

## Literature, &amp;c.

Blackwood's Magazine for Sept.

## THE DUEL.

SPANIARDS generally, have a strong, and not unnatural, dislike to see either military or civil employments in their country filled by foreigners, and it is rare to find a foreign officer in their regiments. Sometimes, however, one meets with them—generally Poles. On one occasion, during my rambles, I fell in with a battalion, quartered in an insignificant Asturian village, in which were two foreigners, a Frenchman and a Pole. The former, whose baptismal name was Victor, was a fine handsome young fellow, well educated, and even accomplished, whom a love of adventure had induced to enter the Spanish service. His greatest fault was one not uncommon among young French military men—a headlong, random way of talking, especially when slightly excited by wine, which frequently caused him to wound the feelings, or give unintentional, but not the less real, offence to his friends and comrades. If remonstrated with on the subject when in cool blood, he admitted the failing, which he would again, however, fall into, the very same day perhaps, when heated by conversation, or irritated by the least contradiction. Cyrzinski, the Pole, was of a widely different character. He was the *beau idéal* of a veteran soldier, to which name, although forty years of age, five and twenty years' service gave him a fair title. Tall and powerful in frame, inured to fatigue, and skilled in all military exercises, he was not less terrible in the field than gentle and amiable in quarters. He was the best hearted creature I ever saw; and although with nothing beside his pay to live upon, was ever ready to share his last dollar with a comrade. By disposition he was somewhat taciturn, he would sit for hours, his chin resting on his hand, and a large German pipe in his mouth, listening to the conversation, but rarely taking part in it. He was still in the prime of his vigor, and although the shako had worn away the hair from his temples and forehead, it still curled thick and short on the top and back of his head, while a strong and very light coloured mustache contrasted with the dark hue to which his face had been tanned by the suns and rains of twenty campaigns. The strangest thing about him was his dialect. It was a mixture of some half dozen languages, picked up in the various services through which he had passed, and no one of which, except his own, could he speak with any degree of accuracy. Somehow, however, he made himself understood; and, as nothing ever offended him, it was often a source of great amusement to his comrades to laugh at old Cyrzinski's polyglot idioms.

I was acquainted with one or two officers of the battalion, and I determined to remain a couple of weeks at the village, to repose on the fatigues of a week's travelling on a Spanish saddle and over detestable roads. I soon got acquainted with Cyrzinski; we discovered that we had some mutual friends in another country, and an intimacy rapidly ensued. Although the village in which the battalion was quartered was a mere collection of cottages, and had nothing to recommend it save the beauty of the surrounding scenery, I found my time pass so agreeably, that I allowed several days to elapse without thinking of departure. The mornings were spent in riding, walking and lounging, with an occasional bout at the foils, or touch at pistol shooting, and in the evening, Cyrzinski, Victor, the Frenchman, two or three Spanish officers, and myself, used generally to meet at the quarters of one or other of the party, for the sake of conversation, and the discussion of a bowl of mulled wine.

It was on the eighth evening after my arrival at the village we were with Julian N—, an officer whom I had formerly known at M—-. For three or four days past, troops had been daily arriving from different quarters in our rear, and occupying a strong position, of which the village was the most central and advanced point. Several thousand men were assembled in the neighboring hamlets, or bivouacking in the fields; while in our front a strong Carlist force had established their pickets within little more than musket shot of ours. Nothing was expected for the following day, as both sides were waiting further reinforcements, but an action was decidedly looked for the day after the morrow.

We were seated, six in number, round a ponderous old table of black, worm eaten oak, on which were placed a large bowl, of coarse, yellowish earthen-

ware, emitting a most fragrant vapor of spiced wine, glasses in number sufficient, but no two of them of the same form or size, and a bundle of excellent cigars. The conversation ran, as may be supposed, chiefly on the movements of troops, and probabilities of an approaching engagement. The first bowl was finished, and another brought in before a deviation was made from this topic, by one of the party relating an incident that had occurred that morning.

An officer had ridden out from the Carlist lines, mounted on a superb Andalusian charger, and amused himself by cantering to and fro—not advancing, however beyond, his own pickets. Suddenly the horse started at some object on the ground, gave a rear and near unseated his rider, and then throwing up his head in the most approved style of star gazing, started off at a furious rate in the direction of the Christino camp. The officer tried hard to pull him in, but he was riding with a single reined bridle, and, as ill luck would have it, the leather broke. The horse went on at the same mad pace, his rider keeping his seat, but unable to control him, until within a hundred yards of the Christino picket, when a shot from one of the sentries brought the unlucky officer to the ground. The horse instantly stopped, and stood motionless and crestfallen by his master, as though conscious of and repenting the harm he had done. Some men went out from the picket to bring in the animal, and finding the officer quite dead, a shallow grave was dug, and he was buried where he had fallen.

'The burial was not long,' said one of the Spanish officers, a young man, and a great friend of Victor's. 'The grave was scarce three feet deep, and coffins being of course, out of the question, they just laid him in the ground in his shirt, as though he had been going to bed.'

'And that was too much,' cried Victor, 'when linen is so scarce among our poor fellows. It would be a praise worthy act to dig the body up, and strip it.'

'Non pas,' said Cyrzinski, gravely, 'you bad ting deranger los muertos—ca porte malheur.'

'Oh, does it! Monsieur Cyrzinski,' said the Frenchman, who had spoken merely in jest, but was roused by the appearance of opposition. 'Eh bien! le diable m'emporte, if I don't do it then; and what's more, I'll wear the Carlist rascal's shirt the next time we go into action. What say you to that, *mon Polonais*?'

Cyrzinski shook his head, but made no reply. The Frenchman, who had been drinking pretty freely, but was by no means drunk, now filled a large tumbler with wine, and took it off at a draught.

'Come along, Luis,' said he to his friend, 'I want you to help me, or I shall be all night digging up the carrion.'

The young Spaniard hesitated, and did not seem half to like it; but he was accused to yield to Victor's impetuous character, and they left the room together. We shouted after them to come back, but they paid no attention to our call, and supposing it to be a joke of Victor's, and that he had gone off to pass the evening in the quarters of some other of his comrades, we thought no more of the matter. The conversation took a new turn. Cyrzinski laid aside his pipe, and becoming unusually communicative, told us one or two strange wild stories of the fate of persons who had disturbed the repose of the dead. In his native province, he said, there was a strong belief, that the man who dug up a body always met an untimely death; and that unless he made expiation by masses and penance, he never lived to see the anniversary of the day on which the sacrilegious act had been committed. It was easy to perceive that Cyrzinski himself was not altogether exempt from a belief in these superstitions.

Nearly an hour had elapsed since Victor's departure, when there was a loud knocking at the house door; and a moment after the Frenchman burst into the room, followed by his comrade; and laughing in a tone of boisterous, but it appeared to me, somewhat forced gaiety.

'We have got it,' cried he, after being nearly shot by our centres, who took us for Carlist forages, I believe.'

'Take that bird of plomen,' continued Victor, who probably from the effect of the cool air, seemed more intoxicated than when he left the room; and he threw a small bundle at Cyrzinski. The latter, not thinking what it might be, by a natural movement, held out his hand and caught it. As he did so, the bundle unrolled itself, and a shirt of beautiful fine linen, but stained with

blood and earth, dangled from the hand of the Pole, who immediately let it drop.

'C'est une mauvaise plaisanterie, *Mon-sieur Victor*,' said Cyrzinski, and I could perceive the slightest possible sparkle of anger in his fine clear blue eye.

'Comment, *une mauvaise plaisanterie*?' cried Victor, who had just drank off a bumper, to counteract, as he said, the effect of the night damps.

'Vous trouvez, *done*, mauvais tout ce que je fais ce soir. You seem to think that you are to be a law giver amongst us, that we are only to do what you approve of. Is not that the case, Master Cyrzinski?'

To this accusation, than which there could not have been a more unfounded one, the Pole made no answer, but continued puffing at his pipe. I observed that the whiffs of smoke followed each other with greater rapidity than usual; but his features betrayed no emotion, although the bullying tone, rather than the words, of the Frenchman could not be otherwise than galling to him.

'Reponds, *moi done!*' shouted Victor, who had just drank enough to be very quarrelsome, and who was doubly incensed by the calm coolness of Cyrzinski. 'Answer me, or by G— I will throw my glass in your face!'

Victor was standing opposite the Pole with a half empty tumbler in his hand; and whether it was done intentionally, or whether, in the vehemence of his anger, he involuntarily suited the action to the word, I cannot say; but as he spoke, the glass flew across the table, and smashed against the opposite wall—Cyrzinski receiving part of the contents in his face.

I never saw anything more truly dignified than the Pole's look and manner as he rose from his seat, and wiping the wine stains from his sun burned face and moustaches, addressed Victor, who still continued standing opposite to him, with the dogged look of a man who has done something to be ashamed of, but has too much false pride to acknowledge his fault.

'*Mon cher*,' said Cyrzinski, in better French than I had usually heard him speak, 'you have done a very foolish thing you have insulted, without reason, a man who was a soldier before you were born. I have the scars of nine wounds on my body, and I do not fear being taking for a coward. Say that you are sorry for what you have done—there is no degradation in doing so—and let the thing drop. These gentlemen are our friends—they will be silent on the subject for your sake; for myself I care not—Cyrzinski is known to be no poltroon.'

There was a momentary struggle in the Frenchman's breast between good feeling and false pride. Unfortunately, the latter prevailed.

'I have no willingness to receive apologies,' replied he, with a sneer;—'but I do not feel equally disposed to make them.' And, turning on his heel, he left the room. This unpleasant incident broke up the party, and we all retired to our quarters except Cyrzinski, who remained alone with Don Julian N—.

Before daybreak the next morning the troops were turned out in case of an attack; but none occurring, after being under arms a couple of hours, they were allowed to return to their quarters. I was looking out of the window of the village *posada*, when Cyrzinski and our host of the previous evening passed by, the latter with his cloak on. He beckoned me to come down, which I did and joined them.

'This is a bad business,' said Don Julian, showing me that he had a case of pistols under his cap. 'Cyrzinski and Victor are going to fight; nor do I see how it can be helped, for Victor has again refused to make the smallest apology. You know probably, that our military law is severe against duelling, and this affair may cost us all our commissions, and the more so as occurring in front of the enemy. Walk down with us if you have no objection. No harm can accrue to you for so doing, and your evidence may be good for some of us hereafter, if it comes to a court martial.'

In a few minutes we were on the ground selected for the duel, which was a small Indian corn field in front of the village, about equidistant from two of the Christino pickets, but screened from view by being in a sort of a hollow, shut in either side, and also to the rear by high land and plantations of young forest trees. It was inconveniently near the cantonments and pickets; but the whole of the adjacent country being covered with troops, it would have been necessary to have gone lea-

gues to get a better place, and on the whole, it was the most secluded spot that could be found. On the side looking towards the Carlist camp, the country sloped gently downwards for some three hundred yards, and then again began to rise for about the same distance, or rather more, till it terminated in a ridge, or crest upon which the Carlist had their position. One of the loose stone walls commonly used in Spain to divide farms and estates, ran across the lower end of the field from which them aize had been recently cut. Beyond this, the ground was uneven, intersected by hedges, and sprinkled with apple trees.

Victor and his second, the same young Spaniard who had accompanied him on his expedition of the preceding night, reached the field as we did. After another vain attempt on the part of Don Julian to extract an apology from the Frenchman, fifteen paces were measured, and the men placed. As the seconds handed the pistols to their principals, a scattering fire of muskets was opened, which to me appeared very near. I made a few steps towards the higher part of the field, and saw the grey coats and blue caps of some Carlist skirmishers advancing up towards our lines, Julian, who was to give the signal, seemed to hesitate. There was something strange in fighting a duel almost under the fire of the enemy.

'*Allons!*' cried Victor, stamping his foot, impatiently; '*dans un instant, ce sera fini.*'

'*Uno!*—*Dost!*' cried Julian, with a pause of a second between the words.

At the *uno* the pistols were raised; at the *dos* they fired. Cyrzinski's bonnet de police fell off his head, with a bullet through it.—His pistol, the charge of which had probably not been well rammed down, flashed in the pan.

At the same moment, however, to the surprise of all present, Victor turned half round, and fell heavily to the ground. The seconds and Cyrzinski hurried up to him, and I followed. The blood was flowing from the back of his head. A stray bullet from the Carlists, who were skirmishing with our pickets, had glanced over the wall, which ran a few yards in his rear, and given him a fatal wound. The last words he had uttered, '*Dans un instant ce sera fini*,' might have been spoken in a prophetic spirit. Not a minute had elapsed and he was already a corpse.

From Jack Hinton, the Guardman, in the Dublin Magazine for September.

## TIPPERARY JOE.

I have already passing alluded to Joe's conversational powers; and certainly they were exercised on this occasion with a more than common ability, either taking my silence as a suggestion for him to speak—or perhaps, and more probably, perceiving that some deep depression was over me—the kind hearted fellow poured forth his stores of song and legend without ceasing. Now amusing me by his wild and fitful snatches of old ballads—now narrating in his simple but touching eloquence some bygone story of thrilling interest—he long hours of the night passed over, and at daybreak we found ourselves descending the mountain towards a large and cultivated valley, in which I could faintly distinguish in the misty distance the little mill where our relay was to be found.

I stopped for a few minutes to gaze upon the scene before me. It was one of those peaceful landscapes of rural beauty, which beam more of soothing influence upon the sorrow struck heart than the softest voice of consolation. Unlike the works of man, they speak directly to our souls, while they appeal to our reason; and the truth comes forced upon us, that we alone must not repine. A broad and richly cultivated valley, bounded by mountains whose sides were clothed with deep wood—a stream, whose wayward course watered every portion of the plain, was seen now flowing among the grassy meadows, or peeping from the alders that lined the banks. The heavy mist of morning was rolling lazily up the mountain side; and beneath its gray mantle the rich green of pasture and meadow land was breaking forth, dotted with cattle and sheep. As I looked, Joe knelt down and placed his ear upon the ground, and seemed for some minutes absorbed in listening. Then suddenly springing up, he cried out,

'The mill isn't going to-day—I wonder what's the matter. I hope Andy isn't sick.'

A shade of sorrow came over his wild features, as he muttered between his teeth the verse of some old song, of which I could but catch the last two lines—