

PUBLIC EXECUTION OF FIVE MEN IN LONDON—HORRIBLE SCENE.

For the first time in more than forty years, five men were simultaneously executed in London, on the 22d of February. The names of the men were Blanco, Walter, Duranno, Lyons and Lopez, all of whom were sentenced to death for piracy on board of the British ship *Flowery Land*. The *London Times*, in its account of the execution says:

When Lopez came to be pinioned, there was no levity among the lookers-on, but it was impossible to avoid the remarks made at the time, that it seemed almost as if Lopez had been hanged before, so lightly did he step forth, so rapidly did he adjust his every movement to the necessities of the hangman, and thrust his hands almost by anticipation into the straps that were to confine his dying struggles. Yet not for a second did his mere swagger, if we may use such a term, impose on those accustomed to see really brave men going to their death. Duranno was the first who showed signs of fear. Walter was resigned; but Duranno seemed blanched by his fear to a dull clayey hue, that was worse to look upon than the pallor of death itself. Still though his lips kept shivering, and his eyes reeled, he seemed to bear up till the hangman removed the sailor's necktie, and undid the collar of his shirt. Then the death that was so near seemed to come upon him in all its bitterness, and he crept together with his limbs, and spoke a few words, in almost piteous tone, to the Roman Catholic clergyman who was with him. Blanco was even worse than this. Large, beyond all the rest in stature, an overmatch for almost all the others in mere brute strength, the man who had taken the most conspicuous and relentless part in all the murders, who had struck down the mate, and boasted of having thrown him, while praying for mercy, into the sea, who had stabbed the captain in his sleep, and beaten the captain's brother till his very corpse was shapeless, came out from his cell as if the very agony of death was on him, so strongly did he show his fear. He seemed helpless as he was being pinioned, and sighed heavily. He, like Duranno, shuddered as his neckerchief was removed, but seemed gratified that two little copper crucifixes, which he wore round his neck, were allowed to remain, and then speaking to the priest, asked to be permitted to carry with him two little "holy pictures," as they are called on the Continent—one of the Crucifixion, the other of the Ascension. Both were, of course, at once placed in his hands, but though he asked for them, he seemed not to heed them when he had them, but kept trying to wet his lips with his tongue, and rolling his eyes up above him on every side, looking, as it seemed to those around, for the scaffold on which he was to die.

The *Morning Star* has the following:

At one minute past eight, Calcraft appeared upon the scaffold and was at once followed by the convict Blanco. By an error of judgment altogether inconceivable, the hangman placed the culprit under that portion of the beam which was nearest to the prison, and followed the same rule in dealing with the remainder, the effect of which was, that each of the men had to pass by some of his companions with the cap drawn over their faces and the rope around their necks before he reached his own position upon the drop—a piece of aggravated barbarity which called forth strong expressions of feeling, even from that callous mob. Blanco stood firmly until the noose had been adjusted and hooked on to the chain and the cap drawn down, and then his courage failed him. He fell into a state of entire collapse, and swayed about, half kneeling, and hanging with his full weight upon the halter. The exhortations of the Catholic chaplain in attendance, the Rev. Father Louis, and the intervention of Mr. Under-Sheriff Nicholson, who came upon the scaffold and entreated him to bear his fate calmly, were all in vain, and at last a chair was brought, upon which the wretched man sat, a huddled-up and trembling heap of half dead humanity, while his comrades passed by him one by one and were prepared for death. Walter and Duranno followed, the latter being attended in his last moments by a Greek priest, M. Morfines; then came Lopez, who stepped up with a jaunty and defiant air, which secured for him a loud tribute of applause. Lyons, whose bearing was more dignified than any of the others, was the last to appear. When all was arranged, the priests pressed the crucifix to the lips of the dying men, whose faces wore an indistinguishably hideous aspect, with the features just dimly shadowed through the white cap, and the moment Calcraft left the scaffold, Lopez, who had evidently objected strenuously to the concealment of his face, made a spasmodic effort with his pinioned hands to lift the cap and take a last look at the world, and almost succeeded in his attempt. Just ten minutes elapsed between the appearance of Blanco on the scaffold, and the fall of the drop, and it was some few minutes before all the men ceased to exist.

The *Star* has some severe editorial comments upon the scenes witnessed at the execution. It says:

The gallows deter from crime! Why, they robbed all night long, up to the very foot of the gibbet! Men of a more respectable grade who had been idiotic enough to go thither from curiosity, or whose duties led them to the spot, were seized by bands of ruffians and deliberately robbed, while those who could not share

the spoil applauded the boldness with which the crime was consummated. The young brood of ruffianism which was so numerous represented, received fresh lessons in crime. They saw robbery applauded, they saw the frantic attempts of men brutally assaulted, mocked with uproarious laughter, they were taught that it was the right and manly thing to show contempt of that law, for outraging which the doomed culprits were to die, and to care no more for the gallows than as a rallying point for villainy and an exhilarating spectacle of the same kind, but more intensified in a degree, than a roaring tragedy at the penny theatre. When Calcraft appeared, he was hissed, just as the villain in the play is sure to be, and when Lopez sprang on the scaffold with defiant air (after having just kissed the crucifix and received absolution), he was cheered because he seemed to die game. The most striking feature of the assemblage was the extreme preponderance in it of the juvenile element; there were certainly more than a dozen youths to every man of mature years, and the mass of upturned faces presented to view a tessellated pavement of vicious expression of many grades which was positively sickening to look upon. The haziness of the morning made it somewhat difficult to estimate the number of persons present from a coup d'oeil, but we should say there cannot have been less than 30,000.

GIBRALTAR.

The value of Gibraltar to England, above that of all other fortresses, above all other conceivable fortresses, arises from the peculiarities of its situation and its character. Other great strongholds, such as Cronstadt, Comorn, and Ehrenbreitstein, have their values, which can be expressed in money, in regiments, in war ships, according to the strength of each. But these great strongholds have no value beyond what can be expressed. They are military stations purely. Cronstadt protects the approaches to St. Petersburg by sea; Comorn covers Vienna from the assault of an army ascending the Danube from Silesia and Belgrade; Ehrenbreitstein defends the middle Rhine against France. Each has its military function, and when that function is discharged there is an end of its utility. But the chief office of Gibraltar is political. Gibraltar gives England political power in the Courts of Paris and Madrid. The Rock is the key of both France and Spain; cuts each, as it were, into two portions; divides the Mediterranean from the Atlantic ports. While England holds the Straits, the princes of these two countries are but half possessors of their own naval power.

The second peculiarity of Gibraltar is its impregnability. No engineer doubts that Cronstadt or Comorn might be taken. It is only a question of cost—so much time, so many men, so large a park of artillery, and that is all. The elements are known, and the calculations would come out like those of an eclipse. Not so with Gibraltar. It cannot be taken. The resources of mighty empires have been wasted on that solid rampart of limestone. The cannon balls showered upon it would make another mountain. In the great siege everything was in favor of the besiegers; England was far away, her army were engaged in every quarter of the globe, the Franco-Spanish navies masters of the Straits, the princes of Morocco for a time unfriendly to the English, and two mighty armies, led by able engineers, supplied with lavish means, stood ready for assault. Yet in four long years during which this memorable siege lasted, they never made it.

NATION AGAINST NATION.

List of the wars which are being carried on at the present moment:

- 1, War in Poland between the Poles and the Russians.
- 2, War in Italy between the usurping Piedmontese and Neapolitan patriots.
- 3, War in Japan between the Japanese and the English.
- 4, War in China between the Imperialists and the Insurgents.
- 5, War in China between the Chinese, the French, and the English.
- 6, War in Sumatra and Java between the Malays and the Dutch.
- 7, War in Hindostan between the Indians and the English.
- 8, War in Persia between the Persians and the Afghans.
- 9, War in Cochinchina between the Annamites and the French.
- 10, War in Algeria between the Arabs and the French.
- 11, War in Morocco between the Moors and the Spaniards.
- 12, War in Madagascar between the Indians and the French.
- 13, War in Caffraria between the Kaffirs and the English.
- 14, War in the United States between the North and South.
- 15, War in Mexico between the Mexicans and the French.
- 16, War in St. Domingo between the Negroes and the Spanish.
- 17, Civil war in the republic of South America.
- 18, War in Australia and New Zealand between the English and the Maori.

—The Herald says New York "wants a few good city missionaries, even if we have to import or raffle for them."

THE MAITRE D'ARMES.

A STORY OF DUELLING.

The practice of duelling was probably at its height during the latter end of the eighteenth, century, and the beginning of the nineteenth.

All Europe was convulsed. New nations were receiving the baptism of blood; old ones were being sacrificed, and by a murderous hand. Dynasties were tottering and tumbling. The political horizon was obscured by a mist, and its hue was crimson.

Mutations were going on everywhere—in mind and matter, in public and private relations, in low and high estates, in opulence and indigence. Everything was being changed, and the universal instrument was the sword. The hand of improvement was bloody.

But even revolution pauses. Occasionally there were lulls.

But the minds of men are not nations. The passions of men are not the phases of polity. These cannot pause. And from these lulls, from these minds, and from these passions, the Duello, the spirit of polite murder, arose from comparative infancy to the acme of its influence. Men were crippled daily and hourly; sometimes for mere pastime, in hot blood, and cold, generously and malignantly. The good swordsman adored it. There were men who could count up their murders on their fingers, and go through the digits of the hands and begin over again.

Achille de Beaumont was such a one. Achille St. Pierre de Beaumont; step-son of the Marquis de Chesnea; no money; forty years old, and handsome still; Maitre d'Armes and Lieu enant of the Imperial Guard. That is all the description necessary for this story of his doom. Duelling had become his passion, his sole delight. He quarrelled with people in order to kill them. He had slain his first cousin, a mere boy, to keep his hand in. He had slain half his friends and crippled the rest. Only one was spared, left whole.

"I should like to kill thee, too, Maurice," said the duelist, regretfully; "but I cannot. I must have a friend—one friend—the Duello requires a second."

In return for this unparalleled magnanimity, Maurice seemed to love his friend extravagantly. Truly, he was a faithful jackal, was Maurice. It was said that upon more than one occasion he had furnished prey to the lion. He had pushed a poor young Vicomte who forfeited his life the next morning at daylight. There were other instances, but the above will suffice. At any rate Maurice was fond of contributing to his friend's vanity. At the cafe, or at the club, such a conversation (for the special benefit of bystanders) was not of rare occurrence:

Maurice (sipping his brandy)—Let me see, my dear Achille, what is the number of your duels?

Achille (sipping his brandy)—"Thirty-six, exactly."

"Maurice—"And let me see—really I have forgotten—out of this thirty-six there were fatal—?"

Achille (twirling his moustache—"Twenty-four."

Maurice—"And, my dear Achille, if I mistake not—really my memory is provoking—in those thirty-six duels you were wounded or scratched—?"

Achille (with pardonable hauteur)—"NEVER."

And upon a certain evening toward the end of March, when the cafe was overflowing, a conversation very similar to the above was brought to an unusual denouement.

The scornful "Never" had just burst from the curling lips of the Lieutenant, as it had burst successfully many a time before, when a young man glided from somewhere in the crowd to the side of the boaster, and said, politely:

"Will Monsieur be so condescending as to favor me with his name?"

"Achille de Beaumont, of the Guard."

Monsieur, I have come from Lyons to seek you, continued the young man; and coolly elevating the half empty tumbler of the Maitre d'Armes, he cast the contents in his face.

The duelist appeared paralyzed with astonishment; but the young man left him not time to gape. Seizing the nose of the Maitre d'Armes, he pulled it, and wrung it, and twisted it, till the victim fairly squealed.

Then, still retaining his hold on the nose, with his disengaged hand he collected a handful of the filthy sawdust with which the floor of the cafe is covered, and crammed it down the vociferating mouth, at the same time rubbing it well into the eyes. Having gone thus far in a very quiet, business like manner, the young man relieved the sufferer and stood calmly by, addressing the spectators in the following terms:

"Gentlemen, my name is Henri Duval; my place of residence is Lyons; I am a gold beater by trade. A year ago our family was composed of four—a mother, a daughter, and two sons. To-day our family is composed of one—myself. Yonder wretch is the cause. My brother was a Lieutenant of infantry. He was unutterably beautiful; he was noble and brave; our hopes were centered in him; our lives were nothing but eyes that watched his career. This man murdered him. He purposely insulted him, compelled a challenge, took his life. When my mother heard of it she was ill; the blow killed her. My sister is dead of a broken heart. Gentlemen, can you guess why I am here? Can you doubt that my mission is vengeance? Can you imagine that failure is possible with me?"

"Enough," said the Lieutenant, who had

spat out the sawdust and drank another glass of brandy—"here is the measure of my sword,"—handing him a strip of paper from his vest pocket.

"Thanks, thanks!" cried the young man joyfully. "There is a little wood on this side of the Seine; a hundred yards to the left, through the trees, as you approach it, going northward from here, is an open glade; let the time be daybreak, and to-morrow."

"At that place will I meet you," said Achille de Beaumont; and at that time precisely you shall meet your brother in another world."

"We shall see," said the beardless young man, and he left the room.

Of course this incident, the young man's unique behavior, the unusual publicity of the challenge, and the fame of the Maitre d'Armes, created a profound sensation, and every one who had witnessed the challenge looked forward to witnessing the duel with almost as much interest as to the actors themselves. Several policemen had been present, whose sense of duty had been overpowered by the desire to see the fight.

And to make a long story short, and as this is not the duel of my tale, I will merely mention that the parties met at the appointed time and place, the only noticeable event in the preliminaries being the young man's deficiency in procuring a second from among the spectators, most of whom were fearful of incurring the displeasure of the Lieutenant, who had a well known knack of fighting his opponents' seconds on the first available occasion—that the struggle was longer than usual; and, finally, that the young man received the rapier of Achille de Beaumont right through the centre of his heart, and expired with a groan of baffled vengeance, and his clay was borne to the common dead house, for he had no friends.

It was the evening of that bloody day at the cafe. The customary crowd was there, and a few more besides, for the fame of the duellist had received an accretion since morning. And the Maitre d'Armes himself, was there; so was his pimp-friend, I should say—both of excellent spirits; the former, especially, for it may be told that for the first time in his life Monsieur le Lieutenant had felt apprehensions previous to meeting the strange young man, Henri Duval. There had been something so supremely deadly in his calm demeanor—something so eager, yet passionless, in his bestowal of the insult—something so unaffectedly joyful in his aspect when made aware that his object, the duel, the mortal meeting, was to be consummated—that even the brave bully, even while flaming under the monstrous insult he had been subjected to, was touched with doubt that was akin to fear.

What, then, must be the exuberant, the exultant character, of the Maitre d'Armes' emotions upon the present occasion. He is not a talkative man; his words may be few; but his glowing countenance, his demeanor—nervous, enjoyable, self-celebrating—are they not eloquent? Do they not say to the whole cafe: "Tenez, Messieurs! regardez moi! Last night you saw me insulted, abused, outraged; to-night you see me here, beaming, buoyant, supreme. Last night you saw me stained, to-night you see me cleansed. What changes a little day brings forth!—what a perfect cleanser is a steady hand! what a burnisher of dimmed honor is the bright, the swift, the glorious rapier! And the insulter, the avenger, the fierce young man—he is not here to-night; how is this! Heyday! the beardless young man from Lyons, I do not see him here to-night—where can he be?" etc., etc.

Indeed, the elevation of the victor permits him to be generous. He admires the dead man's courage; he acknowledges that his fencing was excellent, his attitude irreproachable.

"My dear Maurice," (speaking to his friend in particular and to the cafe in reality,) "my dear Maurice, he punished me with a fervor of a Conde. And his defence—was it not impregnable?—could anything penetrate it? Parbleu! it was a cuirass, a wall."

"Ah! then," said Maurice, "but my friend Achille's coup de grace!"

Achille smiled, his soul was tickled; but suddenly the smile was changed to an expression of intense horror, the bloom of his cheek was blighted to the color of a corpse; the lustre seemed to have left his eyes, which were wide and dilated; he had partially arisen from his chair, and now appeared frozen in—the attitude—a painful, unnatural one.

Seeing the aspect of his friend, Maurice followed the stony glare of those frightened eyes, and then remained motionless, himself scarcely less confounded.

The frequenters of the cafe, standing up and sitting down, were equally impressed. The clinking of the glasses at the bar came to a sudden cessation. All were silent and lifeless. Had a quick enchantment chilled the gay cafe? All eyes were turned in one direction. All faces bore a likeness to each other, so fearful was the breathless anxiety of each.

One young dandy had been in the act of lighting a cigar, and the lighted paper burnt up against his arrested hand, and went out without his moving, or evincing any sensation of pain.

"Parbleu! the beardless young man!" gasped, the Maitre d'Armes.

Brave, though a bully, he was the first to recover. Seizing a decanter, he brimmed a tumbler with brandy and drank it down like water.

Sure enough, there, to all appearance, stood the young man who had given himself the name of Henri Duval and who had been