

POETRY

MARCO BOZZARIS.

BY FITZ GREENE HALLECK.

At midnight, in his guarded tent,
The Turk was dreaming of the hour
When Greece, her knee in supplication
bent,

Should tremble at his power;
In dreams, through camp and court, he
bore,

The trophies of a conqueror;
In dreams his song of triumph heard;
Then wore his monarch's signet ring;
Then pressed that monarch's throne—a
king;

As wild his thoughts, and gay his wing,
As Eden's garden bird.

At midnight, in the forest shades,
Bozzaris ranged his Sultane band,
True as the steel of their tried blades,
Heroes in heart and hand.

There had the Persian's thousands stood
There had the glad earth drunk the
blood

On old Plataea's day;
And now there breathed that haunted air
The sons of sires who conquer'd there,
With arm to strike, and soul to dare,
As quick, as far as they.

An hour pass'd on—the Turk awoke;
That bright dream was his last;
He woke to hear his sentries shriek,
"To arms! they come! the Greek! the
Greek!"

He woke—to die midst flame and smoke
And shout, and groan, and sabre stroke,
And death-shots falling thick and fast
As lightnings from the mountain cloud;
And with voice as trumpet loud,
Bozzaris cheer his band:

"Strike—till the last arm'd foe expires;
Strike—for your altars and your fires;
Strike—for the green graves of your
sires;

God—and your native land!"
They fought—like brave men, long and
well;

They piled that ground with Moslem
slain;

They conquer'd—but Bozzaris fell,
Bleeding at every vein.

His few surviving comrades saw
His smile when rang his proud hurrah,
And the red field was won;
Then saw in death his eyelids close
Calmy, as to a night's repose
Like flowers at set of sun.

Come to the bridal chamber, Death;
Come to the mother's, when she feels,
For the first time her firstborn's breath;
Come when the blessed seals
That close the pestilence are broke,
And crowded cities wail its stroke;
Come in consumption's ghastly form,
The earthquake shock, the ocean storm;
Come when the heart beats high and
warm

With banquet-song, and dance, and
wine;

And thou art terrible—the tear
The groan, the knell, the pall, the bier,
And all we know, or dream, or fear
Of agony, are thine.

But to the hero, when his sword
Has won the battle for the free,
Thy voice sound like a prophet's word;
And in his hollow tones are heard
The thanks of millions yet to be.
Come, when his task of fame is wrought;
Come, with her laurel leaf, blood-bought;
Come in her crowning hour—and then
Thy sunken eye's unearthly light
To him is welcome as the sight
Of sky and stars to prison'd men:
Thy grasp is welcome as the hand
Of a brother in a foreign land;
Thy summons welcome as the cry
That told the Indian isles were nigh
To the world seeking Genoese,
When the land wind from woods of
palm,

And orange groves and fields of balm,
Blew o'er the Haytian seas.
Bozzaris! with the storied brave
Greece nurtur'd in her glory's time,
Rest there—there is no prouder grave,
Even in her proud clime.

She wore no funeral weeds for thee,
Nor bade the dark hearse wave its plume
A torn branch from death's leafless tree,
In sorrow's pomp and pageantry;
The heartless luxury of the tomb;
But she remembers thee as one
Long lov'd, and for a season gone;
For thee the poet's lyre is wreathed;
Her marble wrought, her music breath'd;
For thee she rings her birth-day bells;
Of thee her babe's first lisping tells;

For thine her evening prayer is said
At palace, couch, and cottage bed;
Her soldier, closing with the foe,
Gives for thy sake a deadlier blow;
His plighted maiden, when she fears
For him, the joy of her young years,
Thinks of thy fate, and checks her tears;
And she, the mother of thy boys,
Though in her eye and faded cheek
Is read the grief she will not speak,
The memory of her buried joys,
And even she who gave thee birth,
Will, by thy pilgrim circled hearth,
Talk of thy doom without a sigh;
For thou art Freedom's now and Fame's,
One of the few immortal names,
That were not born to die.

(Continued from the Second Page.)

A squadron of hussars, with whom the regiment had for some time before been in garrison at the frontiers, came to share their quarters in Provençe. The officers of La Croix's regiment invited the others to a dinner at the mess. La Croix was one of the company; and the cavalry officers, who were not blinded by prejudice, were delighted at his frank and social manners. The applause given to his lively sallies, and the laughter which his bon mots excited, provoked some of the most inveterate of his enemies to turn him into ridicule. But he replied with so much good humoured drollery and turned the laugh against them in a manner at once so clever and so free from asperity that they could find no fair pretence to insult him. The officers of hussars shook him heartily by the hand, and shewed so much admiration of his conduct, that Valmont's anger was inflamed to the highest pitch. "What St. Maur!" cried he abruptly, addressing one who seemed the most delighted with La Croix "you, who have gained your epaulettes at the point of the sword, you who have so many honourable wounds as testimonials of your services, can you suffer yourself to be dazzled by the frosty nothings of a man who owes his promotion to favor alone?"

"How!" cried St. Maur, briskly drawing back his chair, which was close to that of La Croix, "is it possible you belong to a class which all brave men detest?"

"Yes, captain; it is unfortunately true that my commission is neither the meed of my services nor the fruit of the suffrages of my companions. God knows how often I have regretted that it should be so, and how impatiently I wait for an opportunity of proving to my comrades, that I am not unworthy to march with them under the banners of my country."

"That's very well for the future," said St. Maur coldly, "for the future, but it is nothing to the purpose at present. Valmont has insulted you, and there is but one way in which you can answer him. 'What!' added he more warmly, seeing that La Croix remained silent, 'would you prove yourself insensible to the honor of a Frenchman?' 'He is a coward,' cries the lieutenant."

Without noticing this speech, La Croix said to St. Maur, "I should indeed prove myself insensible to honour were I to commit a base action; but I defy the world to prove me guilty of one."

"What, you do not think it base to suffer yourself to be called a coward?" "No!—for if abuse dishonoured a man, whose name would be unstained? The most illustrious patriots, the greatest heroes might then be dishonoured by the folly of a drunkard, or the infamous language of a blackguard."

"Ah! pshaw! all this sort of abstract reasoning does very well in the discussions of philosophers, or the writings of moralists; but we learn a different lesson in the school of honour. In a word, our creed is, insult leaves a stain which can only be effaced by the blood of the insult. Such has always been the custom of the army, and he who enters it must conform to its usages."

"I beg your pardon, this custom is not so ancient as you suppose; the Greeks and Romans—"

"What the devil have we to do with them? The customs of France are the only customs that Frenchmen ought to follow. But what need of all this prating about such a trifle? It is clear enough that you must fight your antagonist, or he apologize to you."

"I apologize?" cried Valmont, interrupting him, "never."

"Very well, then, M. La Croix, you must fight or quit the regiment."

"I hope to settle the affair without doing either one or the other, by bringing back my comrade to sentiments more just to me, and more honourable to himself."

He turned to the door: but Valmont called to him in an impetuous tone, "before you go sir, I expect that you will name the hour and place where you will meet me to-morrow to decide our difference."

"M. Valmont, I know you to be a brave, and I would willingly think you an honourable man; take then, I request of you, three days to reflect of this subject; to ask yourself coolly and dispassionately, how far this thirst for the blood of a man who never injured you is consistent with true honour. I hope at the end of that time to find you in a more just way of thinking, and that you will assist me to convince these gentlemen, that it is not necessary to shed blood because a word has been dropped inconsiderately."

"At these words, cries of indignation resounded from all present, and La Croix left the room, while they were swearing that he should fight or else quit the regiment."

The slights with which they had before treated him, were nothing to the insolent contempt they showed for him during the three following days, and the patience with which he supported it appeared in their eyes a meanness that nothing could justify. The General had been immediately informed of what had passed, and full of the prejudices of the military profession, he remonstrated with him in the strongest terms upon his conduct, and ended by forbidding him his house till he had wiped out the stain upon his honour. Eugenie was forbidden to see or write to him; but for the first and only time the gentle girl disobeyed the will of her parent, by conveying a line to La Croix expressive of her approbation of his conduct, and of her hope that heaven would give him strength of mind to persevere in it. His heart swelled with mingled sensations of pleasure and pain, as he read this letter—"Yes, dearest Eugenie," cried he, "you and you alone understand me, and in your approbation of my conduct I could find a balm for the unjust scorn with which I am treated; but alas! how long shall I be able to preserve that approbation so precious to my heart."

When the three days were expired, he entered the coffee house at the moment that all the officers were assembled. M. Valmont, said he, addressing his antagonist, "I hope that I now find you in a disposition to appreciate more justly the motives of my conduct. I am satisfied that in your heart you acquit me of cowardice; but I frankly avow that a duel inspires me with horror, and never will I willingly raise my hand but again the enemies of my country. I do not ask you for any apology: I am willing to bury the past in oblivion; accept my hand, and let us be friends?" "I shall never be friends with a man who acts like a poltroon." "Then I must fight?" "To be sure you must," cried all the officers at once—"Very well then, let our differences be decided to-morrow morning at six o'clock, in presence of three officers of our corps, and three of the hussars. As the party challenged, I ought to have the choice of weapons; but I waive it.—If I am to name them, I say swords."

La Croix smiled with peculiar expression in his countenance, and retired without making any observation. "So then," cried St. Maur, "we have at last provoked this pretty gentleman to run the chance of being let blood." "I think," cried another of the officers, "it is doubtful after all." "No," cried Valmont, "whatever strange notions the fellow has got in his head, I really believe he is no coward. The tone of his voice, the firmness of his look, assure me of his courage; and I should have been almost sorry to have used him as I have done, if I did not consider that he had as good a chance as myself for his life. 'Provided,' cried one of the officers drily, 'he is as good a swordsman.' Valmont reddened, but made no reply."

The following morning, the lieutenant and the other officers were on the ground,

exactly at the appointed time; where in less than two minutes they were joined by La Croix, who took a letter from his pocket, and presented it to St. Maur, requesting that if he fell, it might be given to General Belegarde. The combat then began; Valmont was an excellent swordsman, but he soon found that he had to do with his master; at first he fought with great temper, but soon abandoning himself to the fury of his resentment, he made the most desperate passes, and left himself so open to his adversary, that La Croix might have repeatedly taken his life, but it was evident that he acted merely on the defensive, and avoided even wounding him.

"Let us have done with this child's play," said the enraged Valmont, at last, "you knew what you were about when you agreed to fight with swords; but if you are not dead to every sentiment of true honour, give me a fair chance and let us take pistols."

La Croix looked at him with horror. "O my God!" cried he, "how much more barbarous is man under the influence of his blind rage, than the most savage of animals! you still thirst for my blood. Well then, unjust man satisfy yourself if you can."

Pistols were produced; they tossed up for the first fire—the chance fell to Valmont—he fired and missed. La Croix turned round, and taking direct aim at a tree thirty paces distant, lodged a bullet in it breast high. A cry of mingled astonishment and admiration burst forth from all the officers. "Death," cried Valmont, this is not to be borne! I will not receive my life at your hands—I insist on your firing."

"Be satisfied, M. Valmont; you have gained one point; you have succeeded in bringing me into the field, heaven knows, sorely against my will; but I entered it with the firm determination not to raise my hand against your life; insult me as you please, you shall not provoke me to break my resolution."

Overcome by these words, Valmont stammered out "I am to blame." "But I am more so," cried La Croix, interrupting him, "I ought not to have suffered any provocation to draw me into an action so contrary to my principles.—Thus you have lowered me in mine own eyes, and I am determined to have my revenge, that I swear to you, that from this moment I shall not cease to seek your friendship till I compel you to grant it to me."

"It is yours already," said the subdued Valmont; "Yes, La Croix, the promise of your friendship is the only thing that could reconcile me to myself; that could give me courage to avow the injustice, the barbarity of my conduct to you—conduct, which I now publicly declare to have been unworthy of a gentleman and a soldier, and for which I sincerely ask your pardon."

It was granted with a hearty shake of the hand. The other officers flocked round La Croix, eager to solicit his friendship, and to prevail on him to be present at an entertainment which they determined to give to his honour. He would have declined this public acknowledgment of his superior conduct, but they were too pressing to be refused; he agreed to accept it, and they all returned to the parade together.

The subsequent conduct of Valmont proved that he was not unworthy of the generous forgiveness he had received. He published everywhere the particulars of his reconce, and gave to his antagonist all the merit which was justly his due. The old General was delighted; he declared that the nuptials of his daughter and La Croix, should be celebrated the moment the consent of his father was obtained. "Ah," cried Eugenie, extending her hand to La Croix, "Heaven be praised that thou art safe! I will not reproach thee, but yet—" "But yet I should have done better not to have met him: is not that what my fellow has got in his head, I really believe Eugenie meant to say?" "Yes." "Foolish girl!" said the General frowning. "No," said La Croix, "she is right. I have but half acquitted myself to my conscience; it is only in refusing a challenge altogether, that a man can prove himself possessed of true courage."

Mr Mark Wiggins, at Haycocks Harbor, killed a few days since, a hog, only 20 months and a week old, weighing 529 lb