

Poet's Corner.

THE NEW ARISTOCRACY.

From the "London Leader."

"A title once could only show
The signs of noble birth,
And men of rank were years ago
The nobles of the earth.
They deemed it just the crowd should shrink
Before the cap and gown;
They thought it wrong the poor should think
And right to keep them down.

Those were the days when books were things
"The people" could not touch;
Made for the use of lords and kings,
And only made for such.
To work the loom, to till the soil,
To cut the costly gem—
To tread the round of daily toil
Was quite enough for them.

Time was when just to read and write
Were thought a wondrous deal,
For those who wake with morning light,
To earn their daily meal.
The man a mere submissive slave
The less his head piece knew;
And so the mass from habit gave
Their birth-right to the low.

Now look abroad, the light of Truth
Is spreading far and wide,
And that which filled the English youth,
Must shame our ancient pride.
'Tis mind alone can wield the sword,
In spite of wealth and rank;
The artisan may face the lord
With thousands in the bank.

We scorn not those of high degree,
For so 't were wrong to do;
But poorer men as rich can be,
And quite as noble too.
The prince may act a gayer part,
But he who works for bread
May have, perchance, a warmer heart,
And praps a clearer head.

Then grieve not for "good old times,"
Behold a brighter day!
The causes of our father's crimes
Are wearing fast away.
Before the Pen, the Press, the Rail,
Must old opinions fall;
The mighty project cannot fail—
Then aid it one and all.

Select Story.

THE DUEL

WITH

Double-Barrelled Guns!

BY CHARLES SUMMERFIELD.

In the purple light of a cloudless setting sun one mild May evening of 1840, a steamboat was urging her way against the strong current of the Rio Grande, a few miles below the Mexican town of Camargo, and within distant view of her destination, a nascent village situated on the American shore, which for special, and at present unexplained reasons, I shall take the liberty of naming Battleborough. This vessel was crowded to her utmost capacity with a heterogeneous mass of human beings, as if a sort of floating museum for the collection and exhibition of living curiosities. There were Americans—both of the North and South—Germans, Italians, Mexicans, negroes, and to point the anti-climax, half a score of Karisa Indians, painted and bedizened with beads and feathers. Perfect harmony and good feeling, however, seemed to prevail among all on board, notwithstanding this diversity and opposition of elements, as if some mighty and mysterious spirit had intervened, for the hour, to fuse the antipathies of races and prejudices of individuals into one common sentiment of genial fraternity; in fact a spirit of great potency was actually present, enthroned behind the bar, in the form of a host of sparkling decanters, marshalled in tempting rows with mathematical precision, and flashing back the gorgeous light which streamed through a large window of stained glass. Around these shrines, like bees swarming to the nectar of honeyed flowers, gathered a dense throng of ardent worshippers, calling, *inter alia*, for cogniac, rum and gin, according to the respective tastes of the several devotees while the comic toast, the wild songs and peels of laughter, went ringing over the boat from keel to hurricane deck, without respecting even the ladies' cabin, the doors of which stood wide open, and in full view of the merry bacchanals.

"Remember, gentlemen, these are ladies within hearing," suggested the captain of the steamer, in a pitiful voice, desperately venturing this one timid

effort to moderate the mad tempest of fun and frolic which now grew every moment more unmanageable.

"Ladies!" ejaculated a lip dewed with a tincture of rosy wine, and curling with an expression of the bitterest scorn—"Ladies it is the first time ever I heard the word applied to greasers."

The sentence produced shouts of applause—it evidently embodied the general opinion and feeling. "Greaser," is the current epithet on the frontier to denote the sovereign contempt which almost all the American residents entertain for the whole Mexican race. Hence, the brutal remark, instead of receiving the rebuke it so richly merited, elicited clamorous cheers, and a full chorus of approving voices ejaculated "Good! good!—that's right, Col. Hickman. Let's take a smile after that." Then followed a tremendous gongling of glasses, and the prudent captain of the vessel effected a hasty retreat from the storm which he had neither the courage nor the ability to allay.

There were two spectators, however, who, from their seats near the entrance to the ladies' cabin, surveyed the indecorous scene with emotions of undisguised indignation. One of these was Dr. Harnel, a surgeon in the army, and the other, a young merchant named Joseph Samuel, lately arrived from the city of New York. The latter united to a youthful and handsome person, dressed with faultless taste, the manners and feelings of a gentleman, and being, moreover, entirely unaccustomed to the exhibition of such drunken revels on a stage so public, he found it hard to suppress that which his every thought spontaneously assumed. It is possible that the internal excitement of the young man had been caused, as it certainly was increased, by the frequent glances which he cast in the direction of a beautiful Mexican girl who stood by the window at the farthest end of the saloon, with her eyes of a dreamy dark light fixed upon the water. For that even was a face, which once seen, might never be forgotten: pale, yet impassioned, tenderly illuminating the very air around it; rich raven black ringlets, falling down a neck of snowy whiteness, and shoulders and slender bosom, exquisitely shaped, as if rounded by the chisel of an artist; with forehead, eyes, and blooming cheeks, like those we sometimes see in divine pictures of the old masters: and with a mouth small, rich and rosy, such as might melt the coldest heart into love. The youth, though fresh from Broadway, thought he had never seen anything half so beautiful.

"Ah!" he said, in a low voice, which sounded like a sigh, "what disgrace to the very name of American is yonder revel. But it is fortunate that our Mexican neighbors do not understand our language, and therefore unconscious of the gratuitous insults offered them."

"There you commit a slight mistake," replied Dr. Harnel—"some of these Mexicans have an excellent education. That charming girl for instance gazing out of the window, speaks and writes English as well as yourself. See how she blushes, as the obscene jest reaches her ear."

"Who is she?" enquired the other.

"Maria Zavala, the daughter of the wealthiest merchant in Matamoras. There he comes to join her."

A tall, middle-aged man, with silvery hair, and proud, grave Spanish features, passed the two companions with a courteous bow, and entered the ladies' cabin. At the moment, the voice of Col. Hickman was heard above the tumult around the bar.

"I propose a toast. Here is to the greaser girls: woo, but not wed them."

Samuels, almost stifled with shame and rage, glanced at the face of divine beauty, and then turning to the doctor, said quickly,—

"This is infamous! By heaven, I will insult the drunken wretch."

And he was in the act of springing to his feet, when the other caught him by the arm and whispered—

"Hold! Would you throw away your life?—See you not the gleaming hilt of the Bowie knife beneath the desperado's vest, and the outlines of the Derringers, which he carries in each pocket? It is madness to seek a quarrel with the duellist, at whose frown the bravest men tremble. His aim is death. He has already slain his half dozen victims, each at the first fire, and that fire with the word!

The youth turned pale and shuddered. He was without arms. He felt that he was in a strange land, and on the verge of some new and terrible experience.

In the meantime, his previous gesture and present emotion had not escaped the flashing glance of an eye as keen as any eagle's. Col. Hickman without apparently looking towards him, had actually noticed and correctly interpreted every tint

and shadow of his changing countenance; the sudden admiration of the beautiful Maria, the indignation against the roystering bacchanals, the hasty impulse to immediate combat, and the unexpected relapse into a state of mind evincing all the outward symptoms of craven fear. As the duellist observed all this, as if by one instinctive perception, a smile, sinister as the gleam of lurid lightning, passed over his sharp features, and at the same moment he formed a savage scheme to goad his new enemy to desperation.

He was urged, also, to the adoption of his sentiment of revenge towards the fair Mexican. He had been a suitor, and was rejected with scorn and loathing. With such a man, the deed follows the thought, as surely and swiftly as blood follows the blows of his bowie knife.

Calling for a huge glass of cognac, the Col. exclaimed aloud, in fierce tones, intended to quell effectually all opposition to his will—

"We have gallantly drunk the health of the greaser girls, and they must now return the compliment by drinking ours."

And as he spoke he advanced rapidly towards the doors of the ladies' cabin, bearing the sparkling beverage in his hand.

The daughter uttered a scream of uncontrollable horror; but the father instantaneously threw himself in the ruffian's way, crying out in a determined voice—

"Back, unmannerly brute, you come not near my child, save over my dead body!"

The menace, however, proved idle. A terrible blow from the nervous right hand of the duellist stretched the Mexican insensible on the floor the blood streaming from a severe wound over the eye.

"Do not kill my poor father. Oh! for heaven's sake, spare him! spare him! and I will do what you wish," entreated the agonized voice of Maria, as, with pallid face and gestures of frenzy, she endeavored to cover the victim with her own body while the fiend incarnate, with sharp boot heels of iron, was seeking to stamp out the last sparks of life. Even the most reckless of the beholders felt a thrill of horror at the scene: but all remained silent, quiescent, so great was the fear inspired by the appalling anger of that murderous man.

At length young Samuel jerking away his arm from the grasp of Doctor Harnel, who had been holding him in his seat by superior strength, with a bound like that of an enraged tiger, planted one stunning blow on the left temple of the desperado, that laid him on the floor beside Zavala. Many among the crowd gave an approving cheer, showing their appreciation of generous action, though without ability to perform the like themselves.

In a moment Hickman was again upon his feet, and hastily snatched a pistol from his pocket; but before he could draw back the hammer, a dozen persons, some of them his bosom friends, interfered to prevent more bloodshed. The courage of one man had broken the spell of horror which enthralled two hundred. The inexpressible grief, the musical, plaintive prayers of that beautiful girl partially sobered the most inebriate, and melted the stoniest hearts to unaccustomed pity. It was thus, we are told in the wild myths of the world's golden prime, that tears on the radiant cheeks of innocent virgins were sometimes all-powerful to appease the anger of the most ferocious beasts.

The duellist struggled an instant with those who were striving to sooth his wrath, and being satisfied of their firm resolution to oppose the present execution of his deadly purpose, he seemed to acquiesce, and exclaimed, with a singular laugh—"come, let us settle the matter at the bar, and forget this sudden folly."

The throng concurring in the highly popular motion, gathered immediately around the shrine of decanters, to repeat, once more the jingle of ringing glasses.

In the meanwhile, Zavala revived from his momentary insensibility, and Samuel and the Doctor followed him into the ladies' cabin, the latter examining his wound, pronounced it to be not at all dangerous, and merely applied a linen cloth soaked in cold water, bandaging it with a silk handkerchief.

It was then as soon as the anxiety of the beautiful Maria in respect to her father's safety was quieted, that she gave way to an irresistible emotion of grateful tenderness. She seized the hand of the young merchant and pressed it to her lips, and bedewed it with a rain of silvery tears, saying in tones low and sweet as the music of summer rills—

"Oh! thou hast saved my father's life and mine! Brave youth! how shall we ever pay thee?"

"Thanks, even one kind thought from such an adorable creature as thou, I value more than the

wealth of worlds!" replied Samuels, transported with unutterable happiness.

"My father, myself, and all we possess are yours," said the blushing girl, repeating only the usual complimentary formula of friendship sanctioned by the custom of her country; but the soft radiance of the tender black eyes had a meaning which no words formed of common air, though breathed through lips living in music, can even be adequate to express.

Women born in the delicious climate of the Rio Grande, beneath a sky of cloudless blue, in that air which no frosts chills, where the green leaf never withers and the bright flowers fade not; women reared under groves of the golden orange and matured into maturity by the sunbeams of eternal summer whose foster mother is benignant Nature, untrammelled by the restraints of art, are far quicker to catch the fire of feeling and more impetuous to reveal its name, than our prudent daughters of colder and higher latitudes. Hence, the fair Maria did not even have the wish to hide her sudden and passionate love for the young merchant, the depth of whose own heart were almost delirious with the same sweet dream.

But their delighted converse was abruptly cut short by the anxious voice of the doctor, with the startling question—

"Mr. Samuels have you any weapons, either on your person or among your baggage?"

"Not even a pocket-knife," answered the youth nervously:

"Why do you make this inquiry?"

"Because I believe yonder truculent homicide to be arranging some mischief against you. See the crowd is gathered in a close circle around him, he is speaking to them in a low tone, but with vehement gestures."

"Besides, he was never known to forget an insult or forgive an enemy."

"That is too true," said Maria with trembling lips, "it was only last year that I saw him shoot down a man in the street before father's door.—He fired at a distance of fifty yards, and sent a bullet through the centre of his victim's forehead. Oh dear! fly, hide from his murderous vision," she entreated, grasping his arm convulsively, as if to enforce her earnest request.

"There is no place where I can either fly or hide except the river," answered Samuels, now fully awake to the perils of his situation.

Then a person of genteel appearance from the dense group around the bar approached, and said with a smile—

"Young gentlemen, Col. Hickman desires to see you for a short time, for the purpose of tendering you a friendly apology in reference to his rude conduct."

"Do not go," whispered Maria, supposing the message to be a snare intended to draw her new favorite away from the ladies' cabin.

A similar thought had crossed the mind of the youth; but, after hesitating an instant, he reflected that it was idle to shun his adversary and accordingly he walked forward with a bold step towards the bar. As he came near, he heard the stern voice of Col. Hickman remarking, in tones of menace—"Remember! if any one, even my own brother, should interfere in this matter, he must fight me to the death." Then the throng opened, and Samuels stood in the presence of his mortal foe.

It was a startling, a terrible tableau. The tall form of the duellist was seen brandishing an enormous horsewhip in one hand and presenting a revolver ready for fire with the other; a smile of demoniac ferocity on his thin, sneering lips, revealing two rows of teeth of a dazzling whiteness, and apparently sharp as the tusks of a wild boar; while his reddish grey eyes seemed to emit flashes of flame. The concentrated fury of his countenance actually struck the beholders with awe, as something unnatural and infernal.

On the other part, the young merchant remained entirely passive, as if resigned to his fate, whatever it might be; with arms folded across his bosom; his features pale and immovable as those of a marble statue; limbs rigid as iron; with his deep blue eyes, steadily, yet without sternness, fixed on the fierce figure before him. And thus the two continued for more than a minute gazing in each other's faces, while the spectators scarcely drew their breath. One might have imagined that even the fall of a pin to the floor could have been heard, so oppressive was the deep silence.

At last, Col. Hickman hissed through his teeth—"Villain! you have insulted me, and I intend to wash away the stain with your blood."

He paused, but received no answer. No muscle of his face moved.

"You must apologise, or I will shoot like a dog," said the duellist, imperiously,