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Miscellaneous.

A DANGEROUS CHALLENGE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY MRS. ST. SIMON.

Among the foreign officers who took part in the campaign of the English against Tippoo Saib, was a Frenchman, Count Horace de Benzeval. Although more than five-and-twenty years of age, yet he seemed scarcely eighteen; and his feeble frame, his fair complexion, and his delicate limbs, gave him almost the appearance of a female in disguise. Notwithstanding this, he was a man of extraordinary strength, capable of any fatigue, concealing every emotion, and deriving himself the gratification of every need.

Family affairs called him to Bombay, where two of his relatives, young English officers, received him with marked distinction, and soon after his arrival, invited him to dinner, with several other officers—an invitation which he readily accepted.

At the Count's first appearance, the young officers, who were strangers to him, noticed him by his exterior, and assumed to be the same as "Benzeval." The Count, however, declining to be recognized, and kept himself upon his guard, firmly resolved, however, to profit by the first opportunity that offered, to leave behind him an enduring memorial of his visit to Bombay. As he took his seat at table, he was asked if he understood English, and, although he was perfectly well acquainted with that language, he declared that he was entirely ignorant of it, and begged them to converse with him in his native tongue.

Relieved from all restraint by this assertion, the Englishmen conversed together freely, and the Count de Benzeval soon remarked that he was the object of their incessant mockery. He controlled his indignation, however, and listened with a calm and smiling mien. During the dessert, their tongues were rendered still more voluble by the champagne; among other things, the discourse turned upon the chase, and they asked the Count what kind of game, and in what way, he hunted in France. Benzeval, in order to perform his part to the end, replied that he sometimes hunted the wild boar on horse-back, sometimes hares and partridges, with pointers, sometimes foxes and deer in the forest.

"Ah!" cried one of the company, "you hunt foxes, hares, and deer! We, in this country, hunt the tiger."

"And in what way?"

"Mounted upon elephants, accompanied by slaves, some of whom, armed with spears, go before to rouse the beast, while the others reload our muskets when we have discharged them."

"That must be glorious sport," rejoined the Count.

"It is a pity," remarked one of the Englishmen, "that you leave Bombay so soon; otherwise we could gratify you with such an entertainment."

"Well," rejoined Benzeval, "if I am not obliged to wait too long, I will defer my departure for a while."

"Fortunately, it so happens," said another, "that, just at this time, a tigress with her young has taken up her abode in a swamp, about three miles from here.—Some Indians, who have had several sheep killed by the beast, brought us the news yesterday. We resolved to wait until the whelps were grown, in order to arrange a regular hunt, but since so favorable an opportunity occurs of procuring you a pleasure, we will defer it no longer."

"I am greatly obliged to you, replied Benzeval, "but it is certain that the tigress is to be found in the spot where she is supposed to be, and is this spot accurately known?"

"There is no doubt about it. From the top of a hill which overlooks the swamp, you can plainly see her paths through the reeds; they all lead to a common centre, like the rays of a star."

"Well, then," cried the Count, filling his glass, and arising, as if to propose a toast, "to the health of him who shall seek out the tigress alone, on foot, through the

reeds, and slay it, amid its whelps, with no other weapon than this poignard."

With these words, the Count drew from the girdle of a slave a Malay poignard, and threw it upon the table.

"Have you lost your senses?"

"By no means, gentlemen," cried the Count, in a tone of bitter scorn, "and in proof of it I repeat my pledge. Listen to me well, that the man who accepts the challenge may know to what he binds himself. To the health of him," he continued, "who shall seek out the tigress alone, on foot, through the reeds, and slay it, amid her whelps, with no other weapon than this poignard!"

Universal silence followed these words, during which the Count gazed in turn at all present; every eye was cast to the ground.

"No one answers!" he continued, with a smile. "No one ventures to accept my challenge? No one has the courage to do honor to my pledge? Well, then, I must undertake it myself, and if I do not, you may call me knave, as I now call you cowards!" With these words, Benzeval drained his glass, then set it calmly upon the table, and said, as he approached the door—

"Adieu, until to-morrow, gentlemen!" and with these words he disappeared.

At six o'clock, on the following morning, the Count had completed his preparations for the fearful hunt, when his companions of the preceding day entered his chamber to entreat him to give up an undertaking, the result of which could not but prove fatal to him; but the Count would not listen to them. They acknowledged the impropriety of their conduct at table the day before, and owned that they had behaved heedlessly and rudely. The Count thanked the gentlemen for their excuses but refused to accept them. He answered, abruptly, that his principles did not permit him to shed the blood of his fellow-men, and that he retracted the epithet which he had applied to them, but that nothing could induce him to give up his intended adventure.

At the same time he invited the gentlemen to mount their horses, assuring them, however, that if they refused to honor him with their company, he would go alone in search of the tigress. This declaration was uttered in so firm a tone, that no one attempted to oppose his purpose, but all mounted their horses, in order, according to agreement, to join the Count at the eastern gate of the city.

The party rode in silence toward the appointed spot. Each one was accompanied by a double-barrelled gun, and a sword. The Count alone was without a weapon. He was dressed like a young boy when he takes his morning ride in the Bois de Boulogne. The officers gazed at each other with astonishment; no one could believe it possible, that the Count would persevere in this calmness to the end.

When they reached the edge of the swamp, the officers made another attempt to prevent him from pushing the adventure farther. In the midst of their expostulations, and as if to warn him, a loud roar was heard at a distance of about a hundred paces; the terrified horses began to plunge and rear.

"You see, gentlemen," said the Count, "we are observed; the animal knows that we are here, and upon quitting the East Indies, which I shall probably never visit again, I do not wish to leave an unfavorable opinion behind me—even with a tigress. Forward, gentlemen!"

With these words the Count struck the spurs into his horse's sides, in order to pass along the edge of the swamp and reach the hill, from the summit of which they could see over the reeds which hid the tigress and her whelps.

When they had reached the foot of the hill, a second roar was heard, but now so loud and near that one of the horses started aside, and almost threw his rider from the saddle; the others, with foaming mouths, dilated nostrils, fixed and glaring eyes, trembled in every limb. The entire party now dismounted and gave their horses into the hands of the slaves; the Count was the first to clamber up the hill.

From its summit he could follow the tracks of the wild beast through the crushed reeds. Paths, about two feet in width, were broken amid the tall stems, and, as the officers had said, all led towards a common centre, where the reeds were trampled down, leaving a spot of bare earth. Another roar from this direction dissipated all doubt, and Benzeval now knew where to find his enemy.

The oldest of the officers once more approached the Count, but the latter, divining his intention, motioned him coldly away with his hand. He then buttoned his coat and requested one of his cousins to lend him the silk sash that was fastened about his waist, in order to wrap it around his left arm; he then beckoned the Malay to reach him his poignard, and directed the latter to fasten it firmly in his hand by means of a wet cloth; he threw his hat upon the ground, smoothed his hair calmly from his face, and took the shortest way towards the reeds, amid which he disappeared for some moments, while his companions gazed upon each other in dismay, as if they scarcely credited the reality of the scene which was passing.

Slowly and cautiously, the Count advanced upon the path, which was so plainly marked out that it was impossible to err either to the right or to the left. When he had proceeded about a hundred paces, he heard a low growl, which informed him that his enemy was upon the watch, and that, if she had not seen, she had at least scented him; he stopped for a second, and, as soon as the noise ceased, continued upon his way. He soon reached the bare spot, which was strewn with bones to which remnants of flesh were still clinging. He glanced around the circle, and in a cavity of a few feet in depth, which was over-arched, as it were, with reeds, he perceived the tigress, half erect, with open jaws, and her eyes fixed upon him, while her whelps were playing beneath her like young kittens.

The Count alone could describe what passed, at this moment, in this moment, in his bosom; but his soul was an abyss which locked up every emotion. The two antagonists gazed upon each other steadfastly for a while, but when the Count remarked that the animal, fearing to leave her whelps, did not attack him, he resolved himself to be the assailant.

He approached to within a few paces of her, and as he saw at last that she made a movement to rise, he at once rushed upon the animal. Those who watched and listened, heard at once a roar and a cry; for a moment they saw the reeds agitated, then perfect silence followed. All was over.

They waited for a few seconds, to see if the Count would appear again, but they waited in vain.

They were now ashamed at having suffered him to enter the swamp alone, and resolved, as they had not prevented him from throwing away his life, at least to recover his body. They advanced eagerly into the swamp, and at last reached the bare spot, where they found the two antagonists, lying one upon the other; the tigress was dead, the Count in a swoon. The two whelps, as yet too young to devour him, were licking his blood.

The tigress had received seven poignard strokes, the Count a bite which had crushed his left arm, and a stroke from the animal's paw which had lacerated his breast.

The officers bore away the body of the tigress and the senseless Count; man and beast were carried upon the same litter to Bombay. The Malay slave bound the young whelps with strips of muslin, and hung them over his horse, on either side of the saddle.

When, at the expiration of a fortnight, the Count left his bed, he found the skin of the tigress, which he had slain, with both of its eyes, and claws, and a pair of its teeth, lying upon the floor of the apartment in which his two cousins served. No man has since ventured to mock at the Count de Benzeval.

MODERN PROPHECIES.

A STORY FOR THE CREDULOUS.—It is somewhat singular that the usually grave pages of Blackwood should (in the December number) contain a chapter on dire and fearful prophecies, as connected with the time in which we live, and particularly as involving the destinies of France. In all ages the organ of wonder has been strongly developed in the human race, and this tendency of man's nature has often been turned to profitable account by the designing and ambitious. Who can doubt that with the ancients, the mystic vaticinations of Delphos and Dodona were framed to suit the aspirations of power? Where not the Sybilline Leaves also consulted, in most instances, with the certainty of a favorable answer? And is it not a sad and sober truth, that the publication of a prophecy, real or pretended, contributes to its own fulfilment, by prompting mankind even to evil acts, under the pretext or belief that in aiding to fulfil a prediction, they are obeying a Divine behest? Thus was Macbeth stimulated to the perpetration of many murders by the *all hail!* and "Thou shalt be King hereafter!" of the Weird Sisters.

But it is not our intention to write an essay on prophecy, and therefore, we will at once proceed to the so-called forshadowing of events in France.

It appears that for some time past, and even previous to the recent revolution, a brochure called the "Prophecy of Orval," together with other and subsequent predictions, has been circulated in Paris and throughout France—and that it created a great sensation. No wonder—when the mental excitement produced by the revolution and the events of June, is taken into due consideration. The "Provisions of a Solitary" (Monk or Hermit of the Abbey of Orval, in the Diocese of Trier, are said to have been first printed at Luxembourg, in 1544—and re-printed in 1792. The language used is of a "mystic" character—of that cloudy and shadowy style in which oracles and predictions have in all ages been shrouded. The events of the French Revolution, the then fall of the Bourbons, the career of Napoleon the restoration—the accession and reign of Louis Philippe, his dethronement, party strife and the present revolution, appear to have been foretold—at least so reads the interpretation of the prediction, in which by moons, even the time is calculated. The tendency of the article before us is evidently to produce the impression that if so large a portion of the prophecy has already been realized, it is probable that the remaining previsions will prove equally true. Now what are these? why—civil war, slaughter, the destruction of the city of Paris by fire! a revolution in England—and the firm establishment of

the child of the *white flower* (the old Bourbon dynasty) on his throne." The remainder of the previsions are somewhat tremendous, but more obscure—referring to the Church as well as to secular affairs. So much for the Solitary of Orval!

The next French prophecy is ascribed to a Jesuit priest of Poitiers, who died at Bordeaux towards the close of the last century. It was made prior to the first French revolution, which it predicted, and other events, (as in the case of Orval) to the present time. Hence it is popularly depended on for the future.—It predicts, among other things, a terrible convulsion—the formation of two parties in France—that convulsion shall extend to other lands (it has done so)—and that Paris shall be "so utterly destroyed, that when twenty years afterwards, fathers shall walk with their children, and the children shall ask—why is that desolate spot?"—they shall answer—My children, here once stood a great city, which God destroyed for its crimes." After this fearful convulsion, all will return to order, and the counter-revolution shall be made.

Then shall the triumph of the Church be such, that nothing like it shall ever be seen again, for it shall be the last triumph of the Church on earth." The commentator says that the "events foretold ought to receive their fulfilment (calculation given) before 1859. And so much for the prophecy of Poitiers.

Then comes the prediction of Bug de Thilas, of the pyrenes, in the sixteenth century, who predicted the utter destruction of Paris, entering into details of the great fire, and fixing the epoch for the disaster in the nineteenth century.

The "Prophetic Lorraine" in verse, foretells the same event, with minute descriptions and details, warning the Parisian "that he will perish entirely by his own fault."

But when is this tremendous conflagration to occur?

An alphabetic-numeral calculation is given, which places it in the year 1849!

The Rev. Robert Fleming's (Minister of the Scottish Church) predictions, published in 1704, are then dwelt upon at great length in which he foreshadows events to 1794 as the opening of the Fourth Vial of the Revelations—and that the opening of the Fifth Vial of the Apocalypse, (under the wrath of which the world is now, of course, supposed to be suffering, refers to the period between 1794 and 1848.

We have thus endeavored to give the

strange—very strange—that the Secs of the Future did not foretell the invention of the steam engine, of railway-locomotives, the adoption of steam navigation on the ocean—and more wonderful still, the discovery of the Magnetic Telegraph—as being all and each, of more importance to mankind at large than the burning of Paris, or even a French revolution? However, we will not quarrel with the predictors of the dark future or their expounders—as it is probable that they could not see every thing in the time to come. Besides, a thought strikes our mind—and that is, that Paris with its solid walls of masonry, its tile and brick floors and stairs-cases, would not prove sufficiently combustible to produce a general conflagration. By fire, at least, it could never be more than partially destroyed.

DROLL FUNERAL PROCESSION.

Mr. Kendall, writing from Hamburg, says: Lest some of my readers may think that the term droll, as applied to a funeral procession, may appear strange, let me tell them that in Hamburg the friends and relatives of the dead do not follow the remains to the grave, but in their stead march along some twelve or sixteen hired mourners, with curled and powdered wigs upon their heads, short cloaks upon their shoulders, and swords at their sides, while the very quaintness of their costumes, and a species of mock gravity upon the countenance of those whose trade it is to mourn for pay, combine to give anything but that solemnity to a scene which the stranger meets in other lands.

ARKANSAS COURTS.—THE WAY THEY DO IT.—A correspondent of the New York Spirit of the Times, writing from El-Dorado, relates the following "good un."

R. H. M., an Attorney of high standing at our Bar, being counsel in a case then pending, was called by the Sheriff from the Court House door three times, distinctly—R. H. M., Esquire! R. H. M., Esquire! but no answer to either call, and it was impossible to proceed with the case, without him; some inquiry was made by the court "in person," when one of the crowd walked up to the bench, saying—"Ef you want him pretticleker, Judge, he's over at B's, playing poker." Here was a fix. The Court had too much respect for such sport to break up the game, but could not conveniently adjourn; so after reflecting a moment, he very coolly remarked to his informant, "Go over and play his hand awhile and tell him to come into Court."

Macfarland, the celebrated vaulter, accomplished the herculean feat of throwing seventy-two somersets, without resting, on Saturday afternoon last, at the Broadway Circus. This is the greatest number ever thrown anywhere. The average height of each somerset was over ten feet from the

ground, clear. The "Forty Somersets Man" of England will have to change his title of "Prince of Vaulters."

MIXED HUSBANDRY.

By the adoption of mixed husbandry says Mr. Seabrook, the fallow system will be abandoned, and fallow crops take its place. The cultivator will become substantially a farmer; and no longer wear the insignia of a planter. It follows that one-third, in cases, one half, of the real estate in possession of many of our profession, might, in such an event, be sold, and the profits appropriated to the improvement of the remainder; or converted into legacies for their children, instead of compelling them for the supposed want of room, to seek their bread in foreign climes. The amount of capital invested in land by individual proprietors, ought to be diminished. There is perhaps no barrier to agricultural progress which has attracted so little notice as the disposition to hold landed property incommensurate with the force actually engaged in its cultivation. No fact is better established, than that any quantity of ground, under the supervision and control of an intelligent practical man, will give larger returns and insure more comforts, than three times the area, in unskillful and improvident hands. As a rule universally to be observed, it is better to cultivate one acre, systematically managed, than three acres unprovided with appropriate pabulum, or only partially aided in other words, to own a small plot of ground, capable of being put in a garden-like condition, than the boasted occupier of immense tracts a stranger perhaps to the plough, or hoe, certainly to the artificial food designed for the maintenance and support of cultivable plants. The secret of the accumulation of wealth lies, not in disbursing the profits of the farm, in adding to its size, or in increasing the number of laborers, but in expanding them in such improvements as the skillful and experienced eye may point out. This is the true and only mode of permanently enlarging the productive capital of an estate. By this means the owner of 100 acres may be the proprietor of as much land as the holder of five times that quantity, with the advantages among the many others, in favor of the former, that he pays less taxes and is certain of a progressive improvement in the value of his property.—Let the excess of income, then, be appropriated in draining—in reducing to culture every pond and morass within the inclosure—in good buildings—in substantial and durable fences, and, where there is a necessity, to purchase, in mineral or animal manures, and in judicious and economical experiments.

THE BENEFIT OF APPRENTICESHIP.

There is an important feature in the regulations of a master-mechanic, which is fruitful to some kind parents' hearts; and that is the five to seven years apprenticeship the boy who learns a trade must submit to. It is an excellent

and the restraining influence of duty—and puts him to a steady round of duties, severe, at first, but soon becoming, from habit, agreeable; and, when his minority expires, his steady habits and industry are established, and he comes forth a man, the master of a trade, of fixed principles and good habits, a blessing to himself and the community.

If parents would but look at it aright, they would declare that, had they many sons, they should learn trades. Contrast the youth just alluded to with him who, having a horror of an apprenticeship, is allowed to run at large. At the most critical period of life for forming habits, he is forming those that are the reverse of industry. He is not fitting himself to be a man, but wearing away his boyhood in idleness. The partial parent sees this, yet has not fortitude to avert it. At twenty-one years of age, when the first-named lad comes out a good mechanic, it is wonderful if the other has not fastened habits upon him that will be his ruin, if he is not ruined already. More than one excellent man in our community can say with thankfulness, that it turned out so that, to his half dozen years' apprenticeship, he is indebted for the habits of industry and sobriety he has obtained; that, when he was put to a trade, he was on a pivot, as it were. Had it not been for the firmness of his parents he likely would have been a ruined lad ere his minority expired. This was the turning point.—Charles W. Holden.

CURIOUS.

Until a year or two since, the lagoon extending from the entrance of our harbor to within half a mile of the Perdido Bay, a distance of eight or ten miles, had an entrance into our bay at a point near the residence of Major Chase, the channel at one time admitting vessels drawing seven feet, and all the vessels laden with brick for the building of Fort McRee passed through this channel into the lagoon to discharge their cargoes. By the action of the surf rolling in from the ocean, the entrance was gradually closed. Thus the lagoon remained for three months, constantly receiving accessions from the little streams making into it, until it was two or three feet above the level of the bay and sea. At this time a young man residing in the neighborhood, "just for the fun of the thing," cut a little ditch through the sand at a low point near the fort, when the water commenced running, and in a few hours it was cutting away everything before it, and in a day or two there was a channel of over a hundred yards wide, and in the deepest place twelve or fourteen feet. The channel has ever since been encroaching upon the fort, and a few months since began to wash its base. Major Chase, seeing that the beautiful fort that had been erected under his supervision, at a cost, probably, of over a million of dollars, was in danger of being blown up by an unexpected enemy, and knowing that the structure rested upon a sandy foundation, turned his attention to stopping the breach, and used a number of methods; but all failed, until the happy expedient suggested itself of procuring some 20,000 corn sacks, which were filled with sand, sewed up, and tumbled into the channel, and in a short time the water was successfully stopped, and the fort saved. The Major is now endeavoring to divert the water into another channel, but at a point where the fort is not in such dangerous proximity.—Pensacola Gaz.