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Literary Selections.

PREVENTING AN ELOPEMENT

A writer in the "Democratic Quarterly Review," in sketching life at Baden-Baden, records the following incident:

A noble Hungarian lord, Count Christian W., had come to pass the season at Baden, accompanied by his daughter Helen. Young, beautiful, charming, and heiress to an immense fortune left her by her mother, the young Countess soon found herself surrounded by a host of admirers. Adorers of all kinds were not wanting—rich and poor noble and obscure, tender and passionate, grave and gay. It was a perpetual tournament, of which she was the queen, and where the aspirants contended for her hand by exhibiting their address, grace and seductive qualities. When she entered her carriage, ten cavaliers were in the saddle, caroling around her *calèche*. At the ball, the most elegant dancers were devoted to her. They had neither cares, attentions, nor sighs, but for her; whereas many beautiful women—French, English and Russian—were particularly mortified. Of her pressing suitors Helen selected the most worthless. The Chevalier Gaston M.—was, it was true, a charming fellow, pale and delicate, with fine blue eyes, and long black wavy hair. In the place of true passion, he had eloquence of look and word; in short, he dressed with taste, danced marvelously and sang like Roubini. But, unhappily, these advantages were contrasted by great vices. A dissipated gambler, and unprincipled, the Chevalier Gaston had quitted Naples in consequence of some scandalous adventures in which he was implicated. The Count, after having informed himself of these facts, desired, too late, to put his daughter on her guard against a dangerous affection. Helen listened neither to the advice, the prayers, nor the orders of her father. The man for whom he endeavored to destroy her esteem was already master of her heart, and she obstinately refused to believe in the disgraceful antecedents of the young Italian. If Gaston had had to do with a father who lacked energy, perhaps he would have become the happy husband of the young Countess, and the peaceful possessor of the immense fortune with which he was so frantically in love. But the Count knew how to carry his point either by management or force. He was an old lion. He had preserved all the vigor of youth, and all the rude firmness of an indomitable character, which nothing but paternal tenderness had ever softened. Self-willed in his resolutions, stern in his execution of them, he cast about for means to put *hors du combat* this carpet knight who had dared to undertake to become his son-in-law in spite of him, when accident threw into his hands a letter which Gaston had written to Helen. The Chevalier, impatient to attain the goal of his desires, proposed, in direct terms to the young Countess, an elopement, and proposed a clandestine meeting, at the hour when the Count was in the habit of going out to play whist with some gentlemen of his acquaintance at the Conversation House. A rose placed in Helen's belt was to be the signal of consent.

The young girl had not read the adroitly intercepted note. "Put this flower in your belt," said the Count to her, offering her a rose, "and come with me."

Helen smilingly obeyed, and took her father's arm. In the course of their walk they met Gaston, who seeing the rose, was overjoyed.

Then the Count conducted his daughter to the residence of one of their acquaintances, and requested her to wait until he came for her. That done he returned to the little house in which he lived, at the outskirts of Baden, on the Litchenthal road. He had sent away his servants, and was alone. At the appointed hour Gaston arrived at the rendezvous, leaped lightly over the wall of the garden, and, finding the door shut, entered the house through one of the low windows. Then mounting the stairs, filled with pleasing emotions, he directed his step towards the apartment of Helen. There, instead of the daughter, he found the father, armed with a brace of pistols. The Count closed the door, and said to the wretched Gaston, trembling with terror:

"I could kill you; I have the right to do so. You have broken into my house. I could treat you as a felon; nothing could be more natural."

"But, sir," replied Gaston, almost inaudibly, "I am not a robber."

"And what are you, then? You have come to steal my daughter—to steal an heiress—to steal a fortune. Here is your letter, which unveiled to me your criminal intentions. I shall show you no mercy! But, to take your life, I had no need of this trap. You know the skill of my right arm; a duel would have long ago rid me of you. To avoid scandal, I did not wish a duel; and, now, I will slay you only at the last extremity, if you refuse to obey me."

"What is your will, sir?"

"You must leave Baden—not in a few days, not to-morrow—but this very instant. You must put two hundred leagues between it and you, and never again come into the presence of my daughter or myself. As the price of your obedience, and to pay your traveling expenses, I will give you twenty thousand francs."

The Chevalier wished to speak.

"Not a word!" cried the Count in a voice of thunder. "You know me, understand! I hold your life at my mercy, and a moment's hesitation will be punished with death."

"I obey," stammered the Chevalier.

"In good time! Your twenty thousand francs are in that secretary; take them!"

"Permit me to decline your offer."

An imperious gesture over the false modesty which the Chevalier expressed feebly, and like a man who declines for form's sake.

"But," said he, "the secretary is locked."

"Open it."

"There is no key in it."

"Break the lock, then."

"What! you wish me to—"

"Break the lock, or I'll shoot you."

The pistol was again presented, as an argument which admitted no reply. Gaston obeyed.

"It is well!" said the Count. Take that package of bank-notes; they are yours. Have you a pocket book?"

"Yes."

"What does it contain?"

"Some papers—letters addressed to me."

"Let your pocket book fall in front of the secretary you have broken open."

"What?"

"I must have proof which will convict you."

"But—"

"But, sir, I mean to have here all the evidences of a burglary. I mean that the robber shall be known. Robber, or death! Choose! Ah! your choice is made. I was sure you would be reasonable. Now you are about to fly. You will go before me. I do not quit you until you are a leaguer from Baden. For the rest, make yourself easy. I will return late, and will enter no complaint till to-morrow. You may easily escape pursuit, and if my protection becomes necessary, reckon on me. Begone!"

After this adventure, which made a great noise, Helen could no longer doubt Gaston was banished from her mind and she married one of her cousins, captain in a regiment of cavalry in the service of the Emperor of Austria.

VOLCANO AT HILO.

We have again alarming news from Hilo. The lava is in violent action, and progressing directly towards Hilo. A man who went up to watch its progress was hemmed in by a sudden flow of the lava, from which there was no escape but by jumping into the river, which he did, and, as the water was nearly at boiling heat, the poor fellow was scalded to death. It is perfectly impossible to conceive of the awful grandeur of this lava stream: imagine a river of molten iron, three miles in width, flowing on, sometimes so gradually, though surely, that its progress is scarcely perceptible; at other times sweeping down a steep declivity in a rapid and resistless torrent, fearful by day, and terrible by night. No obstacle can stay its march. A more awful sight cannot be imagined. It cuts down immense forests, which, by their tremendous fires, turn night into day. It pours its molten torrent over precipices in one unbroken sheet, in a fall of hundreds of feet, into a deep and broad ravine, which, deep as it is, proves but a straw in its resistless progress—for no matter how deep and broad the ravine, it is soon filled up with the cooling lava, to a level with the plain, and the unbroken current moves on, leveling and destroying everything in its path. In the place of that most beautiful spot, Hilo, we fear there will be nothing left but a plain of black and barren scoriae. Mr. —, who has immense estates there, where he lives like a prince, will be nearly, if not quite ruined, if Hilo is submerged.

A man ceases to be a "good fellow" the moment he refuses to do precisely what other people wish him to do.

A REMARKABLE STORY.

The following singular story is taken from "Illustrations of Human Life," by Mr. Ward, author of Tremaine:

The story of which we shall now advert has the double value of being told, we presume, on Mr. Ward's personal knowledge, and of illustrating the extraordinary chances on which human life is offered to depend. The circumstances occurred to the well known Sir Evan Nepean, in the Home department. The popular version of the story had been, that he was warned by a vision to save the lives of three or four men condemned to die, but reprieved; and who, but for the vision, would have perished, through the under-Secretary's neglect in forwarding the reprieve. On Sir Evan's being subsequently asked how far this story was true, his answer was—"The narrative romances a little, but what it alludes to was the most extraordinary thing that ever happened to me." The simple facts as told by himself are these—One night during his office as under secretary, he felt the most unaccountable wakefulness that could be imagined; he was in perfect health, had dined early, and had nothing whatever on his mind to keep him awake. Still, he found all attempts to sleep impossible, and from eleven till two in the morning, he never closed his eyes. At length weary of this struggle, and as the twilight was breaking (it was in summer) he determined to try what would be the effect of a walk in the park. There he saw nothing but the sleepy sentinals. But, in his walk, happening to pass the Home office several times, he thought of letting himself in with his key, though without any particular object. The book of entries of the day before still lay on the table, and through sheer listlessness he opened it. The first thing he saw appalled him—"A reprieve to be sent to York for the coiners ordered for execution." The execution had been appointed for the next day. It struck him that he had received no return to his order to send the reprieve. He searched the "minutes;" he could not find it there. In alarm, he went to the house of the head clerk, who lived in Downing street, knocked him up, (it was then past eleven) and asked if he knew anything of the reprieve being sent. In great alarm, the chief clerk could not remember. "You are scarcely awake," said Sir Evan, "recollect yourself; it must be sent."

The clerk now recollected he had sent it to the clerk of the Crown, whose business it was to forward it to York.

"Good," said Sir Evan. "But have you his receipt and certificate that it is gone?"

"No."

"Then come with me: we must find him although it is so early."

It was near four, and the clerk of the Crown lived in Chancery Lane. There was no hackney coach to be seen, and they almost ran. They were just in time. The clerk of the crown had a country house, and, meaning to have a long holiday, he was at that moment stepping into his gig to go to his villa. Astonished at this visit of the under-Secretary of State at such an hour, he was still more so at his business.

"Heavens!" cried he, "the reprieve is locked up in my desk!" it was brought, Sir Evan sent it to the post office for the truest and fleetest express. The reprieve reached York next morning just as the unhappy men were ascending the cart.

With Sir Evan Nepean we fully agree in regarding this little narrative as one of the most extraordinary that we have ever heard. We shall go further even than he acknowledged, and say that to us it appears striking evidence of what we should conceive a superior interposition. It is true that no ghost appears, nor is any prompting voice audible; yet the result depended upon so long a succession of seeming chances and each of these chances was at once so improbable and so necessary, that we are almost compelled to regard the whole matter of an influence not to be attributed to man. If the first link of the chain might pass for common occurrence—as undoubtedly fits of wakefulness will happen without any discoverable ground in the state of either body or mind—still what could be less in the common course of things than, thus waking, he should take it into his head to get up and take a walk in the park at two in the morning? Yet, if he had, like others, contented himself with taking a walk in his chamber, or enjoying the cool air at the window, not one of the succeeding events could have been sacrificed. Or if when he took his walk, he had been contented with getting rid of the feverishness of the night, and returned to his bed, the chain

would have been broken; for what was more out of the natural course of events than that, at two o'clock in the morning, the idea should come into the head of any man to go to his place, and sit down in the lonely rooms in his department, for no purpose of business or pleasure, but simply from not knowing what to do with himself?

Or if, when he had let himself into those solitary rooms, the book of entries had not lain on the table; (and this we presume to have been among the chances, as we can scarcely suppose books of this official importance to be generally left to their fate as the servants and messengers of the office;) or, if the entry, instead of being on the first page that opened to his eyes, had been any other, even the second, as he might never have taken the trouble of turning the page; or if he and the chief clerk of the Crown's house, and, instead of finding him at the moment of getting into the carriage, had been compelled to incur delay of bringing him back from the country, all the preceding events would have been useless. The people would have died at York, for, even as it was, they were stopped on the very verge of execution.

The remarkable feature of the whole is, that the chain might have been snapped at every link, and that every link was equally important. In the calculation of the probability of any one of these occurrences, a mathematician would find the chances very hard against the probability of the whole. If it is asked whether a sufficient ground for this high interposition is to be discovered in saving the lives of a few wretched culprits, who, as frequently in such cases, probably returned to their wicked trade as soon as they escaped, and only plunged themselves into deeper iniquity; the answer is, that it is not for us, in our ignorance, to mete out the value of human life, however criminal in the eyes of heaven.

THE CONDOR.

The Condor is the largest winged bird known, its extended wings measuring from tip to tip about fifteen feet. It is no doubt, of all creatures living upon the earth, the one that can remove farthest from it.

The terrestrial localities of this gigantic bird are comprised in a zone which extends from about 1,000 to 9,000 feet above the sea, and the height at which it habitually soars, according to Humboldt, is six times that at which clouds are suspended over the plains of Europe.

While searching for food, it descends to the plains which border the Cordilleras, and Humboldt has called attention to the remarkable physiological fact, that the same individual which breathes so easily the rarified air of the loftiest regions, should sometimes suddenly descend to the sea-shore, thus passing rapidly through all climates, and every condition of atmosphere. It was formerly believed, in connection with experimental observations on the air pump, that no creature could live under so low a pressure; but it is not known that the species breathe as well when the barometer stood only twelve inches, as if it stood at thirty.

Its most frequent haunts range from 10,000 to 19,000 feet above the sea. These lofty regions are known vernacularly by the name of Condor's nest, although the female is believed to lay her eggs upon the arid rock. There, perched in dreary solitude on the crests of scattered peaks, at the very verge of the region of perpetual snow, these dark, gigantic birds are seen silently reposing like melancholy spectres. But however wild and savage may be their haunts and habits, the tales narrated of their carrying off young persons ten or twelve years of age, may be regarded as fabulous by any one who has examined their feet and talons, which, though long, and in some respects powerful, are but slightly curved. There is scarce an instance of their assaulting even a child.

Dissolve in a quart of pure water, as much salt as will thoroughly saturate the liquid, and drench the animal thoroughly until you discover symptoms of relief. This is a simple and effectual remedy for cholera in horses, and has been successfully applied in case of bots.

Gentility is in neither birth, wealth, manner nor fashion, but in the mind. A high sense of honor, a determination never to take a mean advantage of another, an adherence to truth, delicacy and politeness towards those with whom we have dealings, are its essential characteristics.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.

Harper for February has the following upon dueling in New York:

A very laughable circumstance is said to have occurred in Albany, during a session of the Legislature at the Capitol, several years ago—of course before the prohibition of dueling by statute in this State.

It was an exciting political time, and owing to some "words spoken in debate" by a heated member, during the "heated term," touching somewhat upon the private character of a brother member, a challenge was forthwith despatched to the offending member, by "a friend," as such a messenger is called in the language of the code of honor.

The challenge was at once accepted.

Pleased with this promptness, the second said:

"When can we expect your friend?"

"Don't want any friend," said the challenged party. "I waive all such advantages. He can have a dozen if he wishes."

"This is magnanimous, but it is not according to the code." Well Sir—if I am to confer with you directly—what weapons?"

"Broad-swords."

"The time?"

"Day after to-morrow, at twelve o'clock at noon, precisely."

"At what place?"

"At O—, on the St. Lawrence. Your principal shall stand on one side of the river, and I will stand on the other, and we will fight it out!"

The "second" frowned. "This is no jesting matter, sir. You are not serious?"

"Why, yes I am too! Hasn't the challenged party a right to the choice of weapons and place?"

"Well—yes sir; but not to unusual weapons in usual places."

"Very well; pistols will not be objected to, of course."

"Assuredly not; the gentleman's weapon."

"Very good, then. We will meet to-morrow in the little village of P—, and at twelve o'clock precisely we will fight on the Sugar-loaf Hill," standing back to back, each holding a pistol, turning and firing. Will that arrangement be satisfactory?"

"It will. We shall be there."

And the parties separated. Now "Sugar-loaf Hill," "at the place aforesaid," was exactly what its name imparts—a sharp conical pillar of ground, remarkable all the immediate country round for its peculiar formation.

The time arrived, and "the parties" appeared on the ground; but the state of the case "leaked out" very quick.

"Sir!" said the second, as he arrived with his almost breathless "principal" at the apex of the Sugar-loaf, and surveyed the ground—"Sir! this is another subterfuge! What kind of a place is this for a duel with pistols, back to back, and a forward march of ten paces? Why, Sir, both parties would be out of sight at eight paces, let alone ten; and in turning to fire, you must fire into the side-hill!"

"So much the better for both of us; answered the "party of the second part;" "we are on terms of perfect equality then, which is not always the case in modern duels."

Out spake the challenging "principal" then in words too plain to be misunderstood:

"Sir—!" he said to the second "principal," at the same time looking daggers at him; "SIR—! you are a coward!"

"Well! 'sposin' I am! You know I was, or you would not have challenged me!"

"They do say," that the two "parties" that went down the steep sides of Sugar-loaf Hill, on that memorable occasion, were as difficult of reconciliation as when they ascended its sides; and, moreover, that they were as different in temper as possible. One party was laughing, and the other "breathing out threatening and slaughter; but nothing came of it, after all. This was the last of that duel.

And, thoughtfully regarded, it seems to us that there is something of a lesson in it, "indifferently well," as we have set the actual occurrence before our readers.

Human nature is like a bad clock; it may go right now and then, or it may be made to strike the right hour, but its inward frame is to go wrong.

The best cough mixture that has yet been made, consists of a pair of thick boots, mixed with lots of air and plenty of exercise. People who hug the stove and grow lean, please notice.

Put your farming utensils in order.

MIDNIGHT.

Hufeland, in his treatise on sleep, has some curious as well as forcible ideas on the necessity of devoting midnight to rest and sleep. He considers that the period of twenty-four hours, which is produced by the regular revolution of the earth on its axis, marks its influence most definitely on the physical economy of man. Diseases show this regular influence in their daily rise and fall. Settled regular fever exhibits a twenty-four hours flux and reflux. In the healthful state, there is manifest the same regular influence, and the more habitual our meals, our hours of exercise or employment, and our hours of sleep, the more power is there in the system to resist disease. In the morning the pulse is slow and the nerves calmer, and the mind and the body better fitted for labor. As we advance toward the evening of the day, the pulse becomes accelerated, and an almost feverish state is produced which, in excitable persons, becomes an absolute evening fever.—Rest carries off this fever by its sleep, and the refreshing opening of its pores which sleep produces. In this nightly respiration, there is an absolute crisis of this evening fever, and this periodical crisis is necessary to every one, for it carries off whatever useless or pernicious particles our bodies may have imbibed.

The evening fever, Hufeland thinks, is not entirely owing to the accession of new chyle to the system, but to the departure of the sun and of the light. The crisis of this fever, to be most effective by its regularity, ought to take place at midnight when the sun is in its nadir, and then the body becomes refreshed for the early morning labor. Those who neglect this period, either push this diurnal crisis into the morning, and thus undermine the importance of its regularity, or lose it entirely, and arise to their labors unrefreshed by sleep. Their bodies will not have been purified by the nightly crisis, and the seeds of disease will have thus been planted.

Nervous people are peculiarly subject to the influence of this evening fever, and think they cannot labor without its excitement. Hence their mental efforts are performed in the night alone; the important time for the crisis of their nervous excitement passes over in wakefulness, and no refreshing perspiration cleanses the body or strengthens the nerves. Such people will wear out soon, unless they change their habits and seek rest when nature and the human constitution dictate.

These considerations ought to be deeply studied and regarded by all who are in the ruinous habit of turning night into day, and of changing the functions of each.

A failure of health will soon manifest the truth of these remarks.

NEBUCHEDNEZZAR FOUND.

It is stated that Col. Rawlinson, who is at present engaged in prosecuting the discoveries commenced by Layard and Botta, and in exhuming from the mounds of the long lost rival cities of Nineveh and Babylon, the instructive remains of this once gigantic power, has lately discovered in a state of perfect preservation, what is believed to be the mummy of Nebuchednezzar. The face of the rebellious monarch of Babylon, covered by one of those gold masks usually found in Assyrian tombs, is described as very handsome—the forehead high and commanding, the features marked and regular. This interesting relic of remote antiquity, is for the present preserved in the Museum of the East India Company.

Of all the mighty empires which have left a lasting impression on the memory, none has so completely perished as that of Assyria. More than two thousand years have gone by, since the two "great cities," renowned for their strength, their luxury, and their magnificence, have crumbled into dust, leaving no visible trace of their existence, their very sites forgotten. A chance traveler, Layard, riding through the Mesopotamian valley, discovered "the buried city," and with a success that will immortalize his name, has commenced to unroll the book of Assyrian history and civilization, which, of all the histories of the first period of the world, is most clearly connected with the subsequent destinies of the human race. The discoveries already made furnish ample testimony to refute the sceptic and unbeliever of scripture truth.

Habit in a child is at first like a spider's web; if neglected, it becomes like a thread or twine, next a cord or rope, finally a cable; and then who can break it?

TIME FOR MATRIMONY.

The most proper age for entering the holy bands of matrimony has been much discussed, but never settled. I am entitled to my opinion; and, although I cannot here give the grounds on which it rests, the reader may take it for granted that I could adduce, were this the proper place, a great number of weighty reasons, both moral and physical, for the dogma, then, which I would inculcate is this,—that matrimony should not be contracted before the first year of the fourth septennial, on the part of the female, nor before the last year of the same, in the case of the male: In other words, the female should be, at least twenty one years of age, and the male twenty-eight years. That there should be seven years difference between the sexes, at whatever period of life the solemn contract is entered upon, need not be urged, as it is universally admitted. There is a difference of seven years, not in the actual duration of life, in the two sexes, but in the stamina of the constitution, the symmetry of the form, and the lineaments of the face. The wear and tear of bringing up a family might alone account for this inequality; but there are other causes inherent in the constitution, and independent of matrimony or celibacy.

In respect to early marriage, as far as it concerns the softer sex, I have to observe, for every year at which the hymenial knot is tied below the age of twenty-one, there will be, on an average, three years of premature decay of the corporal fabric, and a considerable abbreviation of the usual range of human existence. It is in vain to point out instances that seem to nullify this calculation. There will be individual exceptions to all general rules. The above will be found a fair average estimate. On the moral consequences of too early marriages it is not my intention to dilate, though I could adduce many strong arguments against, and very few in favor of the practice. It has been said that "matrimony may have miseries but celibacy has no pleasures." As far as too early marriage is concerned, the advice ought to run thus—"marriages made by miseries, though celibacy have no pleasures." The choice of a wife as a husband is rather foreign to my subject, and has occupied much abler pens than mine, to little advantage. My own opinion is, that, were the whole of the adult population registered as they came of age, and each person, male and female, drew a name out of the urn, and thus rendered matrimony a complete lottery, the sums total of happiness, misery or content would be nearly, if not exactly, the same as upon the present principle of selection. This, at first sight, will appear a most startling proposition; but the closer we examine it, the less extravagant it will be found.—Dr. Johnson.

THE TWO HEIRS.

"I remember," says a late Postmaster General of the United States, "the first time I visited Burlington, Vt., as a Judge of the Supreme Court. I had left it many years before a poor boy. At the time I left there were two females of special note for their standing and wealth. Each of them had a son about my own age. I was very poor, and these two boys were rich. During the long years of hard toil which passed before my return, I had almost forgotten them. They had long ago forgotten me.

"Approaching the court house, for the first time, in company with several gentlemen of the bench and bar, I noticed, in the court house yard, a large pile of old furniture, about to be sold at auction. The scenes of early boyhood with which I was surrounded prompted me to ask whom it was. I was told it belonged to Mr. J. "Mr. J.? I remember a family of that name, very wealthy; there was a son, too; can it be he?" I was told that it was even so. He was the son of one of the families already alluded to. He had inherited more than I had earned, and spent it; and now his own family was reduced to real want, and his very furniture was that day to be sold for debt.

"I went into the court house suddenly, yet almost glad that I was born poor. I was soon absorbed in the business before me. One of the first cases called, originated in a drunken quarrel between Mr. H. and Mr. A. Mr. H., thought I, that is a familiar name. Can it be? In short, found that this was indeed the son of the other wealthy man referred to! I was overwhelmed alike with astonishment and thanksgiving—astonishment at the change of our relative standings, and thanksgiving that I was not born to inherit wealth without toil."

Those fathers provide best for their children who leave them with the highest education, the purest morals, and—the least money.