birds do, when the summer morning comes out of the darkness, and the day is born on the mountains. We have all our possessions in the future which we call "sometime." Beautiful flowers and sweet singing birds are there, only our hands seldom grasp the one, or our ears hear, except in far off strains, the other. But, oh, reader, be of good cheer, for all the good there is a golden "sometime."

When the hills and valleys of time are all passed, when the wear and the fever, the disappointment and the sorrow of life are over, then there is the peace, and the rest appointed of God. O homestead, over whose roof falls no shadow or even clouds, across whose threshold the voice of sorrow is never heard; built upon the eternal hills, and standing with its spires and pinnacles of celestial beauty among the palm trees of the city on high, those who love God shall rest under thy shadows, where there is no more sorrow, nor pain, nor the sound of weeping—sometimes.—*Peterson's Magazine.*

DURING a recent fire an old woman was very anxious to go through a street, which at the time was considered dangerous, but all her efforts were unavailing. At length she pushed one of the policemen aside, when that worthy preserved the public peace, saying, "Now, mam, you can't pass; if you do you'll be killed, and then you'll blame us afterwards."

DIDN'T TAKE THE PAPERS.

Some years ago, a lady noticing a neighbor who was not in her seat at church one Sabbath, called on her return home to inquire what should detain so punctual an attendant. On entering the house she found the family busy at work. She was surprised when her friend addressed her—

"Why! where have you been to-day, dressed up in your Sunday clothes?"

"To meeting."

"Why what day is it?"

"Sabbath day."

"Sal, stop washing in a minute! Sabbath day! Well I did not know it, for my husband has got so plaguey stingy, he won't take the paper, and we know nothing. Well who preached?"

"Mr. S—."

"What did he preach about?"

"It was on the death of the Saviour."

"Why, is he dead? Well, all Boston may be dead and we know nothing about it! It won't do, we must have the newspaper again, for everything goes wrong without the newspaper! Bill has almost forgot his reading, and Polly has got quite morose again, because she has no poetry and stories to read. Well, if we have to take a cart-load of potatoes and onions to market, I'm resolved to have a newspaper."

STRANGER YOU KIN COME IN.—A worthy friend from the farming districts, who occasionally drops in upon us to get the latest news, narrates the following.

A traveler passing through his neighborhood on horseback stopped at a modest cottage on the roadside, and asked for shelter, as it was raining.

"The head of the family came to the door, and accosted the traveler with—

"What do you want?"

"I want to stay all night."

"What are you?"

"The interrogatory was not fully understood by the traveler and he asked an explanation.

"I mean what are yer politics? rejoined the former, are they for the Union or agin it? Let's know."

This was a poser, as the traveler was not certain whether the man was for the Union or for the secessionists, and as he was anxious to put up for the night—so he made up his mind and said—

"My friend, I am for the Union and the Constitution."

"Stranger you kin come in."

It is needless to remark that the traveler dismounted, and both man and beast were hospitably taken care of for the night.

DESCRIPTION OF LOVE.—Love is like the devil, because it torments; like heaven, because it wraps the soul in bliss; like salt, because it is refreshing.

Like paper, because it often sets one on fire—

Like sugar, because it is sweet—

Like a rope because it is often the death of a man—

Like a prison, because it often makes a man miserable—

Like wine because it is here to-day and gone to-morrow—

Like a woman, because it guides one to the wished for port—

Like a Will-o'-the-Wisp, because it often leads one into the bog.

Like a fierce courser, because it often runs away with one.

Like the bite of a mad dog, or the kiss of a pretty woman, because they both make a man run mad.

Like a goose, because it is silly.

Like a rabbit because there is nothing like it.

In a word, it is like a ghost, because it is like everything and like nothing—often talked about, but never seen, touched, nor understood.

LETTERS BY PRIVATE HANDS.—Of all the "kind offices" solicited on the score of acquaintance or friendship, that of asking one to convey and deliver a letter by private hand is among the most unpleasant and annoying. It is also the most uncertain mode of conveyance in the world, for we think it may be laid down as a rule that those who resort to it never get the benefit of a prompt delivery of their communications, but frequently find that they have been resting quietly in the carpet-bag or pocket of the obliging private messenger for days and weeks, entirely forgotten and neglected. Such has been our own experience, both as the sender and receiver of letters by private hand, and we presume that promptness and accuracy in the matter referred to is the exception and not the rule. Men's thoughts are apt to be upon their own business, and although when they assume such little obligations they intend to carry them out, yet they often discover, to their great mortification, that they have made a miserable failure in their attempt to play private letter carrier.

This is our advice: don't send letters which are of the least importance by private hands if it can possibly be avoided.—*U. S. Mail.*

GOOD COUNSEL is one of the rarest and most difficult things to get. The prosperous man is not always wise. Is it wise to love money, and to fill our thoughts in getting and saving money? But the advice. How many thousands find the want of it? They are lost. They stand like men where several roads meet, not knowing which to take—with no one to tell them; they shut their eyes, trust to luck, and take the wrong one. Does any one doubt that thousands of ruined men and women could have been saved by a little timely counsel, backed by timely help? Good counsel is often all that is needed. The young man who hesitates who stands between good and evil—if he had but good counsel to help him to resist temptation, might be saved.

The girl of my heart.—Oyster Patty.

When is a sick man a contradiction?—When he is an impatient patient.

"Don't cry, little boy. Did he hit you on purpose?" "No sir—he bit me on the head."