"FORWARD TO DEATH?"

Woerth, 1870.

BY CYNICO.

"I never saw such a queer, reckless fellow in all my life. He seems so completely indifferent to what you think of him, whether it be good or bad. Where does he come from? What is he?"

"A Turk."

"A Spaniard."

"A Frenchman."

"English, all to nothing."

"No, Irish."

"None of these—a Heathen Chinee."

"Heathen, I grant you; Chinee, I deny. He is a European, and, to my thinking, an Englishman who strayed to South America when young, and burnt his blood and his morality. Not worth a curse as far as godliness goes, but a rare hand, I should imagine, at all kinds of devilry and mischief."

"With just a touch of softness about him."

"Softness? Where?"

"Brain."

"Your proof?"

"His condescending to listen to the empty chatter of such beggars as you."

These last words were pronounced by a lively, dark-featured, handsome youth who had just stepped out on the terrace where were assembled the men whose conversation opens this tale. There were seven of them, of all ages and species, but all coming under the designation of commonplace. Two subs in a marching regiment, with downy lips and boiled-gooseberry eyes, who, on the strength of nineteen years and a cornetcy, deemed themselves the superiors of all men who wore civilian dress; a promising young fool of barrister, whose office door bore the perpetual ticket, "Back in half an hour," and who had never known a brief; an Oxford undergraduate, who made up by swagger and boat-talk for a total want of brain, and a languid swell who thought everything a bore, and strove to forget that he was meant for a man in his highly successful efforts to become a tailor's walking advertisement; a city man, whose whole soul was in stocks and funds, and finally the speaker whose remark, by its truth and directness, produced a singularly unpleasant effect on the smokers and critics in high-court assembled. He was the best of the lot in every way—more independent, bright and manly than all of them put together—with a quick, intelligent, fearless look in his eye, and a pretty contemptuous curl of the lip. The subs looked on him as a muff—he was no soldier; the undergraduate as a spoon—he was no athlete; the city man as a fool—he was no merchant; the barrister and the swell as a nonentity — he was not a professional man—merely a painter; a good painter, too, a famous painter; but the precious crowd he was addressing had no idea that a painter of pictures could be anything better than "a low fellow." It would not do to show this, nevertheless, or express it in any way, for Bob Thornhill was too well received in the best circles, and had far too great a power of sarcasm for any one to risk incurring his displeasure. A devilish hot-tempered fellow, too, and not likely to pass by any impertinence, however covered or slight. So a light protest was all that the party dared murmur in opposition to the scathing satire of the last comer, and a rapid change of topic with renewed attention to cigars and coffee.

Meanwhile the individual who was the object of all this curiosity was strolling slowly along the garden path that bordered the river, talking to a pretty, stylish-looking young lady, and apparently oblivious of everything but his fair companion, Miss Amy Baldwin, the only daughter of John Baldwin, Esq., a rich proprietor, at whose villa on the banks of the Thames was assembled the present dinner party. Miss Amy was not only an heiress, she was also a clever, well-informed girl, with feelings and sentiments that made her worthy of the highest honor and reverence. Chatting gaily with her companion, she appeared so thoroughly fascinating that an impartial observer might have suspected jealousy to be at the bottom of the hostile criticisms of the cohort of nonentities who were enjoying their smoke and small talk on the terrace.

"No place like this," said Miss Amy, as they reached a seat under a tree by the water-side, "no place like this to enjoy the view of the river and cool of the evening."

"I have forgotten your city modes of speech," replied her companion, "but feel I ought to throw in a compliment to you. I can't though, because to speak what I feel would utterly spoil it."

"Rather, then, leave it unsaid, and don't mistake me for an empty-headed, foolish chit. I don't lay claim to perfect freedom from vanity, but I hated forced compliments."

"Which can never be paid you — all must come but too naturally. But I meant that merely to tell you that your society heightened the charm of this scene, would be but following in the wake of all fools, and not expressing one half of what I really feel. You know, Miss Baldwin, that I care little for conventionalities; you know that my life has been such as to make me long for some rest, for some companionship — well, I have determined to seek both, and both I mean to have."

"How very decided you are. Can you rely on obtaining them?"

"The later granted me, I shall enjoy the former. Plainly, Miss Baldwin, will you be my wife?"

A week later, Bob Thornhill was pottering away in his studio, just as it was getting so dark that he could scarcely see his work. A knock at the door preceded the entrance of a tall, muscular man, with bronzed face, piercing blue eyes, and fair mustache. His erect bearing and military air at once betrayed that he had seen service.

"Beaufort! by the powers!" cried Thornhill on recognizing him. "Why, where on earth have you been during the last seven days and nights?"

"In France—in Paris. Left the day after Baldwin's dinner and returned this morning."

"Restless beggar. What took you over?"

"The rumors of war. I have still a hankering for fighting and excitement, and all that sort of thing."

"Yes? A *blasé* like you, that is rather astonishing. Enlisted, have you?"

"Got a commission in the Cuirassiers. Join in ten days."

"By Jove! And how did you manage that?"

"Met Bazaine in Mexico; got rather friendly with him there. Served, indeed, on his staff as a volunteer. Thank to his influence, I have got my commission."

"But I wonder you should choose that mode of settling down. Did you not announce to me when you returned to England a month since that you were fully resolved to marry and live a peaceful and useful life."

"True, Bob; but the love of adventure is too firmly planted in me to be so easily stifled. I am tired already of quiet life, of fashionable society—and as to marrying—"

"Well?"

"Too old."

"Bosh. You're the right age; something between thirty and fifty—blest if I know more exactly—and well off. Your love of adventure ought to be all out of you by this time."

"Mistake, my dear boy, mistake, I smell powder and a terrible fight, in which France is sure to be the loser. Few of us will return from that war, trust me. And, after all, my old desire, my old prayer, a quick death on the battle-field, is as good a way of 'settling-down' as the perpetration of marriage."

"But your friends, Beaufort, have you thought of them? The Baldwins will be shocked and grieved at your sudden determination."

"Haven't known me more than six weeks, and won't feel my loss much. Your uncle will play chess with you instead of with me, your aunt will tell you all her little stories and find you a better listener than ever I was; your cousin——"

"Will be terribly sorry. Hang it, man, don't you know you have made an impression there?"

"A queer one, I should think. I believed she looked on me more in the light of a possible lunatic than anything else. I regret it, for I greatly admired her."

"I tell you she is fond of you. I have known her long enough to be able to judge. You are acting foolishly in going."

"I had rather go with the pleasant idea, founded on your assertion, than with the unpleasant feeling of having been refused. Trust me, my dear boy, no such luck is mine; it doesn't come to fellows of my class."

"Won't you at least try to find out what she really thinks?"

"Why, Bob, do you think that such matters are very important to me, that you insist on my making a fool of myself? Don't you know that George Beaufort never fell in love in his life and never means to?"

"George Beaufort behaved on several occasions as if he *were* in love, and——"

"Oh hang it all, here's the old story, Theseus and Ariadne once more. If I have been told once, my dear fellow, I have been told a thousand times that I should not have encouraged this pretty pet or that pale darling. I have never gone in for being a hermit, and when I admired a girl, I never had the least objection to letting her find it out—except once."

"I won't imagine on what occasion. When do you go down to the Baldwins?"

"Never, I fear. I have only run back to settle one or two matters here, and return to Paris to-morrow evening. I have a great deal to do before I join the Third. Bid the Baldwins good-bye for me, but for heaven's sake don't put anything sentimental in what you say to Miss Amy. Now, my dear friend, let us shake hands one last time—I have a presentiment that I am to be the billet for a German bullet. Cheerful and inspiring reflection."

Tramp, tramp, tramp, went the regiments through the long Paris street; horse and foot, artillery, military train, Cuirassiers, Lancers, Dragoons, Hussars, Zouaves, Spahis, Turcos, Grenadiers, and light infantry-men; banners and pennons waved, golden eagles shone resplendent in the sun, helmets and cuirasses glittered, bright lance-points and sword-blades flashed, ponderous batteries of guns and mitrailleuses went past in clouds of dust; uniforms of all colors and shapes dazzled the eye, cries of command and strains of music sounded on all sides, and over all, from time to time, rolled the thundering shout — "To the Rhine! To the Rhine!". Aides-de-camp galloped hither and thither, bodies of troops halted at times and then resumed their march amidst all the wild enthusiasm of a people panting for war and glory. It was a gay sight, and well might the elated Frenchman bethink himself that they were invincible and that the *fête de l'Empereur* would be celebrated in Berlin.

The *Rue de Rivoli* was crowded with masses of people eagerly discussing the fortunes of the war that was now declared; a babel of tongues, French, English, Italian, Spanish, confused the ear; a sea of tossing arms and excited faces met the eye everywhere; and, where uniforms were as numerous as the stars in heaven, it seemed impossible to detect that of any particular regiment or arm. To this task, however, an active young Englishman was addressing himself; asking frequently of spectators where the 3rd Cuirassiers were. Many shrugged their shoulders in token of ignorance, others thought they were still in barracks, others again swore to having seen them file past hours before. At last an officer of lancers told him that the regiment he was in search of was just leaving Paris by rail. Hastily inquiring the way to the depot, Thornhill, for it was he, sprang into a cab and bade the driver hurry on.

"If I can only catch him before he starts, all will go right. I knew perfectly well she cared for him; it did not require her fainting away on hearing that he was off to the war, to tell me that. Now the difficulty will be making him listen to reason — how fortunate that I should have a note from her to him! He will not refuse such evidence surely."

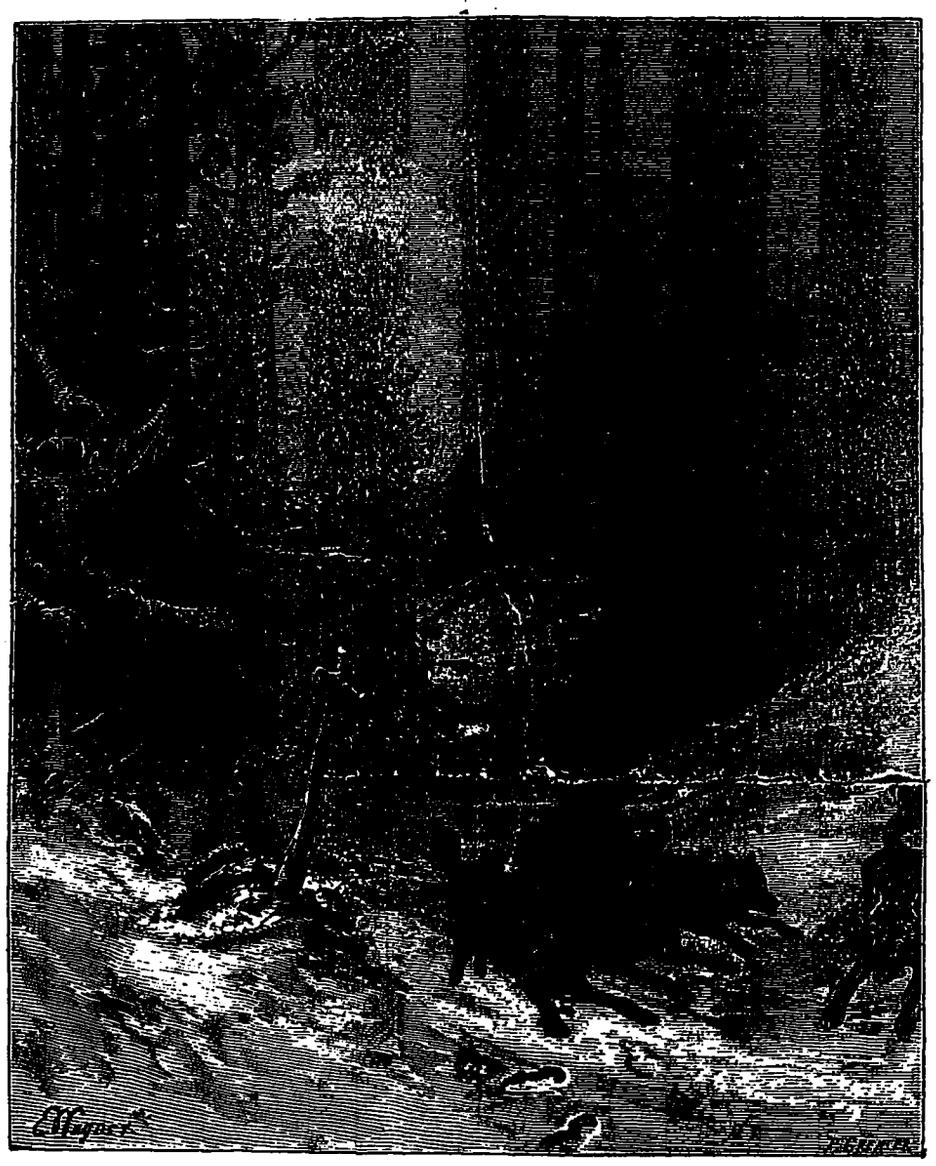
It was a very much easier matter to reach the railway station whence the gallant 3rd were starting for the frontier, than to penetrate within it, for it was crowded with troops and no one was admitted "except on business." But few cuirassier uniforms were visible, and the two or three that showed here and there were worn by officers who bore no resemblance to Beaufort. The prolonged whistle of a train about to start, sent Thornhill, who had succeeded in proving his claim to admittance, flying along the platform, looking into every compartment for his friend. As the train moved off, he caught sight of him leaning out of a window, shaking hands with a general officer. In a twinkling Bob was there and with a cry of — "From England!" — held out Amy's note to Beaufort who reached to seize it, missed it, and both saw the tiny paper flutter to the ground where it was crushed and torn by the now rapidly revolving wheels.

Amy Baldwin was sitting on the same seat where but a short time before, she had been surprised by George Beaufort's abrupt declaration. She looked as lovely as ever, but a shadow of pensiveness had fallen over her beauty, and the glance of her eye was moist with tears. She sat gazing at the flow of the river and thinking of the happy evenings spent there so recently and to which such a sudden end had come. She now knew, for her heart spoke loud and clear, that she loved Beaufort from the day she first saw him, and that all his eccentric ways, so different from the tame conventionalities of her usual admirers, had more and more captivated her. She could give herself no clear account of the way she had parted from him on that June evening, all she remembered was his burning words that thrilled her through and through with ineffable delight: delight so great that she could not speak; she remembered, too, how his wild impulsiveness had led him to misunderstand the first words she could utter, and how he had suddenly left her because he could not read in her silence what her tongue could not speak. Then later had come news through her cousin of Beaufort's sudden resolve to resume service, and the writing of the letter which had come to such untimely end in the Parisian station.

As these thoughts came over her, her melancholy and pain deepened and increased, and the flushing of the water and the murmur of the night-wind seemed wails of sorrow for the dead. She gazed upwards at the moon, — feeling oppressed beyond her strength, and seeking in the grave and soft splendor a little consolation. While she gazed, a cloud came up and veiled the orb in darkness.

Woerth! The sound of battle; smoke, fire, din, braying of trumpets, shouts of commanders, roar of guns, groans of dying and wounded. The earth shaking under the rush of mighty battalions and the thunders pouring a ceaseless, murderous fire into the advancing hosts of the French — batteries of guns playing with fearful effect upon the serried ranks of a charging column which breaks and is routed. A roar of victory from the Prussian line is answered by one of defiance from the French; aides are flying rapidly to various parts of the field, squadrons of cavalry are massing together under the protection of heavy guns—on the left comes at a long steady trot a brilliant regiment, clad in steel helms and cuirasses, the swords flashing in the sun which breaks through the clouds of smoke and dust,—the horses dashing on and holding high their heads as they snuff the battle — the leaders in front, sitting firm and motionless on their steeds. — The Prussian gunners see the storm coming—the dark blue line takes a firmer stand as it hears the shrill bugle-blast and the loud cry:—"Forward, Cuirassiers!"—and on at top speed come the solid mass, every man eager to reach those murderous guns which have opened on them and are levelling whole ranks. In vain. No human power can stand against the shower of hurtling shot and shell—the regiment is breaking up—the lines are bending—men and horses are falling thickly, the oft repeated shout, "Close your ranks!" telling of death and carnage. The gallant troops fall back a space, an officer rides out from between the ranks, waves his sword, reforms the line, and once more the 3rd charges the German battery, once more is repulsed, once more reforms and rides—a small and blood-covered troop—to certain death. Firm as on parade, calm and cool, the last captain leads the last squadron, and ere the brave horsemen can close with their enemy, the guns flash out and smoke envelops the scene. When the dark cloud clears away, the unfortunate braves are seen lying pell-mell on the gory plain, horse and rider killed or dying. But close under the mouths of the Prussian cannons lies the stalwart form of the officer that led the last desperate charge. His helmet has fallen off — his hand still grasps his sword—and from a little hole in his breast-plate oozes a thin stream of blood. Nearest to victory of all his regiment, he has fallen as he wished—on the battle field.

The German bullet has found its billet, and the fair English girl will never again hear the accents of the voice that on the field of Woerth shouted to the survivors of the Third — "Forward to Death, Cuirassiers!"



ON THE TRACK.

STOPPING PIN-HOLES IN LEAD-PIPES.

A correspondent in the Industrial Monthly writes: "The supply water-pipe which extends from the street, along the top of our cellar to the sink in the kitchen, had a very small hole in one side, so that a stream of water ran out not so large as a cambric needle. It has been known that the difficulty could have been remedied by placing the square end of a tenpenny nail on the hole and hitting it two or three light blows with a hammer, the knowledge would have saved me much trouble and expense. But I did not know that a small hole in a lead-pipe can be stopped by battering the metal just enough to close the orifice; therefore I went and called a plumber.

Of course he was employed by the day. He knew how to stop the issue in less than one minute; but he preferred to make a good job for himself and for his employer. He was too proud to be seen carrying his solder and tools along the street; hence a helper must be detailed to carry these appliances. His employer paid him twenty cents per hour, but charged sixty cents for his services. He paid the helper ten cents per hour, and charged forty cents, whether they were loitering along the streets, or at work. They looked around, lit their pipes, smoked and chatted, and used about four ounces of solder, for which the charge was fifty cents, as they reported that they had used one pound. The plumber reported one hour each for himself and helper.

Thus the cost of stopping one pin-hole cost $1.50, when any one who can handle a hammer could have closed the issue in half a minute, if he had thought of how to do it."

MARKET REPORT.

HEARTHSTONE OFFICE.

Sept. 20th, 1872.

The tone of foreign advices was rather unfavorable to holders of flour, wheat having suffered a decline both in Liverpool and Chicago. The receipts, however, were comparatively light, comprising only 900 barrels, and this fact, combined with the meagre offerings, caused an increased firmness. Holders demanded and obtained an advance of 5c. per barrel on extra, fancy and superfine grades. Buyers were somewhat opposed to this advance, and sales were consequently small, only 1,000 barrels changing hands. Cereals of all kinds were quiet and nominally unchanged. Provisions were steady at previous prices. Ashes were a shade higher.

The following were the latest telegrams received on Change:—

FROM LIVERPOOL.

	Sept 19. 1.30 p. m.	Sept. 20. 2.30 p. m.
	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.
Flour	31 0 @ 31 6	30 6 @ 00 0
Red Wheat	12 2 @ 12 9	12 3 @ 12 9
Red Winter	12 4 @ 00 0	12 5 @ 00 0
White	13 3 @ 13 6	13 2 @ 13 6
Corn	29 2 @ 29 6	29 0 @ 00 0
Barley	3 6 @ 00 0	3 6 @ 00 0
Oats	3 0 @ 00 0	3 0 @ 00 0
Peas	39 6 @ 00 0	39 3 @ 00 0
Pork	52 6 @ 00 0	52 6 @ 00 0
Lard	41 0 @ 00 0	41 0 @ 00 0

FLOUR.—Transactions on 'Change were confined to immediate wants of local and city dealers. The scarcity of Supers continues, and an advance of 5c. per barrel is noted. Extras and Fancy are also a shade higher. Sales reported include 100 brls. Fancy at $7.60; 50 do at $7.65; 100 brls Strong Bakers' at $7.60; 100 do at $7.30; 50 do at $7.15; 100 brls Ordinary Canada Super at $6.70; 100 brls Western State do at $6.70; 100 brls Welland Canal at $6.65; 200 brls cut down Middlings at 3.50; and 200 City Bags at $3.60.

	$ c. $ c.
Superior Extra, nominal	0 00 to 0 00
Extra	7 85 to 8 00
Fancy	7 55 to 7 65
Fresh Supers (Western Wheat)	6 65 to 6 70
Ordinary Supers. (Canada Wheat,)	6 65 to 6 70
Strong Bakers'	7 25 to 7 75
Supers from Western Wheat (Welland Canal (fresh ground)	0 00 to 6 65
Supers, City brands (Western Wheat),	6 60 to 6 10
Canada Supers, No 2	6 00 to 6 10
Western States, No 2	0 00 to 0 00
Fine	5 10 to 5 25
Middlings	3 95 to 4 25
Pollards	2 80 to 3 25
Upper Canada Bag Flour, ℔ 100 lbs	2 85 to 3 25
City bags, (delivered)	0 00 to 3 06

WHEAT.—Market quiet and nominal in the absence of transactions.

OATMEAL, per brl. of 200 lbs.—Upper Canada, $4.50 to $4.60.

PEAS, ℔ bush of 66 lbs.—Quiet at 87½c to 89c.

OATS, ℔ bush of 32lbs.—Quiet at 30c to 31c.

CORN.—Inactive. Latest sales were at 83c afloat.

BARLEY, ℔ bush of 48 lbs.—Nominal at 45c to 50c, according to quality.

BUTTER, per lb.—Market quiet at 15c to 17c, for fair to choice Western: and 20c for Eastern Townships; old nominal at 7c to 9c.

CHEESE, ℔ lb.—Quiet: Factory fine 11½c to 11¾c.

PORK, per brl. of 200 lbs.—Market firm; New Mess, $17.50 to $18.00. Thin Mess, $15.50.

LARD.—Winter rendered firm at 11¾c per lb.

ASHES, ℔ 100 lbs.—Pots firm. Firsts, at $7.65 to $7.10. Pearls quiet. Firsts, $9.05 to $9.10.

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