

THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man.—Thomas Jefferson

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MISCELLANEOUS.

From a late Foreign Journal.

A STORY OF VENDEE.

Towards the latter part of April, in the year 1815, an unusual bustle was observed in an old castle situated on the banks of the Cèbron, within a few leagues of Parthenay. The proprietor of this mansion was an elderly lady, named Marguerite de—, whose husband was beheaded in 1794, for his loyalty and devotion to the unfortunate Louis. After the death of her husband, Marguerite left the abode of her ancestors with her infant son, to seek shelter in a foreign land; but before she could accomplish her purpose, she was overtaken by a party of republicans, who, finding that she was the widow of a royalist, sent her to Nantes where she was separated from her child and imprisoned. To add to her sufferings, she was informed, after she had been a few days in prison, that her son had, along with several more royalist children, been drowned in the Loire, by the orders of Carrier, a man who was chosen, on account of his stern and unrelenting cruelty, to put down the royalists in the neighborhood of Nantes. After six months confinement, Marguerite effected her escape out of prison, and fled to England, where she remained until the emigrants were recalled by the first consul. She then returned to her native country, carrying along with her, her niece, who was at that time only six years old, and took possession once more of her ancestral dwelling on the banks of the Cèbron, where she lived in a very retired manner, until the restoration of the Bourbons, 1814, when the castle of Marguerite was thronged with the faithful subjects of Louis XVIII, who, in the exuberance of their loyalty, made an old roof ring as in days of yore, with the shouts of *Vive le Roi!*

After this mark of respect to her rightful sovereign, Marguerite relapsed into her quiet mode of life. She was, however, not allowed to remain long in retirement.—The following year, the news of Napoleon's arrival in Paris, and of the departure of the Bourbons, caused the Vendéens to fly to arms, in the hope of making a stand against the usurper. Their head quarters was fixed at the dwelling of Marguerite, which circumstance occasioned the bustle spoken of at the commencement of our narrative.

A strong body of Napoleon's followers was at this time stationed at Parthenay, under the command of a gallant young officer, named Pierretrouve. The history of this young man is most remarkable.—He was drawn out of the Loire, when he was about three years old, by an old soldier who saved him at the imminent risk of his own life, and afterwards adopted him. At the battle of Friedland, he was made a drummer boy, and received a wound in the leg which compelled him to sit down, but he continued to beat the charge as coolly as if he had not been hurt. As Napoleon was passing in front of the army, he saw the lad who was wounded and said to him—

'Go, child, and have your wounds looked to.'

'Yes, sire,' said the undaunted boy, after we have gained the victory.'

Napoleon desired one of his attendants to look to the lad and passed on. Three months after, the drummer boy was sent to

a military school in Paris, and remained there until he was sixteen years old. He was then made an officer. At seventeen, he fought in Spain, and two years after, at Smolensk and Moskwa.

The following year he entered the young imperial guard, and distinguished himself by his courage and activity, at Lutzen, Dresden, Montmarail, and Brienne. On the abdication of the emperor, he was deprived of his rank, and he retired to a small village not far from the castle of Marguerite. In his rambles through the neighborhood, he often met that lady and her niece, Claire, and being struck with the beauty of the latter, was desirous of becoming acquainted with them; but they hearing that he was attached to the usurper, shunned all intercourse with him.

When Napoleon returned from Elba, Pierre was appointed to the command of the troops stationed at Parthenay. Hearing that the royalists had assembled in arms in great numbers at the castle of Marguerite, he went and dislodged them; and took the greater part of them prisoner. Marguerite and Claire fled in disguise to Parthenay but on their arrival in that town, they were discovered and thrown into prison. About a week after the attack on the castle, Pierre returned to Parthenay; and in looking over the list of unfortunate beings whom the authorities had condemned to be executed, he found the names of Marguerite and Claire. The day appointed for their execution was the 23d of June.

Early in the morning, on the day of execution, a brutal and excited mob was waiting near the prison to witness the dying agonies of those who were about to suffer. Pierre had tried to prevail on the authorities to spare the lives of the ladies, but finding that his efforts were unsuccessful, he determined to save them at the hazard of his life. Having procured a couple of dresses like those worn by the wives of the peasantry, he went to the prison, accompanied by a small party of soldiers, whom he left at the prison door to prevent the mob from following him. When he entered the cell where the ladies were confined, they started back as if an adder had approached them. Pierre addressed them respectfully, and told them that instead of coming to harm them, he had come to save them.

'Time presses,' said he; 'take these clothes and disguise yourselves, and I will conduct you to a secret passage, which leads to the forest. It is your only hope now. I have tried every other means to save.'

'And what recompense do you expect for this service?' demanded Marguerite.

'My recompense,' replied Pierre, 'will consist in the satisfaction I shall feel in knowing that I have contributed to your safety.'

'But,' said Marguerite, 'have you thought of the responsibility you incur, of the rigor of military law, and of the fury of the people?'

'Madam,' replied Pierre, 'I place the duty I owe to the Emperor before that which I owe to the people, but I think my honor more sacred than the oath that binds me to Napoleon. A soldier of the empire does not war with women, he dies rather than allows their blood to stain his uniform.'

'Young man,' interrupted Marguerite, 'we cannot accept the aid proffered to us by a soldier of the usurper. We would deem ourselves dishonored by it. We appreciate your conduct, but it must not be. Leave us to die.'

'I entreat you madam to accept my offer, before it is too late.'

He was interrupted by the loud execrations of the mob, who had beaten back the soldiers that he had stationed at the door of the prison, and were preparing to glut their vengeance in the blood of the royalists.—Pierre rushed out of the cell, and exhorted the soldiers not to allow their misguided countrymen to perpetrate so foul an act of cruelty as that which they were bent on.—The soldiers placed themselves by the side of their young commander, and favored by

the narrowness of the passage leading to the cell of the ladies, which only permitted the approach of a few of their assailants at a time; they kept them at bay for two hours, at the end of which time they were relieved by a strong detachment of troops who soon dispersed the mob.

Pierre received three severe wounds in the affray; and when the mob was beaten off, he lay weltering in his blood, unable to move. His wounds were bound up, and he was carried to a hospital. In half an hour after, the news of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo arrived; the ladies were immediately released, and borne in triumph to the castle. The followers of Napoleon, who had in any way distinguished themselves during the hundred days, were then hunted from place to place like wild beasts. Pierre was immediately marked out; and although his wounds were not yet healed, he was sent to prison, and was soon after sentenced to death. Marguerite and Claire hearing what had befallen their gallant defender, went directly to the place where he was confined. When they arrived they found him quite delirious, from a high fever which had been brought on by neglect of his wounds, and the sorrow he felt for the fate of his master. He kissed from time to time a star of the Legion of Honor, which Napoleon himself had given him at the walls of Dresden, and spoke in raptures of the Emperor and the grand army; as he related in glowing language, their astonishing exploits. The ladies, finding that the fever did not abate, left the prison; the next day they returned, and found him fast asleep, wrapped up in his war cloak; the fever had left him, and he was as pale as death.—When he awoke he was surprised to find two ladies by his side, he bowed politely to them, and when his eyes met those of Claire; he coloured slightly. Marguerite inquired kindly after his health and spoke to him of his release.

'There is no hope for me,' said he, gloomily.

'You are not sure of that,' said Marguerite. Do you think we have forgotten the man who so generously defended us, even at the risk of his own life? The king has granted me the power to save the life of any of those who are now in prison under sentence of death. I need not tell you for whose sake I have solicited this favor. You have only to put your name at the bottom of this petition, and you will be free.'

'My life,' replied Pierre, 'is now but a blank to me. If I were to accept your offer my place ought to be by the side of my benefactor, on the desolate island to which they have exiled him. Yet there is one condition on which I could accept my life, but it would be idle to think of it—you may believe me mad—I, a soldier, of birth so obscure that I do not know even who or what my parents were. No, lady, I cannot accept your offer unless you accompany it with a gift still more precious—the hand of your niece.'

Marguerite turned aside to conceal the disdain she felt at this proposal; and Claire fell on her knees, and besought her to save the life of the young soldier. At this moment an officer presented himself, and told the prisoner that the hour of his execution had arrived.

'Madam,' said Pierre, as he was about to follow the officer, 'I hope you will pardon my ambition, and accept this silver cross.—It is a strange present from a soldier; but I should like to place it in the hands of some one whom I esteem, for it belonged to my mother; it was found on me when I was quite a child by an old soldier, who saved me from being drowned in the Loire.'

Marguerite took the cross, and after looking at it attentively, she said, 'Have you no remembrance of your mother?'

'No, madam,' replied Pierre; 'I was separated from her at too early an age to remember her.'

Marguerite approached him, and looked earnestly into his face. When she withdrew her gaze, she was seized with a fit of trembling which for a few moments deprived her of her power of utterance. After

she had recovered a little, she took off Pierre's cravat, and having discovered a large red mark on his neck, she exclaimed: 'Oh Heaven, 'tis my own son!' She then fell on his neck, and wept aloud. The officer again reminded Pierre that he was waiting for him. This intimation drew a loud shriek from Marguerite. She however, soon recovered her self possession, and displayed to the officer the order of the king. As soon as he had read it, he returned it to the lady and retired declaring that he had never in his life obeyed the order of his sovereign with greater pleasure than he did on that occasion.

A few months after this the friends and retainers of Marguerite were assembled to celebrate the nuptials of Pierre and Claire, and the old castle again became the scene of festivity and rejoicing.

The sorrow of Pierre for the fate of his master became less poignant after this event though he always spoke of him in terms of admiration and respect; and the hostility of Marguerite and Claire to the usurper gradually diminished as they listened to the surprising adventures of Pierre who always dwelt largely on the bright parts of the Emperor's character, and softened as much as possible the darker ones.

POLITICAL.

REMARKS OF MR. SPEAKER WRIGHT

On the Veto of the Canal Commissioner's Bill, made in the house of Representatives, April 4th, 1842.

MR. SPEAKER WRIGHT rose and said—Sir, I was never more forcibly struck with the truth of any gentleman's remarks, than with those of the gentleman from the county, (Mr. Roumfort) made yesterday on the resolution of impeachment against William Overfield, one of the Canal Commissioners, for an attempt to bribe a member of this House. From the attention paid that gentlemen, I fancy, sir, all feel alike the force of that speech. The gentleman from the county said, what is too well known by this House and the whole community, that if the finger of inquiry is pointed towards corruption—if a man has courage enough to expose the misfeasance of any of the heads of this government—he is assailed with a malignity of feeling disgraceful in a legislative hall.

To this state of facts, you sir, nor I, have been indifferent observers. Why, sir, should a difference of opinion on a measure of State policy, be made the signal for indiscriminate and hot blooded attack? Aye, sir, why should it be? Must the friends of the Executive make his sinking cause theirs—make his malevolent views a part of their creed and conscience?

When this bill was under consideration before, it happened to be my view, and I so then expressed it, that the only safe depository of power was with the people; and because I advocated the doctrine of taking from the Executive a portion of his patronage and giving it to the people, it was made in this hall the signal of personal attack! Because I shall dare to advocate the same doctrine now, I presume the same result is to follow! Why is this, sir? Is there something so sacred about a veto, that to touch 'the thing' is treason? Must freemen bow the neck of subserviency to executive will, and conceal and cover up from the public eye, what may be concealed under an executive veto? If so, we are slaves, and unworthy to occupy these seats! Sir, I shall vote for the bill, and against the veto; and did I vote otherwise, I should consider myself the especial object of the public censure. The executive denunciations have no terrors to me. The two first years of my legislative career always found me battling with the Executive, in his measures. Then, sir, my course met his approbation, whether those measures were right or wrong; now, for adhering to my own opinions of what is right, I suppose the minions of power will aim their shafts at my head. Let them do it. I thank God there is another tribunal to which I shall make my appeal, and which it to convass my motives—and that is the people—the great tribunal of public opinion!

On the 11th day of February I occupied the floor on the final passage of this bill; and then, sir I submitted this question to the constituency I have the honor to represent. They have most nobly responded and numerous public meetings of the Democracy of Luzerne have expressed but one opinion in reference to the merits of this bill, and the course of their representa-

tive. There, sir, it has been as the voice of but one man. These testimonials of my constituents' approbation, is to me a matter of pride and pleasure. And if there be one man in the county of Luzerne of Wyoming—one honest, upright man who has condemned, I have yet to hear his voice. Not only in that county has the merits of the bill been canvassed, but from one end of this Commonwealth to the other. Look at the public meetings in Columbia, Allegheny, Juniata, and throughout the State on this subject. It is a matter of surprise to me, indeed, that the Governor of this State, knowing, as he did, the public sentiment in reference to this bill, should have so far disregarded the public will, as to disapprove it. But, sir; I must confess in all frankness; that I would hardly be surprised at any measure that Executive might condemn or recommend.

These expressions of the people, sir, the people who have no favors to ask of the Executive, and no threats or menaces of his can intimidate, are worthy of them. They are unbought tributes—they are the open and undisguised manifestations of approval of the men who sent us here, and whom we represent.

But sir allow me to turn the attention of the house to the veto accompanying this bill. A document certainly of no ordinary character—made up of apologies of reasons, why the bill should not become the law of the land, and first of all as to the constitutional objections raised. Is it worth the time of the House to examine the objections? Did these objections arise from the mind of a man acquainted with constitutional law, and having some faint glimmerings of jurisprudence, it might be worth some reflection; but crude and undigested as the reasons are which operated on the Executive head and the Executive mind, it would seem hardly worth the time of this body to seriously consider them. But it may be expected, and let us examine the subject at a glance only without going into the details. The Executive contents in substance that the Legislature can only elect such officers as are defined by the Constitution—and this body has not the power to create an office, and elect a person to fill it. Now sir, I must confess I have long been in darkness, if this be the law of the land! You sir, as a good lawyer (Mr. Sharwood was in the chair) know this to be the rule laid down by constitutional lawyers. That the Legislature is sovereign and supreme in all cases, except where restrained by the letter of the Constitution—differing in this respect very materially from the powers of Congress under the Constitution of the United States.—Congress acts under delegated powers from the States, and can only legislate where power is conferred on the federal government. Not so with the powers of the State legislature. If the Executive can put his finger on an article in our Constitution, that names or refers to the word Canal Commissioner, I have yet to see it. It is unconstitutional too because the election must have the Executive sanction! His excellency had no hesitation in approving the State Printer bill—and yet sir that bill made no provision that the two houses in convention should ask his approval of the man, whom they might choose to elect. How did it happen that this objection did not occur to his constitutional mind, when he had that bill before him? Nothing is heard of a constitutional doubt—no indeed.

How long is it since we abolished the office of the Secretary of the Land office? Does any sane man doubt but that the legislature could reestablish that office, and elect a man to fill it? Certainly not. I concede, sir, that when the Constitution confers the appointing power on the Governor naming the office, the legislature cannot assume the power by law to appoint. If that instrument gave him the power to appoint the Canal Commissioners, it would be widely deficient; but it does not, and to contend for this principle he assumes that usurpation he charges on the Legislature. Sir, I cannot talk on this subject without feeling shame for the Executive in attempting to usurp powers that he has not, and which probably is well for the country he has not. We sir, are to be told that each House shall choose its Speaker—and here our authority ends! A wise conclusion truly. But let us look at this language, I read from the message. 'I never can sanction a law which takes away not only the rights of the Executive, but of the people, and gives power to the Legislature not contemplated by the Constitution, and which in my judgment would be an USURPATION OF POWER by the Legislature pregnant with evil. However indisposed I may be to retain all the power of the Executive, it is my sworn duty to protect the rights of the people from legislative encroachments, and I intend to do it.' And again from the same article of the paper. 'The great misapprehension seems to be this, it appears to be taken for granted, that the two Houses of the Legislature,