

CONTRABAND MUSEUM IN PARIS.

I had caught a cold, and just as I lifted up my head to sneeze, I saw through one of the windows of the mayor's office, in the twelfth *arrondissement*, the body of a negro hanging by the neck. At the first glance, and even at the second, I took it for a human being whom disappointed love, or perhaps an expeditious justice, had disposed of so suddenly; but I soon ascertained that the ebony gentlemen in question was only a kind of doll as large as life. What to think of this I did not know; so I asked the door-keeper the meaning of it.

"This is the contraband museum," was the answer: and, on my showing a curiosity to examine it, he was kind enough to act as my *cicerone*.

In a huge dusty room are scattered over the floor, on the walls and along the ceiling, all the inventions of roguery which have been confiscated from time to time by those guardians of the law, the revenue officers. It is a complete arsenal of the weapons of smuggling: all unfortunately in complete confusion. Look before you; there is a hogshead dressed up as a nurse, with a child that holds just two quarts and a half. On the other side are logs, hollow as the Trojan horse, and filled with whole armies of cigars. On the floor lies a huge boa constrictor, gorged with China silks; and just beyond it a pile of coal, curiously perforated with spools of cotton. The coloured gentleman who had excited our sympathy so much at first, met with his fate under the following circumstances:—He was built of tin, painted black, and stood like a heyduck or Ethiopian *chasseur*, on the foot-board of a carriage, fastened by the feet and hands. He had frequently passed through the gates, and was well known by sight to the soldiers, who noticed that he was always showing his teeth, which they supposed to be the custom of his country. One day the carriage he belonged to was stopped by a crowd at the gate. There was, as usual, a grand chorus of oaths and yells, the vocal part being performed by the drivers and cartmen, and the instrumental by their whips. The negro, however, never spoke a word. His good behaviour delighted the soldiers, who held him up as an example to the crowd. "Look at the black fellow," they cried; "see how well he behaves! Bravo, nigger, bravo!" He showed a perfect indifference to their applause. "My friend," said a clerk at the barrier, jumping up on the foot-board, and slapping our sable friend on the shoulder, "we are really very much obliged to you!" Oh, surprise! the shoulders rattled. The office was bewildered: he sounded the footman all over, and found he was a man of metal, and as full as his skin could hold of the very best contraband liquor. The juicy mortal was seized at once, and carried off in triumph. The first night, the revenue people drank up one of his shoulders, and he was soon bled to death. It is now six years since he lost all the moisture in his system, and was reduced to a dry skeleton.

How many strange stories these inventions of roguery might tell! Only ask that empty mattress that lies there by the stove. That mattress came from Valenciennes. One morning, two citizens left the town, with swords in hand, and seconds by their side. The solemn, mournful gait of their companions indicated clearly the deadly character of the promenade, which took place before the eyes of the revenue officers. The angry principals were so anxious to get to work, that they drew almost as soon as they got beyond the walls. The crossing of their blades, and the clatter of the duel, would easily be noticed from the guard house. After a desperate contest, the noise ceased. A cry of distress was heard, and if both the contending parties had preserved their honour untouched, the person of one of them could not boast of the same immunity. A wide wound across the forehead, and a scientific thrust into the region of the sternum, which bled profusely, were easily seen. In a moment a hand-barrow, with the aforesaid mattress upon it, were transformed into a litter, and the procession re-entered the town by the same gate, amidst the sympathies of the guards.

It happened that one of the soldiers had dabbled a little in medicine, and been surgeon's mate in a regiment. He took pity on the wounded man, and followed him home, to offer him his services. This generous behaviour won him all hearts in Valenciennes, except those of the seconds, who were at a loss how to get rid of a benefactor whose presence would be so fatal to the success of their daring fraud. At last, the most ingenious of them took the soldier aside, and begged him to wait a few moments in another room, till he got the sick man ready to receive his disinterested physician. The surgeon-soldier readily agreed to this; the friend availed himself of the interval, and whispered in the patient's ear, as he lay on the mattress, "We are lost!"

"*Sabrebleu!* and why?" asked the wounded man.

"Speak lower! one of the custom-house guards wants to dress your wounds."

"My wounds? he shan't do it—I want to keep them as they are, and you go and tell him to."

"He won't believe it," was the answer.

"But suppose I don't want to be cured? I presume I am my own master, and besides, I have a reason for it."

"I know that, but the fool will insist on it."

"He may go to the—I'll jump out of the window first."

"Why, you wretch, we shall be ruined."

"What of it? I wish I had really been badly wounded, I give you my word for it."

"Alas! I'm afraid it's the only way to get out of this scrape."

"Much obliged to you."

"If you only would —"

"Well, what?"

"It's time enough yet, perhaps —"

"Well?"

"The wife of Brutus, on a like occasion, inflicted a desperate wound on herself?"

"What have I got to do with that?"

"Don't you understand me, my dear friend?"

"Ah, horrible! I shudder at the thought. You are so fond of me, that you are very willing to shed my blood—" and the frightened patient raised himself up in bed.

"Come, come, try to be reasonable."

"You are troublesome: do you think I'm going to throw away my life to serve you—think of somebody else. I should like very much to oblige you—but in such a way—never! I'd die first."

"Only think what it is you object to—only two little wounds—if they only look natural, it's all sufficient. Come, my dear fellow, say you agree to it."

"I tell you again and again, I won't."

"Come now, be clever, I've an easy hand, and the surgeon will be tired of waiting."

"I suppose you think it will be fine fun for me."

"Oh what a fuss you make about a couple of little scratches! If kindness and friendship cannot touch your obstinate heart, let's see what force will do." And thereupon the friend seized his sword; the patient dodged the first blow, leaped to his feet, snatched up the other weapon, and attacked his aggressor furiously. The soldier, hearing the scuffle, rushed into the room, and succeeded, not without trouble, in separating the combatants, when he found, to his great surprise, that it was not the sham patient that needed help, but his friend, till now safe and sound, whom the dying man had pinked just below the thorax.

"I thought," said the soldier, "that these gentlemen were too polite to give me all the trouble of coming for nothing."

The wounded man was soon cured, and the mattress, stuffed full of English goods, well repaid the soldier for his medical services.

From the Life and Services of General Lord Harris, G.C.B., during his Campaign in America, the West Indies, and India.

EXTRAORDINARY DUEL.

Captain Bell, with whom the duel was fought, was the commanding officer of the company in which Harris was then an ensign. He had been the constant friend of the young ensign, and had invariably acted towards him with the unremitting tenderness of a father. But all of a sudden his manner changed, and betrayed the greatest aversion. This went on, until one night when young Harris was enjoying the Christmas festivities with a family in the neighbourhood of their quarters, and was detained all night by the extreme severity of the weather. A violent snow storm set in and continued till daylight.

"Had it ceased so that I could have found my way, not all the hospitality of Ireland would have kept me to make me liable to his reproach. As it was, I was at his room long before the morning parade, and before he was out of bed. I knocked several times at his chamber door before he would make an answer, no doubt suspecting who it was, when at last he said 'Come in.' But before I could make an apology for staying out all night, he ordered me to my room, where, he said, 'I should soon hear from him.' In about an hour he came over to my room, gave me a letter, and desired I would immediately comply with its contents. These were in the most intimidating terms and style; directing me to meet him at the abbey the moment I had provided a case of pistols, and to bring my sword, but no second. I communicated his letter to the only two officers in garrison, Hussey and Jackson. One of them, a fine spirited young man, (poor Hussey) insisted he would go with me, that I should not go without some one to witness what might pass, but this, with some difficulty, I fortunately (as matters terminated) overruled, and it was then agreed they should both go to the rock of Cashel, which overlooked the place appointed. I then got Hussey's pistols, (never having had any) and joined my former friend at the place appointed, apologised for keeping him waiting, and began to request he would acquaint me why he had called me there. He answered that it was not to talk, and that there was a more retired place for the business on the other side of the wall he had been walking by; he then attempted to scramble over a breach of the wall that had been built up with loose stones, and even accepted my assistance to get over. I then begged again he would explain what could have made him call me to the place, and said that I was ready to make every apology for any offence I might unknowingly have given him, the moment I was convinced of my error. 'Sir,' he replied, 'I have told you already we have not met here to talk, so prepare yourself.' He then began to load his pistols (I believe, whistling a tune at the same time), whilst I, like some poor bird under the fascinating eye of the serpent, followed his example. When he had finished loading, he took off his coat and waistcoat, deliberately folded them together, and laid them on a broken tombstone. He then took off his sword, drew it, and laid it on his clothes; in all which I followed his example, except that my clothes were deposited on the ground beside me. He then took up his pistols, and on my again requesting he would say in what I had offended, he gave me the same answer as before, adding that he should insist on our firing as near as possible together after presenting. On my answering, 'Very well,' he asked if I was quite

ready, and on saying 'Yes,' he continued, 'Then let us both present, and fire directly.' We did instantly *present*, but he alone fired, and, I am truly grieved to say, evidently with intention to hit me. It may, indeed, be said that I escaped miraculously, for we afterwards picked one of the balls out of the wall in a line as if it had passed through me, and the other so little wide as to show that it was meant to hit. On my lowering my pistol, he instantly said, 'You have not fired.' 'No,' I replied, 'nor did I intend it, and now I hope you will be induced to inform me in what I have offended.' To this he answered, 'Sir, this will not do, and I insist on your firing at me instantly.' I attempted to soothe him, and, at last, finding it in vain, and perhaps rather irritated, I presented, and, levelling on one side, fired. He then said, 'You must give me your word of honour that you will fire as near as possible with me.' I would have spoken, but he would not allow me, and, asking if I was ready, and on my answering 'Yes,' he called out 'Present, and I think the sound appeared as one shot. He stood for a few moments, and then moved towards his clothes, as I supposed to take his sword, on which I took up mine, and again begged him to tell me my offence. To this he answered, 'We shall go no further now, but you shall hear from me.' I observed that, 'If he was not satisfied, he had better reload,' as I saw he was not equal to using his sword (for he was actually trembling with weakness, and perhaps a little from anger, and certainly risking his life by coming out, as he was undergoing a violent course of mercury). He then turned towards me, and, as I thought, rather more cordially, said, 'No, you shall hear from me,' and, having put on his clothes, allowed me again to help him over the wall. My comrades, seeing us walk quietly towards the barracks, took their way, and he and I soon after separated, by his proposal, that we might not be suspected.

In the course of the evening, his servant brought me a note, which, before perusal, I flattered myself would prove of a friendly nature; but little did we know the height of madness my early patron had arrived at. The note contained an appointment for next morning, concluding with a direction to bring a number of balls, as one of us must fall. My two friends now insisted that we should not meet without seconds, and I agreed to write to him to that effect, assuring him, at the same time, of my readiness to apologise, if I saw occasion to do so. He did not send any answer, but next morning his servant came to me, and desired me to come to him. I went accordingly; and, after our first greetings, the exact nature of which I do not remember, he informed me that the direful offence I had committed was the staying out of barracks all night, without previously obtaining his leave. I observed that 'I had not done so premeditatedly; that, had it been possible to find my way through the snow storm, I should have returned that evening, and that I came to him as soon as possible with the intention of apologising for my absence.' He asked 'If I was still willing to make a proper apology?' I answered, 'Certainly, if he still thought it necessary.' He said, 'It was highly necessary for him as commanding officer, and that he would send over a written one for me to sign, without which we could not be friends.'

The apology was accordingly sent and signed. Some time elapsed, and Harris afterwards discovered that his friend was mad. He died in London in confinement.

EXTRACTS FROM NEW YORK MIRROR.

Nature always wears the colour of the spirits; to a man labouring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend, the sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.

The first step towards vice in a woman, is to make a mystery of actions innocent in themselves; and she who is fond of disguise, will sooner or later have reason to conceal herself.

The silliest of errors is, when young men think they forfeit their claims to originality, if they acknowledge that any truth has been discovered by others before them.

It is ridiculous to oppose judgment to the imagination, for it does not appear that men have as necessarily less of one as they have more of the other.

The true genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction.

A good heart is indispensably necessary to the knowledge of truth; he who feels nothing can learn nothing.

Modesty doubles the beauties which are seen, and gives credit and esteem to all that are concealed.

The contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns; and the beauties of the ancients.

He that merely makes a book from books may be useful, but can scarcely be great.

Little things are not valued but when they are done by those who can do greater.

The greatest difficulties are always found when we are not looking for them.

While an author is yet living we estimate his honours by his worst performance; and when he is dead, we rate them by his best.

This world of ours is like a fair bell with a crack in it; it keeps on clanging, but does not ring.

The art of satisfying our desires lies not in indulging, but in suppressing, them.

All wonder is the effect of novelty upon ignorance.