

"THE TRAGEDY OF THE MARSH."

Translated for the "Argonaut" from the French of J. G. Masson.

I tell the tale as 'twas told to me by Noel, keeper of the pastures, one day when I was duck-hunting on the marshes of Saint-Georges. We had beaten the prince's enclosure, Dick in advance, nose to the wind, Noel bringing up the rear, with my game-bag—which, alas! was not heavy—on his shoulder. The noonday sun fell perpendicularly upon our heads; the mosquitoes swarmed about us by thousands, first making their presence known by sounding a charge in our ears. The Seine—a long ribbon that unrolled itself in its passage around the hills—glistened like a mirror before our eyes. On the opposite bank Quillebois, with its gray grove green through long and intimate contact with the marsh, its slate roofs scattered pell-mell around the old church, and its white light-house, like an advance guard, stood upright at the foot of the pier.

We were approaching the rushes with gun half-cocked and ear strained to catch the faintest sound. Suddenly I detected a rustling among the reeds. "Hist!" whispered Noel; "watch attentively, but be in no haste." Thereupon, to my astonishment, he seized without ceremony the following-piece with which I had taken aim. "For God's sake, do not fire! It is crazy Jeanne!"

Through the tall grasses, which prevented my clearly discerning the object, I now perceived a white shadow reflected in the rippling waters. Soon a fantastic figure appeared on the other side of the rushes. It was of a still youthful woman, pale and emaciated, whose eyes glittered with that restless, lurid light which marks the prey of consuming fever. Hanging loosely from her waist was a skirt that had been originally white, but now it was bediggled with mud. She wore crossed over her bosom, a red shawl, while on her head, entangled in her heavy hair, was a bridal wreath—crushed and torn, and matted with grasses. She paused and gazed at us, took two steps forward with both arms extended, then paused anew. For an instant she stood thus, with face motionless as a statue; then gave utterance to a strange cry, half sob, which awakened from its reverie and put to flight a high heron that was sunning itself in a neighboring field.

"Come, be still, silly one," said Noel, in his harsh, rough voice, at the sound of which the poor creature behind her skirts with both hands, and pursued her erratic course toward Saint-Georges.

We seated ourselves on a neighboring hillock in the immediate vicinity, under the shade of the silvery willows, and, at my request, after having first taken a drop to restore cheerfulness, the keeper began his narrative, to the hoarse accompaniment furnished gratis by the frogs from out the ditch.

Jeanne's father (said Noel) is the host of the inn where you are now staying. Previous to her misfortune, Jeanne was universally considered to be the belle of all the country hereabouts; nor was there within a radius of ten leagues an inn more frequented than that of Pere Simon. The line of carriages drawn up in the courtyard Sunday after Sunday was a sight worth seeing. Calashes and omnibuses from Havre, conveying thither gay parties attracted to the inn by the fame of its *maitelote*, hunters, equipages, with their liveried coachmen; to say nothing of traveler's gigs of every description, and heavy farm wagons, whose horses stopped of their own accord before the door.

Jeanne was the life and soul of the house. In the *salon*, where the villagers were wont to assemble in friendly converse over a cup of coffee or glass of wine; in the kitchen, where all absolutely glittered in its cleanliness; in the cellar, filled to repletion with its barrels of cider and rows of wine bottles. In short, everywhere her snowy cap was visible. She was ever on the alert, watching mightily every eye or her ready wit, and was always ready to laugh at a good joke, which no one could better appreciate than herself.

Pere Simon, seated at his counter in the midst of many hued bottles, gathered in the earnings that cost him nothing but the trouble of clinking glasses with his guests.

"Am I the first?"

"It is to be hoped so, as it is not yet daybreak. With the three exceptions of you, myself, and that great bull yond, who is regarding us so intently while chewing the cud, all the world is asleep. God be praised—that is to say, all the Saint-Georges."

"So much the better." So saying, Delaporte walked off with long strides, and soon disappeared in the light fog that floated over the meadows. I then called to mind the fact that on the previous day I had pointed out to him a covey of snipe on the upper marsh-lands. Doubtless he thought to effect a master stroke and surprise me before dawn, and he was right.

Near Pere La Thiele's I thought I detected something like a shadow gliding along through the trees and taking the same direction as that taken by Jules. "Another hunter," thought I to myself; "but no—no one but Jules Delaporte is such a simpleton as to beat the prairie before it is sufficiently light enough to see distinctly, at the risk of starting the game, while yet unable to take aim with any degree of decision."

The new day had but just shown itself above the horizon when the first shot resounded in the distance. "My friend Jules," thought I, "is frightening the ducks."

Soon all was stir on the marsh. The snipe, screaming with fright, set at defiance the unskilled huntsman by flying over his head far beyond his reach, whilst the rail and curlew ran under the very noses of the dogs, scattering themselves in the rushes. On all sides the shots resounded, like a volley of musketry, until at sunset men and dogs alike too weary to take another step, fled homeward, wet, dirty, and tired.

It was nightfall when returning home, I met Pere Simon's stable-boy. He looked frightened and anxious. Monsieur Delaporte had not returned. Mademoiselle Jeanne, after several hours of anxious suspense, had set off, as though distracted, in search of her lover. The whole night was spent in exploring the prairies with the aid of lanterns. Occasionally we paused, thinking we heard a call for help. It was but a flock of curlew that, flying over our heads, pierced the black and still expanse of heaven with their mournful cry. It was not until daylight that Jules was found, there, sitting, right there opposite where you are now sitting, in the bottom of the creek, with his head buried in the mud, his arms extended, his hands already shriveled. At first it was supposed that he had been drowned; but after extracting him with no little difficulty, and removing the mask of mud from his face, it was discovered to be terribly disfigured, literally peppered with little black holes, from which had oozed streams of blood. His gun was found in the rushes within a distance of some thirty feet, with both barrels discharged.

Upon examination, the physician decided that the wounds had not been mortal, but the unfortunate man, blinded by the discharge, after having turned several times in his bewilderment, for the tracks of his footsteps were clearly discernible in the mud—had finally sunk in the quagmire, where he had died from suffocation, and the incoming tide had covered him over.

Jeanne regarded the corpse with that fixed vacant stare which you saw in her

eyes just now. Then with a piercing scream she exclaimed:

"He killed him! It is he who killed him!"

The tone in which these words were uttered was heart-rending. The next instant she fell upon the ground insensible.

"From that poor girl we have been crazy. But the fever has pined her in her misery, and will soon send her to join in the cemetery him whom she still seeks among the rushes."

"And the author of the crime?" I said.

"It was not a crime," Noel replied, shrugging his shoulders at a simple accident of the chase, that was all—such, at least, was the verdict of the coroner's jury. Raymond, who was immediately accused, brought witnesses to prove that at the time of the accident he was in town, whither he had carried a load of hay. It was afterwards recalled to mind that two young men, strangers to the spot, had precipitately withdrawn after seeing the hunter's hunt. They were seen later, looking so pale, what anxious and troubled. Some advanced the opinion that it was not improbable that, owing to the high rushes and the heavy fog of the morning, the involuntary author of the crime had gone his way, happily unconscious of the occurrence."

"No?" said I.

"It is my opinion, monsieur, that the sun is sinking; therefore high time that we return home."

THE U. S. SUPREME COURT.

A Pen-and-Ink Photograph of the Judges and Their Wonderful Clerk.

It is not true, the attaches of the court say, that any of the justices have had gowns made in Paris by Worth. They are all home made and have been worn by one family of people for nearly forty years. Zach Chandler had a very poor opinion of these gowns, for it is said of him that he once said to Salmon P. Chase, a former chief justice: "Salmon, when you have your old jacket on you look every inch a judge. There is no reason why one of these gowns should be called a jacket, for the skirt reaches the floor. The gowns are put on the justices in what is called the robe room, adjoining the court, at five minutes to 12 o'clock, for the judges never go upon the bench until high noon. Then, after the marshal's deputy sings his song in person. The notary speaks in a low tone, and the Justice, in a loud voice, reads the opinion. To that effect, the arrival of the justices having been previously announced, they take their seats and are ready for business.

The clerkship of the court is worth more than the salary of four of the justices, as it is said to frequently pay over \$40,000 per year. The charges are simply terrible. It costs about a dollar for the clerk to look at you, and another dollar to get out of his sight. They have a little talk of keeping the decisions back as long as possible, often a couple of months, and in the meantime if any one wants a copy of the decision it costs \$2 for each page of one hundred words. There is no good reason why the clerk should not be paid in type the day they are delivered, and furnished with the debates of congress are furnished, the day following; but this was not the practice sixty years ago, and they never do anything about the court except in the time-honored and excessively slow way. This, all agree, would be a great convenience, but it would cost \$10,000 a year out of the fees of the clerk. To be sure, it is not done. Several times bills have been prepared for introduction in congress on the subject, but somehow nothing was heard of them afterward. Those who proposed them were convinced that it was not the custom, and they let the matter drop. The supreme court has always held that every bill relating to the court must first be sent to them for inspection, and, strange as it may appear, they have always carried this point in their respect.

When Belva Lockwood, the female lawyer, applied for admission to practice before the court, the justices were shocked and the clerk horrified. The court considering the application, and after holding it under advisement for a month or so, gravely declared against her, on the ground that it was against the custom, if not law. Belva in reply said it was against the custom once to ride in a railroad car, or to light up a house with gas, but those customs were not in keeping with the progress of the times. The reply was that there was no help for her. Belva, being practical, slipped over to the senate, drew a bill giving women the right to be admitted to the bar, and it was passed, and had it introduced. She had a similar bill introduced in the house, which body passed it. The senate in turn passed it, and now the custom was a thing of the past. A law took its place, and she or any other woman is now perfectly free to get a big fee for appearing and arguing a case before the supreme court, provided she is prepared to do so on the day called for.

It is against the custom, and no one is allowed to do it under penalty of being put out of the court room, for any one, newspaper reporter or lawyer even, to write a word in the court room, or take a note of any point in a decision or remark of any of the judges. This appears strange, and yet it is a fact, and the same rule of newspaper correspondents who know it from being prevented. The custom is to go to the clerk, and wait a week or so for him to make such extracts of an opinion as are wanted and to pay him his fees. The only way to get over this is to keep the points in your head and write them out after coming out of the court room, which has to be done on the day called decision day.

The opinions of the supreme court are much too long. They go into a history of every case, and often a person has to read a half hour or so before the point in the decision is reached. But all this plays into the hands of the clerk. He gets wealthy in consequence of the fact that the readers of a paper in these days of telegraph and newspaper are too busy to wait for a decision. The judges are too slow. They don't intend to be slow; but they are, without knowing it. It is seldom that a decision can be had in less than a month after a case has been argued. In similar courts in England a decision is given in five minutes after a case is argued. This is as it should be. The judges, in holding off their decisions, without knowing it, are enriching a certain number of resident attorneys at the expense of other attorneys who do not happen to reside here; for knowing the delay, the expenses of waiting, &c., non-resident lawyers frequently are required to secure the assistance of resident attorneys to argue and look after their cases.

One of the customs is that each justice has a lady servant. The justices get money for their own body servants, but the custom is otherwise, and the body servants are paid \$1,300 per annum by the government. Some of the justices want to select their own body servants, but are not allowed to do it by the other body servants, for the custom is that the newly appointed justice retain the body servant of his predecessor. The body servants have never been known to allow a justice to violate this custom.

Mr. Justice Woods was appointed by Garfield in speaking to some gentlemen of this custom said: "My body servant is the most annoying thing I have yet experienced. The fellow is the first man I see in the morning and the last I see at night. He forced his way into my room at the Elliot house, ordered me to go down to breakfast, and then

asked me what I would have for breakfast, taking my orders to the cooks himself. I could not get rid of him in any way. He haunted me all the time. I tried to find places to send him to get rid of him, but he was back as quick as lightning. That fellow will be the death of me. I have this satisfaction, however, the other justices are tortured in the same way."

When Mr. Justice Gray of Massachusetts recently went on the supreme bench, he had an idea he would do just as he pleased; but after a trial he finally had to yield, and is now as completely in the power of his body servant as any of the others. He not only was not allowed to select a man for himself, but was forced to accept the services of a fellow who had been on the bench, and not one of the body servants does a thing different from what he did years ago. As a rule, the body servants are past middle age. The fathers and grandfathers of some of them served in the same capacity, for they never let a new man into the ring.

THE SMUGGLER'S BRIDE.

An Artist's Story.

The sun had disappeared behind the rocks on the Sorrento coast one midsummer evening, and I had long since laid aside my sketching materials; still I lingered far beyond the usual hour, and watched the dark blue waves as they rolled up and then slowly receded. The thin veil of mist that evening Yessavus was still illuminated by the sun's declining rays, that lent a warm color to the column of smoke as it rose from the mountain top and curled away in the distance. As the twilight deepened the stars became brighter, and the moon rose, adding new charms to the scenery that had held me enchanted. Presently I discovered a fishing-boat that had been detached from the side of a small sailing-vessel in the harbor, rapidly approaching. When near enough to shore, a man jumped out, pulled in the boat by means of a rope attached to the stern, and hastily fastened it to the rocks. A woman followed, then both secured several large bundles by means of straps to their backs, and began to climb toward me. I wondered at the evident ease with which they ascended the steep declivity, for their burden seemed heavy. The woman came first, but on observing me took the opposite direction, and soon vanished with her companion behind a projecting rock.

While I waited to see whether they would reappear, a scream startled me, and at the same time several small bundles, accompanied by sand and stones, came rattling about my feet. Somebody has met with an accident, I thought, stooping to examine the bundles, but when I found the contents to be cigars and tobacco, I concluded that the two people whose landing I had watched were neither more nor less than smugglers, who had probably been surprised, and had thrown away their wares to secure their own personal safety. Approaching footsteps caused me to look up, just in time to observe a young girl spring from a dizzy height and run toward me. In an instant I recognized Nina—a bell Nina—as she was called. She greeted me with a simple "good evening," as composedly as though we had met on the beach, and with remarkable self-possession proceeded to gather together scattered articles of which she again made a large bundle.

Suddenly we heard the report of a pistol. The girl raised her hand to her ear and listened. As the sound was repeated an anxious cry escaped her lips, and she started up the rocks. "I do not know," she said, "I do not know, but it is an extreme difficulty that I could keep her in sight, so rapidly did she make her way over the rough, broken ground."

Reaching at last an open space, on which stood a huge stone cross, Nina knelt devoutly at its base, and bent her head to listen. All was silent. "Come," she called softly. No answer. Then she rose, and repeated the name in a louder tone. Hers was uttered in reply, as a young man advanced from some hiding-place not far off. With a cry of delight she sprang into his arms. A moment's whispered conversation ensued; then, turning toward me with a merry laugh, and a good-night friend, the young man disappeared with Nina.

There seemed nothing more to detain me, so I returned at once by the nearest road to the hotel, where a good supper awaited me. I was so late that most of the guests had deserted the dining-room, but my friend, Professor Baruff, of Cologne, still sat at a table smoking. "I had acquainted him with my little adventure, he replied:

"I should have known of whom you spoke, even though you had not discovered their names; those two will continue their unlawful trade until they are arrested. It is a perfect passion, fed by the profit, which is by no means inconsiderable. I have actually seen Francesco and his band, with their wares, in broad daylight. To be sure, they run no great risk at any time, for the whole gang work in concert, and have signals by which to ascertain whether the coast be clear before they venture ashore. Nina has had remarkably good luck, so far; but she will yet come to grief, no doubt."

"Is she a native of Capri?" I asked.

"Listen, and I will tell you all I know of her. About nineteen years ago two women, one young; the other middle-aged, landed at Sorrento. They stopped at the hotel two or three days, then removed to a little house over there next to the church, where the old apple-woman now has her stall. A few weeks later the younger woman gave birth to a child, the Nina whom you met to-night. As Francesco was just two months old at the time, his mother was engaged to nurse the new infant and the elder woman went away. Nobody knew whence the young mother had come, and there was much speculation as to whether she was French or Spanish, but she was so reserved that it was impossible to question her. Her little house was plainly furnished, but there was an air of refinement and luxury that proved its occupant to be possessed of ample means and good taste. Her personal appearance is recalled to my memory when I see Nina, for she has her mother's dark, dreamy eyes, light, oval face, finely chiseled mouth, and a face, but she is somewhat taller, and her figure is more developed.

"Business of importance called me to France the autumn Nina was born, and I did not return to Sorrento for three years. The night of this hotel and the little house opposite revived the curiosity I had felt concerning the young mother who, I soon heard, had deserted her child as soon as it could walk. For the first few months of the little one's existence she did not leave it for an hour at a time, but as it grew older she would make frequent trips to Naples, always returning before night, until one day when, without the slightest warning, she failed to reappear. Francesco's mother took charge of her foster child, whom she loved very tenderly, and the two children grew up together; so inseparable were they that they were known by the villagers as 'The Twins.'"

"When Nina was ten years of age, the priest received a letter enclosing two francs and francs which he was requested to hand to the child's parents. Nobody could decipher the post-mark, and no sign has since come to prove that Nina has a friend outside of Sorrento.

"But the two thousand francs were a fortune to the poor people, who built the little house, which they still live in."

"The twins are united as ever, but their sentiment toward each other must have undergone somewhat of a change, for they are to be married in the autumn. That is my story, and now let us be off to our rooms, for the land-lord has looked in two or three times to see whether he may extinguish the light."

Early the next morning Francesco awaited me in the court-yard with the drawing materials I had left on the rock the previous evening. I inquired about Nina. "Benissimo!" he replied, with a bright smile and graceful bow as he hurried away to join her at the gate. As the two sauntered down the road, hand in hand, I wondered whether in all the world a handsomer or happier looking couple could be found. Even at some inconveniences to myself, I resolved, as I watched them, to stay for their marriage, which was fixed for the following month. But Providence ordained otherwise.

On the 17th of August—how well I remember the date—just two weeks after the event related above, I was engaged on my picture of the Euryglottis, but the weather was so oppressive that after an hour's work

I resolved to seek a shady spot, and await a cooler part of the day. A pinkish haze obscured the mountains, and the blaze of the sun almost blinded my eyes. Not a breath of air was stirring. Scarcely a ripple disturbed the glassy surface of the water. A deep stillness, broken only by the incessant buzzing and humming of insects, prevailed. Overcome by the heat, I soon fell asleep. At the expiration of three hours I awoke with a start from a troubled dream, in which a giant had seemed to be pressing me down into the bowels of the earth. I looked about; the whole face of nature had undergone a change while I slept. The angry waves had risen almost as high as the rocks against which they dashed with wild force, filling the now murky air with an ominous echo; heavy clouds had settled down on the mountains, and the wind howled furiously among the rocks.

Just beyond the curve on the coast, nearly opposite to where I sat, men, women, and children were running about, and looking out to sea. Evidently something had excited them. I strained my eyes in the direction they were looking, and beheld a vessel, with the crew, in a state of commotion. The occupants of the vessel, I well knowing how slim a chance there was for anybody against such a sea. With considerable difficulty I made my way around to the other side, and then I could distinguish two people in the little boat. Four or five sturdy fishermen had gone down to the very edge of an overhanging rock, with heavy ropes, which two of them fastened securely beneath their arms, their companions retaining a firm hold of the other end. Then, with coils of rope in their hands, they bravely jumped into the water, and waded out as far as they dared. The anxiety increased with each moment, and loud screams filled the air when a tremendous wave broke right over the boat. A moment of suspense, then a man, holding a woman in his arms, could be seen swimming, or rather being dashed by the waves, toward the shore. The rope was thrown out to him. He clutched it, and the men on the rock pulled steadily. But it was of no use, for the wave raised above the struggling human being high above the projecting rock, and dashed the lifeless forms close to the feet of their rescuers.

They were hastily removed beyond danger, while the workmen recognizing Nina and Francesco, eagerly set to work to apply the resuscitating and repeated experience made familiar to them.

Half an hour passed before Nina showed signs of life. As she began to breathe, and the color slowly returned to her lips she turned to look for her companion. A group of men with bowed, uncovered heads, surrounded all that remained of the boat. Nina was not necessary to such questions, for Nina was no stranger to such scenes. With a scream that pierced every man and woman present, she broke away with superhuman strength from those who sought to restrain her, and fell unconscious on the breast of her beloved.

Two days later all the villagers stood around Francesco's grave. The solemn words of the gray-haired priest found an echo in every heart, for each person present had lost a friend in the young man whom they had known and loved from infancy.

The last prayer was uttered, the coffin was lowered into the earth, when a murmur passed through the assembled throng, and the name of Nina was mentioned with a mouth, as the young girl slowly advanced toward us. Every eye was fixed on her as she made her way to the priest's side. She was dressed in white, carried a bouquet in her hand, and a bridal veil was fastened with a wreath of flowers to her head. She was ghastly pale, but a heavenly smile lit up her face.

For one instant, as she stood, the light of peace broke on her countenance, and she bowed her head when the priest, raising both hands on high, uttered the solemn words:

"The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

The morning dew of the following day bathed with its rosy haze the steep slopes of hoary ruins, and woke from their slumbers the flowers wherein lay chilled dead a peasant plodding past the village churchyard saw, stretched upon the new-made mound, a slender form. The whiteness of her garments glistened in the dawning glimmer of the opening day. Her arms were wreathed about her head, as if to die in their embrace all that lay beneath. From under a twining bridal-veil, crept half-imprisoned locks of shimmering gold. The man reverently approached the grave. He could detect no sound or movement in the figure. Drawing nearer, he gently raised the prostrate girl.

It was dead, and she was dead.—Adapted for the Argonaut from the German.

Saphir and Angela.

Esthetes do not wear artificial flowers. No starch is used in laundering any of their garments. Roskin is the modern apostle of the esthetic idea. All the minor writers, poets and artists have received their inspiration from him, but many have improved upon his hints, and many have discarded the habit of wearing dog ears. His constant teaching is that only the true and permanent can be beautiful. He asks that dwelling houses shall be built to last, and be built to be lovely. That whatever we buy shall be that which will be a joy to the one who made it, and a satisfaction and pleasure to the one who uses it, on account of its excellence and beauty. He demands that the houses in which we do things in these days, and urges artists, architects, builders, workers of all kinds requiring the exercise of the art of designing, to study natural forms, and particularly those peculiar to their own native land. It is only carrying out Mr. Ruskin's principle when Mr. Oscar Wilde tells us that we Americans have missed the best part of art and architecture in our great Western flora.

Atlanta's Pretty Shoemaker.

Says a correspondent of the Savannah Georgia News: Atlanta can boast of genuine curiosity, a live female shoemaker young, pretty and industrious. Having passion to send my little nephew with a pair of boots to be mended, he surprised me by his return by remarking that "she" said, and so about the boots. I then learned for the first time that we had in our neighborhood a young girl under 20 years of age, the daughter of a shoemaker, who daily works at the trade herself, not only mending, but making in good style both boots and shoes. For several years she had thus been engaged, and has won the patronage of a large circle of appreciative families.

Business Realism.

Derriek Dod.

You may say what you please about realism and high art, but one of the most disillusionizing things that can happen to a theater-goer is to sit in an inside stage box at the Baldwin and listen to two Dunning exclaim in agonizing tones: "Great heavens, it can not be possible that my poor, injured child still loves her miserable, guilty mother!" and then distinctly hear her add in an aside: "Forty-two—and four are forty-six—and—eleven—fifty-seven—and—why, from mine, she's not! There aren't over \$35 in the whole house."