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"THE END OF EVERY GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

From the Knickerbocker.

HALINA RADZIVIL;
OR,
The Battle of Warsaw.

A TALE OF POLAND.

By Professor Barber—author of "Pulpit Eloquence," "Downfall of Nations."

On the evening which preceded the ever-memorable revolution of Warsaw, in 1830, two Poles, in military apparel, proceeded, in deep conversation, along the winding banks of the Vistula.

The costume of the elder, consisting of caftan, girdle, sabre, and yellow boots, betokened him to be of noble lineage. His attendant, a youth about eighteen years of age, wore the insignia of the military academy in Warsaw.

'Sire,' exclaimed the younger, as he gracefully threw back the dark flowing ringlets which shaded his manly forehead, and fixed his beaming eyes on the face of his companion, 'we are now without the walls of the Kraga: gold has purchased for me this interview with my noble father; perhaps,' added he, as a dark expression of melancholy overspread his youthful countenance, 'perhaps the last.'

'Does the Duke, then,' said the elder, 'seek the destruction of the ancient house of Plater. He shall yet know'——

'Speak softly!' said the young man, 'the very winds of Poland are traitors to liberty. The tyrant seeks the ruin of more houses than ours. Twelve noble scions are doomed, to morrow, to the dungeons of Warsaw.—But,' continued he, as his flashing eye expressed the daring energies of his soul, 'the cup is full—the consummation has come. Ere yon orb re-illumines the banks of our ancient river, the Russian tyrant must flee, or perish! Two hundred youths of Poland—youths of Poland like myself—have sworn on the altar of their country's wrongs to assert her freedom, or swell the hecatombs which the monster's vengeance has already lighted.'

'Noble but ill-fated project!' exclaimed the elder Plater, 'what chance for freedom has Poland, before the power of the Russian autocrat? Abandon the enterprize, my son; it is useless. Failure will erase the *name* of Poland from the page of future history, and fill the mines of Siberia with the best and bravest of her sons.'

'Father,' replied Casimir Plater, 'Il vaut mieux mourrier avec honneur que de se rendre: forty thousand Poles will assemble round our standard: "Deo adjuvante non timendum!" shall be our motto. The free in Europe will awake from their lethargy, and fly to our succor. The die is cast—we have passed the Rubicon, retreat is impossible, and triumph, glory!

'But, Sire,' continued young Plater, 'I tremble for the house of Radzivil, when the torch of liberty is lighted. Halina Radzivil must not fall into the monster's power.—Speed to the Prince; warn him to place her beyond the Polish frontiers; I will see her to-morrow. I see my guards are approaching. Adieu, best of fathers! Arm yourself for the events of to morrow: the name of Plater shall not be dishonored by your son.'

Two gens d'armes, clad in the Russian police dress, now approached. 'Your time has expired, young man,' said they. 'I am ready,' replied Casimir, as he pressed the hand of his parent and departed for the state dungeon of the capitol.

The feelings which agitated the bosoms of the patriotic Poles were not unknown at the palace of Belveder. Spies had been placed in the mansion of every noble family, and the royal agent of the autocrat was aware that some great movement was about to take place; but fear was not an element in Constantine's character, and he trusted that by striking a decisive blow at some of the most exalted in Warsaw, the spark of freedom would be extinguished before it could burst into a flame. In the morning succeeding the interview between Count Plater and his son, Warsaw wore the appearance of a military camp. The drums beat to arms. A military commission was opened, at the head of which Constantine had placed—himself!

At ten o'clock, a military escort proceeded to the state prison, and demanded in the name of the Grand Duke, the military students confined on charge of treason. They were immediately surrendered. A few moments brought them before the tribunal of the tyrant.

Plater, with a firm step and dignified air, first ascended the platform before his judges. With a contemptuous expression of countenance, he gazed around on this mockery of justice, as the chief commissioner exclaimed, 'I denounce Casimir Plater a traitor to his emperor and his country!'

'Poland has no traitor among her free-born nobles,' replied the undaunted youth.

'Behold thy companions,' continued the commissioner, pointing towards the military students who had assembled in the hall of the tribunal, 'they shall testify against thee.'

The bosom of the young soldier heaved with indignation: he exchanged a glance with his comrades; it was enough. Then casting a look of disdain on his oppressors, he replied, 'No Pole ever committed dishonor.'

'Thou hast been sworn against, as a rebel and a traitor,' muttered the Duke.

'Show me my accuser,' retorted the youth.

'The mines of Siberia are not yet filled,' continued Constantine, 'a descendant of the noble house of Plater would grace the earth-wrought dungeons of Tobolisk.'

'Prince,' replied Casimir, 'there is a point at which resistance becomes a virtue, and silence a crime. Posterity will demand at your hands a retribution for the wrongs of Poland. History will record this military tribunal, where power usurps the seat of judgment, and vengeance the throne of mercy—from which the *accuser* is banished, and the *accused* condemned. The future asserters of the rights of nations and of men will re-echo from Warsaw to St. Petersburg this unholy mockery of the attributes of justice in the court of kings. They will record their verdict against the faith of princes, on the ruins of Poland's freedom, in characters of blood.

'Could I alone,' continued Casimir, be offered as a propitiary sacrifice between Poland and her wrongs—could the yawning gulfs of your northern capital receive *me* as the last of their Polish victims, I would, like another Curtius, plunge into the lake and save my country. But the descendant of the house of Plater is a fraction in the vast unit of destruction. Where is the ancient house in Warsaw, that mourns not some inmate, whose groans reverberate through your Siberian dungeons until the genius of misery shrieks affrighted at the sound!—The youth in full vigor of manhood who enters to-day, and he whose head has grown hoary in your subterranean prisons, as the eternal snows which cover their unhallowed summits.'

'Let the youthful hero be shorn of his hair, scourged, and sent off for Siberia,' said Constantine, as Plater concluded his address; 'away with him, my guards!'

At this moment a Polish lady, elegantly attired in a garb of deep mourning, rushed through the crowd, and threw herself at the feet of the Duke, in the hall of the tribunal. It was Lodoiska, the mother of Casimir Plater. The council stood in mute astonishment, until Constantine exclaimed: 'Who thus presumes to obtrude herself in the courts of Warsaw?'

'I, the mother of the youth thou hast but now doomed to slavery,' replied Lodoiska. 'Great Duke, the noblest element of *greatness* is mercy—the *greatest* exercise of power, forgiveness. Let a daughter of unhappy Poland plead before you in behalf of an unfortunate but noble son!'

'My guards, remove this maniac from the hall,' exclaimed the tyrant, 'a woman's tears cannot wash out the blackness of guilt, or obstruct the infliction of its penalties.'

'Thou hast truly spoken, tyrant,' replied Lodoiska; 'a woman's tears cannot wash out the stains of guilt, an *angel* could not cleanse the foul pollution of thine. Humanity instinctively shrinks at thy presence, the flowers wither at thy approach; nature recoils in horror, as thy sanguinary hand pollutes her altars, or thy blood-tracked footsteps desolate her plains.'

'Lodoiska becomes eloquent,' replied Constantine, scornfully.

'Hear me, thou descendant of the Czars,' resumed the wretched mother: 'the blood thou hast wantonly shed, has ascended to heaven; it waits thy coming, at the great tribunal. On earth, too, thou shalt have thy trials. Yon sun, which now careers through a cloudless sky, shall not decline while thy feet tread the halls of Belveder; the ramparts around thy castelled mansion shall be torn from their foundation, and the lofty turrets of thy palace graced with the flag of renovated Poland, before another morning dawns on the city thou hast sacked and desolated.'

'Ha! sayest thou so, proud woman?' thundered Constantine, as his lips quivered under the mingled emotion of rage and shame. 'Thy evening vespers shall be chanted in the recesses of the citadel. Slaves, manacle this prophetess of evil, and convey her to the northern wing of the citadel.'

'Lodoiska and Poland!' shouted a thousand voices, as the mother of Casimir approached the doors of the military hall, guarded and chained. 'A rescue!—strike down the guide! a rescue for the mother of Poland!' The guards in vain attempted to execute their commission. They were instantly overpowered, and Lodoiska conducted to the head quarters of her son.

The shout which preceded the liberation of Lodoiska, struck a thunder bolt on the ear of Constantine. The tyrant trembled. 'Summon the Russian regiment!' said he: 'To the mansion of Radzivil! Convey its inmates to the palace.'

Obedient to the orders of the Duke, the Russian cavalry, headed by Colonel Kreutz, proceeded to the abode of Prince Radzivil. In a moment the massive doors were burst open, and the lovely Halina, supported by two of the autocrat's guards, was hurried onward in the direction of Belveder palace.

Ere the escort had reached the bridge of Sobieski, Plater and his determined band were there.

"Liberate your captive!" shouted Casimir in a voice that echoed along the shores of the Vistula.

"Who thus opposed the orders of the Grand Duke?" said Kreutz, advancing to the head of his guards.

"I, Casimir Plater," re echoed his opponent;—the sacrifice is too great, the victims too noble."

"Rash youth! thy blood be upon thy head!" cried Kreutz, waving his sword over the head of Plater. With the velocity of lightning, Casimir unsheathed his weapon. A tremendous blow levelled at the young Polander, was dexterously parried. He advanced, made a thrust, and buried his sword in the bosom of the Russian commander.

'For thy blood, soldier of the Autocrat, I shall not be answerable at the final appeal,' said Casimir, as he gazed for a moment on the bloody corpse. The Poles, animated by the chivalry of their leader, pierced the ranks of the Russians, and drove them from their position. But Halina Radzivil had, during the contest, been conveyed to the palace of Constantine, and was now in the presence of the tyrant.

"Daughter of Radzivil," said he, "it is in thy power to quell the rebellion in which thy countrymen are engaged."

"Dost thou, brother of the autocrat, claim protection at the hands of a captive thou hast ensnared?" replied Halina—"a weak, unprotected woman, whom thy rude soldiery have forced from the ancient abode of her fathers to a royal prison?"

"Woman," retorted the Duke, "thou art in my power; thy father and brother, in chains, are in the western wing of the palace: before day declines their heads shall grace yon ramparts, should the son of Plater, thy lover, continue the contest. He is now before the moat which surrounds the outer gate. *Thou* hast but to command, and he withdraws his force. Reflect—and refuse, if thy courage permits. The forfeit is the extinction of the race and name of the house of Radzivil."

"An inhuman, an awful, but a willing sacrifice," cried the heroic girl, "to thee, my beloved Poland!" as she gazed, unappalled, on the features of her royal jailor.

"Thou refusest then, maid of Warsaw!" said Constantine.

"I scorn the bribe, great as it is, for which I am required to crush the rising liberties of my country," she replied. "Halina Radzivil stands before the tribunal of nations. On her decision may rest the fate of unborn millions. The separation of the soul from the clay which it animates, is a trifle when weighed in the balance against the destinies of the human race. I know thy power; inflict what tortures thou canst; the frail tenement may sink beneath their execution, but the *immortal* inhabitant is beyond thy oppression. It shall meet thee at the bar of Omnipotence!"

"I have then commanded in vain," said Constantine, as the ashy paleness of death for a moment overspread his countenance: "Proud woman," said he, "thou shalt die, and that before yon sun reaches his meridian."

"Be it so, if Poland requires the sacrifice," said the unbending daughter of Radzivil—"be it so; but I fall not unrevenged."

A loud shout, proceeding from the direction of the draw-bridge, announced to the tyrant that the outer gates of the palace had yielded to the force of Casimir's assault. He proceeded to the eastern wing of the palace; a youth, bearing the ancient flag of Poland, preceded by a herald, demanded a parley.

"Do the rebels submit?" asked Constantine, as the youth approached.

"Liberty, not submission, is the watch-word of renovated Poland," replied the young warrior, "we come to require the unconditional surrender of the house of Radzivil," continued he, "or to warn thee, in case of refusal, that ere the dial's shadow points to another hour, shalt thou behold the palace of Belveder in ruins."

"Rather demand the headless trunks of that noble house," scornfully replied Constantine. Sentinel, conduct the soldier of Poland to the eastern wing of Belveder.—Let him learn from the lips of Halina the recklessness of his attempt—the certainty of its consequences."

The youth followed his guide through a winding staircase and darkened passage, to the chamber of Halina, the door was opened, and there, imploring the protection of Heaven on her hero and her country, knelt the graceful form of her whose life trembled in the balance of her country's fate. The beautiful girl calmly rose from her bending posture, as the sentinel announced the entrance of a stranger. The guide retired, and the young Pole, muffled in a military surtout, entered the apartment.

Halina stretched forth her hand; "My countryman," said she, "whether friend or stranger, thou art welcome to the forced abode of Radzivil's daughter."

The young soldier threw back his cloak; it was Casimir Plater!

"How hast thou passed the guards?" said the affrighted girl, trembling for the fate of her lover.

"By the command of the tyrant," replied Plater. "I bore to him a flag of truce, and unknown, have gained admittance. 'Beloved of my heart!" continued he, "what says the monster?"

"He demands the withdrawal of the troops, or a forfeiture which he deems equivalent," replied Halina.

"What is the forfeiture," said Casimer, as he perceived the blood forsake the countenance of Halina.

"Seek not to know, noble Plater," replied his companion; "compared with the accomplishment of thy great design, the forfeiture is a drop of water to the ocean."

"Halina," said the young hero, "thou wilt not deny my request; we may meet no more. What is the forfeiture this royal wretch demands."

"The destruction of the house of Radzivil," replied the high-souled daughter.

"Inhuman monster! thou hast not yet sufficiently glutted thyself in human blood, but that the most noble house in Warsaw must fill the measures of thy crimes! Halina, I cannot sacrifice thee—Poland must fall!

"Not while Casimir Plater claims the hand of Halina Radzivil," she replied.

"Treasured as thou art in my heart," continued she, "I would scorn the proffered hand of a traitor to Poland, and reject an alliance with thy noble family, should the son of my country's liberties sat in the liberation of her captive daughter. Proceed in the glorious cause. The stake for which thou contendest is priceless and incomparable. I will not say to thee, in this hour of trial, Poland has other daughters. I know thy faith. Yon orb," said she, pointing to the sun, "is not more pure, nor his returns more constant. Commit thy Halina to heaven—thy courage and perseverance to thy country. Depart, beloved Plater," continued Halina, as she placed her miniature in his hand; "on the day of trial look on *this*. Yet stay a moment; lend me thy dagger. I shudder at the thought of self destruction—yet are there cases in which even that act may be a virtue."

"What is the issue of thy interview with the daughter of Radzivil?" said Constantine as Casimir descended towards the lower corridor of the palace."

'The secrets of Poland's daughter are secure with her sons,' replied Casimir. 'Thou wilt know, ere evening shades thy palace. Am I at liberty to depart?'

"Thou art," returned Constantine.

Young Plater, preceded by his herald, soon reached his assembled companions. A shout, which shook the walls of the tyrant's palace, announced his arrival.

"What is the answer of the Duke?" demanded a hundred voices.

"He refuses to release the captives," replied Casimir.

'Storm the palace!—raze the monster's mansion to the dust!' cried the military companions of Casimir—'Poland and liberty.'

'My comrades,' said Casimir, 'caution must be our watch word. We must be very wary in our approach to the den of the monster.—He must have a chance to escape. The fate of Radzivil depends on this circumstance, and who among you would require the possession of the tyrant, at the sacrifice of this noble family?'

'Not a son of Poland,' rejoined his companions. 'Let the Duke escape.'

'Three cheers!' said Plater, 'and then for the palace!'

The acclamation reached the ears of Constantine. The words 'storm the palace!' had scarcely fallen from the enthusiastic Poles, ere he entered the chamber of Halina.

'Imprudent maid,' exclaimed he, 'why dost thou court death?'

'I court the freedom of Poland,' she replied, 'even at the price which thou hast decreed. Know, Duke, the blood of Kosciusko still runs in the veins of Poland's daughters.'

'My guards,' said Constantine, 'conduct hither Prince Radzivil and his son.'

The soldiers rushed at the command, and returned with the noble captives.

'Behold the offering,' said Halina, as she gazed on her father and brother; behold the victims for the sacrifice. But thou,' turning to Constantine, 'art not the officiating priest at the altar.'

'Say'st thou so, maiden?' replied Constantine. 'Executioners, approach!'

'Stand back! ye murdering ministers, ye accursed agents of another's crime!' exclaimed Halina, as her eye turned from the assassins to their employer; 'the blood you seek is too pure for your cowardly daggers!'

'I command you to do your duty!' thundered the Duke. The ruffians again approached to fulfil the awful commission.

'Take thou the reward of guilt!' said the daughter of Radzivil, as she plunged the poignard of Plater in the bosom of the foremost assassin; 'I pity, yet have destroyed thee!'

Constantine, petrified with astonishment, gazed with conscious horror on the body of the executioner, as it writhed in the agonies of death.

'The blood of that man shall be demanded at thy hand, Russian Duke,' said Halina, 'when we meet before the bar of Heaven. Mine was an act of justice, not revenge.—The life of a parent demanded the poignard of a daughter. Thou seest how strong, when virtue nerves them, are the arms of Sarmatia's maidens.'

A crash in the court-yard now announced that the inner gates of the palace had been forced. 'To the rescue of the Radzivils!' was heard in every quarter. 'If they be safe, give quarter to the tyrant, if not, be his fate as theirs!'

Plater rushed to the eastern chamber; in a moment, the door was opened. 'My Halina safe!—Spirit of the Universe, I thank thee!' said he, as he clasped the lovely girl to his bosom.

'Where is the tyrant!' exclaimed the inflamed soldiery. 'He has escaped,' said Halina, 'by a secret passage.'

'Mother, I have fulfilled thy prophecy,' said Plater; 'the evening sun has not found the tyrant in the palace of Belveder. And now, my Halina, I demand thy bribal hand at the altar, before the face of Heaven, and on the dawn of Poland's regeneration.'

From "Courtship and Marriage," by the Rev. J. Davis.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A BETROTHMENT.

The most interesting and decisive period in the history of courtship remains to be considered. We have endeavoured to conduct the inquirer after truth along, from one step to another, till we have brought him to that point, when he is prompted, not only by his affections, but by a regard for his own character and the character of his friend, to make those declarations of attachment and love, which, if reciprocated, shall prepare the way for an assumption of obligations the most binding and solemn. What then is the nature of a betrothment? And what are the circumstances which will render it null and void?

1. I remark that a matrimonial engagement does not consist in any of the civilities and courtesies of life which a gentleman may extend to a lady.

It is not unfrequently the case, however, that these are mistaken for declarations of love, and the announcement is made at once that such persons are engaged. Such is the imprudence of friends often, and more frequently of the lady herself, that the common politeness and attention which are ever due between the sexes are construed into proposals for matrimony, and a young gentleman hears the report of his engagement while as yet not even a dream of the thing has passed through his mind. By such imprudence the young lady severs herself from the society, perhaps, of an honorable and polished mind, and brings upon herself and friends the mortification and disappointment which will inevitably follow in such cases. If a gentleman attend a lady to church; if he escort her to the public assembly; if he walk with her in the street; if he occasionally visit her for the sake of her good society, the report is not unfrequently set on foot, by some mischief maker or indiscreet friend, that the parties are engaged to be married.

2. Neither does an engagement consist in any politeness, or social intercourse, which a lady may extend to a gentleman.

There are young gentlemen, however, of such consummate vanity, as to suppose that such treatment was nothing less than the strongest intimation of personal attachment. If a lady so much as look at them, they fancy that it must be a love affair, and equivalent to the most direct proposals for matrimony. A smile, a compliment, a social interview, a walk or ride of pleasure, is set down by such conceited coxcombs, as the most unequivocal declaration of love. They tell of the conquests they have made, with an air of triumph, and never know their mistake till they learn it in that reserve and neglect which their conduct so richly deserves.

3. Neither does an engagement consist in any of these preliminary steps, which are so important, in order to a just estimate of the character and qualifications of the person with whom you would be united for life.

Many persons, however, imagine that every such step is a committal. While the individual is only forming that wise estimate, and making those judicious investigations, which every one is bound to make in this affair by a regard to his own happiness—and that of others—he is considered as fairly committed, without the possibility of honorable retreat. But this is all wrong, whether it be the sentiment of individuals or public sentiment. The very object of his researches is to ascertain if the character and qualifications of the person are such as will make him a happy companion for life. Without such investigation he might as well commit his interest in this matter, to a lady, whom he had never beheld. He might as well be betrothed as heathen children by their parents without his consent or knowledge, and while yet in a state of infancy. He might as well blindfold himself and rush into a great assembly, and select a companion at random. Parents must suppose their daughters are little else than angels if they expect to betroth them in this manner. And if young ladies are so superficial in character and accomplishments, as not to admit of such honorable and wise scrutiny, they had better give up the idea of marriage life, and become nuns at once.—Such should be the sentiments on this subject that every young gentleman should feel himself at liberty to make every necessary investigation of character, without subjecting himself to the report of his being engaged, or of other than honorable intentions, if disappointed he sees fit to retire.

4. Neither does an engagement consist in the most unqualified declaration of love on the part of either the gentleman or lady. This may all be, yet no obligations are assumed, no contract is formed. And yet there are those who suppose that declarations of attachment impose an obligation on their friend, which cannot be resisted or violated. The gentleman whose province it always is first to make such disclosures, consider that when he has done this, he has secured by right his object. But not so. The lady may be wholly unprepared for such an event. Such a disclosure may be made before she has made the necessary inquiries and investigations herself. Such a declaration may be made when she had no suspicion of any attachment existing, and whilst her own engagements and circumstances do not admit of her entertaining such proposals for a moment. It is true, such a disclosure on the part of a gentleman, impose certain duties on the female. If her circumstances are such as render an engagement impossible, she is bound by every principle to acquaint him immediately with the fact, and keep the transaction a secret. If her circumstances are such as to render it proper for her to enter into a matrimonial engagement, it is proper then, that she make his proposals a matter of immediate and serious consideration. If she is satisfied with his character, and entertains such an affection for him as will render a union with him happy, she has nothing left but to make known to him, in a modest and affectionate manner, her acceptance of his proposals. But, if, after due consideration and inquiry and deliberation, she is conducted to a contrary conclusion, she should lose no time in informing him of the fact, in a way least likely to wound his sensibilities, or mortify his pride. She will consider it, too, both a dictate of modesty and prudence and honor, to disclose the circumstance to no living being.

5. A matrimonial engagement then, is when the parties, having made mutual disclosures of affection for each other in view of such disclosures, bind themselves by promises to become each other's wedded companion for life. There must be a contract formed, in which the parties pledge themselves to each other for life, or there can be no matrimonial engagement. Nothing short of this can be accounted a betrothment, and nothing more is necessary to its perfection.

Mr. Madison.—When the debates upon the adoption of the federal constitution were occupying the attention of our patriot fathers, and when wisdom like a daily visitant, hovered over the hall where genius and virtue breathed fire into the hearts of the sages who were there assembled. Mr. Madison wished to speak, but was almost afraid from his great physical debility to make the attempt. However, he begged a gentleman who was sitting near him to pull him by the coat when he perceived that he was becoming exhausted.

Mr. Madison rose and opened his speech; his voice was feeble at first—it became stronger as he progressed—passage after passage of brilliant and illuminating thought came from his almost inspired lips; every point of the great subject he touched upon, he left for men of all future times to look upon as if he had blown the clouds from the summit of the hills; he went on, and concluded. "Why," as he sunk back exhausted in his chair, "why did you not pull me when you saw me go on as I did." "I would rather have laid my finger upon the lightning," was the reply. This anecdote we have obtained from a gentleman who was present.—*U. S. Telegraph.*

An Independent Spirit.—Diogenes being taken captive, when about to be sold as a slave, was asked what he could do? "I can govern men," replied the Cynic; "here Mr. Auctioneer, cry, *Is there any one here who wishes to purchase a master for himself?*"