

Marshal Ney's Retreat.

One of the most memorable deeds of fortitude and heroism recorded in the annals of war was performed by Marshal Ney, in the retreat from Moscow. With a division of five thousand men he was cut off from the remainder of the French army. Kutusoff, the Russian general, with 80,000, including numerous cavalry, and with 2000 pieces of artillery, had effectually blocked up his passage.

Ney, with his band of half-famished soldiers, wavering in their languid march with guns defective and dirty, and with but six pieces of cannon, rushed upon the hostile batteries, and maintained the unequal conflict in the vain endeavor to cut his way through the masses of the foe, until night darkened the field. Then, at midnight, with no thought even of surrender, he ordered his troops to turn upon their track, and march back again into the wilds of Russia.

With amazement the troops heard this command, which, without hesitation, they obeyed. It was a bleak, gloomy winter's night. The frozen ground was covered with snow and the blast pierced the worn out clothing of the soldiers. For two or three hours they traversed in darkness, the savage waste till they came to a small river. Breaking the ice, to see in what direction the current ran, Ney said, "This stream must flow into the Dnieper. It shall be our guide."

The feeble band, cold, hungry and weary, struggled along until they reached the Dnieper. Its broad and rapid current was clogged with floating masses of ice; and in one spot only, to which a lame peasant conducted them, was the ice sufficiently firm for them to attempt a passage. And even here it was necessary to pass with the utmost caution. Ney, wrapped in his cloak, slept for an hour upon the snow, while his troops passed over in single file. The ice bent and cracked under their feet.

They then attempted to pass the wagons over laden with the sick and wounded.—The frail surface broke, and several of the wagons sank beneath the ice. A few faint cries only were heard, as the sufferers disappeared in their cold and icy sepulchre. By crossing the Dnieper, Ney hoped, in a long detour, again to reach the army. The Russians followed this feeble band in its retreat, keeping beyond musket shot, but firing incessantly upon their victims with artillery, from every available eminence.

Napoleon was at Orcha, waiting in the most intense anxiety, to hear tidings from Ney. Four days had passed without even a rumor of his fate. The whole army was looking back across the Dnieper hoping to catch a glance of his advancing columns, or to hear the report of his artillery. At the close of a day of solitude and watching, another wintry night enveloped in its gloom these retreating, woe-stricken armies. Napoleon was partaking of a frugal supper with General Lefebvre, when a shout of "Marshal Ney is safe," fell upon his ear. At that moment a Polish officer entered with the tidings that Marshal Ney was a few leagues distant, on the banks of the river harassed by pursuing Cossacks, and in want of immediate assistance. Napoleon sprang from his chair, seized the informant by both hands, and gazing into his eyes, exclaimed:

"Is this really true? Are you sure of it? I have two hundred millions in gold in my vaults at the Tuilleries. I would have given them all to save Marshall Ney."

Instantly Eugene was dispatched with a thousand men for the rescue of the Marshal. Eagerly the soldiers left the bivouac fires for their midnight march. For six miles they toiled along through the snow and over an unknown path, often stopping to listen if they could hear any sound of their lost friends. The river, which was their only guide, flowed drear and chill at their side, encumbered with masses of floating ice. Gloomy forests of evergreen frowned along their paths, and no sound but the tramp of Eugene's battalion disturbed the silence of the night.

At length Eugene ordered his artillery to be discharged, as a shout to call the attention of his friends. Listening anxiously, they heard far off in the distance, an apparent response, a feeble report of musketry. The Marshal had not a single piece of artillery left. Both parties, however, understood the language of the guns and they hastened to meet each other. They were soon united. Officers and soldiers alike threw themselves into each other's arms, and many of those war-worn veterans wept for joy.

The re-united bands, forgetful of past perils and the still greater ones they were yet to encounter, returned rejoicingly to Orcha. As Marshal Ney, with soldierly simplicity and unostentation, gave a recital of the dangers and difficulties he had surmounted, and the hardships he had endured, Napoleon grasped his hand, and immortalized him with the title of "bravest of the brave." Again Napoleon said in reference to this same achievement, in words which will never die, "Better is an army of deer commanded by a lion, than an army of lions commanded by a deer."

During this retreat, an unnatural mother, who was one of the camp followers, weary of nursing her crying child threw it in the snow to perish. Ney chanced to witness the inhuman deed, and lifting up the child, soothed it tenderly, and restored it to its mother, in the sledge, commanding the mother to take charge of it. But soon again the woman, whose heart was rendered callous by misery, threw the child into the snow. The Marshal again rescued the little one, took it under his special protection, carrying it for some time

in his own arms. The indignant soldiers hurled the mother from the sledge, and left her to be picked up by the Cossacks or to perish on the ground. The little orphan was watched over with the greatest care by the soldiers, as they covered it up with furs and blankets in one of the sledges. The child was carried in the arms of a soldier through all the horrors of the passage of Beresina, and surviving the hardships of the most disastrous retreat in the history of war, at length reached Paris in safety.

In the passage of the Beresina, which soon ensued, Ney again displayed his heroism through scenes of horror which have rarely been paralleled, and never surpassed upon this globe. The genius of the French engineers speedily threw two bridges across the stream.—The army consisted of twenty-seven thousand fighting men, and a disorganized mass of forty thousand stragglers. While the frenzied mass were struggling over these bridges, the Russians, from the adjacent heights were hurling upon them a storm of shot and shell. Sixty thousand Russians manned those batteries. Ney, taking with him but eight thousand troops, plunged into the densest masses of the foe, drove them before him, and took six thousand prisoners.

Though the long hours of a winter's night this horrid scene of tumult and carnage continued. Thousands were crowded from the bridges into the icy stream, and sank with shrieks which rose above the thunders of the battle. A fearful tempest arose of wind and smothering snow. The black mass of men and wagons enabled the Russians to direct their guns with more unerring aim, the howlings of the storm, the gloom of the night, the flash and roar of artillery, the explosion of shells and whistling of balls and bullets, the cries of the onset and the shrieks of the dying, presented a spectacle which has given the passage of the Beresina, perhaps, the most prominent position among all the horrors which have occurred in this lost world. The numbers lost have never been fully ascertained. Thousands were swept to an unknown burial. But, in the spring, as the ice melted, twelve thousand corpses were dragged from the river.—[N. Y. Ledger.

RAVEN STORIES.—It is a curious fact that a bird of so grave and sedate a demeanor as the raven, should so affect inns and taverns. Whether it is that, being burdened with an evil conscience, he seeks there to drown it—not by indulging in intoxicating liquors, but rather in the riot consequent on its absorption by mortals—or whether, being of a cynical turn, he delights in the contemplation of folks doing the same thing from the most opposite reasons—drinking, because they are jolly, because they are miserable, because they can afford it, and because they are so wretchedly poor—is more than I can say. I only know that of the few remaining ravens left in London, at least one-half are attached to public houses, and nearly always to such houses as adhere to the old custom of sign-posts and water troughs.

Some years ago there was attached to a tavern at Stoke Newington a raven whose great antipathy was grey or white horses.—Brown, black or roan horses might halt outside and welcome, but so sure as one of the detested color drew up and appeared at the water trough, Peg was on the alert. She would perch on the very edge of the trough and would abuse the poor animal in the very choicest Billingsgate, or "Gee, who!" in exact imitation of a carter, and start it off. I should have thought all this was done for pure fun and love of mischief, but for an incident related to me by the landlord, and which at once proved that the bird was actuated by sheer malice.

It happened one day that Peg was particularly curious respecting a tobacco-box belonging to a sailor who was drinking ale in the parlor. Presently the sailor took a "quid" from the box and put it in his mouth. Peg watched the operation with great attention, and, observing that the sailor relished the disgusting mouthful, as soon as his back was turned she darted at the box, and swallowed its contents at a gulp. The consequence was that, for the remainder of that day and the next, she was very ill indeed. A few days after, an unlucky white horse, attached to a hay cart, arrived at the house in question, and was drawn up to the trough to drink, and the raven instantly began her persecution. The white horse, however, had met Peg several times before, and had learnt to treat her impudence with indifference. Finding abuse and assault of no avail, Peg turned into the house, and, finding some men smoking in the tap-room, she caught up a paper of tobacco from the table, flew to the edge of the trough with it, and deliberately dropped it into the horse's nose-bag.—[Home Pets.

A REPRESENTATIVE OF MAJESTY.—A man, who had been a commissary in the West Indies, returned to the neighborhood of Inverness (Scotland), and assumed more consequential airs than could be well brooked by the honest natives. One day, being somewhat on his high horse, he called himself the representative of Majesty.

"Hoot, you represent her Majesty's!" was retorted in the due Doric, "her Majesty, God bless her, honest woman, is muckle better represented on a bawbee."

—Coming from a pulpit after a heavy sermon, a popular minister said to his favorite deacon: "Deacon, I'm very tired."

"Indeed!" replied the deacon; "then you'll know how to pity us."

The Art of Not-Hearing.

The art of Not-Hearing should be taught in every well regulated family. It is full as important to domestic happiness as a cultivated ear, for which so much money and time are expended. There are so many things which it is painful to hear, many which we ought not to hear, very many of which, if heard, will disturb the temper, corrupt simplicity and modesty, detract from contentment and happiness—that every one should be educated to take in or shut out sounds, according to their pleasure.

If a man falls into a violent passion and calls me all manner of names, the first word shuts my ears, and I hear no more. If, in my quiet voyage of life, I find myself caught in one of those domestic whirlwinds of scolding, I shut my ears, as a sailor would furl his sails, and making all tight, scud before the gale. If a hot and restless man begins to inflame my feelings, I consider what mischief these sparks might do in the magazine below, where my temper is kept, and instantly close the door.

Does a gadding, mischief-making fellow begin to inform me what people are saying about me, down drops the portcullis of my ear, and he cannot get in any further. Does the collector of neighborhood scandal task my ear as a warehouse, it instinctively shuts up. Some people feel very anxious to hear everything that will vex and annoy them. If it is hinted that any one has spoken ill of them, they set about searching the matter and finding out. If all the petty things said of one by heedless or ill-natured idlers were to be brought home to him, he would become a mere walking pin cushion, stuck full of sharp remarks. I should as soon thank a man for emptying on my bed a bushel of nettles, or setting loose a swarm of mosquitoes in my chamber, or raising a pungent dust in my house generally, as to bring upon me all the tattle of careless or spiteful people. If you would be happy when among good men open your ear; when among bad, shut them. And as the throat has a muscular arrangement by which it takes care of the air-passages of its own accord, so the ears should be trained to an automatic dullness of hearing! It is not worth while to hear what your servants say when they are angry; what your children say after they have slammed the door; what a beggar says whom you have rejected from your door; what your neighbors say about your children; what your rivals say about your business, or your dress.

This art of Not-Hearing, though not taught in the schools, is by no means unknown, or unpracticed in society. I have noticed that a well-bred woman never hears an impertinent or a vulgar remark. A kind of discreet deafness saves one from many insults, from much blame, from not a little apparent connivance in dishonorable conversation.

There are two doors inside my ears: a right hand door leading to the heart, and a left-hand door, with a broad and steep passage, leading out into the open air. This last door receives all ugliness, profanity, vulgarity, mischief-making, which suddenly find themselves outside of me.

Judicious teachers and indulgent parents save young urchins a world of trouble by convenient deafness. Bankers and brokers often are extremely hard of hearing, when unsafe borrowers are importunate. I never hear a man who runs after me in the street, bawling my name at the top of his voice; nor those who talk evil of those who are absent; nor those who give me unasked advice about my own affairs; nor those who talk largely about things of which they are ignorant.

If there are sounds of kindness, of mirth, of love, open fly my ear! But temper, or harshness or hatred, or vulgarity, or flattery, shuts them. If you keep your garden gate shut, your flowers and fruit will be safe. If you keep your doors closed, no thief will run off with your silver; and if you keep your ears shut, your heart will lose neither its flowers nor its treasures.

PATTERNS OF MORALITY.—George III. was one day standing between Lord Eldon and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Sutton. After a moment's pause in the conversation, the King said, gravely, "I am now in a position which, probably, no European King ever occupied before."

Lord Eldon begged his Majesty to explain himself.

"I am standing," said the King, in the same grave tone, between the head of the Church and the head of the Law in my kingdom—men who ought to be the patterns of morality, but who have both been guilty of the greatest immorality."

The two lords—reverend and learned—looked shocked and astonished. Lord Eldon respectfully begged to know what his Majesty alluded.

"Well, my lords," exclaimed the King, in a tone of banter, "tell me, did you not both run away with your wives?" [Such was really the case.]

CLEAVING TO THE DUST.—A Free Church minister in Glasgow gave out as the morning lesson the fourth section of the 119 Psalm, and while looking out the "portion" in their Bibles, he took out his mull, and seizing a hasty pinch with his finger and thumb, regaled his nose with snuff; he then began the lesson, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust." The titter that run round the Church, and the confusion of the poor man, showed that the congregation and he alike felt the psalmist's "pinch."

Air, Sunshine and Health.

A New York merchant noticed, in the progress of years, that each successive book-keeper gradually lost his health, and finally died of consumption, however vigorous and robust he was on entering his service. At length it occurred to him that the little rear room where the books were kept opened in a back yard, and was so surrounded by high walls that no sunshine came into it from one year's end to another. An upper room, well lighted, was immediately prepared, and his clerks had uniform good health ever after. A familiar case to general readers is derived from medical works, where an entire English family became ill, and all remedies seemed to fail of their usual results, when accidentally, a window glass of the family room was broken in cold weather. It was not repaired, and forthwith there was a marked improvement in the health of the inmates. The physician at once traced the connection, discontinued his medicines, and ordered that the window pane should not be replaced.

A French lady became ill. The most eminent physicians of her time were called in, but failed to restore her. At length, Dupuytren, the Napoleon of physic, was consulted. He noticed that she lived in a dim room, into which the sun never shone; the house being situated in one of the narrow streets, or rather lanes of Paris. He at once ordered more airy or cheerful apartments, and all her complaints vanished. The lungs of a dog become tuberculate consumptive in a few weeks, if kept confined in a dark cellar. The most common plant grows spindly, pale and scraggling, if no sunlight falls upon it. The greatest medical names in France, of the last century, regarded sunshine and pure air as equal agents in restoring and maintaining health.

From these facts, which cannot be disputed, the most common mind should conclude that cellars, and rooms on the northern side of buildings, or apartments into which the sun does not immediately shine, should never be occupied as family rooms or chambers or as libraries or studies. Such apartments are only fit for stowage, or purposes which never require persons to remain in them over a few minutes at a time. And every intelligent and humane parent will arrange that the family room and the chambers shall be the most commodious, lightest and brightest apartments in his dwelling.—[Hall's Journal of Health.

AN ANECDOTE OF BURTON.—A friend of the late comedian recently published the following:

I remember an interview I had with Burton, the comedian, a year or two previous to his death. He had but a short time before, while fulfilling an engagement in Philadelphia, become suddenly and alarmingly ill. On consulting Dr. Pancoats, he had decided that he was laboring under a disease of the heart, which must inevitably prove fatal. He however expressed some hope of ultimate recovery, which I endeavored to dissuade him from, under the belief that it is better for a person laboring under an incurable malady to know the worst, in order to be prepared for the final result. I advised him to abandon the stage, give up his theatrical management, and with his abundant means endeavor to lead for the short time he might be spared a life of ease and one consonant with his approaching end. "I cannot abandon the stage," he replied; "it furnishes me with an excitement which I cannot live without. I should be driven to think of myself and should go crazy."

He invited me to come that evening and witness the effect. He was already on the bills for "Sir Tony Belch." I accepted his invitation, and never knew him to be more humorous or more fully appreciated by the audience, who were convulsed with laughter. How little did they think that the source of all this laughter was at that very moment a gloomy, morose man, who had a full consciousness that he carried in his person an incurable malady that must inevitably terminate his life in a short period!

REMINISCENCE OF AARON BURR.—The Hartford press has this reminiscence of Aaron Burr:

We have before us a bundle of old bills that were found in Aaron Burr's office in New York. Among them are some bills for wine; and it is strikingly noticeable that they are not receipted. But the first one, "Dr. to Thomas Roach," which begins with a balance unpaid of £2 9s., Feb. 4, 1789, shows that he had paid something sometime. The next item is Dec. 23, 1790, 2 galls. Port wine, 18s. then 2 galls ditto San. 15, 1791; 2 more Jan. 31; and 5 galls. Madeira. March 22. But he must have been very thirsty about that date, for we also find a bill from John Shaw for 4½ galls. Madeira, March 22, 1791, and March 23 for 4 galls. Serry. And, as if he got impatient at such little dribbles, we find that on the 10th of April, 1791, he bought of Lynch & Slough-ton 22½ galls. Sherry at 12s. the gallon. Thirty-six gallons of wine within twenty days! Alas, where is the receipt for it? What nights of revel do these time-yellowed bills conjure up; what dinners, what sparkling suppers, where wit and beauty flashed and reigned, and the flow of hilarity was not choked—for the nonchalant manner of the host gave no sign that Lynch & Slough-ton were cooling their heels at the door with their "little bills" for the "bubbles that swim on the beaker's brim."