

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE DUELLO.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE BROTHERS,'  
'CROMWELL,' ETC.

It was a clear bright day in the early autumn when the royal tilt-yard, on the Isle de Paris was prepared for deadly conflict. The tilt-yard was a regular oblong space, enclosed with stout squared palisades and galleries for the accommodation of spectators, immediately in the vicinity of the royal residence of the Tournelles, a splendid gothic structure, adorned with all the rare and fanciful devices of that rich style of architecture—at a short distance thence rose the tall grey towers of Notre Dame, the bells of which were tolling minutely the dirge for a passing soul. From one of the windows of the palace a gallery had been constructed, hung with rich crimson tapestry, leading to a long range of seats, cushioned and decked with arras, and guarded by a strong party of gentlemen in the royal livery with partizans in their hands and sword and dagger at the belt—at either end of the list was a tent pitched that at the right of the royal gallery a plain marquee of canvass of small size, which had apparently seen much service, and been used in real warfare. The curtain which formed the door of this was lowered, so that no part of the interior could be seen from without; but a particolored pennon was pitched into the ground beside it, and a shield suspended from the palisades, emblazoned with bearings, which all men knew to be those of Charles Baron de La-Hire, a renowned soldier in the late Italian wars and the challenger in the present conflict. The pavilion at the left, or lower end, was of a widely different kind—of the very largest sort then in use, completely framed of crimson cloth lined with white silk, festooned and fringed with gold, and all the curtains looped up to display a range of massive tables covered with snow white damask, and loaded with two hundred covers of pure silver—Vases of flowers and flasks of crystal were intermixed upon the board with tankards, flagons, and cups and urns of gold, embossed and jewelled—and behind every seat a page was placed, clad in the colors of the Counts de Leguy—a silken curtain concealed the entrance of an inner tent, wherein the count awaited the signal that should call him to the lists.—Strange and indecent as such an accompaniment would be deemed now-a-days to a solemn mortal combat—it was then neither deemed singular nor monstrous, and in this gay pavilion Armand de Laguy, the challenged in the coming duel, had summoned all the nobles of the court to feast with him, after he should have slain, so confident was he of victory, his cousin and accuser, Charles Baron de La-Hire. The entrances of the tilt-yard were guarded by a detachment of the king's sergeants, sheathed *cap a pie* in steel, with shouldered arquebuses and matches ready lighted—the lists were strewn with saw dust and hung completely with black serge, save where the royal gallery afforded a strange contrast by its rich decorations to the ghastly draperies of the battle ground. One other object only remains to be noticed; it was a huge block of black oak, dented in many places as if by the edge of a sharp weapon and stained with splashes of dark gore. Beside this frightful emblem stood a tall muscular gray-headed man, dressed in a leathern frock and apron stained like the block with many a gout of blood, bare headed and bare armed, leaning upon a huge two-handed axe, with a blade of three feet in breadth. A little way aloof from these was placed a chair, wherein a monk was seated, a very aged man with a bald head and beard as white as snow, telling his beads in silence until his ministry should be required.

The space around the lists and all the seats were crowded well nigh to suffocation by thousands of anxious and attentive spectators; and many an eye was turned to watch the royal seats which were yet vacant, but which it was well known would be occupied before the trumpet should sound for the onset. The sun was now nearly at the meridian, and the expectation of the crowd was at its height. When the passing bell ceased ringing, and was immediately succeeded by the accustomed peal, announcing the hour of high noon. Within a moment or two: a bustle was observed among the gentlemen pensioners—then a page or two entered the royal seats, and, after looking about them for a moment, again retired. Another pause of profound expectation, and then a loud blast of trumpets followed from the interior

of the royal residence—nearer it rang, and nearer, till the loud symphonies filled every ear and thrilled to the core of every heart—and then the King, the dignified and noble Henry, entered with all his glittering court, princes and dukes, and peers and ladies of high birth and matchless beauty, and took their seats among the thundering acclamations of the people, to witness the dread scene that was about to follow, of wounds and blood and butchery. All were arrayed in the most gorgeous splendor—all except one, a girl of charms unrivalled, although she seemed plunged in the deepest agony of grief, by the seductive beauties of the gayest. Her bright redundant auburn hair was all dishevelled—Her long dark eyelashes were pencilled in distinct relief against the marble pallor of her colorless cheek—her rich and rounded form was veiled, but not concealed, by a dress of the coarsest serge, black as the robes of night, and thereby contrasting more the exquisite fairness of her complexion. On her all eyes were fixed—some with disgust—some with contempt—others pity, sympathy, even admiration. That girl was Marguerite de Vaudreuil—betrothed to either combatant—the betrayed herself and the betrayer—rejected by the man whose memory, when she believed him dead she had herself deserted—rejecting in her turn, and absolutely loathing him whose falsehood had betrayed her into the commission of a yet deeper treason. Marguerite de Vaudreuil, lately the admired of all beholders, now the prize of two kindred swordsmen, without an option save that between the bed of a man she hated, and the life long seclusion of the convent.

The King was seated—the trumpets flourished once again, and at the signal the curtain was withdrawn from the tent of the challenger, and Charles de La Hire, stepped calmly out on the arena, followed by his godfather, De Jarnac, bearing two double edged swords, of great length and weight, and two broad bladed poniards. Charles De La Hire was very pale and sallow, as if ill health or confinement, but his step was firm and elastic, and his air perfectly unmoved and tranquil; a slight flush rose to his pale cheek as he was greeted by an enthusiastic cheer from the people, to whom his fame in the wars of Italy had much endeared him, but the flush was transient, and in a moment he was as pale and cold as before the shout which hailed his entrance. He was clad very plainly in a dark morone colored pourpoint, with vest, trunk hose, and nether stocks of black silk netting, displaying to admiration the outlines of this lithe and sinewy frame. De Jarnac, his godfather, on the contrary, was very foppishly attired, with an abundance of fluttering tags and ruffles of rich lace, and feathers in his cap. These two had scarcely stood a moment in the lists, before, from the opposite pavilion, De Laguy and the Duke de Nevers issued, the latter bearing, like De Jarnac, a pair of swords and daggers; it was observed, however, that the weapons of De Laguy were narrow three cornered rapier blades and Italian stilettoes, and it was well understood that on the choice of the weapons depended much the result of the encounter—De Laguy being renowned above any gentlemen in the French court for his skill in the science of defence, as practised by the Italian masters—while his antagonists was known to excel in strength and skill in the management of all downright soldierly weapons, in coolness, in decision, presence of mind, and calm self sustained valor, rather than in slight and dexterity. Armand de Laguy was dressed sumptuously, in the same garb indeed which he had worn at the festival whereon the strife arose which now was on the point of being terminated—and forever!

A few moments were spent in deliberation between the godfathers of the combatants, and then it was proclaimed by de Jarnac, 'that the wind and the sun having been divided equally between the two swordsmen, their places were assigned—and that it remained only to decide upon the choice of the weapons!—that the choice should be regulated by a throw of the dice—and that with the weapons so chosen they should fight till one or the other should be *hors de combat*—but that in case that either weapon should be bent or broken, the seconds should cry 'hold,' and recourse be had to the other swordsmen the use of the poniard to be optional, as it was to be used only for parrying, and not for striking—that either combatant striking a blow or thrusting after the utterance of the word 'hold,' or using the dagger to inflict a wound, should be dragged to the block and die the death of a felon.'

This proclamation made, dice were produced, and De Nevers winning the

throw for Armand, the rapiers and stilettoes which he had selected were produced, examined carefully, and measured, and delivered to the kindred swordsmen.

It was a stern and fearful sight—for there was no bravery nor show in their attire, nor aught chivalrous in the way of battle. They had thrown off their coats and hats, and remained in their shirt sleeves and under garments only, with napkins bound about their brows, and their eyes fixed each on the other's with intense and terrible malignity.

The signal was now given and the blades were crossed, and on the instant it was seen how fearful was the advantage which de Laguy had gained by the choice of weapons—for it was with the utmost difficulty that Charles de La-Hire avoided the incessant longes of his enemy, who springing to and fro, stamping and writhing his body in every direction, never ceased for a moment with every trick of feint and pass and flourish to thrust at limb, face and body, easily parrying himself with the poniard, which he held in his left hand, the less skillful assaults of his enemy. Within five minutes the blood had been drawn in as many places, though the wounds were but superficial, from the sword arm, the face and thigh of De La-Hire, while he had not pricked ever so lightly his formidable enemy—his quick eye, however, and firm active hand stood him in stead, and he contrived in every instance to turn the thrusts of Armand so far at least aside as to render them innocuous to life. As his blood, however, ebbed away, and as he knew that he must soon become weak from the loss of it, De Jarnac evidently grew uneasy, and many bets were made that Armand would kill him without as much as receiving a scratch himself. And now Charles saw his peril, and determined on a fresh line of action—slinging away his dagger, he altered his position rapidly, so as to bring his left hand towards De Laguy, and made a motion with it, as if to grasp his sword hilt—he was immediately rewarded by a longe, which drove clear through his left arm close to the elbow joint but just above it—De Jarnac turned on the instant deadly pale, for he thought all was over—but he erred widely, for De La Hire had calculated well his action and his time, and that which threatened to destroy him proved, as he meant it, his salvation—for as quick as light when he felt the wound he dropped his own rapier and grasping Armand's guard with his right hand, he snapped the blade short off in his own mangled flesh and bounced five feet backward, with the broken fragment still sticking in his arm.

'Hold!' shouted each godfather on the instant—and at the same time De La Hire exclaimed 'give us the other sword—give us the other sword, De Jarnac—'

The exchange was made in a moment the stilettoes and broken swords were gathered up, and the heavy horse swords given to the combatants, who again faced each other with equal resolution, though now with altered fortunes. 'Now De La-Hire,' exclaimed De Jarnac, as he put the well poised blade into his friend's hand—'you managed that right gallantly and well—now fight the quick fight, ere you shall faint from pain and bleeding!' and it was instantly apparent that such was indeed his intention—his eye lightened, and he looked like an eagle about to pounce upon his foe, as he drew up his form to its utmost height and whirled the long new blade about his head as though it had been but a feather. Far less sublime and striking was the attitude and swordsmanship of De Laguy, though he too fought both gallantly and well. But at the fifth pass feining at his head, Charles fetched a long and sweeping blow at his right leg, and striking him below the ham, divided all the tendons with the back of the double edged blade—then springing in before he fell, plunged his sword into his body, that the hilt knocked heavily at his breast bone and the point came out glittering between his shoulders—the blood flashed out from the deep wound, from nose, and ears, and mouth, as he fell prostrate, and Charles stood over him, leaning on his avenging weapon and gazing sadly into his stiffening features—'Fetch him a priest,' exclaimed De Nevers—'for by my halidome he will not live ten minutes.'

'If he live five,' cried the King rising from his seat—'if he live five,' he will live long enough to die upon the block—for he lies there a felon and convicted traitor, and by my soul he shall

die a felon's doom—but bring him a priest quickly.'

The old monk ran across the lists, and raised the head of the dying man, and held a crucifix aloft before his glazing eyes, and called upon him to repent and to confess as he would have salvation.

Faint and half choked with blood he faltered forth the words—'I do—I do confess guilty—oh! double guilty!—pardon! oh God God—Charles!—Marguerite!'—and as the words died on his quivering lips he sank down fainting with the excess of agony.

'Ho! there!—guards, headsmen!'—shouted Henry—'off with him—off with the villain to the block, before he die an honorable death by the sword of as good a knight as ever fought for glory!'

Then De La-Hire knelt down beside the dying man, and took his hand in his own and raised it tenderly, while a faint gleam of consciousness kindled his pallid features—'May God as freely pardon thee as I do, oh my cousin!' then turning to the King—'You have admitted, sire, that I have served you faithfully and well—never yet have I sought reward at your hand—let this now be my guerdon. Much have I suffered, even thus let me not feel that my King has increased my sufferings by consigning one of my blood to the heansmen's blow—pardon him, sire, as I do—who have the most cause of offence—pardon him, gracious King, as we will hope that a King higher yet shall pardon him and us, who be all sinners in the sight of his all seeing eye!'

'Be it so,' answered Henry—'it never shall be said of me that a French King refused his bravest soldier's first claim upon his justice—bear him to his pavilion!'

And they did bear him to his pavilion, decked as it was for revelry and feasting, and they laid him there ghastly and gased and gory upon the festive board, and his blood streamed among his choice wines, and the scent of death chilled the rich fragrance of the flowers—an hour! and he was dead who had invited others to triumph over his cousin's slaughter—an hour! and the court lackeys shamefully spoiled and plundered the repast which had been spread for nobles.

'And now,' continued Henry, taking the hand of Marguerite—'Here is the victor's prize—wilt have him, Marguerite?—fore heaven but he has won thee nobly!—wilt have her, De La-Hire, methinks her tears and beauty may yet atone for fickleness produced by treasons such as his who now shall never more betray, nor lie, nor sin forever!—'

'Sire,' replied De La-Hire very firmly, 'I pardon her, I love her yet!—but I wed not dishonor!'

'He is right,' said the pale girl—'he is right, ever right and noble—for what have such as I to do with wedlock? Fare thee well!—Charles—dear, honored Charles!—The mists of this world are clearing away from mine eyes, and I see now that I loved thee best—thou only! Fare thee well, noble one, forget the wretch who has so deeply wronged thee—forget me and be happy. For me I shall right soon be free!'

'Not so—not so,' replied King Henry, misunderstanding her meaning—'not so, for I have sworn it, and though I may pity thee, I may not be foresworn—to-morrow thou must to a convent, there to abide for ever!'

'And that will not be long,' answered the girl, a gleam of her old pride and impetuosity lightening up her fair features.

'By heaven, I say forever,' cried Henry, stamping his foot on the ground angrily.

'And I reply, not long!'

From the New York State Mechanic.

## THE FIRST PAPER MAKER.

If you have ever observed the operations of the wasp, as he lights upon the unpainted pannel of your house door, or upon the weather beaten clapboard, you have seen the first rudiments of the art of paper making. The wasp is the oldest paper maker; but like the Chinese, the art remains stationary with him, and is handed down from generation to generation, in the same state in which he found it. With the wasp, however, there is no motive for improvement, his manufactures being sufficiently perfect for all intents and purposes of his. In all ages while men were using an extremely scarce and costly article for preserving their records, the wasp was setting them an example for making a firm and durable paper from a vegetable substance. When the art of making paper had been brought to a high degree of perfection, a method was discovered