

Literature, &c.

From Douglas Jerold's Illuminated Magazine, for August.

THE FOLLY OF THE SWORD.

BY DOUGLAS JEROLD.

MAY we ask the reader to behold with us a melancholy shout; a saddening, miserable spectacle? We will not take him to a prison—a workshop, a Bedlam, where human nature expatiates its guiltiness, its lack of worldly goods, its most desolate perplexity; but we will take him to a wretchedness, first contrived by wrong, and perpetuated by folly. We will show him the embryo mischief that, in due season, shall be born in the completeness of its terror, and shall be christened with a sounding name, Folly and Wickedness, standing sponsors.

We are in St. James's Park. The royal standard of England burns in the summer air; the Queen is in London. We pass the palace, and in a few paces are in Birdcage Walk. There, reader, is the miserable show we promised you. There are some fifty recruits, drilled by a sergeant to do homicide cleanly, handsomely. In Birdcage Walk, Glory sits upon her eggs, and hatches eagles!

How beautiful is the sky above us! What a blessing comes with the fresh, quick air! The trees, dawning their green beauty from the earth, quicken our thoughts of the bounteousness of this teeming world. Here, in this nook, this patch, where we yet feel the vibrations of surrounding London; even here, nature constant in her beauty, blooms and smiles, uplifting the heart of man, if the heart be his to own her.

Now look aside, and contemplate God's image with a musket! Your bosom still expanding with gratitude to nature, for the blessings she has heaped about you, behold the crowning glory of God's work managed like a machine, to stay the image of God: to stain the teeming earth with homieidal blood; to fill the air with howling anguish! Is not yonder row of clowns a melancholy sight? Yet they are the sucklings of glory; the baby mighty ones of a future Gazette. Reason beholds them with a deep pity. Imagination magnifies them into fiends of wickedness. There is carnage, and the pestilential vapours of the slaughtered. What a fine looking thing is war. Yet, dress it as we may, dress and feather it, daub it with gold, huzza it, and sing swaggering songs about it—what is it, nine times out of ten, but Murder in uniform? Cain, taken the sergeant's shilling?

And now we hear the fifes and drums of her majesty's grenadiers. They pass on the other side; and a crowd of idlers, jumping to the music, their eyes dazzling, and their feelings perverted, hang about the march, and catch the infection, the love of glory! And true wisdom thinks of the world's age, and sighs at its slow advance in all that really dignifies man, the truest dignity being the truest love for his fellow. And then hope and a faith in human progress contemplate the pageant, its real ghastliness, disguised by outward glare and glitter, and know the day will come when the symbols of war will be as the sacred beasts of old Egypt—things to mark the barbarism of by-gone war; melancholy records of the past perversity of human nature.

We can imagine the deep-chested laughter—the look of scorn that would annihilate, and then the small compassion—of the man of War, at this, the dream of folly, or the wanderings of an inflamed brain. Yet, oh, man of war! at this very moment are you shrinking, withering, like an aged giant. The fingers of opinion have been busy at your plumes; you are not the feathered thing you were; and then the little tube, the goose quill, has sent its silent shots into your huge anatomy; and the corroding ink, even whilst you look at it and think it shines so brightly, is eating with a tooth of rust into your sword.

That a man should kill a man, and rejoice in the deed, nay gather glory from it, is the act of the wild animal. The force of muscle and dexterity of limb, which make the wild man a conqueror, are deemed in savage life man's highest attributes. The creature, whom in the pride of our christianity we call heathen and spiritually desolate, has some personal feeling in the strife—he kills his enemy, and then, making an oven of hot stones, bakes his dead body, and, for crowning satisfaction, eats it. His enemy becomes a part of him; his glory is turned to nutriment; and he is content. What barbarism! Field marshals sicken at the horror; nay, troopers shudder at the tale, like a fine lady at a toad.

Is what, then, consists the prime evil? In the murder, or the meal? Which is the most hideous deed—to kill a man, or to cook and eat the man when killed?

But softly, there is no murder in the case. The craft of man has made a splendid ceremony of homicide—has invested it with dignity. He slaughters with flags flying, drums beating, trumpets braying. He kills according to method, and has worldly honors for his grim handiwork. He does not, like the unchristian savage, carry away with him mortal trophies from the skulls of his enemies. No; the alchemy or magic of authority turns his well-won scalps into epaulets, or hangs them in star and crosses at his button hole and then, the battle over—the dead not eaten, but carefully buried—and the maimed and mangled howling and blaspheming in hospitals—the meek christian warrior marches to church, and reverently folding his sweet unspotted hands, sings *Te Deum*. Angels waft his fervent thanks to God, to whose footstool—on his own faith—he has so lately sent his shuddering thousands. And this spirit of destruction working within him is conized

by the craft and ignorance of men, and worshipped as glory.

And this religion of the sword; this dazzling heathenism, that makes a pomp of wickedness—seizes and distracts us, even on the threshold of life. Swords and drums are our baby playthings; the types of violence and destruction are made the pretty pastime of our childhood; and as we grow older, the outward magnificence of the ogre Glory; his trappings and his trumpets, his privileges, and the songs that are shouted in his praise, ensnare the bigger baby to his sacrifice. Hence, slaughter becomes an exalted profession; the marked, distinguished employment of what, in the jargon of the world, is called a gentleman.

But for this craft operating upon this ignorance, who—in the name of outraged God—would become the hireling of the Sword? Hodge, poor fellow, enlists. He wants work, or he is idle, dissolute. Kept, by the injustice of the world, as ignorant as the farm yard swine he is the better instrument for the world's craft. His ear is tickled with the fife and drum—the lying valet of glory, tells a good tale, and already Hodge is a warrior in the rough. In a fortnight's time you may see him at Chatham—or, indeed, he was one of these we marked in Birdcage Walk day by day, the sergeant works at the block ploughman, and chipping and chipping, at length curves out a true, handsome soldier of the line. What knew Hodge of the responsibility of man? What dreams had he of the self accountability of the human spirit. He is become the lackey of the carnage—the liveried footman, at a few pence per day, of fire and blood. The musket stock, which for many an hour he hugs, hugs in sulks and weariness—was no more a party to its present use, than was Hodge. That piece of walnut is the fragment of a tree which might have given shade and fruit for another century; homely, rustic people gathering under it. Now, it is the instrument of wrong and violence; the working tool of slaughter. Tree and man, are not their destinies as one.

And is Hodge alone of benighted mind? Is he alone deficient of that knowledge of moral right and wrong which really and truly crowns the man, king of himself? When he surrenders up his nature, a mere machine with human pulses, to do the bidding of war, has he taken counsel with reflection—does he know the limit of the sacrifice? He has taken the shilling, and he knows the facing of his uniform.

When the born and bred gentleman to keep to coined and current terms, pays down his thousand pounds or so, for his commission, what incites to the purchase? It may be the elegant idleness of the calling; it may be the bullion and glitter of the regimentals; or, devout worshipper, it may be an unquenchable thirst for glory. From the moment that his name stars the Gazette, what does he become? The bond servant of our. Instantly, he ceases to be judge between moral right and moral injury. It is his duty not to think, but to obey. He has given up, surrendered to another, the freedom of his soul; he has dethroned the majesty of his own will; he must be active in wrong, and see not the injustice; shed blood for craft and usurpation, calling bloodshed valor. He may be made, by the iniquity of those who use him, the burglar and the brigand; but glory calls him pretty names for his prowess, and the wicked weakness of the world shouts and acknowledges them. Ask is this the true condition of reasonable man? Is it by such means that he best vindicates the greatness of his mission here? Is he, when he most gives up the free motions of his own soul—is he then most glorious?

A few months ago, chance showed us a band of ruffians, who, as it afterwards appeared, were intent upon most desperate mischief. They spread themselves over the country, attacking, robbing, and murdering all who came into their hands. Men, women, and children, all suffered alike. Nor were the villains satisfied with this. In their wanton ruthlessness they set fire to cottages, and tore up and destroyed plantations. Every footpace of their march was marked with blood and desolation.

Who were these wretches?—you ask. What place did they ravage? Were they not caught and punished?

They were a part of the army of Africa; valorous Frenchmen, bound for Algiers, to cut Arab throats; and in the name of glory, and for the everlasting honor of France, to burn, pillage and despoil; and all for national honor—all for glory.

But glory cannot dazzle truth. Does it not at times appear no other than a highwayman, with a pistol at a nation's breast? A burglar, with a crowbar, entering a kingdom. Alas, in this world, there is no Old Bailey for nations. Otherwise, where would have been the crowned heads that divided Poland? Those felon monarchs, amounted to—steal! It is true, the historian claps the cut-purse conqueror to the dock, and he is tried by the jury of posterity. He is past the verdict, yet is not its damatory voice lost upon generations. For thus is the world taught—albeit slowly taught—true glory—when that which passed for virtue is truly tested to be vile; when the hero is hauled from the car, and fixed for ever in the pillory.

But war brings forth the heroism of the soul; war tests the magnanimity of man. Sweet is the humanity that spares a fallen foe; gracious the compassion that tends his wounds, that brings even a cup of water to his burning lips. Granted. But is there not heroism of a grander mould? The heroism of forbearance? Is not the humanity that refuses to strike, a nobler virtue than the late pity born of violence? Pretty is it to see the victor with salve and lint kneeling at his bloody trophy; a maimed and agonized fellow man,—but surely it had been better to withhold the blow, than to have

been first mischievous, to be afterwards humane.

That nations, professing a belief in Christ should couple glory with war, is monstrous blasphemy. Their faith, their professing faith is—"love one another," their practice is to—cut throats; and more, to bribe and hoodwink men into wickedness, the trade of blood is magnified into a virtue. We pray against battle, and glorify the deeds of death. We say, beautiful are the ways of peace, and then cocker ourselves upon our perfect doings in the art of man slaying. Let us then cease to pay the sacrifice of admiration to the demon War; let us not acknowledge him as a mighty and majestic principle, but, at the very best, a grim melancholy necessity.

But there always has been—there always will be, war. It is inevitable; it is a part of the condition of human society. Man has always made glory to himself from the destruction of his fellow, and so it will continue. It may be very pitiable; would it were otherwise. But so it is, and there is no helping it.

Happily, we are slowly killing this destructive fallacy. A long breathing time of peace has been fatal to the dread magnificence of glory. Science and philosophy have made good their claims, inducing man to believe that he may vindicate the divinity of his nature otherwise than by perpetuating destruction. He begins to think there is a better glory in the communication of triumphs of mind, than in the clash of steel and roar of artillery. At the present moment, a society, embracing men of distant nations, "natural enemies," as the old, wicked cant of the old patriotism had it—is at work, plucking the plumes from Glory, unbracing his armor, and divesting the ogre of all that dazzled foolish and unthinking men, showing the rascal in his natural hideousness, in all his base deformity. Some, too, are calculating the cost of Glory's table: some showing what an appetite the demon has, devouring at a meal the substance of ten thousand sons of industry,—yea, eating up the wealth of kingdoms. And thus by degrees, are men beginning to look upon this god, Glory, as no more than a finely trapped Sawney Bean,—a monster and a destroyer—a nuisance; a noisy lie.

From the London Athenæum.

TREES.

LIKE the latest left of the battle-spears,
In their ancient strength they stand;
And they tell us still of the sylvan years
When the forests filled the land;
Ere ever a hunter tracked the wood,
Or mariner plough'd the seas,
But the isles were green in the solitude
Of their old primeval Trees.

They have survived the Druid's faith,
And the Roman eagle's fall,
And the thrilling blast of the bugle's breath
From the Norman's stately hall;
But the sun shines bright, and the showers descend
And the wild bird's home is made,
Where the ancient giants still extend
The green of their summer shade.

We have seen our early winter's hang
Their pearls on each leafless bough,
And greeted the buds of the waking Spring
With a joy we know not now;
For Life hath its winters cold and hoar,
But their frosts can form no gem;
And the Spring may breathe on our hearts no more,
But it still returns to them.

They are waving o'er our hamlet roofs,
They are bending o'er our dead,
And the odours breathed from his native groves,
On the exile's heart they shed;
Like him who gazed on his country's palm,
By the palace-circled Seine,
Till the Pagod rose in the wanderer's dream,
And the Ganges rolled again.

How sweet in our childhood's ear they spoke,
For we knew their voices well,
When far in our western hills they woke,
Of the coming Spring to tell;
But now they send us a sadder sound,
On the winds of Autumn eves,
For it murmurs of wisdom more profound,
But it tells of withered leaves.

O, such were the Dryad tones that rose
In the Grecian woods of old,
And the voice from the Indian wilderness
That the conqueror's fate foretold;
For many a minstrel's dream had birth
In the sounds of leaf and breeze,
And the early oracles of earth
Were the old complaining Trees!

FRANCES BROWN.

A HIGHLAND SUNSET.

WHEN Nature gave to the Highlands of the Hudson a scenery in which beauty and majesty are so well combined, one so well calculated at once to awe and charm the beholder; she withheld nothing that would enhance the magnificence of such a scene. Among the additional graces, one that has often delighted the traveller, and whose recurrence never produces satiety in a constant beholder, is the glorious sunset of a summer's evening. The boasted hues of an Italian sky do not excel the gorgeous tints of our western heavens; for the simple reason, that nothing in the created universe can be more beautiful.

The oppressive heats of midsummer are past; the verdant meadows of Orange, ripe for the sythe, are dotted with the deeper green of a thousand orchards, and skirted in the far distance with a barrier of blue mountains half concealed in the summer haze; the golden corals of Daches, bending under their precious

load, are overtopped by the dark green summits of the Highlands, from which the torrents of a thunder storm have just washed the summer dust; while at their feet flow the silver waters of the Hunson, spreading into a noble bay, whose bosom is ruffled by the breeze that fills the canvass of a thousand sails, and plowed by a fleet of steamers, the most splendid in the world; and whose shores are lined with thriving towns, the abode of industry and enterprise.

The day is drawing to a close. The shadow of each hill, and rock, and tree, is thrown far over the ground, and the music of evening insects begins to strike the ear, as the song of birds dies with the declining day. Now begins the splendor of the sight. The azure bordering of the western horizon is changed to a dazzling whiteness by the glare of the departing luminary, and on the eastern mountains many a shade of brightness and gloom points out the bold juttings and retiring recesses of the rocky heights. Soon the fleecy clouds of the west are glided by the rays of the sunlight, and present to the imagination the beautiful vision of huge piles of snow based upon molten gold, while every projecting fleece of the fairy mountain, is tinged with the same rich hue; the sight irresistibly calling to the memory the fine description of the temple of Jerusalem: "a mountain of snow, studded with jewels." But the bright tint slightly fades. The golden orb has sunk behind the blue hills that bound the horizon, and in its place arise clouds of the richest purple, which spread themselves along the mountain ridge, and rise into the sky, changing in their hue as they ascend, presenting the successive tints of purple, crimson, pink, yellow and white, until at last they melt into the deep blue of the darkening sky; while high above all still glisten the snow white mountains with their glided projections—all forming a vision that none can look upon without feelings of rapture and delight. Now the white summit of the coloured range loses its glistening brightness, and each successive ridge fades into the tint of the next below, while the fairy piles above all darken into a watery shade; and as the blue descends to the horizon, the hues of the sky spread on the mountain tops, till from north to south extends a lovely girde of crimson bordered with pink.

When we turn to the eastern mountains, though the sun has set, yet we find bisrays still lingering on their tops, while the corn fields below are shrouded in twilight. Up, upwards ascends the darkness, till even the mountain tops are no longer shone upon, and you fancy you can see the gloom still climbing up the sky. What is your climbing light, so indistinct that one almost imagines it to be an illusion of the eye? No, but it is a star; see how earnestly it struggles with the twilight for existence; but while we speak, it has overcome, and shines forth in its glory, brighter than the diamond of a coronet.

But a change is in the west. The chimney has faded, but we can yet discern a bordering of pink along the summit of the mountains, and over this a hue whose description no tongue can give, and on which no eye can grow weary of gazing. It is not white, nor yellow; nor does it seem a mixture of them; but these are the only colors to which it bears resemblance. If light, and darkness, and beauty were colours, one would say that nature had composed of them a hue of mellowness more soft, and rich, and ravishing than the eye has ever beheld, but in the western twilight sky; save when, at times, it appears amid the throng of beautiful fancies that press upon the eye balls when the lids are closed. The snowy mountains of cloud now break and descend toward the horizon, forming shore like wreaths, inclosing vast lakes of azure sky; and as the imagination revels among fancies that nature aids it in creating, behold! a silver ray shoots from behind the cloud, and in another moment appears the pearl horn of the bright new moon. Slowly the clouds now sink and brighten in her crescent revealing the queen of night in her crescent glory, while her soft rays diffuse themselves over hill, and wood, and field, and are reflected in silver from the rippling waters of broad Newburg bay; as if the expiring efforts of the sunlight were about to be renewed, and day were returning as gently as it had departed.

Still that nameless mellow tint continues to bless the horizon, and though paler and more delicate, is not less beautiful than before; but even while we look upon it, its richness fades away, till its place is wholly occupied by the purest white; and even this darkens, shade by shade, till it melts into the natural azure of the sky, and then every relic of the sunset has departed.

The clouds have dissolved away, and the moon has descended till her lower horn is dipped behind the dark and distant hill. Down and still downward she sinks till but the last point appears, like a beacon fire, upon a mountain top. At last, this too is gone; and a million stars now raise their heavenly song, and look down in joy on the repose of their sister earth.

Foreign Correspondence of the New York Tribune.

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS.

*** The guide, with a strong stick in one hand, seized my friend's horse by the tail, and trotted after. The ascent for some time was gradual, the road passing through vineyards from which Lachryma Christi, tears of Christ, [as a certain kind of wine is called,] is made. The scene gradually drew dearer until we came to the region of pure lava. I can utterly vey to you no idea of the feelings this utterly barren lava desert at first excited. There it spread, black, broken and rough, just as it cooled in its slow and troubled march for the sea. Here it met an obstacle and rose into a barrier;