

## "APRILLE."

She walked across the fields, ice-bound,  
Like some shy, sunny bit of spring.  
And stooping suddenly, she found  
A violet—a dainty thing,  
Which shunned the chilly light of day  
Until sweet "Aprille" came that way.

They know each other, girl and flower:  
There was some subtle bond between:  
And I had walked, that very hour,  
The fields, and had no violet seen:  
For me the winter landscape lay  
All blossomless and black and gray.

They knew me not, blue flower, blue eyes:  
She, careless, passed me when we met;  
The tender glance which I would prize  
Above all things, the violet  
Received; and I went on my way,  
Companioned with the cheerless day.

From wintry days blue violets shrink;  
From wintry lives blue eyes will turn:  
And yet it she, I sometimes think,  
Could smile on me with sweet concern.  
One life so like this wintry day  
Would spring-time be for eye and ear.

—T. H. ROBERTSON, in *Harper's*.

## THE COMEDY OF THE DUEL.

"After the tragedy, the farce," would have been a pretty accurate description of a stereotyped London play-bill not so very many years ago, and unless we are much mistaken, the "piece de resistance" was as a rule the least popular of the two. Not that this involuntary preference for the comic portion of the entertainment hindered the spectators from according due attention and sympathy to the preceding five acts; but, when the hero and heroine were finally disposed of, and the fall of the curtain put an end to their tribulations, a certain sense of relief was experienced, and by a not unnatural reaction those who had wept the most prepared to laugh the loudest. Mr. Dutton Cook, in his excellent *Book of the Play*, when speaking of the once popular epilogues, aptly remarks that their long continued success may in a great measure be attributed to the generally accepted plea "that the minds of the audience must be refreshed, and gentlemen and ladies are sent away to their own homes with too dismal and melancholy thoughts about them. Acting, therefore, on a similar principle, and unwilling to expose our readers to the influence of harrowing emotions, we will consider the tragedy as already played out, and the farce as about to commence; or in other words, while treating of that happily (with us) obsolete anomaly, the duel, justify the heading of our paper by confining ourselves exclusively to a very harmless variety of the genus, namely, the *duel pour rire*."

In the early part of the reign of Louis the Thirteenth, before the passing of Richelieu's edict declaring it to be a capital offence and punishable with death, the rage for duelling was at its height. Every class of society was more or less infected by it. Even men of letters were not exempt from the general failing; for we learn from Tallemant des Réaux that the satirist Regnier, seeking a quarrel with the poet Maynard, entered the latter's room one morning while he was still in bed, and insisted on his meeting him in the Pré-aux-Cleres, the usual locality for such encounters, in an hour's time. Maynard, naturally timid and by no means relishing the proposal, immediately despatched a messenger to his patron, the Comte de Clermont-Lodève, imploring him to repair without delay to the appointed spot, and prevent the combat from taking place. This done, he completed his toilet as leisurely as possible, and at length set out for the Pré, where Regnier was impatiently awaiting his arrival. Meanwhile the count, who regarded the affair as an excellent joke, was there before him, and had taken up his position unobserved behind a tree, from which vantage-ground he commanded a view of the two belligerents standing at some distance from each other. Maynard, not seeing him, and consequently trembling in every limb, endeavoured to put off the evil hour as long as practicable; first, by complaining that his sword was shorter than that of his adversary, and then by making apparently prodigious but ineffectual efforts to divest himself of his boots. At last, after glancing despairingly round, and doubtless invoking maledictions on his unpunctual Meccenas, the unfortunate poet, more dead than alive, faced his opponent, and presented so woeiful a spectacle that the Count nearly choked with laughter. Judging, however, that it was time to interfere, he stepped forward as if just arrived, and authoritatively enjoined both parties to desist; upon which Maynard, recovering his presence of mind, and addressing his opponent, declared that if he had unwittingly offended him, he was sorry for it; "but," he added, "another time I shall rely on my own ingenuity to get myself out of a scrape; for, if I had depended on the count, I might have been made mince-meat of an hour ago."

Very few admirers of the "gentle craft," we should imagine, have carried their enthusiasm for its disciples so far as to fight for them; such an instance, however, is recorded of two angry senators, one of whom maintained that *Tasso* was superior to *Ariosto*, and the other the contrary. Words led to blows, and after a protracted encounter the champion of *Ariosto* received a wound which laid him up for several weeks. "What an idiot I was," he exclaimed, "to expose my life for a poet of whose works I never read a line, and whom I should certainly not have understood if I had!"

During the Revolution, more than one duel took place between actors of the Comédie Française, who considered it imperative to defend their political opinions at the sword's point; one, however, which occurred previous to that epoch, the principals in which were Dugazon and Desessarts, had its origin in a practical joke, of which the former was the inventor, and the latter the victim. Desessarts, whose line of characters was what is technically called "les financiers," possessed among other excellent qualities one peculiarly suited to the parts usually played by him; he was so prodigiously stout as to be generally known by the name of "the elephant." As it happened, the sole representative of the elephantine race belonging to the royal menagerie died suddenly; and this having come to the ears of Dugazon, he conceived the idea of a mystification, of which his unsuspecting colleague was destined to be the dupe. Taking Desessarts aside, he told him that he had been invited to perform an impromptu piece at one of the minister's houses, and asked if he felt disposed to accompany him. Desessarts consented, and enquired what kind of dress he ought to wear. "Deep mourning," replied Dugazon; "you are to play the part of an afflicted heir." "Very good," said the other, and proceeded to attire himself accordingly, displaying a profusion of crape and coal-black streamers that would have done credit to the most conscientious undertaker. When they reached the minister's reception-room, which was full of visitors, Dugazon gravely advanced, and pronounced the following harangue.

"Monseigneur, the Comédie Française, desirous of expressing the regret felt by all its members on the occasion of the demise of the magnificent elephant so universally admired at the royal menagerie, begs at the same time respectfully to solicit that the vacant post may be conferred on my comrade Desessarts here present."

Shouts of merriment interrupted the speaker, and Desessarts, comprehending after some moments of stupor the ridiculous part he had been made to play, retired as quickly as decorum permitted, vowing vengeance against his persecutor, and loudly demanding satisfaction for the insult. A meeting was arranged for the ensuing morning; and both parties, attended by their seconds, repaired to a secluded spot in the Bois de Boulogne, and prepared for action. Before swords were crossed, however, Dugazon, addressing his adversary in a studiously polite tone, suggested that the latter's enormous circumference presenting too vast a surface to his weapon, he could not think of taking advantage of it, "wherefore," he added, producing a piece of chalk from his pocket, and tracing a circle on the astonished Desessarts' stomach, "I propose that all hits outside the circle shall count for nothing!"

There was no resisting the humour of this sally, principals and seconds burst into a simultaneous roar of laughter, and, after a copious past ordered beforehand by Dugazon, the two belligerents were better friends than ever.

Another actor, Damoreau, the husband of the well-known singer, Madame Damoreau-Cinti fought a duel in 1834 with the celebrated orator Manuel, and narrowly escaped a dangerous wound, his opponent's sword striking against a five-franc piece which, fortunately for him, chanced to be in his waistcoat pocket. "Ah," observed a notoriously impecunious journalist, when the circumstance was related to him; "if I had been in Damoreau's place, it would have been all over with me!"

Sainte-Beuve, the eminent critic, was once engaged in an "affaire," the cause of which we had forgotten. While the preliminaries were being arranged, it began to rain slightly, and the author of *Volupté*, who had prudently brought his umbrella with him, held it over his head with one hand, while he firmly grasped his sword with the other. This proceeding, being objected to by the seconds as irregular, he coolly replied that "it was quite sufficient for him to risk his life, without running the chance of catching cold into the bargain." He, however, did not lack courage, which is more than can be said of one of his colleagues, who, finding himself under the necessity of accepting a challenge, only consented to do so on being confidentially informed by his second that in the present case the duel was merely a matter of form, and that his adversary would take care not to hit him. Somewhat comforted by this assurance, he repaired to the scene of action, and the distance—twenty-five paces—having been duly measured, boldly faced his opponent, who, on the signal being given, blazed away, and neatly perforated the critic's hat just half an inch above his head. "Confound it!" exclaimed the latter to his second, who was congratulating him on his gallant bearing; "why didn't you tell me that he was going to spoil my new hat? I would have put on an old one."

Some years ago, one of the drollest of Parisian actors, at a supper given by the manager of the Vaudeville, so far forgot himself as to select as the butt of his jokes a captain of cuirassiers, who was among the guests, and who at length lost his temper, and demanded instant satisfaction. "At your service," replied the comedian. "No time like the present; but remember I have the choice of weapons, and I choose pistols." His adversary making no objections, two citadines were called off the stand, one of which the captain entered, bidding the coachman drive to the *Barrière de l'Étoile*. The actor immediately got into the other, and putting his head out of the window, shouted in his turn, "*Barrière du Trône*," adding in an irresistibly

comic tone, "Don't wait for me, Captain, but fire away as soon as you like!"

They tell a good story at Toulouse of an advocate, Cazeneuve by name, who, having a dispute with a lauded proprietor residing in the neighbourhood of that city, a duel between them was declared, less by themselves than by their friends, to be indispensable. Never having handled a sword or even a foil in his life, and persuading himself that his opponent must necessarily be a proficient in the use of such weapons, the lawyer resolved to consult the leading fencing-master in the town, and having acknowledged his utter inexperience in matters of the kind, asked him what he had better do.

"Are you tolerably strong in the arm?" inquired the professor.

"Pretty well."

"Good. Then all you have to do is to hold your sword steadily, the point exactly on a level with your adversary's eye. Remain immovable in that position, and take care not to advance a step, but wait until he rushes forward and finds himself spitted like a woodcock."

"You think he will do that?"

"Very probably he may. In any case, you don't risk much by keeping him at arm's length."

"But if he comes nearer?"

"Retreat in proportion."

"I understand; and if, on the contrary, he should retreat?"

"Remain where you are."

Thanking the professor for his counsel, the advocate withdrew in somewhat better spirits, but determined, in case of accident, to put his affairs in order, and have his will signed and sealed. An hour later, his opponent was ushered into the presence of the *maître d'armes*, and in answer to the latter's inquiry as to the motive of his visit, replied that he was on the point of fighting a duel with one of the best swordsmen in the department, as he had reason to believe—the advocate Cazeneuve—and having no experience in such matters, came to him for advice. The *maître d'armes*, who could hardly refrain from laughing when he heard the name of Cazeneuve, seeing the kind of individual he had to deal with, gave him precisely the same instructions he had previously imparted to his adversary, and, secretly resolving to be an unobserved witness of the combat, dismissed him.

On the following day both parties, accompanied not only by their seconds, but also by their respective surgeons, arrived at the place of rendezvous, and, obeying to the letter the directions they had received, placed themselves at the stipulated distance from each other, assumed the attitude agreed upon, and stood perfectly motionless. This state of things lasted for several minutes, each supposing that the other would advance, and not daring for an instant to change his position; while the bystanders looked on in mute amazement. At length, the weight of the weapons began to tell; the constant tension of the arm had become so painful as to be scarcely endurable, but they bore it like martyrs, until one of the seconds, chafing at the delay, declared that if they were not satisfied their honour was, and, with the concurrence of his colleagues, insisted on their shaking hands. "Ma foi!" said *Maître Cazeneuve*, when this ceremony had been performed, "I had no idea that a duel was such hard work; I would a thousand times rather plead for a dozen hours than fight as we have been doing for as many minutes."

It is a well-known fact that the best marksman's aim is often unsteady when he has an animated target opposite him. One of these "crack" shots was showing off his skill before a numerous company, and the ground was soon strewn with the remnants of the plaster figures he had successively brought down. All present were in raptures except one spectator standing apart from the rest, who after each shot observed in a perfectly audible tone, "He would not do as much if he had a man facing him." This remark, several times repeated at last so exasperated the performer that he turned towards the speaker, and inquired if he would be the man to face him?

"Certainly," was the reply, "and what is more, you may have the first shot."

As everyone was curious to witness the result of this singular duel, the whole party adjourned to the Bois de Vincennes, and, the word having been given, the hero of the shooting-gallery fired and missed.

His adversary shrugged his shoulders, and fired in the air.

"What did I tell you?" he said, and walked away as unconcerned as if nothing had happened.

Examples might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, but we have only space for one more, which is too good to be omitted. Any one familiar with Parisian society fifty years ago must remember Choiquart the most notorious duellist and impecunious spendthrift of his day. No one knew how he contrived to exist, for he never appeared to have a sou, and money, if by chance fortune happened to smile on him, melted in his hands like snow in June. In 1832, shortly after the accession of Louis Philippe, his exchequer being at zero, he accepted an invitation to sup with some literary friends, among those present being a retired hussier named Mouton. In the course of the evening the conversation turned on politics, and M. Mouton, who professed Republican opinions, imprudently alluded to Charles the Tenth as an old idiot. Hardly had he uttered the words when Choiquart, who was Legitimist to the backbone, started up, and declared his intention of slitting the offender's ears forth.

with. Before, however, the guests could interfere, he sat down again, exclaiming in a tone of despair: "But now I think of it, I can't, for I owe Mouton five francs, and he must be paid first. Who will lend me five francs that I may slit Mouton's ears?"

In vain he appealed to the company, collectively and individually; one had no change, another refused to lend money for such a purpose, and Choiquart at his wits' end, glared savagely at the unfortunate Mouton, who was half dead with terror. At that moment in came Villemot, the witty contributor to *Figaro*.

"Villemot," shouted Choiquart, "lend me five francs that I may slit Mouton's ears!"

"Don't lend him a sou," cried the others.

"They need not have supposed me capable of such a thing," parenthetically remarks Villemot, who himself tells the story; "as that period of my career I had the very best of reasons for not lending money."

At this juncture one of the party, taking Mouton aside, recommended him, if he valued his ears, to offer Choiquart an additional loan of one hundred francs, to which proposal the ex-hussier reluctantly agreed, and drawing five coins from his pocket, placed them on the table, repeating what he had been told to say as if it were a lesson. Choiquart, who had never even dreamt of possessing such a sum, after some demur consented to a temporary truce. "But remember," he added, in a menacing tone, "the day that I pay you the hundred—no, hundred and five francs, your ears will be slit."

Luckily for the recipient of this threat, that day never arrived, for Choiquart died before the year was out; "and even if he had lived," sagaciously remarks the chronicler, "it would in all probability have made no great difference to Mouton."

## VARIETIES.

An English exchange says: "Noah's ark race" is an amusing novelty on the turf. It was introduced at the Madras (India) fair, and was a handicap for all animals bred in the country, the competitors including buffaloes, elephants, a goat, ram, emu, and elk, and other creatures, besides ponies and horses. The elephants were as placid as if moving in a marriage procession, and went over the course at a quick walk. The ram and goat, ridden by two little boys, ran well, and the buffaloes went at a good gallop, but the emu would not stir, neither would the elk, until the end of the race, when it took fright and darted down the course at great speed. Finally, the ram was the winner, a horse coming second, and a buffalo third.

THE FRESHNESS OF YOUTH. Youth is a beautiful season of life. It is full of brightness, and radiant in smiles. It may well be compared to a mountain rill that has just left its bubbling source, which laughs and dances along amid the beauty and freshness of the upland scenery, kissing the flowers that dip their fragrant lips in its lucid waves, and smiling in the glad sunshine but in through the waving branches above it, before it reaches the great muddy stream to which it is unconsciously hastening. This freshness and gladness that is so inherent in the youthful nature should be carried into mature life. What a charm it would add to middle life and old age, if it were so youth's outgushing gladness, subdued by experience into a refined and happy tenderness, would be like flowers and fruits dallying amid the foliage of the same lough.

IN the "Songs of Singularity," by a "London Hermit," is a serenade in *in flat*, sung by Madam Marmaduke Muttinhead to Mademoiselle Madeline Mendosa Mariott:

My Madeline! my Madeline!  
Mark my melodious midnight moans,  
Much may my melting music mean,  
My modulated monotonous.

My madeline's mild minstrelsy,  
My mental music magazine,  
My mouth, my mind, my memory,  
Must mingling murmur "Madeline!"

Match making may may machinate,  
Maneuvering may may may mean,  
More money may may many more,  
My magic motto's "Madeline!"

Melt, most melodious melody,  
Midst Madeline's misty moon's marine,  
Meet me 'mid moonlight—marry me,  
Madonna mia—my Madeline!

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