

IN A FINE FRENZY ROLLING.

A PROSE POEM ON RODIN'S "BALZAC"
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From The Saturday Review.

It was a morning in June when I walked up the Champs Elysées on my way to the Salon in the Champs de Mars. The Place of Peace was bathed in white sunlight, and there was something fresh and hopeful in the cool, thin air. The gibbering ghosts that at nightfall and in the early dawn crowd about the central fountain and mock the effort of the cleansing waters to wash away the bloodstains had all vanished, and the little victorias spun about and the people smiled and chattered as if the past and its enthralling life had no existence. Everything was lightsome and gay; nature seemed to have lent man the quickened pulses of her renewed youth. The great white road drew me, and as I walked I saw the shadowy legions winding up the long hill, and the crowds that rushed together behind them were like the waters seething in the wake of a great ship. At the next moment I was admiring the avenue of chestnut trees with their tiny lamps of waxen blossom.

In half an hour I was to see Rodin's statue of Balzac. What would it be like? Rochefort, whose instinct in matters of Art is almost as fine as his vision of Politics is false, had lectured Rodin, and sided with the Society of the Gens de Lettres, who rejected the artist's gift. His article in the "Intransigent" had ended with the words, "Literature in painting is bad enough, but the whole of the 'Comédie humaine' in one plaster figure is absurd." But was Rochefort to be trusted to criticize Rodin? True, he had bought Goyas when no one cared to look at them, and bronzes of Barye when the sculptor's name was only known to the keeper of the Jardin des Plantes as that of an importunate visitor, who wanted to spend the night as well as the day in studying the great cats. Blake's phrase,

"Nor is it possible for thought
A greater than itself to know,"

came into my mind and put Rochefort out of it. After all, our own wonderful critic D. S. M. had praised Rodin's work without, however, describing it. Perhaps I was to have a new artistic sensation and my steps quickened. How I got to the Salon I do not know; it surely was not I who put down a coin and asked the way; yet here I was passing swiftly through a forest of marble figures with dry throat and leaping heart. For there it stood at the far end, and my excitement was so great that I could not face the hope that sprang to life in me as I peered at it furtively with myopic eyes. I stopped before Rodin's "Balzac"; that I had seen before, three years before, in the sculptor's studio. But the impression was the old one; the figures are wonderfully modelled; the muscles on the shoulders of the man are knotted and gnarled like oak-tree roots and the great tendon of the leg is strained till the strands begin to separate as the strands of a cable strained to the bursting. And the woman's figure is even finer in its lovely curves of swooning abandonment. "All our modern literature," said Ste. Beuve, "is sensual," and he might have added, "all our art, too." But sensuality here, as in life, has its compensation in a passion of tenderness. Notice how the man's hand only dares to touch the tender flesh and how his arm supports her head and neck. The thing is a masterpiece; but it does not satisfy me as a masterpiece should, and by patient looking I find the reason. The contrast between the man's form and the woman's is fine, but the attitude does not bring out the higher characteristics and beauties of the man's figure as it should. The attitude is conceived in a passion of admiration for the woman's figure, and that is superbly and characteristically rendered; but the man's figure is of necessity huddled and dwarfed. I should prefer to see the woman's figure alone and receive from it the single imperious impression. After all, the kiss is the life of woman, but not of man. With a lingering glance of admiration I turn to the Balzac and approach it from the front, as it is meant to be approached.

The first impression made upon me is that of an extraordinary grotesque, a something monstrous and superhuman. Under the old dressing-gown, with its empty sleeves, the man stands with hands held together in front of him and head thrown back. There is something theatrical in the pose, something uncanny in the head. Yes, uncanny; the jaws are so large that they seem to fall on to the great chest and form a part of it, and then the cavernous hollows of the eyes without eyeballs or sight, and above, the forehead, made narrow by the locks of hair. A grotesque of extraordinary power. The personality of the figure is oppressive; there is in it a passion of labor and achievement, of self-assertion and triumph, which excites fear and antagonism. Here is a Titan who has made a world, and could unmake as well. There is something demonic in the thing that thrills the blood. But, after all, that is the first impression left on one by the author of "La Comédie Humaine." A mighty workman was Balzac, who wrote forty volumes that have fallen into oblivion and been lost, but beyond hope of recovery, and then wrote forty more that constitute the greatest dramatic achievement ever produced by one intelligence, except perhaps that of Shakespeare, and then sat coolly down and told the world that he had now learned his art and meant to do extraordinary things, books that should have form as well as meaning, books that—suddenly Death held the restless hands to stillness, and froze the eager brain. Did Rodin mean his work to give this impression?

I moved round the statue, and was struck by the profile. Here the grotesque vanished and the living face appeared. Seen sideways the statue shows a wonderful likeness to Balzac as he undoubtedly was. True, the mustache curls upward cynically, but otherwise the face is the face of Balzac himself, with the large jaws and bulbous, scented nose and eager eyes—a face instinct with a devouring vitality and intelligence.

At length I became aware of Rodin's meaning. Looked at from the front, his statue shows the soul of Balzac, the boundless self-assertion of the great workman, the flaming spirit of one given to labor and triumph. True, there is something theatrical in it, something of conscious pose in the crossed hands and the head thrown backward; but the pose itself is of the man and characteristic. The profile, on the other hand, is the outward presentment of the man, Balzac in his habit as he lived, the leaping spirit thrallied in "this muddy vesture of decay."

I know that some critics—good critics, too—will tell me that this statue, which seen in front gives, as it were, the soul of Balzac, and, seen sideways, gives his very form and image,

is and must be an outrage upon all the canons of art. Did not Sir Joshua Reynolds say that "the attempt to unite contrary excellences of form, for instance in a single figure can never escape degenerating into the monstrous but by sinking into the insipid; by taking away its marked character, and weakening its expression"? All this theoretic stuff may be right enough and even valuable, but what has it to do with me upon whom this monstrosity, this grotesque, has left a deathless impression? In all the range of plastic art I can compare this statue to nothing save the great figure of Michelangelo, which some speak of as the "Day" and others as the "Morning." It will be remembered that Angelo has left the forehead unhewn, uncouth, but by this trick the rest of the face is plunged into deep shadow, and it looks as if the light of the dawning were on the forehead. Here, too, is a grotesque with a fulness of meaning not to be reached by ordinary forms. Here, again, is a divine chance rewarding the workman of genius. "Chance," I call it, for it was chance and nothing else that made Angelo finish the lower part of the face first; chance, too, the happy chance that befalls the maker of a hundred busts that gave Rodin this grandiose idea. Here at last is a statue of a great man worthy of the man's genius, and it was rejected, naturally enough, by the most eminent society of amateurs in France. Right, too: "I came to my own, and my own received me not."

WHEN ENGLAND OWNED MANILA.

BOTH THE PHILIPPINES AND CUBA WERE ONCE
BRITISH POSSESSIONS.

From The Fortnightly Review.

Both the great island possessions—in the West and East Indies, respectively—which are now the seats of war between Spain and the United States were for a time during last century possessions of the British Empire. Havana and



MAJOR-GENERAL JOSEPH WHEELER.
Commanding the cavalry division before Santiago.

Manila were both captured by Great Britain in 1762, and Cuba and the Philippines occupied. A very rare and interesting "Plain Narrative" of the capture of Manila was published by Rear-Admiral Cornish and Brigadier-General Draper in reply to accusations of infringement of the capitulations made against these officers by the Spaniards. Their own allegations are sufficiently strong: "Through the whole of the above transactions the Spaniards, by evasions, avoided complying with the capitulations in every one respect, except in bringing the money from the Misericordia and Ordencara (ships), which it was out of their power to secrete. They basefully and ungratefully took up arms against us after having their lives given them. They preached publicly in their churches rebellion," etc.

At the Peace of Paris (1763), however, which concluded the Seven Years' War, Canada, Louisiana and various islands in the West Indies having been ceded by France, and Florida and Minorca by Spain, Great Britain on her part ceded to the latter Power Cuba and the Philippines. Yet there is still to be seen—or was during my residence at Manila—at the mouth of the Pasig, and under the ramparts, a dilapidated brick and stucco monument with an inscription celebrating the expulsion of the invading British by the noble and patriotic Don Simon de Anda—an inscription which afforded great amusement to British naval officers visiting the port.

EASILY RECOGNIZED.

From Judge.

"You say," inquired the Washington officer, "that you saw the runaway team coming down the street before it was within four blocks of you. Why didn't you run down some alley or cross street?"

"I didn't think of it," moaned the injured man. "I had no map of the city with which to find the location of any alley or cross street." The officer immediately became all attention, for he now knew that the victim was a member of the strategy board.

"LITTLE JOE" WHEELER.

SOME STORIES OF THE CAREER OF
THE EX-CONFEDERATE CAV-
ALRY LEADER.

Washington, July 16.—Among the prominent actors in the military operations in Cuba none are more interesting or picturesque than Major-General Joseph Wheeler. He is a soldier by instinct, education and training; a personification of mental and physical activity and nervous energy, and one of the most curious and inquisitive of men. That he should climb a tree on the picket line at the age of sixty-two, with a field glass slung to his shoulders, in order to observe the position and movements of the enemy, was as natural and characteristic of him as that he should strive and win in a footrace against a bicycle across the Capitol plaza in Washington a few months ago. Nearly forty years ago he was a light dragoon in the United States Army—in fact, weighing little more than a hundred pounds—and he is a light dragoon yet in the same sense, for he does not tip the scale when it is weighted with more than a hundred and twenty pounds.

Young Wheeler was a born cavalryman, and when he resigned his second lieutenant's commission in the 5th Dragoons in 1861, in order to serve the Confederacy, it was with some reluctance that he accepted a first lieutenant's commission in the artillery and an assignment to garrison duty at Pensacola. A few months later he received a colonel's commission in an Alabama infantry regiment. At the battle of Shiloh the regiment and its commander distin-

guished themselves. The former suffered heavy losses in the battle, but Colonel Wheeler, according to the official report of General Chalmers, his brigade commander, "bravely charged at the head of the small remnant of his regiment and the remnant of Mississippians, bearing the regimental colors aloft." In this charge two horses were shot under him. Wheeler's horse always offered a better target than his rider, and before the war ended sixteen had been shot and killed under him in battle, "besides a great number wounded," as he once remarked. He was always in the thick of the fight, even after he rose to the command of a division and a corps, and duty on his staff was by no means merely ornamental or a sinecure. From first to last no fewer than thirty-two of his staff officers were killed or wounded while riding beside him in battle. He himself did not always come off scot free. He was three times slightly wounded, and once "painfully," as he expressed it, and his "saddle equipments and clothes were also frequently struck by the missiles of the enemy." The "painful" wound was received in an engagement near Nashville, Tenn., after Bragg's retreat from Kentucky in 1862. On this occasion General Wheeler's horse "was torn in pieces by an exploding shell, his aid was killed beside him, and himself painfully wounded," but he mounted another horse, secured another aide-de-camp and continued the fight.

LEADING A FORLORN HOPE.

What took place on another occasion when Wheeler was covering the retreat of the Confederate forces—a duty which he was frequently required to perform in the course of his career—is thus described:

It was now sundown; everything was across

Duck River in security, and he was about to make another charge when a staff officer caught him and pointed to the rear, where the enemy had again surrounded him with another column. Wheeler quickly, he charged through it and plunged headlong into the river, then swollen to a mighty torrent, and amid a storm of bullets, making the water fairly foam, he climbed up the opposite bank. Of the sixty who formed this "forlorn hope" only thirteen escaped, and three of these were badly wounded.

On the third day of Bragg's retreat after the battle of Missionary Ridge General Wheeler's cavalry, as usual, was covering the retreat. It became necessary to make a stand for a short time, and General "Pat" Cleburne, with his division of infantry, was detailed to strengthen the cavalry. Of course Wheeler was in the thick of the fight which followed, and "his hat was pierced with a Minie bullet and his foot contused by a fragment of shell."

General Wheeler was sent soon afterward with his cavalry to co-operate with Longstreet in the operations against Burnside in East Tennessee. On December 28, 1863, the former attacked a supply train with a small force and was repulsed, but he "checked the charge of the Yankee cavalry by a counter-charge with his staff and escort." "During the melee which ensued General Wheeler was entirely enveloped by the enemy," but he managed to escape this time with a whole skin.

WHEELER'S CAVALRY RAIDS.

Some of General Wheeler's most daring and successful exploits during the war were his cavalry raids and counter-raids. He was a constant and terrible menace to the Union lines and means of communication and transportation. Railway locomotives and cars were destroyed and bridges burned by the hundred, hundreds of wagons and thousands of mules were captured and carried off or burned and killed, and millions of dollars' worth of quartermasters', commissary, ordnance and medical stores shared a like fate. Thousands of Union soldiers lived on half or quarter rations, and hundreds of Army horses and mules starved for want of forage on account of the operations of Wheeler's cavalry.

In January, 1863, in a raid on General Rosecrans's line of communication, General Wheeler, with a brigade of cavalry, attacked and destroyed nine river transports loaded with Army supplies, and also captured and burned the "tin-clad" gunboat Sedelle. In his account of this exploit General Wheeler said: "Alongside the blazing and crackling transports she became a cinder upon the waters, which only an hour before she had walked so proudly like a thing of life."

The capture of Army transports and Navy gunboats by cavalry was so unusual an occurrence that the young major-general probably thought the account of it would bear adornment. But other accounts written or dictated by him of his military achievements indicate the existence of a strong vein of poetry in his mental composition. For example, his account of a raid into the Sequatchie Valley in the autumn of 1863 contains the following passage:

As jocund day began to stand tiptoe on the mountain tops on either side, and the sunbeams to cast their golden radiance upon the fields of that fertile valley, as if to cheer the weary soldiers for the brilliant achievements before them, a column of the enemy was encountered, and no sooner seen than the notes of the general's bugle sounded the charge and each horseman instinct with new life, rushed forward to the attack.

The Southern Confederacy was in its dying throes, and General Wheeler realized it and had a doleful tale to tell when he was summoned to meet Jefferson Davis at Charlotte, N. C., late in April, 1864. The capture of both followed soon afterward, but at different places, although Wheeler stood by his fallen chief until the time came when everybody must look out for his own safety. They were companions in captivity for a short time, and it was characteristic of the cavalry leader that he should twice suggest "plans for the rescue or flight of President Davis," both of which were abandoned at the instance of the latter. After a short term of confinement in Fort Delaware as a prisoner of war, General Wheeler was released on parole not again to bear arms against the United States.

He was the first ex-Confederate to offer his services to the Government as a soldier in the existing war, and when he again took up arms he belted his sword around a blue instead of a gray uniform, and went forth to battle under the Stars and Stripes.

WHEELER AS AN AUTHOR.

No better evidence of General Wheeler's intense mental activity and great industry could be asked than a volume of some four hundred pages entitled "A Revised System of Cavalry Tactics for the Use of the Cavalry and Mounted Infantry, C. S. A.," by Major-General Joseph Wheeler, C. S. A. Mobile: S. H. Gaetzel & Co., 1863.

This is an elaborate and comprehensive treatise, and when the fact is taken into consideration that its author was in constant active and exacting service in the field during the entire period of its production the achievement must be regarded as an extraordinary one. The book is printed on thin grayish paper and bound in coarse pasteboard covers with a cloth back, for it was published at a place where fine book paper and binding materials had become very scarce, even in 1863. A copy of the book is kept among the "locked-up" treasures of the Library of Congress. When he handed it to the Tribune correspondent Mr. Spofford remarked: "We have a good many books that were published in the South in wartime. This one was picked up at an auction sale for 65 cents. A copy would cost a good many dollars now."