Select Tale.

The Difference Between a Hero and a Bully.

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

One evening, a short time after the battle of Fontenoy, (1754,) a group of the king's bodyguard was congregated near the Latona basin, at Versailles, listening to two of their number discussing a subject which at that period was rarely a matter of controversy in military circles.

"Refuse a duel after a public affront!" exclaimed the tallest of the speakers, whose bronzed features were rendered almost ferocious by the thick red moustache; "it is a stain that all the waters of the deluge would not wash away."

"I repeat, Monsieur de Malatour," replied the other in a calm, polite tone, "that there is more true courage in refusing than in accepting a duel. What is more common than to yield to passion, envy or vengeance; and what more rare that to resist them? Therefore it is a virtue when exhibited at the price of public opinion; for what costs nothing is esteemed as worth nothing."

"A marvel! Monsieur d'Argentre, I would advise, if ever the king gives you the command of a company, to have engraven on the sabres of the soldiers the command—'*Thou shalt do no murder.*'"

"And wherefore not? His majesty would have better servants, and the country fewer plunderers, if we had in our regiment more soldiers and fewer bullies. Take, as an example, him with whom you seem so much incensed; has he not nobly avenged what you call an affront by taking, with his own hands, an enemy's colors, while your knaves most likely formed a prudent reserve behind the baggage?"

"Cowards themselves have their moments of courage."

"And the brave also their moments of fear."

"The expression is not that of a gentleman."

"It is that of Monsieur de Turenne, whose family equalled either of ours, and who avowed that he was not exempt from such moments. Everybody has heard of his conduct towards a braggadocia, who boasted in his presence that he had never known fear. He suddenly passed a lighted candle under the speaker's nose, who instantly drew back his head to the great amusement of the bystanders, who laughed heartily at this singular mode of testing the other's assertion."

"None but a marshal of France had dared to try such pleasantry. To our subject, sir. I maintain that your friend is a coward, and you ——"

"And ——," repeated D'Argentre, his eyes flashing and his lips firmly compressed.

"Hollo, gentlemen!" exclaimed a third party, who, owing to the warmth of the argument, had joined the group unperceived. "This is my affair," said he to Monsieur d'Argentre, holding his arm; then turning to his adversary, added: "Monsieur de Malatour, I am at your orders."

"In that case, after you, if necessary," said d'Argentre, with his usual calmness.

"By my honor, you charm me, gentlemen! Let us go."

"One moment," replied the new-comer, who, young as he was, wore the cross of St. Louis.

"No remarks. Gentlemen, hasten."

"Too great haste in such cases evinces less a contempt for death than an anxiety to get rid of his phantom."

"I listen, sir!"

"Monsieur d'Argentre just now stated that the bravest have their moments of fear. Without taking as serious his anecdote of Monsieur de Turenne, I shall add that, with the exception of the difference that exists between muscles and nerves, the courage of the duellist is more an affair of habit than of principle; for it is the natural state of man to love peace, if not for the sake of others, at least for himself. Do you wish me to prove it?"

"Enough, sir, we are not here to listen to a sermon."

"Yet a moment. Here is my proposition; we are all assembled this evening previous to our leave of absence; I invite you, then, as also these gentlemen present, to a bear hunt on my estate, or rather amongst the precipices of Clat, in the Eastern Pyrennees. You are very expert, Monsieur de Malatour—you can snuff a candle with a pistol at twenty paces, and you have no equal at the small sword. Well, I shall place you before a bear, and if you succeed—I do not even say in lodging a ball in his head, but merely in firing upon him—I shall submit immediately after to meet you face to face with any weapons you choose to name, since it is only at that price I am to gain your good opinion."

"Are you playing a comedy, sir?"

"Quite the contrary. And I even repeat that this extreme haste shows more the courage of the nerves, than of the true courage arising from principle."

"What guaranty have I, should I accept your proposition, that you will not again endeavor to evade me."

"My word, sir; which I take all my comrades to witness, and place under the safeguard of their honor."

There ran through his auditory such a buzz of approbation that De Malatour, though with a bad grace, was obliged to accede to the arrangement. It was then agreed that on the first of September, all present should assemble at the Chateau du Clat.

Whilst the young lord of the manor is making the necessary preparations for their reception, we shall explain the accusation of which he was the object, yet which had not branded him with any mark of disgrace among a class of men so punctilious on the point of honor.

The young Baron de Villetreton, in entering amongst the gentlemen who formed the household guard of the king of France, carried with him principles which remained uncorrupted amidst all the frivolities of one of the most licentious courts in Europe. Such, however, is the charm of virtue, even in the midst of vice, that his exemplary conduct had not only gained him the esteem of his officers, and friendship of his companions, but had attracted the attention of the king himself. One alone among his comrades, Monsieur de Malatour, took umbrage at this general favor, and, on the occasion of some trifling expression or gesture, publicly insulted him. Villetreton refused to challenge him, as being contrary to his principles, but determined that this seeming cowardice, in not fighting a well-known duelist, should be redeemed by some action of *eclat* during the campaign just commenced. That moment had arrived; and for his noble conduct in taking the English colors at the battle of Fortenoy he received the cross of St. Louis from the king's own hand on the field, the eulogium of Marshal Saxe, and a redoubled enmity on the part of De Malatour.

The first care of the young baron, on arriving at his estate, was to call his major-domo, an old faithful servant.

"I have business with thee, my master," said he, cordially shaking him by the hand.

"Speak, monseigneur," replied the pareur, who was deeply attached to his young lord; "you know the old hunter is yours to his last drop of blood."

"I never doubted it, my old friend. Did you receive my letter from Paris?"

"Yes, sir; and those gentlemen, your comrades, will have some work before them."

"Are there bears already on the heights then?" asked Villetreton, extending his hand in the direction of one of the lofty peaks, whose summit, covered with snow, glittered in the morning sun.

"Five in all—a complete *menage*—father, mother and children; besides an old bachelor, whom the Spaniards had driven to this side."

"In less than a week we shall go in pursuit of them. Do you know, pareur, some of my comrades are rather rough sportsmen? there is one of them who is able to snuff a candle with a pistol at twenty paces."

"Easier, perhaps than to snuff a bear at four," replied the old man laughing.

"That is what I said also. But as I should wish to judge for myself of his prowess, you must place us together at the same post—at the bridge of Maure, for instance."

"Hum!" said the pareur, scratching his ear; "it would better please me to have you elsewhere."

"Why?"

"Because to guard this post, a man ought to be in a state of grace, for he will be between two death's the bears and the precipice."

"I know the one, and do not fear the other; thanks to your lessons."

"I am sure of that. But, with your leave, I should like to guard the bridge myself."

"You are sure, then, that the bears will pass this way?"

"Sure—yes; but quite sure—no. Recollect that they are sullen and prudent beasts, which never confide their plan of route to any one."

"It is agreed on. I shall guard the bridge with my comrade. Now go, and have the trackers ready."

"Very well, very well," murmured the pareur, as he retired, "I shall have my eye on him."

Eight days afterwards all those invited, not excepting Monsieur de Malatour—who, despite the delicate attention of the host preserved a cold reserve—were assembled at the chateau. The magnificent grandeur of the Pyrenees, their shining summits relieved against the blue sky of Spain, was an unlooked for pleasure to the greater number of the guests, who for the most part belonged to the rich and fertile plains of the interior.

The morning following their arrival a body of trackers and scouts, provided with all manner of discordant instruments—trumpets, saucepans, drums, &c., &c., were assembled under the walls of the chateau, with the pareur at their head; while by his side stood the maudrin, who proudly guarded a dozen large mastiffs, held in leash by his vigorous helpers. The young baron and his friends, armed with carbines and hunting knives, had scarcely appeared, when, by sign from the pareur, the whole troop moved silently forward. The dogs, themselves seemed to understand the importance of this movement, and nothing was heard but the confused tramp of feet, blending with the noise of the distant torrent, or, at intervals, the cry of some belated night bird, flying heavily homeward in the doubtful glimmer of the yet unopened day.

As the party reached the crest of the mountain which immediately overhung the chateau the first rays of the sun breaking from the east glanced on the summit of the Pyrenees, and suddenly illuminating the landscape, discovered beneath them a deep valley, covered with majestic pine trees, which murmured in the fresh breeze of the morning.

Opposite to them the foaming waters of a cascade fell some hundreds of feet through a cleft which divided the mountain from the summit to the base. By one of those caprices of nature which terrify the primitive conclusions of our globe, the chasm was surmounted by a natural bridge—the piles of granite at each side being joined by one immense flat rock, almost seeming to verify the fable of the Titans; for it appeared impossible that these enormous blocks of stone could have ever been raised to such an elevation by human agency.

Sinister legends were attached to the place, and the mountaineers recounted with terror that no hunter, with the exception of the pareur, had ever been posted at the bridge of Maure, without becoming the prey of either the bears or the precipice. But the pareur was too good a Christian to partake of this ridiculous prejudice; he attributed the fatality to its real cause—the dizziness arising from the sight of the bears and the precipice combined, by destroying the hunter's presence of mind, made his aim unsteady, and his death the inevitable consequence. He could not, however, altogether divest himself of fears for his young master, who obstinate persevered in his intention of occupying the bridge with his antagonist.

After placing the baron's companions at posts which he considered the most advantageous, the pareur rejoined his men, and disposing them so as to encompass the valley facing the cascade, commanded the utmost silence to be preserved until they should hear the first bark of his dog. At that signal the mastiffs were to be unleashed, the instruments sounded, and all to move slowly forward, contracting the circle as they approached the cascade. These arrangements being made, the pareur and his dog, followed by the mandrin alone, disappeared in the depths of the wood.

For some minutes the silence had remained unbroken; when suddenly a furious barking commenced, accompanied by low growling. Each prepared his arms, the instruments sounded, and the mastiffs being let loose, precipitated themselves pell-mell in the direction of the struggle. Their furious barking was soon confounded with the cries of the hunters and the din of the instruments, mingled with the formidable growling of the bears, making altogether a hideous concert, which, rolling along the sides of the valley, was repeated by the distant echoes. At this moment the young baron regarded his companion, whose countenance, though pale, remained calm and scornful.

"Attention, sir!" said he in a low voice.—"The bears are not far from us, let your aim be true, or else——"

"Keep your counsels for yourself, sir!"

"Attention!" repeated Villetreton, without seeming to notice the surly response—"he approaches."

Those who were placed in front of the cascade, seeing the animals directing their course to the bridge, cried from all parts, "Look out, look out Villetreton!"

But the breaking of branches, followed by the rolling of loosened stones down the precipice, had already given warning of the animal's near approach. Malatour became deadly pale; he, however, held his carbine firmly, in the attitude of a resolute hunter.

A bear at length appeared, with foaming mouth and glaring eyes, at times bursting as if he would fain struggle with his pursuers; but when he saw the bridge, his only way of escape, occupied, he uttered a fearful growl and raising himself on his hind legs, was rushing on our two hunters, when a ball struck him in the forehead and he fell dead at their feet.

Malatour convulsively grasped his gun—he had become completely powerless. Suddenly new cries, louder and more pressing, were heard.

"Fire! fire! he is now on you!" cried the pareur, who appearing unexpectedly, pale and agitated, put his gun to his shoulder, but afraid to fire, lest he should hit his master.

The latter, perceiving his agitation, turned round: it was indeed time. On the other side of the bridge a bear, much larger than the first, was in the act of making the final rush. Springing backward, he seized the carbine of his petrified companion, and lodged its contents in the animals breast, ere he could reach them. He rolled, in the death struggle, to where they stood. All this was the work of an instant. The knees of the hardy old pareur shook with emotion at the escape of his young master; as for Malatour, his livid paleness, and the convulsive shuddering of his limbs, testified the state of his mind.

"Take your arms," said the young baron, quickly replacing in his hands the carbine; "here are our comrades—they must not see you unarmed; and, pareur, not a word of all this."

"Look!" said he to his companions, as they gathered around, pointing to the monstrous beasts—"one to each. Now, Monsieur de Malatour, I wait your orders, and am ready to give the satisfaction you require."

The latter made no reply, but reached out his hand, which Villetreton cordially shook.

That evening a banquet was given to celebrate the double victory. Towards the end of the repast a toast to "the vanquishers" was proposed, and immediately accepted.

Monsieur d'Argentre, glass in hand, rose to pledge it, when Malatour, also rising, held his arm, exclaiming: "To the sole vanquisher of the day! to our noble host! It was he alone who killed the two bears; and if, through his generosity, I have allowed the illusion to last so long, it was simply for this reason: The affront which I gave him was a public one, the reparation ought to be public also. I now declare that Monsieur de Villetreton is the bravest of the brave, and that I shall maintain it towards all and against all."

"This time, at least, I shall not take up your gauntlet," said Monsieur Argentre.

"There's a brave young man!" cried the pareur, whom his master had admitted to his table, and who endeavored to conceal a furtive tear. "Nothing could better prove to me, sir, that, with a little experience, you will be as calm in the presence of bears as you are, I am sure, in the face of an enemy."

THE PUNCTUAL MAN.—Mr. Higgins was a very punctual man in all his transactions through life. He amassed a large property by untiring industry and punctuality; and at the age of ninety years was resting quietly upon his bed, and calmly waiting to be called away. He had deliberately made almost every arrangement for his decease and burial.

His pulse grew fainter, and the light of life seemed just flickering in its socket, when one of his sons observed—

"Father, you will probably live but a day or two; is it not well for you to name your bearers?"

"To be sure, my son," said the dying man; "it is well thought of, and I will do it *now*."

He gave a list of six, the usual number, and sunk back exhausted upon his pillow.

A gleam of thought passed over his withered face like a ray of light, and he rallied once more. "My son, *read me that list.* Is the name of Mr. Wiggins there?"

"It is, my father."

"Then *strike it off*," said he emphatically, "for he was *never punctual*—was never *anywhere in season*—and he might *detain the procession a whole hour!*"—*Boston Trumpet.*

RELIGION. — Whatever of excellence is wrought into the soul itself, belongs to both worlds.—Real goodness does not attach itself merely to life; it points to another world. Political and professional fame cannot last forever, but a conscience void of offence before God and man, is an inheritance for eternity. Religion, therefore, is a necessary, an almost indispensible element in any human character. There is no living without it. Religion is the tie that connects man with his Creator, and holds him to His throne. If that tie is sundered or broken, he floats away, a worthless atom in the universe, its proper attractions all gone, its destiny thwarted, and its whole future, nothing but darkness, desolation and death. A man with no sense of religious duty is he whom the Scriptures describe—in so terse but terrific manner—as "living without God in the world." Such a man is out of his proper being—out of the circle of all his happiness, and away, far away from the purposes of his creation.—*Daniel Webster.*

The Fun of Smash-Ups.

A WESTERN LOCOMOTIVE FIREMAN TO HIS FRIEND IN THE EAST.

TOLEDO, Nov. 12, 1854.

Dear Jim:—Why don't you pack up your plunder and come here. We have rare sport, I can tell you—you can bet your life on that. When I first came out here I had the ager a good deal. I shook every other day for six months, and then got a going every other day. Took more quinine than a horse could draw. After a while Joe Smashup asked me to run on his engine and fire for him. "You won't shake long on my engine," says he, "for if pine knots don't drive out your ager, one or two collisions ill fix you complete."

'Wall, on to his engine I went, and I haint shook since. It's better than a Kolagog.

Joe is a perfect brick. He'd ruther run into a train or drove of cattle than not. You'd ought to see the horns fly sometimes. We had a little fun the other night, and I'll tell you how it was. The other train, that we meet every night at pile-up station, has been in the habit of holdin' on to the track on our time, and the conductors had two or three jawins about it. Our conductor says to the other one, says he, 'If you don't get off on to the other track a little livelier in futur, I'll run into you some night—sure's you live.'

Then the other one says, 'You run inter me and you'll get cleaned out, certain. An I'll stay on the track twelve hours, if I like—you can bet your sweet life o' that!'

'Wall,' says our conductor, 'when you stand on the track on my time, you've got to go back to the east end of the side track to switch off, or you'll ketch it some dark night.'

'No,' says t'other one, 'I ain't a going to no east end of the side track to switch off—certain's you live.'

'Wall, then, you'll get smashed to hell-up, sure's you live.'

'Wall, you jest try it on.'

'Wall, you'll see.'

'Wall, *you'll* see.'

'You'll *make* a heap by runnin' into me, I reckon.'

'Wall, *you'll* make a heap by holdin' on to the track—*that's certain.*'

Well, you see, that's the kind of talk we had once or twice, and the other night, about half-past two in the morning, they got to the station ahead of us and held on. The conductor goes into the depo and cocks his feet up on the stove as cool as cucumber, leavin' train—eight passenger cars—on the track.—The depo man is a wide-awake chap, and because his switchman was sick and off duty, he knowed he got to turn the switch if the train was put on the side track for us to go by. So he went in and axed the conductor if he warn't goin' on to the side track?

'Y-a-a-s, I spose so.'

'Wall,' says he, 'you can't be a mite too quick about it—now I tell ye.'

The conductor went out kinder slow, and telled the engineer to go the west end of the side track and switch off, but afore they got there they met us, and then wa'nt there some fun! Joe Smashup says to me, 'What's them fellers tryin to do? Aint they on our time?' 'Yes,' says he, looking at his watch, 'the track belongs to us, an' I'm goin' to let her rip—sure's you live.'

'What,' says I, 'you goin' to run these trains together?'

'Look here,' says he, 'I'm runnin on my own time—the track belongs to me, and I don't see any signals, so I aint to blame if there's a smash. Same time, between you and I, we'd always orter be ready to jump when we get near this depo!' and he gin me a wink, as if to say, 'Look out for yourself!'

It's a mighty straight track across the country at Pileup, and we struck a pretty good gait. Joe had his hand upon the irons but he kept a lookin mighty sharp. "By George,' says he, 'we shall head 'em off.—They can't get up to the switch in time Get ready to jump. No, you needn't. 'Twont be a killer, for they've stopped and are crawling off the other way. I'm *afraid* we shall run into 'em though.'

I did jump, though, before she struck, but Joe stuck to the machine. He's used to it, and knew jest how hard they'd hit, to a pound. The damage wasn't so great. The Lion, t'other locomotive, was smashed up considerable, and one baggage car and one passenger weren't no good arterwards. Then all the couplings and platforms in both trains were smashed up. We lost our cow-catcher and lantern, but the old bully machine run jest as well as ever that mornin.

Well, the passengers screamed. One man's ancle was smashed, one shoulder was put out of joint, and one passenger had his leg crushed all to pieces. We took him to the depo, and a young surgeon cut off his leg at the thigh. It's probable that he'll die. The young doctor has got to hangin around the Pileup depo every night for the train. I believe he's cut off four legs there in two months. I heard him tell Bill Robinson that he was ahead yet. I got sight of this fellow sure. I heard the jaw between the conductors yesterday, and I reckoned on a job this morning.

The man that was smashed was goin home to his family in Wisconsin. It took us a long time to clear the track, and the passengers growled like fun after they got over the fright.

Now, Jim, come out here, and get on a train with a gritty set of conductors and engineers, and you'll have a heap of fun, *sure you live.*

SAMUEL FIREATER.