

Rouge et Noir.

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The Saving of the Colours at the Battle of Isandula.

BY ALBAN GREAVES.

"Strike!" But the arms were weary that obeyed:
"Charge!" But the many who so valiantly
In the proud early hour of battle strife
Responded to that cry now hear no more:
"Hally!" Alas! in serried heaps they lie
Upon the bleeding ground. And they whose fate
Is yet to stay behold fresh masses flock,
Like vultures to the prey across the plain
Of Isandula. That devoted band,
Still left a nation's honour to sustain,
The burden bore until beneath its weight—
Their strength, not valour, falling—they sank down.
Fou as the tigress bearded in the den
Where sleep her jungle whelps doth, bare her fangs
More terribly than when she remains alone,
So strove the men who fought for forest homes.

"Th' done! O turn away thy eyes and weep
To think of those whose life-blood dyes the ground.
Here would the father and the brother bend
In silent awe; the mother's love would sob,
In sorrow, tears that once from joyful hope
She dropped on yonder soldier's infant brow:
The wife would know the bitterness of those
Who find they've hojped in vain, and closer press
The little ones, now fatherless, whom she
Alone must send to meet the battling world.
Alike the sister, and perchance the maid
More dear than sister, would be prone upon
Some face no tears or kiss could more. Alas!
How many a home would pour its sorrow here
And hope see quenched in yonder gory pile!

But, lo! who yonder cuts his way and rides
From out the conflict toward the rock-set plain
With such fierce valour, and what list he bears
So precious that, despite its hindering mass,
He seems to hold a kingdom in his hand?
Meanwhile spring forward to arrest his flight
Furrying bands of swarthy warriors, one
Black mass of screaming rage. But comrades lead
Those abouts as they lie wounded, and rise up
That with their latest glances they may note
The fugitive's career, then falling, give
One faint hurrah, and easier seem to die.
The Zulus come thick, swarming o'er the plain
Like ravenous wolves upon the Russian steppes
Which hour by hour pursue some hapless beast
Till its endurance yields to theirs at last.

The object now of many a scowling eye
He rides, the mark for many an arrow barb,
While spears—now this side, now on that—fly past
Like winged serpents. On he speeds, a star
Of hope unto his comrades who behold
That wondrous sight: for while he rides there lives
The hope that all may not so bitter be
As first did seem—that still may that be saved
Which each true soldier values as his life
Of which despoiled he soldier seems no more.

Then on! good horse: let not thy footsteps fall:
On, on! bear weariness to-day, for thou
Hast costlier burden far than all the steeds
That low encumbered pass thee in their flight.
But now unkladly Nature gives to turn
Her hand against the rider, hindering
His course with tangled bush and slippery rock:
Yet unobdured he toils, with careless care
Guarding those precious emblems, heedless naught
But that dear treasure—there where men would cast

Gold and rich gems away to purchase steel.
And many followed still that laden steed—
Some nigh alongside—till the river gleams
Across his path. The rider pauses not
To ponder on the brink, but plunges in:—
And Melville's work was finished. There then began
A battle with that stream, the Buffalo;
But none may tell that struggle, for the two
That knew it hold the silence of the dead
And sleep the slumber unrecordable.

But there was one—as true a soul as drew
Sword on that day—brave Coghill, who had stayed
Near Melville all the fight. His steed had gained
The further bank when, looking back, he saw
His comrade's strength was spent, and plunged once more
Into the rushing flood to bear relief
To him, or catch those banners saved so long
Which unretrieved, were being swept away
Upon the stream a prey for savage hands.
But with the rapid current fruitlessly—
Not always do the worthiest bear the crown—
He strove for them: the brave attempt did fail,
And strength was barely theirs to gain the shore.

They'd done their best,—duty was more than done:
And moaning o'er that toll, though vainly spent,
They crawled unto safe hiding place, and there,
Faint and untended in the solitude,
Their weary limbs laid down to rest—and die:
For none was near to whisper to them words
Of praise and gratitude, or bear away
Their dying words and messages of love,
Through oftentimes their falling glances turned
Where aid might come, but ever turned, alas!
With vain expectancy. Where were your thoughts,
Ye two, in those sad moments? Far away?
Away beyond the north Atlantic foam,
Once more within the old familiar home
Surrounded by loved faces? There meanwhile
The ruddy fire of Winter on the hearth
The English parlour cheerfully illumed,
Round which your places by fond hearts are still
Kept empty—places to be filled by you
On earth, alas! no more. Thus did ye muse,
While round the breezes of the desert sang
Your requiem, the song that's chanted o'er
The dying forms of those whose graves shall own
No monument but their good fame. 'Twas not
Until their noble spirits had cast off
The burdening clay that joyful comrades found,
Amid the stream suspended far below,
The colours which so valiantly they bore
From woman's grasp. 'Twas not for them to see
The harvest of the toll themselves endured:
But others live who bless the names of two
Whose bones in Africa's keeping hidden lie.
A nation from dishonour foul they saved;
Be theirs for aye a nation's grateful praise!

ROMEO AND JULIET.

BY H. GREGORY COX, M.A.

While witnessing the recent representation of Shakspeare's plays, I was strongly reminded of Charles Lamb's delightful essay in which he maintains that Shakspeare is better suited for the closet than the stage. Much scorn has been wasted of late on this opinion, yet I imagine that it expresses the ultimate view of most Shakspearean students. At first, no doubt, it is the

general experience, that the skill of an accomplished actor touches into life, and gives a reality and substance to the poet's dreams. However this may be, it is not uninteresting to note the mutilations which Shakspeare's plays are subjected to in their adaptation to the modern stage. The audiences, who had the distinction of being written for by him, must, in some respects at least, have had a truer feeling for dramatic art, than the crowds who applaud with more energy than discrimination, the graces of Miss Neilson. In keeping with the practice of earlier dramatists, Shakspeare always continues the action of his tragedies beyond the culmination of the catastrophe. Hamlet dies, but the play does not close until we hear the announcement of the English ambassadors, that the engineer has been hoist with his own petard, that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have gone to their richly-merited doom; and then, with a few words of grace, regret and dignified eulogy of the ill-fated Prince, the bodies are borne from the stage, while

"The soldier's music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him."

Justice has been done, crimes have been avenged, and the uneventful course of human life is resumed in the cleared atmosphere. So it is with all his tragedies, and the reader finds in these calm endings a restorative, which the ways of audiences of to-day, and the conditions of scenic representation, have thrown away. In Romeo and Juliet, the concluding scenes have not merely the artistic effect of soothing the same emotions, which the horrors of the tragedy excite, but contain a most important part of the moral lesson of the play. That which the friar's little schemes could not effect, fate has accomplished by their frustration, and over the dead bodies of the star-crossed lovers, the insane enmities of the rival houses at length are reconciled.

Prince.— Capulet! Montague!
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven sends means to kill your joys with
love!
Capulet.—O, brother Montague, give me thy
hand;
This is my daughter's jointure, for no more
Can I demand.
Montague.—But I can give thee more;
For I will raise her statue in pure gold,