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MISCELLANEOUS.

THE POLISH OFFICER.

A PRUSSIAN TALE OF NAPOLEON'S WAR.

The night was keen and bitter. The report was run that General Maison had concentrated his divisions near Courtray, and was disposed to give us battle; so that a warm day might be expected after this cold night. "I wonder," said one of my comrades, "if the white flying lancer shall show himself."

"Can you doubt it?" replied another; "why man, he is here and there, and everywhere."

"Ay, indeed! a very flying dragoon, whose lance has fattened in the heart's blood of our brave comrades; our balls refuse to enter his carcase; and why? because some way that he has sold him, self to the Old One; but if ever I meet him hand to hand."

In answer to some inquiries, I was informed that as our Prussians daily came in contact with Napoleon's troops, a Polish officer had, by his daring deeds, rendered himself the fear and wonder of all. In every skirmish was to be seen, and ever thickest in the fight. He was not only rashly brave, but he was the best rider, and the most expert hurler of the deadly lance; there was not a better horseman, at least in the French ranks. Like the rapid lightning was he seen here and there, darting among our Prussians upon a fleet white steed—whirling his lance, and striking with maddening aim some gallant breast—then dashing away singing his Polish war song, as if in derision of his wondering foes.

I gave an attentive ear to those accounts of the white lancer, which a stander by observing, said— "All true as gospel, comrade; if he pricks thee with his lance, thou wilt have no need of troubling the flesh for some time after, for he bleeds freely enough."

"Ay, ay, the Kerl's lance is sharp," said another, "and he daily treats us to a pistol shot, a sharp stab, or a sharper word."

"Do you know," said a third, "that the General had a narrow escape from him to-day, as he was reconnoitering?"

"So—the General! but an adjutant is above a match for this lance; let him catch the adjutant sleeping with both eyes shut if he can. The white lancer met the adjutant in a narrow way; well, what was to be done? escape was impossible; but then the adjutant's wit was keener for once than the Polish lance. Well, up comes the flying lance, and without reigning up, made a stab at the adjutant. Off his horse rolled the wily adjutant into a soft comfortable ditch full of green weeds and mud; and there he lay as if stone-dead. The Pole recovered his lance, shook it till its bloody pennon fluttered, and continued his mad career; then the adjutant crawled out, shook his ears, and for that time cheated the dead list of his name."

Many other wondrous tales were related of the wild Polish lancer—how he sometimes tickled the ribs, and at others the midriff, with the point of his whirling lance.

It was midnight—many were calmly reposing near the bivouac-fire; I also stretched myself in the most comfortable spot I could find, and drew over me a female's mantle, which a Cosaque had bartered with me from his load of plunder for a glass of vodka. An upstart door, wrenched probably from some chateau, sheltered me a little from the bitter wind. My ready saddled horse, fastened to the piquet, was slumbering upon three legs. It was a beautiful, clear, starlight night, and the crescent moon sailed majestically through the blue ethereal vault of heaven.

All was calm and still, save the hum of a hungry guard just relieved from a distant post;—they were diligently plunging their swords into the great cauldron, and cramming themselves with the still pleasurable fragments of fowls and geese, and washing them down with cups of potent schnapps. At a short distance might be seen a party of anxious gamblers seated upon the bare ground, a knapsack serving to throw dice upon. Another group were huddled together over some flask of wine, which doubtless they had fallen in with in some of their marauding parties. Close to the fire-stove, sables in hand, wrapping together the scattered remains of the dimming fire; another, full of strong drink to the point of mischief, was amusing himself with throwing gunpowder out of his flask into the fire. Here tossed and tumbled some, and others lay scattered, snoring away most inharmoniously. The outpost continued his silent melancholy march, backwards and forwards, occasionally humming a war song, to keep himself in spirits, or listening to the chiding of his own sabre. In the rear of the bivouac, huddled together, lay the camp followers, ready to sell their pot-boiling water, or to purchase from the marauders their plunder at one-third its value. I would fain have slept, but to sleep was impossible; the snoring, and from perils of my excited comrades kept my weary eyes from closing. Oft would our Jagers fancy themselves in pursuit, or pursued by the white lancer, whose image met them in their dreams, and his name was upon their sleeping lips.

At this moment a bullet came whistling by the outpost, and struck the ground not far from one of the sleepers, who merely raised his head, rubbed his heavy eyes and dropped into a deeper sleep. The bivouac snored and pricked their ears. "Let them fire away!" muttered one near to me; "that is no novelty to us;" and again he laid his weary head upon his knapsack. Then whizzed by another and another bullet. "Oho!" cried the outpost, starting wide, "there is a storm at hand, if one

may judge from these heavy drops." Then the careful sentinel listened attentively, and he heard a rushing sound approaching, and afterwards the hasty hoofs of horses, and the clang of sabres.

"Halt! who goes there?" cried the alarmed sentinel.

"The General and his suite," was the answer. "Halt, General! forward, one of the suites!" said the well instructed sentinel, who now demanded the parole before he would let even the General pass.

In the mean time the distant firing had become much more lively, and approached nearer and nearer; the roar of the cannon was heard, and the vast iron balls rattled through the air, plunged into the earth, or scattered the bare branches of the trees as if in scorn of their feeble opposition. The enemy was making a general attack upon our outposts and our trumpets sounded the shrill alarm.

Up sprung our sleeping men like a swarm of angry wasps disturbed in their nests, and flew to saddle. One could not find his horse; another limped upon one leg, the other being cramped or not yet awake; a third snatched a roasted potato out of the ashes; a fourth hurried to fill his flask with schnapps from the busy camp-flower. One sleepy dog, who, contrary to orders, had unsaddled his steed, had now in his hurry girthed in the projecting bough of a tree under his saddle, and set his horse kicking mad; another, only half awake, sat nodding upon his horse, but could not move forward, because his steed still remained fast bound to the piquet stake. Here, one stumbled over the camp-line; there another floundered into a hole which had been dug into the ground for crookery purposes. Many wandered hither and thither, and did not seem quite certain whether they were about to meet friend or foe. A strange and curious night-piece is an alarmed bivouac, particularly when illuminated by the enemy's fires.

As our men mounted, they were instantly formed into a line; and already our advanced party was performing in a piece where the sabre played the principal part. "Take care! take care, my lads! lest in the dark you sabre your friends. Listen for the French tongue, and then slash away," said our prudent commander.

Doubtless, from our resistance, the French judged that we were in much stronger force; but as the day began to dawn, they were astonished that ours was a mere cavalry post, and instantly ordered fresh men to attack us. The tardy sun at last arose, and the cry of our commander was—"Forwards! forwards, volunteers!" and a gallant crowd sprang out of our ranks and joined the front.

"There he is!" exclaimed a dozen voices; and at this moment was seen in the dim distance, rapidly advancing upon a white horse, in front of the chassours, a slightly-formed lancer, his sky-blue uniform was faced with crimson, and from his scarlet hat, like a comet's tail, streamed the milk-white horse hair—his glittering lance, from which fluttered the red and yellow bandrol, sparkled in the morning sun beam. Reader, this was the dreaded Polish lancer. This Pole was one of the last of that gallant band, the flower of cavalry,—which had helped to gain for the French many a glorious victory. Doubtless he had been induced to fight against the Prussian, who he was led to believe was the enemy of his country; but our people seeing him approach within hearing, called out to him—"Komme zu uns, Kamerad! weil hinter uns leicht schon dein Vaterland." ("Come over to us, comrade! for in our rear lies thy father land.") To which the lancer answered—"Noch ist Poland nicht verloren." ("Poland is not yet lost.") Then he fired his pistol at us, and commenced his war song.

The chassours followed fast upon the flying hoofs of the lancer's white steed. "Forwards!" cried our commander. "Strike hard, my sons, for the honor of your father land." The word was again thundered forth—"Forwards!" Then came the dread shock—then throbbed many hearts, as we firmly clutched our swords spurred our willing steeds, and with a loud hurrah! rushed upon the foe. But what pen can portray, or tongue describe, the mixed sensation of that awful moment! The rush was made—there was no longer time for thought.

I was that day mounted on a wild unbroken mare; and when she heard the trumpet sound the charge, the skittish jade broke from the ranks, and hurried me onward directly towards where the lancer was wheeling and careering on his well-managed milk white steed.

"Be not so rashly valorous, my young comrade," cried the veteran major.

Would to heaven that my mare had understood the warning words! for it was this skittish beast, and not exactly my hot courage, which was hurrying me into the lion's jaws. In the same manner I had only a few hours before brought to us an unlucky French Chasseur, and delivered him into our hands, and now it appeared very probable that a Frenchman would again back this madly brave.

The white lancer witnessed my forced ignoble career, and laughing and uttering one of his bitter jests, he twirled his fatal lance and stabbed me slightly. At this very moment, and before he could repeat his blow the enemy (most fortunately for me) was driven back. Though probably the proud, haughty French, merely intended to show their disdain of us by turning their backs upon us.

The white lancer was by this beautiful manoeuvre of the French the rearward of the rear. He coolly dismounted to give breath to his snorting steed, and then seated himself upon a grove elm, and as if in disdain of our flaming fire, began to eat his breakfast, as if he were upon the parade ground of his father-land, and had heard the order "Stand at ease."

"Look at that impudent rascal!" and several of our irritated men dashed at him, but, like lightning, the lancer sprang upon his horse, and flew laughing upon his steed right and left, seeking for a prey for his sharp lance, and miraculously escaped from a crowd of enemies, and regained the ranks of our foe, who strongly reinforced, advanced again, and then came our turn to retreat.

The lancer upon his white grey bound, galloped lightly over the field, fluttering his lance as a hawk high in the air quivers its wings ere it swoops over its destined victim; then he laughed exultingly. "Ho, ho!" cried he in tones of derision, "which of you valiant Prussians will try his sabre against my lance? Come on, come on, Prussians."

Many of our bravos, who had hardly sworn to eat this lancer and his horse, now pentained out to hear this challenge. But the generous blood of a young Jager was up, and he was determined to conquer or die many of his comrades laughed scornfully, and said—"Ay, ay, away with them, ay lad: the lancer will surely tackle the under the risk."

The brave young man dismounted nimbly, but with sabre swinging to his wrist he fell our line. The lancer, perceiving his advance, presented his lance in the middle space between the opposing combatants, they met, and instantly cut and stab, but neither rider fell; then they flung about, springing at each other again and cut and thrust with might and main. The firing ceased at either side to watch the issue of the champions' strife. Blood streamed from the young Jager first, for which he returned a lusty blow, and slightly wounded the lancer.

"Halt! thou art a brave Prussian," cried the Pole; "such an enemy have I never met before. Come hither, comrade, thou must drink out of my flask!"

"I feel assured now that there is no deceit in thee," said the Jager; "and I will pledge thee," and in full confidence he snatched his bloody sword and approached the Pole, who had laid down the lance in the hollow of his arm pointing backwards. The Pole held out the flask; then the warriors surveyed each other with curious eye, and their horses laid their heads together as if they also would make acquaintance.

"Drink, comrade! drink success to the friend, whether friend or foe," said the Pole to the young Prussian.

"Here's to your health, comrade," replied the young Jager; and as he took the flask, added—"though at this moment my sharp sabre may perhaps have endangered it."

"Why, ay; the sabre bites keenly enough, but thee and thine have often felt the sting of this good lance, and so far we are quits."

"If we gain a victory," to-day and the Jager, "how long do you think it will take us to march to Paris?"

"Comrade, this is a matter we need not speak about," replied the lancer. "How drink once more out of my flask; we are friends yet."

"Ay, but once we join our ranks we are foes again."

Then their quietly turned their horses, and at twenty paces, pull—pull went their pistols at each other's heads, as they galloped to again their comrades.

The rattle of some thirty muskets from a thick clump where Prussian fusiliers lay in ambush was heard and the white lancer and his white horse were seen to roll upon the ground together. In a moment the advanced guard of the enemy was broken and took to flight, leaving the white lancer in our hands; he was not yet quite dead, but gasping himself with a dying effort, he exclaimed—"Poland forever!" His gallant spirit fled with the words he uttered.

Though every one found, yet all admired the brave white lancer, and we buried him in a deep grave, and fired over him three volleys in honor of his bravery; his lance and white horse were buried with him.

Hope and Despair.—There are some beautiful passages in the "Gentleman of the Old School"—passages full of poetry and philosophy. Witness the following:

"It is strange—perhaps the strangest of all the mind's intricacies—the sudden, the instantaneous manner in which memory, by a single signal, can wipe the doors of our mind of those dark adventures of which long passed events have been shut up for years. That signal, be it a look, a tone, an odor, a single sentence, is the catalytic word of the Arabian tale, at the potent magic of which the door of the cave of the robber, Forgetfulness, is cast and duly wide, and all the treasures that he had concealed displayed."

This also:

"From the cottage to the palace, from the castle to the hotel, through all the imperceptible shades and grades of life and station that intervene between greatness and littleness; from the sage to the idiot, from the conqueror to the worm, fire, in darkness and in silence, with movements that are seldom seen and never appreciated, is spinning that small, fine but bending thread which weaves their common destiny into one inextinguishable web. It is not alone that the most discharges the lion from the toils; it is not alone that the stranger seems or destroys the weaker; but it is that every being as every step affects the destinies of millions of others, present and to come, and carries on the train of cause and event that is going on from eternity to eternity."

"The dependence of the great upon the small, and the continual reference of our fate to petty circumstances, is a consideration full of weighty counsel, and is never to be forgotten."

GHOST STORY.

An apparition has been seen in Canada, according to the Montreal Transcript. No body can read the last paragraph and disbelieve the account. No wonder the poor man could not be quiet in his grave, after dying unattended of such a man.

"Last Tuesday, fortnight, Mrs. (a lady of literary taste, and studious habits) sat reading in her drawing room; the clock on the mantelpiece struck twelve; as the last stroke reverberated through the apartments, an door was suddenly flung open. In the act of raising her head to express the astonishment (nerving fear) of the servant, her eye rested on the form of her late husband; she screamed and fell senseless on the carpet. This brought up such members of the family as had not yet retired to rest; restoratives were administered, and when Mrs. had regained consciousness, of her suspended faculties, and being a woman of strong mind and highly cultivated intellect, she felt disposed to consider the whole of the distress she had undergone as the result of certain associations between the melancholy tale she had been perusing and her late loss, operating on a particularly nervous system. She, however, deemed it advisable that her maid servants should appear in her chamber, lest any return of what she had determined to consider a nervous affection should distress herself and alarm the family. Last Tuesday night feeling stronger and in better spirits than she had enjoyed for several months past, Mrs. (disposed with the presence of her attendant, re-

ting alone to her chamber, and went to bed a little before ten o'clock. Exactly as the clock struck twelve she was awakened from her sleep, and distinctly beheld the apparition she had before seen, advancing from the table (on which stood her night lamp) full of light stood opposite to her, and drew aside the curtains of her bed. A sense of suffocating oppression deprived her of all power to scream aloud. She describes her very blood retreating with icy chillness to her heart from every vein. The countenance of her beloved in life were not its benevolent aspect; the eyes, once beaming with affection, were now fixed in stern regard on the trembling, half-alive being, who, with the courage of desperation thus adured him—"Charles! dear Charles! why are you come again?" "Jesus," slowly and solemnly respired the shadowy form, waving in his hand a small roll of written papers, "Jesus, pay my newspaper accounts, and let me rest in peace."

A TALE OF GRENADA.

BY WASHINGTON IRVING.

There was once a poor mason or bricklayer in Grenada, who kept all the Saints days and holy days, and St. Monday in the bargain, and yet he grew poorer and poorer, and could scarcely earn bread for his numerous family. One night he was aroused from his first sleep by a knocking at the door. He opened it, and beheld before him a tall, ungainly, calverous-looking priest.

"Hark ye, honest friend," said the stranger, "I have often observed that you are a good Christian, and one to be trusted; will you undertake a job this very night?"

"With all my heart, Senor Padre, on condition that I am paid accordingly."

"That you shall be, but you must suffer yourself to be blindfolded."

To this the mason made no objection; so being bound, he was led by the priest through various rough lanes and winding passages, until he stopped before the portals of a house. The priest then applied a key, turned a creaking lock, and opened what appeared to be a ponderous door. They quickly entered the door was closed, and heeded, and the mason was conducted through an echoing corridor and spacious hall, into the interior part of the building. Here the bandage was removed from his eyes, and he found himself in a parlour or court, dimly lighted with a single lamp.

In the centre was the dry basin of an old Moorish fountain, under which the priest requested him to form a small vault, bricks and mortar being at hand, for that purpose. He accordingly worked all night, but without finishing the vault. Just before daybreak, the priest put a piece of gold into his hand, and having again blindfolded him, conducted him back to his dwelling.

"Are you willing to return and complete your work?"

"Gladly, Senor Padre, provided I am well paid."

"Well then, to-morrow at midnight I will call again."

He did so, and the vault was completed. "Now," said the priest, "you must help me to bring forth the bodies that are to be buried in this vault."

The poor mason's hair rose on his head at these words; he followed the priest with trembling steps into a retired chamber of the mansion, expecting to behold some ghastly spectacle of death, but was relieved on seeing three or four portly jars standing in an corner. They were evidently full of money, and it was with great difficulty that he and the priest carried them to the tomb. The vault was then closed, the pavement replaced, and all traces of the work obliterated.

The mason was again hoodwinked and led forth by a route different from that by which he had come. After they had wandered for a long time through a perplexed maze of lanes and alleys, they halted. The priest then put two pieces of gold into his hand. "Wait here," said he, "until you hear the cathedral bell toll for matins. If you presume to uncover your eyes before that time, evil will befall you." So saying, he departed.

The mason waited faithfully, amusing himself by weighing the gold pieces in his hand and clinking them against each other. The moment the bell rung its matin peal, he uncovered his eyes, and found himself on the banks of the Penai, from whence he made the best of his way home, and revelled with his family for a whole fortnight on the profits of his night's work, after which he was as poor as ever. He continued to work a little and pay a good deal, to keep Saints days and holy days from year to year; while his family grew up as stout and ragged as a crew of gipsies.

As he was seated one morning at the door of his house, he was accosted by a rich old man, who was noted for owning many houses and being a grasping landlord.

The man of money eyed him for a moment from beneath a pair of shaggy eyebrows.

"I am told, friend, that thou art very poor."

"There is no denying the fact, Senor, it speaks for itself."

"I presume then, you will be glad of a job, and work cheap?"

"As cheap, my master, as any man in Grenada."

"That's what I want. I have an old house going to decay, that costs me more than it's worth to keep it in repair; for nobody will live in it; so I must contrive to patch it up, and keep it together at as small an expense as possible."

The mason was accordingly conducted to a large deserted house that seemed going to ruin. Passing through several empty halls and chambers, he entered an inner court, where his eye was caught by an old Moorish fountain.

"It seems to me," said he, "as if I had been in this place before; but it is like a dream. Pray who occupies this house formerly?"

"A poor fellow," cried the landlord. "It was an old miserly priest, who cared for nobody but himself. He was said to be immensely rich; and having no relations, it was supposed he would leave all his treasures to the church. He died suddenly and the priest and friars thronged in to take possession of his money; but nothing could they find but a few ducats in a leather purse."

The work-luck has fallen upon me, for since his death the fellow continues to occupy my house without paying rent, and I find there's no taking the law of a dead man. The people pretend to hear the clinking of gold all night long in the chamber where the old priest slept, as if he was counting his money and sometimes groaning and moaning about the court.

Whether true or false, these stories have brought a bad name upon my house, and not a tenant will remain within it."

"Enough," cried the mason, sturdily—"let me live in your house, rent free, until some better prospects, and I will engage to put it in repair, and quiet the troubled spirits that disturb it. I am a good christian and a poor man, and not to be daunted."

The offer of the poor man was very readily accepted, he moved with his family into the house and fulfilled his engagements. By little and little he restored it to its former state. There was no longer heard the clinking of gold at night in the chamber, but it began to be heard by day in the pockets of the living mason. In a word, he increased rapidly in wealth, to the admiration of all his neighbors, and became one of the richest men in Grenada. He gave large sums to the church, by way of doing of satisfying his conscience, and never retained the secret of his wealth until on his death bed, to his son and heir.

DETACHED THOUGHTS.

Many a man has tenderly enough to do wrong who has not courage enough to confess it.

Whoso despiseth little things will never attain great things.

To live to ourselves, to take pleasure in the misfortunes of others, to have no heart for devotedness in prosperity, and to regard our own attainments as extraordinary, are four signs of a corrupt heart, which cannot be mistaken.

No man on his death-bed ever regretted any act of self-denial or benevolence practised by himself.

There is in the sight of God no material difference between the moral character of the covetous and that of a worshipper of the sun, or a follower of Gaudium.

One great advantage of truth over falsehood is, that the former suits a short memory.

One of the best evidences of friendship is decreased respect, rightly administered.

The best method of disposing of half the abundance of the age is to pay them no attention. The other half may be lived down.—*Watchman of the South.*

Yorkshire Honour.—An action brought against the owner of a wagon which by the carelessness of the driver had crushed an unlucky donkey against the wall, and killed it. A learned sergeant well known for his roughness of explanation, was perplexing one of the witnesses, who found no other means of extricating himself than by giving a graphic description of the matter in question—"Well, my lord judge," said the hesitating clown, "I'll tell how it happened as near as I can. My lord, suppose I am the wagon, here I was. Now my lord judge, you are the wall." The describer now paused as if trying to recollect his third position. "Come follow," exclaimed the sergeant, "and with the story at once. You have not told where was the ass?" "My lord judge," exclaimed the witness, with a sudden sparkle in his eye, "his honor the counsel is the ass!" Of course the court was in a roar.

A STRANGER AMONGST STRANGERS.

There are few positions more awkward or ludicrous than those into which strangers are often thrown in their first attempts to make themselves understood in a strange tongue. We were so much amused yesterday by the recital of some odd events in the experience of a gentleman who has seen much of the variety of life in Europe and America, that we must make out a sketch of one or two incidents which happened soon after his arrival in London from the continent. He was not much acquainted with the English language, and found it difficult to make himself understood, and was often obliged to draw upon a friend for phrases in which to express some of the simpler wants and wishes.

On one occasion, he had written several letters to his friends on the continent, but not knowing the exact situation of the Post Office, applied to his friend for instructions how to proceed. He gave him the phrase, "I do not know where the Post Office is," and directed him to repeat it to some person after he had proceeded a certain distance, and he would be assisted in his search.

Anxious to avoid mistake, he started with his letters constantly repeating to himself—"I do not know where the Post Office is"—but so great was his zeal to be right, that before long he had dropped a stitch, or rather a fact in the web of his discourse, which he still repeated with the utmost patience, until he fell in with a person to whom he thought he would impart the secret of his negative acquisitions, in respect to the locality of the Post Office, and with much politeness occurred him—"I do know where the Post Office is."

"Sir?"

"I do know where the Post Office is."

The stranger stared a moment and blazed away: "the devil you do—what is that to me? mind your business."

The first part of the reply was spattered forth too hastily for the poor stranger to retain the words, but "mind your business," made a distinct impression; and he led the gentleman with many thanks, supposing he had obtained the name of the street where the Post Office was situated, and pursued his way, studying over his phrases with greater diligence than ever.

Presently he decided to make another attempt to obtain assistance, and accosted a full-fed person, aged, with his ruddy face half covered with a bandanna, thus: "I do know where the Post Office is: mind your business!"

This address called forth a volley of abuse which perfectly astounded the interrogator, and he did not wait for further communication, but pursued his search further, and finally found the office.

The custom in France was for an individual depositing a letter to give it immediately into the hands of the post-master or his clerk, and our friend accordingly marched up for this purpose and delivered his letters, but the clerk supposing he wished to pay the postage, received them with one hand and extended the other for the money. Taking this as a desire to engage in a quarrel, the warm-hearted stranger seized the extended hand with a hearty good-will, and gave it a regular pump-handle shake, which almost brought the clerk through the aperture for the delivery of letters.

The man of letters flew at once into a rage, and