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IS IT YOU?

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LES DEUX DRAGONS.'

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

Chapter Second.

On my return to France, continued he, I was appointed lieutenant in the carbiniers. Then came 1815, and the battle of Waterloo. When the troops were disbanded, I retired to Paris on half-pay. The enemy at that time held posession of the city in a friendly way.

One evening, I was seated with four of my comrades in a billiard-room where some Prussian officers were playing.—One of us, a lieutenant in the horse-grandiers, near whom one of the players was leaning on the table in the act of stricking the ball, took a piece of chalk and wrote on the sleeve of the player a word which, I confess, was rather coarse. Then, winking to me, he said:

"I'll make him spell it, presently.

The player and his companions were so intent upon the game, that they did not notice the inscription until the former had impelled the ball.—The Prussian read it aloud, and we laughed, insolently enough.

Confusion!' cried he, turning round to me, 'who wrote that; IS IT YOU;'

I have always been averse to challenges and duels; there is nothing in the world I so sovereignly despise. But this was really too bad. Before the granadier had time to answer for himself, the Prussian had received the contents of my bowl of punch in his face.

'Is it I; insolent! yes, it is I; my name, Marsin; yours is written on your sleeve; gentlemen it is equally applicable to you all. Stand back, Raimbaud,' said I to the lieutenant, who wished to take the affair into his own hands. 'Choose another, if you will; as for this one, I claim him for myself.'

'Then I'll take them all! cried Raimbaud; 'let me see,' and he counted them with his finger; 'and let it be done quickly.

'Where?' inquired the Prussian, who was not at all afraid.

'Here, by the light of these lamps,' said I; hand me a sword, we will begin the game.

'By heavens! not so;" cried Raimbaud; 'there is room enough here for eight, ten, twenty; we're five, you ten; give us five of your swords.

He double locked the door and kicked the chairs out of the way. The Prussians were evidently surprised, but, nevertheless, they put on a bold countenance.

"My young adversary was under middle size, of fair complexion, light locks, and altogether a handsome fellow.

'You are tall,' said he to me, coldly, 'and with a single bound you can throw yourself ten feet from the point of my blade. As for myself, sir, I never retreat.'

'O! if that is all your care,' replied I, 'I'll show you a way to make you persist in your resolution of not flinching back.' And springing upon the billiard table, 'there, place one foot against the cushion opposite me. Come on sir.'

The Prussian, after having eyed me a moment, followed my example. Raimbaud himself, seeing us on the table, forgot to choose his man. All the company crowded round, to witness the result of this novel game.

The combat lasted much longer than the circumscribed space on which we fought at first led us to expect. My adversary and myself were equally skilled in the use of the broad-sword. The clashing of our weapons, as they parried the rapid blows, was incessant. In spite of all our efforts, we were unable to advance an inch; as for recoiling, that was out of the question.

At length a blow was given, sending forth a sound which the bystanders must easily have distinguished from that caused by the collision of our sabres.—The Prussian had cut me on the head, at the same instant of time when the point of my blade penetrated deeply into his side, throwing him lifeless from the table.

'Another!' cried I, stung to madness by the pain of the wound. Through the blood that streamed down my face, I saw the friends of my slain adversary take to their weapons, and they seemed, like fiends let loose, to attack me with forked tongues and cloven feet, and to hedge me in a circle from which all attempt to escape was vain. They charged, without mercy, my defenceless companions, whilst I spun round on the table like a schoolboy's top, about to cease its motion and drop on its side.—I warded off, at random, the blows aimed at me; imagine to yourself a drunken soldier fighting with the patrole, and who at length falls, as I did then.—My comrades defended themselves as well as they could with the stools and cues, whilst Raimbaud alone had been able to procure a sword, and it was his single arm that saved us.

But Raimbaud had a terrible arm.—When the horse grenadiers were on a march his cap was easily distinguished from the rest; & if his horse had the misfortune to make a false step, he was able to break its ribs with his knees. And the confusion, the cries, the clashing of swords, I heard my friend Raimbaud enjoying himself to his heart's content, charging the Prussians, the waiters of the coffee house, the watch who then came in, and the mob following them, attracted by the noise, bearing me off on one arm, and with the other hewing a passage through the crowd, which could neither avoid nor resist his impetuosity.

However, it was all in vain, we were immured in an abbey, where, I assure you, we did not live like monks. By way of pastime, Rambaud wrote what he called his memoirs on our campaign.

'Oh!' sighed he, 'some of my best adventures here, lost all their point; I must conceal certain passages of my life, because, d'ye see, I want my children to learn from my book, to read in a military style; for depend upon it, as soon as we are free, we'll feel terribly inclined to get married."

He was right; shortly after our retreat Raimbaud fell into the snares of a young widow. It would have made a mummy grin to hear him recount to me—as he did every evening, smoking his pipe—his tribulations and disappointments as a lover.

'Well,' said I to him one day, 'why don't you marry her at once, and have done with it?'

'Do you think so?' replied he; well, since you advise me, I will."

He did so. He was blest with a charming little daughter, that amused us both. But before the sweet creature could learn reading her father's memoirs, she lost him; for Raimbaud was still the same and one night, we were both thrown into a dungeon, for having hoped for the overthrow of the Bourbon dynasty.

The wretch who informed against us, was unable to designate which of us had uttered the fatal words, which were far from being unimportant:—but without further preface, I can now say that it was Raimbaud.

'*I* was minutely questioned, but I persevered an inflexible silence, well knowing that, with the gentleman I had to deal with, chosing which of the two to answer, *yes* or *no*, is exactly the same as turning against one's self a double barrel gun, and pulling one or the other trigger, and therefore the best plan is to be silent.

'Well,' said a man in black to me, 'if it is not you, is it your friend, and so much the better, *I* think I shall have less trouble with him. Once more then, will you answer? Is it he? *is it you?*

I passed my hand over my forehead. I have no pretensions to magnanimity, but I thought of the poor little Lucette, and of her father, who must be preserved for her, and I nodded my answer in the affirmative, as the other continued. 'Come, speak frankly, I am sure it is you.' A nod was all the worthy man asked, to have me beheaded.

'You confess your guilt' resumed he: 'very well; but, to be quite sincere, you must also tell me what you know of your friend. Young man it is noble to sacrifice our affections to truth and our country's cause!'

I very believe *I* would have complied with this request, if I could have strangled him after having satisfied his curiosity, but I was convinced that *I* had said enough, and the only difficult point remaining, was to prevent Raimbaud from spoiling all. When he was informed of what had transpired.

'Marsin, for shame!' said he, 'do you take me for a coward? There are certain favours which we confer upon men, as there are others which we grant to women, only when they have lost all claim to our esteem.'

In the dead of night, he roused me from my sleep.

'Marsin,' said he; 'we are in a bad way; listen: do you wish to escape?'

'Ah!' replied I; '*I* have you now,—save myself?—and you'

'*Both* of us!' continued he, 'that would be difficult.'

'If it be merely difficult, let's try it; if it is impossible, let me sleep and begone.'

'Let us attempt it together then,' said he; 'and indeed that is the only means. One of us, perhaps, may ****. But mark me. We must first set fire to the prison. There is a store-room filled with straw mattresses for the use of the prisoners.—To-morrow, when we are called in, at dusk, I'll throw in a match which I have made of lint, steeped in oil. I shall pretend to be lighting my pipe. We must leave the rest to chance.

'But then we shall be burnt to death.'

'Our doors will be opened, and it's a hard case if in the midst of the confusion, we can't reach the great staircase.'

'And what of that?' said *I*; 'we can do as much in the daytime. Where's the use of your match, to say nothing of these walls that would laugh to scorn the flames of Moscow?'

'But, my dear boy,' said Raimbaud, clasping my head with both his hands, 'all we want is a little fire and great smoke. As for putting our plan in execution during the day-time, that is impossible, since our object is to descend into the street; and it will require something serious for them to let us out at night.'

'Are you dreaming, Raimbaud? Descend? and how?'

'Did you notice, in the upper story, a small door, secured merely by a single bolt?

'A door opening on a wall fifty feet high at least? I did.

'Attached to that wall is a rope, accidentally left there, I presume, by some workmen,' said Raimbaud, 'a new rope as long as the Elysian Fields; oh! how my palms itched to grapple with it.'

'Why, then, Raimbaud, said I, smiting my breast, 'if the cord remains there the attempt will not be very desperate.'

'But, then, Marsin,' said he, embracing me—****. He was silent for a minute or two, and then quitted my side abruptly, bidding me keep a stout heart, and wishing me a good night.

Twenty four hours after the above conversation, the watch gave the alarm.—The fire seemed more dangerous than it really was. Prisons are naturally fire-proof, it is only private dwellings that are combustible. The prisoners shrieked and beat the doors with their feet and hands. The ruddy glare illumined our gloomy dungeon, which was fast filling with the dense smoke. At length the doors were thrown open, & the prisoners rushed into the corridors. Thanks to the prevailing panic, we ascended the great staircase and reached the door unobserved, I had already hold of the bolt, when Raimbaud seized my arm.

Stand back!' said he, in a whisper, 'and let me passed on.'

'No,' replied I, in the same tone; 'you certainly shall descend first, Raimbaud; but my eyes are better than yours, and I must see if there is no one on the lookout. Why, what's the matter?

'Thirty feet from this door, said he methinks I hear him now! 'there is a platform on which a sentinel, with his loaded musket, is stationed every night It is for that reason that we must be two, in order that one may escape. You shall descend after the fire; then run to my family. Be their protector. Adieu.'

'No, Raimbaud; the sentinel shall see *me* first.' Then repulsing him, I softly drew the bolt and opened the door. I perceived the cord, but also saw the sentinel's bayonet gleam in the moon's ray. He was walking to and fro—he passed. Had it not been for the noise in the prison, he must have heard my heart beat.

'He will miss me!' thought I, as I grasped the rope and let myself drop. Raimbaud adranced. 'Stand!' I heard the sentinel cock his piece, and the report of the musket was followed by the heavy fall of my comrade's body, which, striking me on the shoulder, brought me to the ground almost as soon as itself. I grouped about in the dark, and placed my hands, lacerated by the rope, upon his manly heart. It beat no more.

Such was the fate he met, the first time he ever sought safety in flight. He, who had gone through twenty fearful battles, to be killed while assisting a man of honour, whom he loved better than himself, to evade the unmerited harshness of the law!

I was taken up along with the body, and was lucky enough to undergo no severer sentence than that of a five years' confinement in the state's prison; five of the most precious years of my life irrevocably lost!

When I was released, I sought oblivion of my past sufferings in the pleasures of the world; and I have to relate to you one of those adventures, after escaping from which, a man would be tempted to believe that the most prudent course to pursue, would be to hang himself. At all events, I believe you will confess that the antipathy I speak of has a cause.

I was advised to travel. The Spanish revolution being over, I started for Catalonia.

One day, as I was taking a walk in Barcelona with a lieutenant of the national guard, to tell you the truth,' said I, I think that the beauty of the Spanish women is highly exaggerated, and I can assure you that in France———

I was cut short by the sight of two bright eyes which met mine. I suffered my companion to walk on, and followed the Spanish girl, thinking that I had never seen any one half so beautiful as herself! But the old woman who accompanied her, would have deterred a less adventurous man from the pursuit. To be brief, by dint of perseverance, I prevailed upon the young girl to appoint a rendezvous and I had every reason to believe that my suit would be prosperous. Nevertheless, though my progress was sure, it was provokingly slow; and though the yellow fever broke out in Barcelona. I resolved to remain there for the sake of Manuella.

She was the niece of a celebrated physician & superintended his household affairs. Some time after, when his native city was besieged, he fled to Gibraltar; but during the prevalence of the epidemic, he never for a moment deserted his post. Honour to whom honour, &c.

Moreover, he was both whimsical and witty, and barring a certain gravity which—as I afterwards learned to my cost, was merely a cloak to cover a fund of humour, he had nothing of the Spaniard about him. Jealous he was, to be sure, but precisely as a man of sense should be, who knows that the very wisest of us may be made a dupe.

When I said that Manuela was his niece, I was wrong; the poor girl had confessed to me, with tears in her eyes, ******phaw!

—*I* was impatient, she was not cruel; and the old duenna, whom she had succeeded in gaining over to her cause, came to me one evening and proposed to me the following admirable plan.

'The doctor,' said she, 'is very busy now, and ever since the fever rages in Barcelona, at whatever hour of the night he is called upon, especially if it be for the hospital, he unhesitatingly obeys the summons. Now, sir, come to-night and knock at our door, imitating Pedrillo's rap, which I shall take care to teach you; be sure then, to withdraw on the instant, before the doctor has time to open his window, or conceal yourself and make no answer, for he whom you are to represent, is a taciturn Catalonian, who invariably retires without answering the usual question which don Marcos addresses him, 'Pedrilio, IS IT YOU?' Indeed, it is by his silence that the doctor recognises him.

'What!' cried I, 'do you think I would have the folly to answer that question!—No, no; believe me, I shall follow your advice. Indeed there is nothing that *I* would not do, in order to obtain an interview with Manuella, and my good woman, *I* am ready to pass not only for Pedrillo, but, should it be necessary, for yourself. But, *piano*, admitting that I succeed in entering the house, what then?

'What then?' echoed the beldame, modestly casting down her eyes.

'Why, certainly, *what then?*' As soon as Don Marcos reaches the hospital, he will discover that he has been practised upon, and unless the yellow fever carries him off on the way, I shall scarce have entered before I have to decamp.'

'Never fear,' said the duenna; 'the doctor will find sufficient employment at the hospital to detain him some time'

The next night, the plan succeeded wonderfully well, and I flew to meet my Manuella But, I had not been long in the apartment, before the old woman came running in. 'Save yourself,' cried she, 'Don Marcos is coming.'

Manuella writhed her arms with vexation, while the duenna, without more ado seized my hand, and before I knew what she was about, led me in the dark to a door, which she opened, and, pushing me in, turned the key in the lock.

When I recovered from my alarm, for such it really was, *I* was at a loss to account for the strange smell of the place; an odour resembling that which emanated from the chariot in which *I* was transported to Venice, together with several of my wounded cuirassiers, some of whom had died on the road. *I* stepped forward, found a marble table, and upon it a hand colder than the stone itself; a hand which neither returned nor withdrew itself from my grasp. The truth flashed upon me at once.

To say nothing of all that was revolting to my soul in such a situation, *I* knew that *I* was in the doctor's dissecting room.

The doctor was celebrated for his close study of the yellow fever, and for the skill he displayed in combating this dreadful disease. The corpse must be that of one of the numberless victims of the pleague. Had it risen up to tell me so, *I* would not have been more convinced of it. My first impulse led me to batter the door with my fists, not more to make my escape than to strangle the old hag. But she was doubtless well aware of the nature of my lurking place, and *I* began to think that *I* had become the victim of a hideous plot. *I* essayed to reach the sky light above; in vain! *I* walked round the pestilential corpse, close to the walls, like a wolf beset in his den. *I* could almost have cried out to it, 'begone, and quit my sight!' Add to this, that the night air began to feel chill, I had felt, on one of the walls, a mantle and other clothes, but I recoiled from the touch with horror, as I thought they must belong to him.

At length, resolving to make the best of it, I tried to sleep, and thought of Jaffa, where Buonaparte touched with impunity our soldiers, who were dying with the plague. But day-break found me with my eyes still wide open, and, as the light streamed down the body, I saw the well kuown effects of the scourge which had killed the man. He was, as yet, untouched by the scalpel.

Presently the door slowly opened, and the doctor made his appearance.

"Well, young man,' said he, in a serious tone, how did you like your companion? He was not troublesome, *I* hope.'

What could I answer?

'No, said *I*, at last finding words, but having enjoyed his company during one night, I think that *I* would rather decline the honor of all further intercourse.'

'*I* presume so,' said the doctor in the same grave tone, 'and *I* am willing to allow you to withdraw; but how can *I*, seeing that you have neither hat nor cloak? Suspicions would arise unfavorable to my Manuella, or you would be taken for a madman, and conveyed to the lunatic asylum.

'Return me my property,' cried *I*, 'and then your fears will be at rest.'

'Your property!' said he; 'is it possible that you, an officer, should not know, that when a prisoner of war is released, it is but just to retain the spoils of victory? *I* think I am acting very generously by you, in allowing you to retire at any rate. The man before you was taken ill while walking in the streets, he was conveyed hither, and here he died. There is his mantle, and a splendid one it is too! and there, his hat. *I* make you a present of them; put them on and you are free to go.

I did not hesitate; spurred on by a spirit of desperate emulation, caused by the taunts of a man whom I had hoped to dupe, and who now fancied me in his power, I snatched the mantle, folded it round my person, and pulled the hat over my eyes.—[New York Mirror.

From the New York Farmer.

SALTPETRE IN MEAT.

BY PROFESSOR C. S. RAFINESQUE.

It is a matter of regret that while so much salt meat is made and used, we have not yet acquired the proper knowledge of the best mode to prepare and preserve it; nor is it generally known how noxious salt meat may become by an improper use of saltpetre in the pickle or brine usually employed

There are various modes of preserving meat and fish, by drying, salting, pickling, oiling, &c.; but I merely mean at present to notice some of the defects and noxious properties of our actual salt meat, either beef or pork.

One of the main defects appear to consist in the useless addition of saltpetre into the pickle, whereby the meat often becomes sour or spoiled, and always acid and pernicious. I never could understand why this substance was added to common salt in curing meat; except that it is said to make it look better. But it ought to be known that the part of saltpetre absorbed by the meat is *nitric acid* or *aquafortis*, a *deadly poison!* whereby our salt meat becomes unpalatable & pernicious. A slight excess of this acid makes the meat sour, or spoils it as we say. It has been suggested to correct this by potash, which re-absorbs this excess; but merely hides the defect without neutralizing the whole poison.

Is it not surprizing that we should feed and deal as a staple of our country, with an article containing a portion of such active poison as *nitric acid?* In fact, our actual salt meats *are no longer meat!*—They are a new pernicious substance, produced by a chemical action of salt upon the flesh; which when fresh and clean consists chiefly of *gelatine* and *fibrine*—Gelatine or jelly is the substance soluble in warm water, forming a broth by boiling, or becoming a jelly by concentrating; while fibrine is the fibrous tough part of the meat, which cannot be dissolved, and is therefore unfit for food, while gelatine is the real nutricious part of the meat.

But it is well known that salt meat and even corned beef can no longer afford a broth, and therefore gelatine must have been changed into another substance no longer soluble, nor so nutritious, by the chemical action of salt and saltpetre. To this new substance chemists have as yet not given a name; but it is as different from meat as leather is from the hide before it is tanned by the tan-bark or *tannin*.

To this chemical change in meat is to be ascribed all the noxious qualities of salt meat, and he diseases to which those who feed chiefly on it become liable,—sea scurvy, land scurvy, sore gums, rotten teeth, boils, ulcers. &c.—which we entail on ourselves by using a kind of poisoned bad meat, which we call salt.

This important and doleful fact ought to be well known generally to all those who raise cattle, cure meat, or eat it, in order that they may correct this sad defect.

The first thing to be done is to abandon altogether the use of saltpetre in curing meat. This is indispensable; and no one who is told that aquafortis is the produce of it, ought any longer to use this poison in pickles or brines.

The best substitute for it is *sugar*: a small quantity added makes the meat healthier; sweeter, nicer, and equally durable. Let this be known to all our farmers and sailors.

How to make a brine for meat perfectly innoxious is yet a desideratum. Gelatine ought to be preserved in salt meat perfectly pure and soluble, as it is in broth eakes, before any salt meat can be perfectly healthy and equal to fresh meat. But at any rate; by withholding the saltpetre, we divest it of a deadly poisonous substance.

C. S. RAFINESQUE,
Prof. Hist. and Nat. Sciences.
Elm Place Lansingburgh,
N. Y. Aug. 5, 1833.

BOSTON, Sept. 14.

ANTI-MASONIC CONVENTION.—We understand that the nomination of Hon. J. Q. Adams by this Convention as a candidate for the office of Governor, was yesterday accepted by that gentleman. The convention then proceeded to ballot for a candidate for that of Leut. Governor, and the Hon. Samuel T. Armstrong received a majority of the votes. A committee was appointed to wait on Mr. A.; but he declined giving satisfactory assurances of his antimasonry, the Convention reconsidered their vote, and Hon. Wm. Reed of Marblehead, was unanimously nominated. The Convention then adjourned.

The following is Mr. Adams; letter accepting the nomination.

QUINCY, Sept. 12.

Fellow Citizens,—I have received with grateful and deep sensibility the Resolutions which you have been pleased this day to adopt and which have been communicated to me by your very respectable Committee.

The principles upon which the Convention have seen fit to place the nomination, which they have done me the honor to tender to me, are such as I do not feel it consistent with my duties as a citizen to resist. Believing in the right of the people to command the services of one of themselves in any station, which *they* think proper to assign to him, I cannot suffer any personal consideration to withstand the call of so large, so respectable and so virtuous a portion of the people of the Commonwealth as those whom you represent, to submit my name to the decision of their suffrage, for the office of their Chief Magistrate during the ensuing year.

I accept then your nomination, with a profound sense of the obligation which your confidence imposes upon me: among which that of an administration merging all party spirit and feeling in the great interest of the whole Commonwealth will be not least impressive; and with a fervent prayer to the Ruler of the Universe, that if the voice of the people of the state should concur with yours, the final result may be to heal the divisions of party, to promote the harmony of the Union, and to maintain the industry of freedom, and the purity of the Constitution.

I am with great respect, fellow citizens,
Your friend and obedient servant,
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

EXTENSION OF NATIONAL REPUBLICAN PRINCIPLES.—It is truly gratifying to witness the extension of National Republican principles throughout the country. We have always believed that sooner or later TRUTH *must and will prevail*. The ground work of the National Republican doctrines is UNION OF THE STATES AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO DOMESTIC INDUSTRY—an equitable distribution among the State of the proceeds from the sale of the Public Lands—a judicious expenditure of the public monies in great public undertakings—and the re-chartering of the United States Bank.

In Kentucky, the result of the late election of members of Congress has been decidedly unfavorable to the present administration—NINE out of thirteen of the Representatives being chosen by the people for their opposition to the measures of the administration. The election of one of the nine, Mr. Letcher however has been for the present frustrated in consequence of the extraordinary proceedings of the Sheriff of the County. But there is little doubt that when the matter is brought before Congress. Mr. Letcher will be declared entitled to a seat in the House. In Tennessee the strong hold of Jacksonism three Representatives to Congress have been elected who are known to be strongly opposed to the administration. In Pennsylvania the party in favor of Jackson and Van Buren is merely nominal there being in all probability four-fifths of the inhabitants of that State in favour of NATIONAL REPUBLICAN principles. And the intelligent citizens of New England are becoming every day more and more convinced that these principles are not only necessary to the happiness & prosperity of the country, but to *the duration of the Republic.—Lowell Journal.*

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