

## A NIGHT ADVENTURE AT BRIENNE.

BY THE DUCHESS OF ABRANTES.

I have heard the Emperor relate a very extraordinary occurrence which took place at Brienne, at the time when that mansion, the residence of the Comte de Brienne, his brother, the Cardinal de Lemenie, Archbishop of Toulouse, was the rendezvous of all sorts of amusements and pleasures. The Emperor was not then admitted into it, though he was afterwards, and treated with particular kindness; and he learned many things that passed from such of his comrades whose family connexions caused them to be admitted at the chateau during the vacations.

A young man belonging to Madame de Brienne's society was of so disagreeable a temper that nothing could live in good harmony with him. Among other pretensions, he declared that he never knew what it was to be frightened. One day the discussion on this subject grew warm. Four persons of the company offered to lay him a wager that he would be frightened before the end of six months. He accepted the bet; the conditions were fixed; he was to pay one hundred louis if he lost, and one hundred louis were to be paid to him by the assailants, if he came off victorious in the contest.

At first things went on well enough. Morose as the temper of this man was, it was not always proof against the waggeries of his friends. The first month passed away, and he had not once yielded to fear. It had been agreed that the affair should not be continued any where but at Brienne.

One day the four friends being met, said to one another that it was a sort of disgrace not to have yet succeeded. One of them proposed a plan which was adopted and put into execution the very same night.

I have already observed that there were at Brienne, during the building of the new chateau, some remains of a pavilion of ancient construction, where the rats ate one of the Abbe Morellet's shoes; in this pavilion beds were made up for the young visitors, when there was more company at the chateau than could be accommodated there. Just at the time I am speaking of, this happened to be the case, and the young man, whose courage was under trial, as well as several of his friends, was sleeping there.

The weather had been stormy all day, and when they retired to bed, the air had that heaviness, which is quite oppressive, and makes one feel ill.

'Here's a night for an apparition!' said the young rattlebrains to their friend.

'Let it come if it likes,' replied he; 'it shall be welcome.'

So saying, he bowed to them with an ironical air, and retired to his own apartment.

The air, as I have said was sultry, the atmosphere oppressive. The young man threw himself into an arm-chair, the worm-eaten legs of which were capable of supporting him, and there he had strange visions. His thoughts soon became confused, and he sank into an unquiet doze. His servant awoke him from this kind of torpor; he went to bed almost ill, and overpowered by a complete nervous impression, which could not be natural, even admitting the effect of the tempest.

The chamber in which he slept was at a distance from the whole occupied part of the pavilion, which of itself was quite lonely enough. It was a very large, gloomy apartment. A bedstead with twisted pillars, and curtains trimmed with Hungarian point, was the most conspicuous piece of furniture that it contained. He looked at it a long time before he got into bed.

'Good God!' he had said, 'it looks just like a tomb!'

The drowsiness occasioned by the overwhelming heat was soon changed into a profound sleep. He was buried in his first nap, when he was suddenly roused by a plaintive sound. The noise was close to him. He was lying upon his ear. He rose in his sitting, and it seemed as if he was continuing an interrupted dream. The four parts of the curtains were turned up over the bed-posts, and against each of them leant a figure in a complete suit of armour, but motionless, silent, and without any appearance of life.

He gazed on them at first with surprise, and presently with a sort of agitation.

'What do you want with me!' said he, 'I know you; you are here to frighten me, but I give you notice that I am not afraid. You know our agreement, so leave me and abandon your attempt.'

And as he thus spoke he lay down again and closed his eyes, but the figures continued motionless and silent. They retained the same attitude, while the thunder rolled awfully over the crazy pavilion and made it shake to its old foundations.

Annoyed at this obstinacy, he again raised himself in the bed, and addressed one of the figures.—'What do you want with me?' said he. 'I have already told you that you don't frighten me. You know our conditions; adhere to them, and keep your word as I keep mine.'

Still there was the same silence. In this movelessness there was something awful, that began to operate on the mind of the young man. 'Begone!' he cried to them, big drops of perspiration trickled down his brow, and his teeth chattered. 'Begone!' he repeated; 'begone! . . . I am frightened!'

The moment this confession had escaped his lips, he sank back in his bed, faint and gasping for breath. The figures remained motionless and silent as ever.

'Gentlemen,' cried the young man, beside himself, 'I know not if you have made a compact with the demons. I believe . . . for . . . I recognize you under your vizors . . . and yet . . . I know not who you are . . . Leave me . . . you have frightened me . . . what would you have more!'

The same silence prevailed.

From the commencement of this pleasantry the young man, fearing lest it might be carried farther than he could bear, had always kept about him a pair of pistols loaded, ready for firing. He laid them on the night-table beside his bed, and the same night he had examined the priming; every thing was in proper order, he took up one of them.

'Gentlemen,' said he, in a voice tremulous with emotion, 'I call God to witness that whatever accident may ensue is the fault of him on whom it shall light.'

He cocked his pistol, and fired at one of the four figures. None of them stirred. The unfortunate man around whom they were planted ceased to distinguish any object, to hear any sound. His hand trembled, he made a last appeal.

'Another shot!' said he, in a broken voice. No reply. The second pistol was fired. The unhappy man looked, not one of the figures had stirred. His eyes turned from the object that had struck him to another object which he saw before him. It was his own ball that was returned to him. He gazed aghast, and sunk back lifeless.

The young gentlemen who had engaged in this adventure conceiving that they might find their antagonist difficult to deal with, had bribed his servant to take the balls out of his pistols. Each of them had one to throw to him, and this way done, without his perceiving it, by the one at whom he had fired.

**SENSIBILITY TO MUSIC.**—The published fact of the female who died from hearing too much music, we do not imagine to be well known in this country; we therefore give a sketch of it taken from the Surgical Repertory of Turin. A woman, twenty-eight years of age, who had never left her village or heard a concert, was present at a three days fete in 1834, and dancing was carried on to the sounds of a brilliant orchestra. She entered into the amusement with ardour, and was delighted; but the fete once finished she could not get rid of the impression which the music had made upon her. Whether she ate, drank, walked, sat still, lay down, was occupied or unoccupied, the different airs which she had heard were always present, succeeding each other in the same order as that in which they were executed. Sleep was out of the question, and the whole body being deranged in consequence of this, medical art was called in, but nothing availed, and in six months the person died without having for one moment lost the strange sensation; even in her last moments she heard the first violin give some discordant notes, when, holding her head with both hands, she cried "Oh! what a false note, it tears my head." We have heard of another instance of this in an aged person, who, from the year 1829, has the greatest difficulty in going to sleep, because he every evening feels an irresistible desire to hear an air which belongs to the mountains of Auvergne. He has tried reading aloud, thinking deeply, and several other means to get rid of it, but it is of no use, he is invariably forced, mechanically, to utter the words in the idiom of Auvergne. We ourselves have seen the most alarming effects produced upon children by music to which they were unaccustomed, and fevers ensue in consequence.

**EARLY RISING.**—A single dew-drop, however small, furnishes in turn, gems of all imaginable colours. In one light it is a sapphire; shifting the eye a little, it becomes an emerald; next a topaz; then a ruby; and lastly, when viewed so as to reflect the light without refracting it, it has all the splendour of a diamond. But to obtain this beautiful display of natural colours, it is necessary to take advantage of the morning, when the beams of the newly risen sun are nearly level with the surface of the earth; and this is the time when the morning birds are in their finest song, when the air and the earth are in their greatest freshness, and when all nature mingles in one common morning song of gratitude. There is something peculiarly arousing and strengthening both to the body and the mind in this early time of the morning; and were we always wise enough to avail ourselves of it, it is almost incredible with what ease and pleasure the labours of the most diligent life might be performed. There is an awakening of the mind in the morning, which cannot be obtained at any other time of the day; and they who miss this go heavily about their employments, and an hour of their drawing day is not equal to half an hour of the energetic day of one who sees the sun rise. When, too, we take the day by the beginning, we can regulate the length of it according to our necessities; and whatever may be our professional avocations, we have time to perform them, to cultivate our minds, and to worship our Maker, without the one duty in the least interfering with the other.

R. Mudie.

**ON EXERCISE.**—The exercise which our occupations afford is, when they are of a healthy description, and not too long pursued, of the very best kind; inasmuch as it is one in which the mind

as well as the body is engaged; and this harmony of mind and body I have already shown to be requisite for the full realization of the benefits of exercise. It is deeply to be lamented that, notwithstanding the vast improvements that have of late years been effected in this respect, so many of the occupations of life are still destructive of human health and happiness. It is to be feared that many of the causes of these evils must long remain in operation, and that some of them are irremovable. But there can be no doubt that occupations are injurious, more by reason of the excessive length of the time of labor than of any inherent unhealthy tendency; and that if men generally were acquainted with the laws of animal economy, and applied their knowledge to the counteraction of the morbid influences to which they are daily exposed, they would escape many of the miseries which they now endure. Such would be the results if, for example, persons engaged in business devoted the time during which they are released from labor to the invigoration of their frame, instead of spending it, as is too often the case now, in practices which aggravate the complaints occasioned by their employments, and convert functional into organic diseases. Again, how many young men are there in this country, who, being engaged in sedentary occupations the greater part of the day, in banking houses, merchants' counting houses, or lawyers' offices, imperatively need much muscular exercise to preserve their bodies in health and strength, and who yet, in sheer ignorance, give up almost the only opportunity they have of taking such exercise; and instead of walking to and from their places of business, get into an omnibus and ride, for the express purpose of avoiding a little fatigue; whereas their elder brethren, who have risen an hour before them, may be seen walking, and thereby availing themselves of the advantage of exercise. And many of these same persons, breathing during the whole day confined and impure air emergent therefrom, and with admirable sagacity, proceed straightway into the still more impure air of a theatre, or other crowded places.

—Curtis on Health.

**GRAMMATICAL SMOKING.**—As it is customary with cigar smokers to relate the news of the day with a cigar in their mouths, and as the generality of smokers make an awkward appearance in consequence of not understanding the theory of punctuation in smoking; the following system is recommended:—A single puff, serves for a comma (,) puff, puff, a semicolon (;) puff, puff, puff, a colon (:) puff, puff, puff, a period (.) A pause with a cigar kept in the mouth, represents a dash (—) longer or shorter in continuance. With the under lip raised, the cigar almost against the nose for an exclamation (!) and to express great emotion, even to the shedding of tears, raise as before the cigar to the end of the nose. For an interrogation (?) it is only necessary to move the lips, and draw the cigar round the corner of the mouth. Taking the cigar from the mouth, and shaking the ashes from the end, is the conclusion of a paragraph; (¶) and throwing into the fire finishes the section (§). Never begin a story with a half smoked cigar, for to light another while conversing, is not only a breach of politeness, but interferes with the above system of punctuation, which destroys all energy and harmony of expression.

**THE MONKEY AND BULL-DOG.**—A furious battle took place some time back, at Worcester, between those two animals, on a wager of three guineas to one, that the dog would kill the monkey in six minutes. The owner of the dog agreed to permit the monkey to use a stick about a foot long. Hundreds of spectators assembled to witness the fight, and bets ran eight, nine and ten to one in favor of the dog, which could hardly be held in. The owner of the monkey, taking from his pocket a thick round rule about a foot long, threw it into the hand of the monkey, saying, 'Now look sharp—mind that dog.' 'Then here goes for your monkey,' cried the butcher, letting the dog loose, which flew with a tiger-like fierceness at him. The monkey with astonishing agility, sprang at least a yard high, and falling on the dog, laid fast hold of the back of his neck with his teeth, seizing one ear with his left paw, so as to prevent his turning to bite. In this unexpected situation, Jack fell to work with his rule upon the head of the dog, which he beat so forcibly and rapidly, that the creature cried out most eloquently. In a short time the dog was carried off in nearly a lifeless state with his skull fractured. The monkey was of the middle size.—English paper.

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