WILD FLOWERS.

Scarce known by name, they pie the ground
  With motley colors, starry forms.
In them the sunset skies are found
  That follow after storms;
And blurs of crimson, blue and gold,
Their graceful chalices unfold,
  While 'mid the dead leaves pile and pent
  Humbly they live and die content.

Huge oaks above them lift their heads
  And drop the acorn, shed the leaf,
The harvest field far round them sheds
  Plenty in many a sheaf,
And they, half fragrant, brighten earth,
Low in the shadows where there's dearth
  Of pain or pleasure, love or life,
  Far from the world's mad, ceaseless strife.

They speak no message, act no part,
  They have no works to show;
Deep hidden here they touch no heart,
  And do not ask to know;
Yet if one meet the eye of man
It all unfolds the Master plan—
  The Power that painted this fair bloom,
  For man can have no futile doom.

—Charles W. Stevenson, in New York Observer.

The Decision of the Emperor

TO be shot at dawn; those are your orders, sire!"

"Yes, general. There will be no reprieve," said Napoleon quietly, with a frown, and his chin on his breast.

A momentary gleam of satisfaction, nay, triumph, for an instant flashed across General Lazelle's face. It did not escape the eagle eyes of Napoleon, which saw everything.

"A clear case of desertion?" queried Napoleon sharply.

"Yes, sire. He, a drummer in your own guards, was found hiding among the rocks near the Somossierra Pass after yesterday's engagement.'

"Found by whom, general?

"By his own corporal. The prisoner admits running away."

"One of my guards, too," said the Emperor sadly. "I thought they were

KNEELED AT NAPOLEON'S FEET.

all proof against fear. What is his age, geenral.

"Eighteen."

"He is young, but—well, general, he must pay the penalty—at dawn tomorrow.

General Lazelle saluted.

"Send his corporal to me immediately."

It was the day after the Somossierra Pass engagement. The enemy had been routed from an almost impregnable position by the combined forces of the Spanish and French. A superb dash for the enemy's trenches by the pick of Napoleon's guards and Spanish infantry had carried the day—a day that will stand out conspicuously in the history of the peninsular war.

The Emperor's heart kindled when he thought of it.

"My brave guards, it was you who won the battle, not I! Ah! my guards. They are magnificent," he thought.

He sat at a small table in his tent. Writing materials were at hand, and he had just signed the deserter's death warrant. The plain black chapeau was at his side and his uniform was that of a general. There was nothing to indicate his high rank save the Legion of Honor which decorated his breast, and that wonderful face with its fierce eyes and square jaws, which, once seen, were never forgotten.

"You summoned me, sire," said a voice, interrupting the Emperor's train of thought. The corporal for whom he sent stood at the salute.

"Yes, corporal," returned the Emperor, looking up. "Ah! Corporal Gavairre," he added, with an almost imperceptible smile, "still at it?"

"Still fighting for my Emperor, sire. Heaven grant I may yet go through as many campaigns as I have already done."

The grim old martinent, who had fought in numerous engagements, was a favorite of the Emperor's. Gavairre stood motionless, but pale. Napoleon noticed it.

"I want particulars of the deserter," said Napoleon, closely scanning the features of the corporal. "What is his name?"

"Gavairre, sire."

A slight tremor passed over Napoleon.

"A relation of yours?"

"Son, my Emperor."

Again the hawklike eyes of the great leader flashed and seemed to piece Gavairre through and through.

Then came silence.

"It is unfortunate, my corporal."

There was no answer, save for the jerky, labored breathing of Gavairre. The tone of voice in which the last words were spoken meant volumes. The corporal could have borne a torrent of abuse. The stinging, biting sarcasm was worse than anything.

"Repeat all you know," said the Emperor, coldly.

"A corps of your imperial guards stood at the entrance of the Somossierra Pass in the early ...ours of yesterday morning," began the corporal, in halting, measured tones. "A volley of musketry rang out, followed by another and another, right down the ravine. The guards paused, and drew back. Then a drummer stepped slowly forward, quickly beating the charge. A cheer rang out, and the men, daunted for a while, were thrilled. They began to advance. The drummer still beat the charge with his right hand—his left was shot away. The men steadily marched on, and then they saw their beloved Emperor on his charger. That instilled them with fresh courage. They rushed the ravine. In the excitement and melee the drummer, in the thick of the shot and shell, lost his head—and, well, sire, you know the rest," concluded Gavairre, white as death.

The hitherto impassive countenance of the Emperor kindled with momentary enthusiasm.

"I remember the incident, corporal. Who was the drummer?"

"My son, sire."

"Your son is a brave fellow. How came he to desert?"

"It was his first taste of shot, sire. He confesses he tried to run away."

"Does General Lazelle know of the Somossierra incident?"

"Yes, my Emperor."

A look of anger passed over Napoleon's face. He remembered the general's intensely satisfied expression when the death warrant was handed him.

"He never mentioned it to me, my corporal. It was an important omission. It was unjust. Gavairre," put in the Emperor suddenly, "what I ask you is for no ears but yours. Perhaps it may be irrelevant to the subject and contrary to strict military discipline, but—I am Emperor."

The last words were proudly said.

"Listen! Do you know if your son has offended General Lazelle in any way?"

Lazelle had risen from the ranks. In those days promotion was swift, however humble the soldier's birth.

"Sire, they are rivals in the game of love," answered Gavairre.

"Ah!"

The exclamation escaped the Emperor almost unawares. In a moment he gained complete self-possession and was once more calm, inflexible, impassive.

"Sire, sire!" cried the corporal, suddenly, forgetting all save his son, or in whose presence he was, and flinging military discipline to the winds by kneeling at the Emperor's feet; "a word from you, my Emperor——"

"Gavairre! You forget you are a corporal in my guard," said Napoleon icily.

In a moment the man rose, and once more stood at salute, pale, motionless.

Silence once more. Nothing could be heard but the thumping of the corporal's heart, which beat as fast as his son's drumsticks.

"The warrant for his execution has been sent in. I signed it half an hour ago, my corporal," began Napoleon at length. "He must pay the penalty, if only as an example to others."

"As you say, my Emperor."

"That's all, corporal."

The man turned to go.

"One moment, Gavairre."

Napoleon wrote a hurried note, signed and sealed it.

"Deliver this to the head of your son's guards at once. I promise nothing, mind you—hold out no hope. Captain Gavairre."

"Captain, sire?"

"You are captain from this moment. Go."

* * * * * *

The gray shadows of the early dawn crept stealthily over the camp. Faint sounds of life once more began to be heard; men moved about and guards were changed. Presently the steady but muffled tramp, tramp of eight men, with loaded rifles, a captain, and a prisoner with his right arm bound, his left in a rough sling, and eyes bandaged, approached a ready dug grave, near which stood a group of silent men, among whom were Napoleon and General Lazelle, there for the purpose of seeing that all was properly carried out."

"Halt!"

The prisoner was deadly pale. He showed no other sign of fear. He stood still and erect to he eight rifles leveled at him.

"Ready!! The command rang out sharp and clear.

"Present!"

"Fire!" The volley was simultaneous. The smoke rolled slowly away.

The prisoner remained standing, calm, motionless, but, if possible, paler than ever.

"What has happened?" whispered Lazelle. "Some one has blundered."

"It is well," said the Emperor, calm and impassive as ever. "The rifles were loaded with blank cartridges. Gavairre's punishment will suffice. The shock has been great."

"But, sire," expostulated the general, in a fever, "it is——"

"Silence, general; it was my order!" thundered the Emperor.

Lazelle saluted, meeting with difficulty the hawklike gaze of Napoleon.

The sun was just rising.—Chicago Tribune.

SPORTS IN GERMANY.

Wrestling and "Heavy Athletics" Are Most in Favor There.

Wrestling is one of the most popular forms of athletic exercises in Germany, and it seems as if the heavy and muscular build of the Germans peculiarly adapts them for this kind of sport. The general public interprets the word "athlete" as meaning a wrestler, weight lifter or "strong man." When the English style of athletics was introduced into Germany it was termed "light athletics;" wrestling is termed as "heavy athletics." In every town there are many clubs indulging in "heavy athletics," and numerous public contests are arranged, in connection with which challenges to "all comers" are issued. Here one can often witness a pitched battle between science and brute power—see an "all comer" of stupendous build, probably a butcher, brewer or furniture remover, laid flat on both shoulder blades in the most approved style by a little wiry fellow as slippery as an eel. On the occasion of the world's championships held in Berlin, an open arena, roofed only in the center, where the wrestling took place, was erected, with tiers of seats for the public all round. As luck would have it, the weather proved boisterous and the public shy of the fair; the championships ended dismally, and the impresario, unable to pay the men's retainers, very discreetly decided to "leave town."—C. B. Fry's Magazine.

Wasn't Sure Which.

A Scottish minister, taking his walk early in the morning, found one of his parishioners recumbent in a ditch. "Where have you been the night, Andrew?" asked the minister. "Weel, I dinna richtly ken," answered the prostrate one, "whether it was a wedding or a funeral, but whichever it was, it was a most extraordinary success."

A Good Scheme.

"How on earth did you ever get a messenger boy to deliver your note and bring back the answer so quick?"

"I took his dime novel away from him and held it as security."—Philadelphia Press.

THE GROCERYMAN.

"Cherries is ripe," said the groceryman, producing his order book and sinking into the kitchen rocker with a sigh of content. "Fresh picked from the tree, sound in wind and limb an' free from vice. Want some?"

"Who told you you could sit down in that chair?" demanded the pretty cook.

"Nobody," replied the groceryman, "but it looked easy. I was tol'ble sure I could do it if I tried. The hard work'll be to git up again. How's the girl this fine chilly summer mornin'?"

"What girl?"

"You, loveliness."

"See here," said the pretty cook, "you're too fresh to keep. What are the cherries worth?"

"Thirty-five a box."

"Keep 'em!"

"They're worth that, but we've got 'em marked down to two boxes for a quarter. Full quart boxes; six of 'em would come near fillin' a gallon measure. Tradin' stamp with every box. Say, Evelina, didn't I see you a Sunday afternoon in the park in a blue hat?"

"I went out in the country a Sunday afternoon."

"Well, I seen some girl in a blue hat. I was drivin' in my ortermabubble an' I couldn't stop, but if it had be'n you an' I hadn't be'n in a hurry I'd 'a' give you an invite to take a ride. How many cherries do you want?"

"You can bring me a couple o' boxes if they're any good. If they ain't you'll have the pleasure o' takin' 'em back. Would you like a piller for your head?"

"Don't trouble," replied the groceryman. "It's kind o' you to offer, but I can't stay long anyway. I jest thought I'd run in an' see if there wasn't nothin' I could do for you. Honey?"

The pretty cook gave him a look of scorn and indignation.

"I say we've got in a lot of white clover honey. I know you don't need sweet'nin', but it might do for the fam'ly. Eighteen a box. No? Well, you say somethin', then. Laundry soap—Mother's Marvel—washes the most deliket fabrics 'thout crockin', shrinkin' or runnin' down at the heel. Eggs? Fancy pedigreed eggs—real shell—no celluloid imitations. Any matches?"

"You may bring me two dozen eggs and a can o' bakin' powder, half a dozen lemons an' two pounds o' coffee."

"Goin' to make coffee cake?"

"Never you mind what I'm goin' to make. Oh, and I want butter. Two pounds o' butter an' a couple o' bunches o' sparrergrass. I guess that's all. Was you in the park, honest, a Sunday afternoon?"

"Sure thing. An' there was a girl in a blue hat there, too. I wouldn't string you, Evelina."

"Don't you think you're smart!"

"I wouldn't be to blame if I did. Most everybody else does. So you think that will be about all, do you? Say, the nex' time you make a date with me an' don't keep it it'll be because I've lost my memory, I tell you those."

"Well, I was there," said the pretty cook. "You wasn't, though."

"Come off."

"I was, honest."

"Wel, I missed you, then. I stayed around for—"

There was the sound of a footstep beyond the inner kitchen door and the groceryman jumped hastily out of the chair and began to write in his order book. "Cherries, eggs, bakin' powder, lemons, coffee, butter an sparrergrass," he repeated in businesslike tones as the lady of the house entered. "That all? Thank you."—Chicago Daily News.

A FALL FROM THE STAGING.

"I had an experience once that nearly whitened my hair," said the artist. "Spill white paint on it?" asked the man in the big leather chair. "No; it was something worse than that. I was just starting out to earn my living with a brush, and was willing to paint almost anything, from a portrait to the sky piece in theater scenery." And then he went on to tell the story:

"One of the public buildings in the capital had a big dome, and on the ceiling of the dome was a great deal of elaborate painting that had become dingy, and needed retouching. I was pleased enough when I got the job of doing it.

"They erected a staging for me to work on—a frail-looking affair, which almost turned me sick when I arrived with my outfit and stood in the rotunda, looking up at the dome, a hundred and fifty feet above me.

"'I shall be so dizzy I can't hold a brush,' said I to the carpenter.

"'Oh, that will be all right!' said he. 'We're going to spread a big canvas under the staging, for the rotunda is in use all the time, and you'd be spotting everybody below with paint unless we had something to protect them.'

"I felt relieved when I heard that, and still more relieved when I had climbed up into the dome and found that the entire rotunda below was hidden by a taut cloth which the workmen had stretched across.

"I had been at work nearly two days when I began to get careless in stepping round the staging. I suppose the canvas below me gave me a feeling of comparative safety. About noon one day I took a step backward to look up at some drapery which I had just repainted. My foot touched only the air, and I fell into the canvas.

"There was a ripping and tearing of cloth as I settled down into the hollow. I lay there flat on my back, and looked round with an interest in the quality and strength of the canvas and the way in which it was fastened that you may be sure was sincere.

"There was no doubt about the fas- strength of the fastenings; they were of rope, tied round big knots in the cloth, and strong enough to hold a horse. But the canvas itself was frightfully thin, and was mildewed in spots. I turned over on my face and found myself staring through a rip down to the marble flooring of the rotunda, a hundred feet below.

"I was comfortable enough physically, but mentally! Every time I moved something would stretch and tear.

"Of course I yelled for help, and after a time I heard answering shouts below. The canvas was sagging down in the middle and straining and squeaking along the edges. I figured out that it would take the workmen at least two minutes to climb into the dome. By the time they got to me I thought I should be spread out below.

"I tried to move up the incline of cloth, scrambling along on my stomach, and pushing with my feet; but the attempt widened the rip in the canvas. Suddenly, as I pushed harder with my feet, one foot and nearly the whole leg shot through the canvas.

"I could hear the scream of women below. My finger-nails scratched and clawed the rough surface, but of course made little impression. They simply kept me from slipping quite so fast. Then I heard the steps of men on the scaffolding. They let down a rope that curled near my fingers, but it was several seconds before I dared to let go my hold on the canvas for a sufficient time to grasp it.

"Finally I got both hands upon it, and they dragged me up the incline to the staging."

HAD THE NURSERY ALL RIGHT,

But 'Twas for the Propagation of Flowers, Not Babies.

The anxious mother rings up what she thinks is the day nursery to ask for some advice as to her child. She asks the central for the nursery, and is given Mr. Gottfried Gluber, the florist and tree dealer. The following conversation ensues:

"I called up the nursery. Is this the nursery?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I am so worried about my little Rose."

"Vat seems to be der madder?"

"Oh, not so very much, perhaps, but just a general listlessness and lack of life."

"Ain'd growing righd, eh?"

"No, sir."

"Vell, I dell you vat you do. You dake der skissors and cut off apoud two inches vrom der limbs, und——"

"What-a-at?"

"I say, dake der skissors and cut off apoud two inches vrom der limbs, un den turn der garten hose on for apoud four hours in der morning——"

"What-a-at?"

"Turn der garten hose on for apoud four hours in der morning, und den pile a lot of plack dirt all around, and shprinkle mit incegt powder all ofer der top——"

"Sir-r-r?"

"Shprinkle mit insegt powder all ofer der top. You know usually id is noddings but pugs dot——"

"How dare you? What do you mean by such language?"

"Noddings but pugs dot chenerally causes der troubles; und den you vant to vash der rose mit a liquid brepara tions I haf for sale——"

"Who in the world are you, anyway?"

"Gottfried Gluber, the florist."

"O-o-oh!" (weakly). "Good-by."—Buffalo Express.