Daily Appeal.

THE FIRE-FIEND—A NIGHTMARE.

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED MS. OF THE LATE EDGAR A. POE, IN THE POSSESSION OF CHAS. D. GARDETTE.

I.

In the deepest depth of midnight, while the soul and sense were reeling, faintly echoed from the dismal chapel hard by—

Faintly, faltringly floating over the sable waves of air That were thro' the midnight rolling, chanted and tolled with the tolling bell—

In my chamber I lay dreaming, for the fire-light's fitful gleaming, And my dreams were drear foreshadowed on a heart foreboding of woe.

II.

As the last long, lingering echo of the midnight's mystic chime, Linger through the sable hollows of the thither shore of Time—

Lowering on the starless silence not a token nor a trace—In a quivering sob departed; from my couch I fear I started

Startled to my feet in terror, for my dream's phantasmal error Painted in the third day a frightful, fiendish, flaming face!

III.

On the red hearth's ruddy center, from a blazing mass of ash, Seemed to glow and grin this phantom when in terror I awoke, And my slumberous eyeballs straining, as I staggered to the floor, Still in that dread vision seeming, turned my gaze toward the glowing Hearth, and there!—oh, God! I saw it; and from its gleaming jaws it Spat a lonesome, scathing, blasting, burning, purging stream of fire!

IV.

Speechless, struck with stony silence, frozen to the marble I stood, Till methought my brain was blazing with that blasting, burning blood; Till I felt my life stream oozing, coming from these lamed limbs I stood Till the demon seemed to frame me—then a wondrous calm came over me.

And my brow grew cool and dewy, with a death-damp cold and clammy, And I fell back on my pillow, in apparent soul-stillness.

V.

Then, as in Death's seeming shadow, in the icy fall of fear I lay, stricken, came a hoarse and hideous murmur to my ear: Came a murmur like the murmur of assassins in their cleave—

Muttering: "Higher! higher! higher! I am Demon of the Fire!

I am Arch-Fiend of the Fire! and each Nation's wail is my prize,

And my greatest income is the blast and tears my victims weep!

VI.

"Here I revel on the prairies! here I roar among the pines!

Here I laugh when from the village o'er the snow the red flame shines!

And I hear the shrieks of terror, with a life in every breath!

Here I scream with hideous laughter, as I hurl each crackling rafter!

Down, ye Hell slave of fire—until higher! higher! higher!

Leap the high priests of my altar, in their merry dance of death!"

VII.

"I am Monarch of the Fire! I am Vassal-King of Death!

World-enriching, with the shadow of its doom upon my breath!

With the symbol of Hereafter flaming from my fatal brand!

I combined the Eternal Fire! Higher! higher! higher! higher!

Leap my ministering demons, like phantasmagric human,

Hugging Universal Nature in their hideous embrace!"

VIII.

Then a sudden silence shot me in a scream, shrieked and I shivered like an infant in the "cradle of the deep;"

Till the battery in the forest quivered with the mighty shriek,

And the startles, from the edges of its lichen-fringed ledges,

Shimmered through the russet arches, where the light in left five marches,

Like a rocket array struggling through the serried ranks of oak.

IX.

Then my eye-fretted casements, filtered in a trembling way, From the tall and stately linden where the robin sentinel his throat

Quivered, quaker-breasted robin, calling quietly for his mate, Then I started up indignant from my slumber, night-mare ridden,

With the memory of that dire dream in my central fire, On my eye's interior mirror like the shadow of a fate!

X.

As the foolish fire had simulated in a white and fearless heap,

And to ashes of oak was turning as it turned upon my sleep;

Yet around its very center, where the demon face had flitted

Shadows seemed to linger, pointing, as with spectral fingers,

To a little, massive, golden, on a table carved and silver, And I heard and said, "All power is of God—of God alone!"

THE MYSTERIOUS COUNTESS.

BY C. STUART.

From the Atlantic Cliffs-Nook.]

"I was born a lady, and must have my state, though the profession of adventurer.—Lacenaire, Jr.

On the fourth of October, 1849—I like to be particular in dates—a coach and six drew up before the shop of the well known jeweler, M——, Rue St. Honore. The equipage was covered with a profusion of gilding and heraldic devices, and the livery of the footman indicated high rank in the possessor. The steps being adjusted, a lady, splendidly dressed, descended and entered the shop, where all the attendants, at the words M——, himself, were all profuse in their attentions—anticipating every look and sign, and displaying before her the most costly diamonds.

The lady, with lofty nonchalance, selected jewels to the amount of about five thousand pounds, which was immediately placed in a casket by the obsequious attendants, when, handing her purse to the jeweler, he found it contained a sum not exceeding three thousand pounds, and short of the requisite amount. The lady, with great graceful apologies, and a momentary flush of vexation, begged pardon for the mistake, desired M—— to lay the parcel by until she should call again with the money, and giving her name as the Countess L——, departed with all the ceremony and splendor that marked her first appearance.

The coach passed up the Rue St. Honore, to the residence of the Baroness Nevil, thence by the Place de Louis Quinze, and finally stopped at the house of a celebrated physician in the Rue de Rivoli. The lady alighted hastily and was shown into the presence of the well-known Doctor N——, who arising from his seat at a table covered with anatomical preparations, saluted her with his usual courtesy, and begged to hear why he was honored with this unexpected visit.

The lady, assuming an air of settled melancholy, replied:

"I can hardly command my feelings to tell you the cause of my unhappiness. My dear husband, the Comte de L——, during the early years of our married life, was all that a fond wife could desire; my slightest word, hint or sign was sufficient inducement for him to obtain any object of my wishes; but latterly the scene is changed, (here her voice became nearly inaudible through grief,) he has become moody, sullen and reserved; at times breaking forth into violent fits of rage without any apparent cause, thus making my life a perpetual scene of misery—in short, dear doctor, I more than suspect he is tourbed with insanity, and if so, you can understand I know visit you, to obtain your advice, which I consider of more weight than that of any other member of the profession, (here the doctor, much flattered, made a low, disclaiming bow,) especially as the dreadful secret has been concealed from all his family, not even his brothers and sisters having the slightest intimation of it.

"The following circumstance, doctor, has especially influenced my present visit. My dear husband, the Comte, wishing to support the honor of his house, sent me last spring to the noted jeweler M——, Rue St. Honore, with a casket containing a fashionably dressed gentleman, engaged in writing at an escritoire. He arose at their approach, and seemed to regard them with a look of astonishment.

"Symptoms to a hair," ejaculated the doctor, in an undertone.

"To what am I indebted," said the comte, "for the honor of this visit?"

"I believe I am addressing the Comte de L——," said the doctor.

"The same," replied he, with a slight bow.

"My name is N——," rejoined the doctor, after a pause.

"I have the pleasure of knowing you," said the comte.

To be so coolly and sensibly treated by a madman, was a circumstance beyond the doctor's comprehension; the comte shrunk not from his fixed gaze, which, from custom immemorial, has been known to intimid the insane, nor did any "gaucherie" betray the "compression of his cerebellum." However, the doctor determined to persevere until some symptom should manifest itself, to justify his calling in his *poser cimitetus*.

"Were you never—that is to say—have you never been—hem—Monsieur le Comte—afflicted with a violent vertigo, or headache, proceeding from—?—hem—pressure of the cerebral particles—indeed, sir, you look pale—let me feel your pulse—there it is—unsteady—hem—hem—&c.—fever! eh?"

"Sir?" replied the comte, who had yielded his hand in passive astonishment, "your language is entirely incomprehensible—explain yourself, sir, or I shall order my servants to show you the door."

"Now don't be getting warm," replied the doctor, coolly, delighted at what he thought unequivocal symptoms; "don't fly into a passion; we all know your situation; a little touched," (pointing to his head,) "just as your wife, the countess, said—very sensible at times," (aside to the jeweler.)

"My wife?" almost gasped the comte; "this is beyond all endurance! I have no wife, and sir, let me tell you—"

"Poor man, poor man—just as she said—forgets his nearest friends and relations. I suppose, then, M. le Comte, you do not remember the jewels you ordered for the Countess against the coming *fête* of M. M——? nor your repeated solicitations against her will?"

"*Mon Dieu! que deviendrai je?*" almost yelled the comte, leaping up and throwing down his chair in a fury, as the jeweler advanced obsequiously, with his bill, a foot long, in his left hand, making a sweeping courtesy with his right.

"Now, now," said the doctor, first in a deprecating, then in a violent tone, as the incensed comte approached him, "you had better be quiet; all tends to excite you in the anti-chamber;" then as he rushed to the bell and rung it furiously—"no use; servants know your situation—won't come."

And the comte, fairly exhausted by passion, sunk into a chair.

"By what authority do you invade my house? and who are you?" he exclaimed.

"You'll know soon enough—get 'em outside—straight jacket and all—here!" cried the doctor, stamping his foot.

The men stationed without burst in with cords, canvas, and all the apparatus for confusing lunatics, and made a rush upon the astonished comte, who, at the moment of their entrance, drew a concealed pistol and fired it at the doctor. It fell harmless at his feet, but it shaved his head, and carried off a curl of his periwig, and so jarred his "cerebral developments," that he fell, completely stunned.

The rest sealed upon the defenseless comte, and overpowered him. They then slipped a straight-jacket upon him, and bound his legs with ropes, preparatory to carrying him to the doctor's *maison de santé*.

The doctor himself recovered immediately from the stunning effects of the shot, and experimented the operation with all powder and precision, "bearing," he said, "no ill to the *poseur* comte for what he did, *mais* was compute, and laboring under a mental plethora of sensibility."

But the cries of the comte were long and loud; he roared, foamed and grinned at the benevolent doctor, and was in a fair way to occupy a cell of any *maison de sante*, with the lunatic propriety, when the neighbors and passers-by, all armed at his outrageous cries, poured into the house from all quarters, and among them his intimate friends the Duc de C—— and the Vicomte de S——.

On seeing them, the comte suddenly burst into tears, and entreated them to free him from his confinement, assuring them of his sanity of mind in such convincing terms that the vicomte could hardly be restrained from drawing his sword and making an example of the doctor on the spot.

"*Rouiter moi donc! Rouiter moi!*" was all the terrified man could utter.

His story was told—the jeweler's coincident but where was the lady?—and the casket—

* * * * *

About two years afterward, I made an official visit to the *rouiterverie*, to attest the dying confession of a female who had been arrested by the police as an agent of the Carlists, and had taken poison at the moment of apprehension. She was evidently sinking fast, and yet her eyes seemed to grow more lustrous and brilliant, in proportion as the shadows and lividness of death overspread her beautiful countenance. There was wild and fearful energy in her manner, as if she dreaded that life would fail her ere she could unburden her conscience of its secret load.

She began—"My name is Madeline Alzine, otherwise Jeanne Patignon, otherwise the Countess de L——"

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Runaway.

FROM the residence of the subscriber, night, the 16th of July, near Oakland, Miss., a negro boy, about eighteen years of age, copper colored, and will weigh about one hundred and fifty-five pounds; has a small hole in one of his ears, and a small scar on one side of his face; generally carries his head a little on one side; is a very quick, active boy, and will endeavor to pass himself off for a free man. He will probably endeavor to get to Memphis, or some other Mississippi River town, where he may be known by some of his numerous acquaintances. I will pay the above reward for the boy, if he is taken in the State of Mississippi, or the value of the boy if he is taken out of the State, and delivered to me, or in jail at Memphis, Tenn.

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