

Poetry.

THE FARMER'S SONG.

Success to the jolly old farmer
Who sings at the tail of the plow,
The monarch of prairie and forest,
'Tis only to God he may bow.
He is surely a fortunate fellow;
He raises his bread and his cheese;
And though hard is his labor in summer,
In winter he lives at his ease.

When the reign of winter is broken,
And spring comes to gladden and bless,
When the flocks in the meadow are sporting,
And the robin is building her nest,
The farmer walks forth to his labor,
And manly and firm in his tread,
As he scatters the seed for the harvest
That yields to the nations their bread.

His banks are all chartered by nature,
Their credits are ample and sure;
His clerks never elope with deposits,
Pursued by the curse of the poor.
His stocks are the best in the market;
His shares are the shares of the plow;
They bring bright gold to his coffers,
And pleasure and health to his brow.

When his crops are gathered and sheltered,
When his cattle are snug in the fold,
He sits himself down by the fireside
And laughs at the tempest and cold.
A stranger to pride and ambition,
His duty he strives to fulfil,
Determined whatever betide him,
To let the world jog as it will.

His trust is in Him who has given
The seasons, the sunshine and rain,
Who has promised "seed time and harvest,"
So long as the earth shall remain;
And if from his duties he wander,
Led on by his venturesome will,
Through life and its changed relations
God's providence follows him still.

Select Tale.

From the French.

A HERO AND A BULLY,
OR THE TRIAL OF COURAGE.

One evening, a short time after the battle of Fontenoy, (1745,) a group of the king's body-guard was congregated near the Latona basin at Versailles, listening to two of their number discussing a subject which at that period was rarely a matter of controversy in military circles.

"Refuse a duel after a public affront!" exclaimed the tallest of the speakers, whose bronzed features were rendered almost ferocious by the thick-red moustache; "it is a stain that all the waters of the deluge would not wash away."
"I repeat, Monsieur de Malatour," replied the other in a calm, polite tone, "that there is more true courage in refusing than in accepting a duel. What is more common than to yield to passion, envy or vengeance; and what more rare than to resist them? Therefore it is a virtue when exhibited at the price of public opinion; for what costs nothing is esteemed as worth nothing."

"A marvel! Monsieur d'Argentre, I would advise, if ever the king gives you the command of a company, to have engraven on the sabres of the soldiers the commandment—'Thou shalt do no murder.'"

And wherefore not? His majesty would have better servants, and the country fewer plunderers, if we had in our regiment more soldiers and fewer bullies. Take, as an example, him with whom you seem so much incensed; has he not nobly avenged what you call an affront by taking with his own hands, an enemy's colors, while your knaves most likely formed a prudent reserve behind the baggage?"

"Towards themselves have their moments of courage."

"And the brave also their moments of fear."

"The expression is not that of a gentleman."

"It is that of Monsieur de Tarenne, whose family equalled either of ours, and who avowed that he was not exempt from such moments.—Everybody has heard of his conduct towards a braggadocio, who boasted in his presence that he had never known fear. He suddenly passed a lighted candle under the speaker's nose, who instantly drew back his head to the great amusement of the bye-standers, who laughed heartily at this singular mode of testing the other's assertion."

"None but a marshal of France had dared to try such pleasantry. To our subject, sir, I maintain that your friend is a coward, and you—"

"And I—," repeated D'Argentre, his eyes flashing and his lips firmly compressed

"Holla, gentlemen!" exclaimed a third party, who, owing to the warmth of the argument, had joined the group unperceived. "This is my affair," said he to Monsieur d'Argentre, holding his arm; then turning to his adversary, added: "Monsieur de Malatour, I am at your orders?"

"In that case, after you, if necessary," said d'Argentre, with his usual calmness.
"By my honor, you charm me, gentlemen! Let us go."

"One moment," replied the new comer, who young as he was, wore the cross of St. Louis.

"No remarks. Gentlemen, hasten."

"Too great haste in such cases evinces less a contempt for death than an anxiety to get rid of his phantom."

"I listen sir!"

"Monsieur d'Argentre just now stated that the bravest have their moments of fear. Without taking as serious his anecdote of Monsieur de Turenne, I shall add that, with the exception of the difference that exists between muscles and nerves, the courage of the duelist is more an affair of habit than of principle; for it is the natural state of man to love peace, if not for the sake of others, at least for himself. Do you wish me to prove it?"

"Enough sir: we are not here to listen to a sermon."

"Yet a moment. Here is my proposition: we are all assembled this evening previous to our leave of absence; I invite you, then, as also these gentlemen present, to a bear-hunt on my estate or rather amongst the precipices of Clat, in the Eastern Pyrenees. You are very expert, Monsieur de Malatour—you can snuff a candle with a pistol at twenty paces, and you have no equal at the small sword. Well, I shall place you before a bear, and if you succeed—I do not even say in lodging a ball in his head, but merely in firing upon him—I shall submit immediately after to meet you face to face with any weapons you may choose to name, since it is only at that price I am to gain your good opinion."

"Are you playing a comedy, sir?"

"Quite the contrary. And I even repeat that this extreme haste shows more the courage of the nerves, than of the true courage arising from principle."

"What guaranty have I, should I accept your proposition, that you will not again endeavour to evade me?"

"My word, sir; which I take all my companions to witness, and place under the safeguard of their honor."

There ran through his auditory such a buzz of approbation that De Malatour, though with a bad grace, was obliged to accede to the arrangement. It was then agreed that on the first of September all present should assemble at the Chateau du Clat.

Whilst the young lord of the manor is making the necessary preparations for their reception, we shall explain the accusation of which he was the object, yet which had not branded him with any mark of disgrace among a class of men so punctilious on the point of honor.

The young Baron de Villetteon in entering amongst the gentlemen who formed the household guard of the king of France, carried with him principles which remained uncorrupted amidst all the frivolities of one of the most licentious courts in Europe. Such, however, is the charm of virtue, even in the midst of vice, that his exemplary conduct had not only gained him the esteem of his officers, and friendship of his companions, but had attracted the attention of the king himself. One alone among his comrades, Monsieur de Malatour, took umbrage at this general favour, and on the occasion of some trifling expression or gesture, publicly insulted him. Villetteon refused to challenge him, as being contrary to his principles, but determined that this seeming cowardice, in not fighting a well-known duellist, should be redeemed by some action of *eclat* during the campaign just commenced. That moment had arrived; and for his noble conduct in taking the English colors at the battle of Fontenoy, he received the cross of St. Louis from the king's own hand on the field, the eulogium of Marshal Saxe, and a redoubled enmity on the part of De Malatour.

The first care of the young baron, on arriving at his estate, was to call his major-domo, an old faithful servant.

"I have business with thee, my master," said he, cordially shaking him by the hand.

"Speak, monseigneur," replied the parour, who was deeply attached to his young lord; "you know the old hunter is yours to his last drop of blood."

"I never doubted it, my old friend. Did you receive my letter from Paris?"

"Yes, sir; and those gentlemen, your comrades, will have some work before them."

"Are there bears already on the heights then?" asked Villetteon, extending his hand in the direction of one of the lofty peaks, whose summit, covered with snow, glittered in the morning sun.

"Five in all—a complete *menage*—father, mother and children; besides an old bachelor, whom the Spaniards had driven to this side."

"In less than a week we shall go in pursuit of them. Do you know, pareur, some of my comrades are rather rough sportsmen? there is one of them who is able to snuff a candle with a pistol at twenty paces."

"Easier, perhaps than to snuff a bear at four," replied the old man, laughing.

"That is what I said also. But as I should wish to judge for myself of his prowess, you must place us together at the same post—at the bridge of Maure, for instance."

"Hum!" said the pareur, scratching his ear; "it would better please me to have you elsewhere."

"Why?"

"Because to guard this post, a man ought to be in a state of grace, for he will be between two deaths—the bears and the precipice."

"I know the one, and do not fear the other; thanks to your lessons."

"I am sure of that. But, with your leave, I should like to guard the bridge myself."

"You are sure, then, that the bears will pass this way?"

"Sure—yes; but quite sure—no. Recollect that they are sullen and prudent beasts, which never confide their plan of route to any one."

"It is agreed on. I shall guard the bridge with my comrade. Now go, and have the trackers ready."

"Very well, very well;" murmured the pareur, as he retired; "I shall have my eye on him."

Eight days afterwards, all those invited not excepting Monsieur de Malatour—who, despite the delicate attentions of the host, preserved a cold reserve—were assembled at the chateau. The magnificent grandeur of the Pyrenees, their shining summits relieved against the blue sky of Spain, was an unlooked-for pleasure to the greater number of the guests, who for the most part belonged to the rich and fertile plains of the interior.

The morning following their arrival a body of trackers and scouts, provided with all manner of discordant instruments—trumpets, drums, saucapans, &c., &c., were assembled under the walls of the chateau, with the pareur at their head; while by his side stood the mandarin, who proudly guarded a dozen large mastiffs, held in leash by his vigorous helpers. The young Baron and his friends, armed with carabines and hunting knives, had scarcely appeared, when, by a sign from the pareur, the whole troop moved silently forward. The dogs themselves seemed to understand the importance of this movement, and nothing was heard but the confused tramp of feet, blending with the noise of the distant torrent, or, at intervals, the cry of some belated night-bird, flying heavily homeward in the doubtful glimmer of the yet unopened day.

As the party reached the crest of the mountain which immediately overhung the chateau, the first rays of the sun breaking from the east glanced on the summit of the Pyrenees, and suddenly illuminating the landscape, discovered beneath them a deep valley, covered with majestic pine trees, which murmured in the fresh breeze of the morning.

Opposite to them the foaming waters of a cascade fell some hundreds of feet through a cleft which divided the mountain from the summit to the base. By one of those caprices of nature which testify the primitive convulsions of our globe, the chasm was surmounted by a natural bridge—the piles of granite at each side being joined by one immense flat rock, almost seeming to verify the fable of the Titans; for it appeared impossible that those enormous blocks of stone could have ever been raised to such an elevation by human agency.

Sinister legends were attached to the place, and the mountaineers recounted with terror that no hunter, with the exception of the pareur, had ever been posted at the bridge of Maure, without becoming the prey of either the bears or the precipice. But the pareur was too good a Christian to partake of this ridiculous prejudice; he attributed the fatality to its real cause—the dizziness arising from the sight of the bears and the precipices combined, by destroying the hunter's presence of mind made his aim unsteady, and his death the inevitable consequence. He could not, however, altogether divest himself of fears for his young master, who obstinately persevered in his

intention of occupying the bridge with his antagonist.

After placing the Baron's companions at posts, which he considered the most advantageous, the pareur rejoined his men, and disposing them so as to encompass the valley facing the cascade, commanded the utmost silence to be preserved until they should hear the first bark of his dogs. At that signal the mastiffs were to be unleashed, the instruments sounded, and all to move slowly forward, contracting the circle as they approached the cascade. These arrangements being made, the pareur and his dog, followed by the mandarin alone, disappeared in the depths of the wood.

For some minutes the silence had remained broken, when suddenly a furious barking commenced, accompanied by low growling. Each prepared his arms, the instruments sounded, and the mastiffs being let loose, precipitated themselves pell-mell in the direction of the struggle.—Their furious barking was soon confounded with the cries of the hunters and the din of the instruments, mingled with the formidable growling of the bears, making altogether a hideous concert, which, rolling along the sides of the valley, was repeated by the distant echoes. At this moment the young baron regarded his companion, whose countenance, though pale, remained calm and scornful.

"Attention, sir," said he in a low voice. "The bears are not far from us, let your aim be true, or else—"

"Keep your counsels for yourself, sir!"

"Attention," repeated Villetteon, without seeming to notice the surly response—"he approaches."

Those who were placed in front of the cascade, the animals directing their course to the bridge, cried out from all parts, "Look out, look out, Villetteon!" But the breaking of the branches, followed by the rolling of stones, had already given warning of the animal's near approach. Malatour became deadly pale; he, however, held his carbine firmly, in the attitude of a resolute hunter.

A bear at length appeared, with foaming mouth and glaring eyes, at times turning as if he would vainly struggle with his pursuers; but when he saw the bridge, his only way of escape, occupied, he uttered a fearful growl, and raising himself on his hind legs, was rushing on our two hunters, when a ball struck him in the forehead and he fell dead at their feet.

Malatour convulsively grasped his gun—he had become completely powerless. Suddenly new cries, louder and more pressing, were heard.

"Fire! fire! he is now on you!" cried the pareur, who appeared unexpectedly, pale and agitated, his gun to his shoulder, but afraid to fire, lest he should hit his master.

The latter, perceiving his agitation, turned round; it was indeed time. On the other side of the bridge, a bear much larger than the first was in the act of making the fatal rush. Springing backward, he seized the carbine of his petrified companion, and lodged its contents in the animal's breast, ere he could reach them. He rolled, in the death-struggle, to where they stood. All this was the work of an instant. The knees of the hardy old pareur shook with emotion at the escape of his young master; as for Malatour, his livid paleness, and the convulsive shuddering of his limbs, testified the state of his mind.

"Take your arms," said the young baron, quickly replacing in his hands the carbine—"here are our comrades—they must not see you unarmed; and, pareur, not a word of all this."

"Look!" said he to his companions, as they gathered around, pointing to the monstrous beasts—"one to each. Now Monsieur de Malatour, I wait your orders, and am ready to give you the satisfaction you require."

The latter made no reply, but reached out his hand, which Villetteon cordially shook.

That evening a banquet was given to celebrate the double victory. Towards the end of the repast a toast to the "vanquishers" was proposed, and immediately accepted.

Monsieur d'Argentre, glass in hand, rose to pledge it, when Malatour, also raising, held his arm, exclaiming: "To the sole vanquisher of the day!—to our noble host! It was he alone who killed the two bears; and if, through his generosity, I have allowed the illusion to last so long, it was simply for this reason: The affront which I gave him was a public one, the reparation ought to be public likewise. I now declare that Monsieur de Villetteon is the bravest of the brave, and that I shall maintain it towards all and against all."

"This time, at least, I shall not take up your gauntlet," said Monsieur d'Argentre.

"There's a brave young man!" cried the pareur whom his master had admitted to his table, and who endeavoured to conceal a furtive tear. "No