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Literary Selections.

From the Waverly Magazine.

THE PIRATE'S CONFESSION.

BY DOCTOR J. H. ROLLINS.

Midnight was drawing near. Without the winds moaned fearfully, and the rain fell in torrents, and the clouds, from whence it came, hung overhead in one dense, dark mass. Occasionally the gleams of lightning, quivering with electric vibration, would shoot athwart the sky with gorgeous brilliancy, rendered doubly brilliant by their contrast with the intense darkness. Afoot and aloft, in the heart of that great centre of vice and virtue, of civilization and heathenism, London, were alone, at this late hour, the hardened villain, the God-forsaken inebriate, or that nameless, silent, desolate spectre of humanity, that flits as a shadow through the cries of time.

We have said that these were they, only, who were found, on this fearful night, traversing either the open highways of a masked aristocracy, or the secret, lonely defiles of death-dealing crime; but, as will presently be seen, we are mistaken. A way down in the respectable though not wealthy part of this gigantic metropolis of the British Empire, and near a church of moderate dimensions, lived the worthy rector, who, for twelve years, had officiated in the same, and whose name had come to be revered and cherished throughout the entire parish; and well did he deserve it—holly, reverential love, and religion pure and undefiled, alone had found a resting place in his heart, and was alone the secret motive from whence his generous acts had sprung.

Upon the fearful night we have described, he was sitting, late as it was, in his library, as was his wont before retiring, the holy scriptures, and deeply meditating on the same, when a loud knock startled him from his reverie, and caused him, with some astonishment, to open the door.

"Does Father Martin reside here?" inquired the new-comer, a large and well proportioned man, speaking in a low and melodious tone.

"I am the person, friend; but step inside, for the night is awful, and you must be thoroughly drenched with rain."

"And so I am, good father; but the storm, terrible as it is, serves as no impediment, in my mind, to the performance of a generous act."

"But whom have I the honor of addressing, and what critical state of affairs has compelled you to seek my humble abode, on this desolate night, when the elements are so vigorously warring?"

"My name is Lemont; and the business which has summoned me hither is briefly stated. A few doors hence, in the upper story of my own residence, during the past two months, has resided a man by the name of Armand; about him I never knew anything save that he seldom left the house, and invariably paid me the rent once a week. Yesterday morning he was suddenly taken sick; since which time he has rapidly growing worse, and this evening he earnestly requested me to call round and ask you to visit him, as he was afraid he should not live till morning, and had much to communicate to you ere he died."

"I will go," said Father Martin, rising; and a few moments thereafter, being attended for the walk, pronounced himself ready to follow the stranger to the abode of the sick man. In silence the journey was made, and in silence they ascended the rickety stairs, (for the building was old and time-worn,) and in silence they opened and closed the door leading to the invalid's apartment.

Lemont approached the bedside noiselessly, and found his patient in a restless slumber; but a few moments elapsed, however, before he thoroughly awoke, and inquired if Father Martin had arrived.

"Yes, Monsieur Armand," answered Lemont, addressing him after the French style, "he is here; would you like to converse with him now?"

"Yes; he sick?" was the answer, "for I have much to say."

Father Martin was signalled, and came forward; taking a seat by the bedside, and leaning his head upon his hand, he distinctly heard every word, though spoken in a low, and rather inaudible tone; and, although intensely excited, still listened throughout to the details of the following fearful

CONFESSION.

"My present name is Pierre St. Armand; my place of nativity, Lyons, in the southern part of France. During my

early life, my parents were in comfortable circumstances; but latterly, on the breaking out of the fearful war between Francis I. and the German Emperor, that so long devastated Europe, and especially France, their subsistence was entirely swept away, and for over two years they existed in the most extreme poverty. Finally, just as my father had succeeded in procuring a small farm, and was again about to commence life with some prospect of success, he was summoned forth to follow the fortunes of the French King through the provincial wars.

"Never shall I forget the parting scene with my mother and myself, then the only child left to him. I had an elder brother, but years before he had left home, and never since had been heard from. After a long and tender embrace, he bade us both farewell, and, with tears streaming from his eyes, mounted the coach that was to convey him to Toulon, and from thence to head-quarters, a few miles beyond.

"We never saw him again; but months afterwards, when the shorn and shattered hosts of the king returned from the battle-fields of central Germany, and the regiment with which my father was connected was, for a few weeks stationed in my native place, the news came to us, through the commander, that my father had expired from a death-wound, received on the field of battle, while valiantly fighting for his king and country.

"This piece of information had a fearful effect on my mother; for, no sooner was the news communicated, than she was seized with violent paroxysms, which succeeded one another in quick succession for several hours, until one more severe than the rest accomplished the work, and unconsciously she passed into another world, without even the privilege of leaving me her dying blessing.

"It was late in the afternoon when the friends, who had kindly volunteered us a home during my father's absence, and with whom we had resided since his departure, came to me with tears streaming from their eyes, (for they loved my mother,) and told me she was dead. As I lay long, since first she was taken with those fatal convulsions, I had been strictly prohibited from entering the room where she lay, and, in dread anticipation was compelled to await the issue; and now, though in dread expectation of this event, it came like a thunder-bolt; and, being quite young, I burst into tears and cried a long time.

"After I had partially recovered, they led me into the little narrow bed-room, through the neat parlor, up to the bed, removed the curtains, and pointed to my mother—alas! how changed; but I will not dwell on the scene; the next day she was interred, and, long after the funeral obsequies had been performed, and the company had dispersed, I lingered and consecrated the burial-place with bitter, scalding tears.

"As the last rays of the setting sun were shedding their rich mellow hue over earth, and just as I was on the point of arising, a hand was lightly laid on my shoulder, and a well-known voice said, 'Pierre.' I quickly turned, and beheld before me an intimate friend of my father's, and one who, by his side, had gone forth to the war. I was calm, very calm then; so calm that it nearly startled myself; and, in a very quiet, unconcerned manner, inquired for my father. 'He is dead, Pierre; surely you must know, and so is your mother, for they told me as much at the village inn below; why Pierre, how pale you look! are you sick?' 'O, no,' said I, quickly, anxious to dissipate any such suspicion; 'But Louis,' said I, 'did you see my poor father in his dying struggle, and attend him in his last moments?' 'O, yes,' he answered; 'after the wily Spaniard had slain him, and fled, I chanced to be passing by, when, hearing moans, I searched for the source from whence they came, and, in a short time discovered your father weltering in blood. I would have sought for assistance, but it would have been in vain, as he was just expiring; and, with only the words, 'The Spaniard! San Diego!' who was afterwards discovered to be the assassin, he is died; but I must leave, Pierre, for he is rapidly growing dark, and I have a considerable distance to travel."

"Long after he had gone I stood and thought; and, ere I reached home that night, a fearful oath had ascended, over the remains of my mother, unto heaven: it was the extermination of Spaniards. I have been thus minute, weak as I am, in describing the details of my early life, in order to show how dearly I loved my parents, as also the motives from whence I sprang my after career. My heart was

scared, scared by the misfortunes I had suffered, and I considered myself specially constituted an avenger.

"Eight years had passed away; during that time nothing had occurred worthy of note, save working steadily, working firmly, for the one great object in view: that time expired, and being now twenty years old, I enlisted on board a man-of-war, and there remained for ten years, being constantly promoted from station to station, until the age of thirty, I was elevated to the supreme command of a fine ship of the line. This I retained for several years, until, ever having the same design in view, viz, revenge on the Spanish race for the murder of my father. At the Eolian Isles I resigned my command, and took possession of a pirate ship, which I had previously purchased, and commenced a traffic in that line, by which alone I could accomplish the designs I had in view.

"On a fine summer's morning we set sail, with the agreement, between the crew and myself, that none but Spaniards found in the vessels we might conquer should be subjected to death, though all should forfeit their possessions.

"The first prize was a Russian merchantman, rather larger than our own vessel, but, taken by surprise, was easily conquered. The next, a long Spanish frigate, numbering over 200 men, all of whom were condemned to walk the plank.

"After traversing the high seas between four and five years, and after no less than 800 human beings had been sacrificed to my vengeance, I began to grow tired of the revolting scenes constantly enacted, and to wish that I was far, far away.

"The hour of deliverance drew nigh; in an ill-fated moment, (ill-fated for my crew,) our vessel was captured and all taken prisoners, with the exception of two or three, who escaped by drowning; fortunately, at a port where the vessel stopped, I succeeded in escaping; and, after wandering about for some time, have finally arrived in this renowned city; but I am now being seized by the minions of the law, to whom two hundred pounds in sterling coin, is no slight inducement to exertion.

"I have sent for you to night, for a different purpose than that represented. You suppose I am in a dying condition; what think you now?" said he, suddenly raising up with an energy that seemed to put to defiance all thoughts of dying.

"The action was so sudden that Father Martin was completely taken aback; and some moments elapsed before he could recover himself; and when he did so, he immediately inquired the reason of all this.

"Father Martin, you behold before you, as you have probably conjectured ere this, Loran, the famous pirate; such was the name I won during my piratical career. Armand is the name I have assumed since, to avoid suspicion; but, beneath these disguises, behold, William Martin, your own brother Henry; doubt not, for weeks of searching investigation, the results of which are contained in this little document, and which are a convincing proof of our relationship, have placed the matter beyond mere conjecture, and settled it as a fixed fact."

Father Martin, as we shall continue to call him, took the paper from the hands of his now-found brother, and, quivering with intense excitement, perused it.

After doing so, he said the evidence was satisfactory, but inquired of his brother why he should adopt this strange method to make the relationship known.

"For obvious reasons: first, because I did not wish to startle you with the announcement until I had made a free and full confession of my life; and second, that you might have time to grant justice, on review of the facts, to the seemingly heinous crimes I had perpetrated. The night, your official character, any supposed condition, were all intended to cloak the true design, until these objects could be obtained; and now, brother, will you not intercede for me at the throne of our common Parent, who forgiveth the wayward one, that our bond of fraternal union may be fully re-established, never again to be parted?"

Without answering the question, and with tears streaming from his eyes, Father Martin knelt at the bedside; his brother followed the example; and, in calm and earnest supplication, blessings were vouchsafed on the penitent brother; at the same time the heavens, as if to shed resplendent light on the scene, cleared away the cloudy veil that obscured it, the rain ceased, and the lightning returned to its element.

That night, for the first time in over thirty years, the brothers slept together, and a sweet sleep it was; childhood came back, and old associations, with double pleasure, were rehearsed.

A few days afterwards, by mutual agreement, they removed to the southern part of Italy, where Henry had large possessions, and where they continued to reside, for several years in the greatest happiness. Lemont was taken with them, and employed as gatekeeper.

One day, in passing along the main street in the city where they resided, they met a boy selling confessions of a murderer, who had been executed but a short time before they arrived. Purchasing one, they commenced reading, when, among the first acts of the villain's life was the murder of John Martin; they turned to the title page and read,

"Confessions of the Spanish murderer, San Diego."

The circumstances were the same, so that no doubt was left on their minds but that the man whose life was here given was identified with him who assassinated their father. It was enough—the cup of vengeance was full.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

BY DR. L. L. CHAPMAN.

Knowledge is power. This is an axiom often spoken, but too superficially considered by the mass of mankind. For by far the largest portion of the human race seem too much under the influence of intolerance, or prejudice, or perverted and selfish devotion to low physical pursuits and enjoyments, to appreciate, or even to comprehend the value of any knowledge, beyond what ministers direct to their avarice, ambition, or sensual gratification.

Knowledge is only another name for truth as well as science. It includes every agency as well as all consciousness of happiness. Involving a just appreciation of our own faculties, as well as correct perceptions of the laws of nature, the physical elements of life, motion and intelligence, and spreading out the limitless field of progression before us. It may truly be said, that if knowledge is not the essential principle of human existence, that it is the fountain of all that renders existence desirable.

But in the same ratio that knowledge advances the welfare and happiness of the human race, is error too often fatally pernicious and destructive.

An item of knowledge, based upon truth, may diffuse a benign influence, not only over nations, but through successive generations of mankind. So also a single error, even in science, may cloud the intellectual horizon, and give a wrong direction to the policy, morality, and religion of nations; ultimately plunging them into the lowest depths of mental debasement, and of physical oppression, servility, and suffering.

The most pernicious of all the errors of physical knowledge are those which flow from wrong conceptions of those physical laws which constitute the true element of the sublime science of astronomy.

How far—far beyond the limits of language to express, or of the human mind to conceive, has been the oppression and cruelty; the national, social, and individual anguish, crime, and suffering which has attended the dark and gloomy reign of Mythology! Extending its dark, misty shadows for not only one but many thousand years, over the successive generations of almost the entire globe.

Yet Mythology, with its overwhelming deluge of human degradation, crime and woe, was the legitimate offspring of a simple astronomical error! viz, that the earth was immovable, and that all the other heavenly bodies revolved around it.

For how could a rational or reflecting mind contemplate the sublime order and beautiful but illusive harmony of the sidereal movements, as they would appear by the hypotheses of the earth's immobility?—I say, how could a rational or reflecting mind contemplate such a wonderful display, and suppose it all to be the result of chance?

And having lost sight of the Creator, how could mankind suppose otherwise than that these heavenly bodies were ruled by Gods, who directed their movements, and controlled the phenomena of nature and the destinies of mankind?

Within a few centuries past, the discovery and partial application of physical facts and forces, have given a new direction and energy to scientific research, resulting in development which, for practical utility and convenience, have intro-

duced almost a new era among mankind.

But beyond the use and aids of mechanical discovery, the intellectual advancement of a rational knowledge of the physical laws and relations of the Universe, or even of the Solar System, has been limited and superficial. Too much so, to justify the fancy elevation of modern popular science above that of preceding ages.

The discovery and application of partial laws of nature, though true and important in their physical connection with others which, as yet, are too often of themselves alone, like the disconnected links of a chain, of little value. And as the want of a main pillar will often destroy the stability of the most stately edifice—or as the want of a wheel will cause the most perfect machinery to go wrong, or give it a destructive tendency, so, in the present case, the errors and imperfections in important popular sciences, resulting from oversights, &c., and fallacious substitutes for real but unknown laws, are not only formidable barriers to the advancement of true knowledge, but a prominent source of the prevailing ignorance and false prejudice; the defection of national, social, and individual principle and integrity—of the perverted perception of what constitutes the true elements of the happiness and dignity of mankind, and of the concomitant consequences which flow from these overwhelming proximate causes.

In another point of view, this subject is fraught with thrilling importance. The connecting links which disclose the harmony of the laws of nature with that which purports to be the true record of their origin, received direct from the Creator himself, are as yet overlooked by popular science. And the discrepancies between popular hypotheses, and the literal record given in the Bible in reference to the Creation, the Deluge, and kindred subjects, amounts to nothing short of positive contradiction.

Can there exist in language or idea, a more popular theory than the sun first existed, and that the planets, &c., were cast off from him as sparks or rings, organizing in the course of almost countless ages into worlds,—on the one side—contrasted with the Bible statement on the other side, that the sun was created on the fourth day—not until after the earth, with her seas, and her continents covered with vegetation, was completely formed.

When about to cross a well trodden path, where they are likely to be disturbed, the soldier weaves themselves into a complete arch, extending across the whole width of the path, under which the females and laborers bearing the laves, pass without the least exposure. The construction of the arch with their own bodies is one of the most singular and interesting things to be met with in the history of insects. One ant is raised entirely above the ground, by having one pair of its feet interlocked with the fore-feet of another standing upright, and the other pair with another in the same posture on the opposite side of the arch. Any number of these are formed, and they are bound together by other ants stretching themselves lengthwise with the arch, and serving as transverse beams to hold the different parts together. The arch when formed, holds together with the greatest tenacity, and looks like a beautiful net work of heads. I have frequently put the end of my cane under the arch, and raised it four or five feet from the ground, without letting a single ant fall.

PRACTICAL PREACHING.

Here is a delicious paragraph from Henry Ward Beecher:

"We have no doubt that a rigorous landlord, having shirked it all the week, would be better pleased on Sunday, to doze through an able Gospel sermon on mysteries than to be kept awake by a practical sermon that, among other things, set forth the duties of a Christian landlord. A broker who gambled on a magnificent seal all the week does not go to church to have his practical swindling analyzed and measured by the 'New Testament spirit.' A merchant whose last bale of smuggled goods was safely stored on Saturday night, and his brother merchant, who, on that same day, swore a false invoice through the custom house—go to church to hear a sermon on faith, or angels, or the resurrection—they have nothing invested in these subjects; they expect the minister to be bold and orthodox. But if he wants respectable merchants to pay attention to his doctrine, he must vulgarize the pulpit by introducing commercial questions. A rich Christian brother owns largely in a distillery, and is clamorous against letting down the pulpit to the vulgarity of temperance sermons. Another man buys tax titles and about all the week to see who can be clipped out of a neglected lot. A merchant that piles his craft with unscrupulous appliances of every means that win, he too wants 'doctrine' on the Sabbath, not those questions. Men wish two departments in life; the secular and the religious. Between them a high wall and obaque is to be built. They wish to do what they please for six long days. Then stepping the other side of the wall, they wish the minister to assuage their fears, to comfort their consciences, and furnish them a clear ticket and assurance to heaven. By such a shrewd management, our modern financiers are determined that a Christian can serve two masters, both God and mammon at the same time."

When disturbed in this way, the whole body of soldiers spread themselves over a space of twenty or thirty feet in diameter, over which neither man nor beast can pass without getting some of them upon him, and receiving a few sharp rips. A horse can scarcely be forced through them, and a dog never does except with a bound or a leap, and even then is sure to get one or more about his claws, which are very apt to get hold of his lip in attempts to remove them from his toes.

If they come across a dead body of any kind, they encircle it, and by the time the whole column comes up, it is completely covered. They will remain by it until every particle of flesh is consumed, even should it be the carcass of an elephant, and require several days to complete their work. They will attack living animals with equal vengeance, and there is nothing of the animal race that can effectually resist them. A horse

THE DRIVER ANTS.

[Rev. J. L. Wilson, in his interesting account of "Western Africa, its History, Condition and Prospects," just published by Harper & Brothers, furnishes the following notice of one of the curious insects found in that part of the world:]

A DRIVER ANT DESCRIBED.

A species commonly known as the "drivers"—*termites bellicosus*—are so denominated from the fact that they compel every other species of the animal kingdom to get out of their way, or submit to the alternative of being devoured. They are a black or dark brown species, which in size and general appearance, is not unlike the common ant of this country. It has a sharp flat head, terminating in a pair of horizontal nippers, not unlike one of the species of white ants just described, with which it can give a very severe pinch; and if it gets hold of a soft part of the skin, always draws blood, but leaves little or no irritation after it is removed.

AN ARMY ON THE MARCH.

The "driver" is the enemy and assailant not only of every other insect, but of everything which comes in its way.—They traverse the country by day and by night, in trains of a quarter or half mile long. They form a running stream and persons about to step over the train as it glides along under the grass, frequently start back under the impression of its being a snake. When moving about in these long files, they are either about to change their residence, or are in search of food. They are always preceded by a few straggling guards, who keep them informed of any dangers or difficulties that may lie in their way. It is astonishing with what rapidity a note of alarm can be transmitted from one end of the line to the other. The soldiers, who always keep along the side of the regular column, the moment they receive a note of alarm set off with all possible dispatch, by the means of a dead ant, or turned backward; and as soon as the obstruction is removed, or is found not to be insuperable, the main body is set in motion again. They seem to have regular leaders, and there are runners passing backward and forward all the while, as if to keep up a constant communication between the front and rear.

BUILDING AN ARCH.

When about to cross a well trodden path, where they are likely to be disturbed, the soldier weaves themselves into a complete arch, extending across the whole width of the path, under which the females and laborers bearing the laves, pass without the least exposure. The construction of the arch with their own bodies is one of the most singular and interesting things to be met with in the history of insects. One ant is raised entirely above the ground, by having one pair of its feet interlocked with the fore-feet of another standing upright, and the other pair with another in the same posture on the opposite side of the arch. Any number of these are formed, and they are bound together by other ants stretching themselves lengthwise with the arch, and serving as transverse beams to hold the different parts together. The arch when formed, holds together with the greatest tenacity, and looks like a beautiful net work of heads. I have frequently put the end of my cane under the arch, and raised it four or five feet from the ground, without letting a single ant fall.

THEIR PURSACITE.

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or cow shut up in a confined place, would be harassed to death in a few hours, and would be eaten up, except the hair and skeleton, in less than forty-eight hours.

AN EFFECTUAL REMEDY FOR VERMIN.

They frequently visit dwelling houses and if at night, as is generally the case, it is always to the no little discomfort of the inmates. They enter by some small hole; and, from the point where they emerge, they spread themselves over the floor, along the wall and over the under surface of the roof, like a scouring army. Every nook and corner and crevice in the house is explored, and no other insect, however small, can elude their search. The human inhabitants are generally apprized of their approach by the fluttering of cockroaches and the squeaking of mice which have fallen into their toils. The mouse usually seized in the first instance by a single ant; but in his foolish attempt to get that one detached, instead of running off with it to a place of safety, he gets half a dozen or more on him. In his distress and agony he falls down and cries out, and is soon overpowered by a multitude sufficient to destroy a much larger animal. In a very few minutes not a trace of the mouse is to be seen, except a little hair and a few of his larger bones; and in the morning the floor may be seen strewn with the wings of cockroaches that have been destroyed in the night. It is necessary for the human inhabitants to abandon the house during their occupancy of it, which, however, is more than repaid for this inconvenience by having the house completely rid of all other insects, which is no small matter in any tropical country. I have known persons to be entirely destroyed by them, who, from sickness or lameness, could not get out of their way, and had no one to remove them. It is said that criminals were once punished on this part of the coast by being laid across the tracks of these insects, and conceived. If ever this was the custom of the country, it has since passed away.

The ants seldom retain possession of any one house more than a few hours; but sometimes it takes them several days to get through all the houses of the same village. There is scarcely any way by which their progress can be arrested, and as a general thing, thought to be the best policy to let them take their regular course. They perform an important service; and the inconveniences which they occasion is temporary, and might well be endured for the advantages which are derived from it.

CROSSING STREAMS.

But in nothing is the ingenuity of the little insect more remarkably displayed than in the expedient to which they frequently resort to cross a little stream on the sand beach after a shower of rain.—Sometimes their train is cut in two by one of these little streamlets. To plunge into it singly, they would soon be swept away by the rush of the current. They come to the edge of the water, raise their antennae, point them from one direction to another, as if they were taking a scientific view of all the dangers of crossing. They wander up and down the stream with the greatest uneasiness, and finding no other way to cross, form themselves into a compact knot or raft of a dozen or more, and then launch themselves upon the stream. They have, by previous arrangement, a meeting point or bluff on the opposite shore, and are carried by the current into the main river. The moment they touch the other side they use their claws like anchors, and hold on until the whole company disengage themselves, and march off in single file in the track of those who have preceded them. I have watched them for hours together, and have seen raft after raft of these little creatures go over in safety, when if they attempted to get across singly, they would have been swept into the river.

THE CINCINNATI PLATFORM.

Many of our readers yet have no stomach for the following from an Arkansas Whig:—

"Now, this Cincinnati platform seems to be a perfect hodge-podge." Tom Kilkenny used to tell of a friend of his dropping in about dinner time on an old lady, who invited him to draw up to the table. The old lady helped him heartily, and he being hungry, was doing justice to it. "Stranger," said the old lady, "you will find almost every sort of meat in this pie." "Yes, madam," said he, "and fish too, as he drew between his lips what he imagined was the back-bone of a red-horse sucker. 'Lord have a mercy,' exclaimed the old woman, 'if there ain't our own tooth comb that Billy lost two weeks ago.'"

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