

## THE BATTLE OF THE GUN.

From Victor Hugo's "93." They heard a noise unlike anything usually heard. The cry and the noise came from inside the vessel. One of the cannonades of the battery, a twenty-four pounder, had become detached.

This, perhaps, is the most formidable of ocean events. Nothing more terrible than this can happen to a war vessel, at sea and under full sail.

A cannon which breaks its moorings becomes abruptly some indescribable, supernatural beast.

It is a machine which transforms itself into a monster.

This mass runs on its wheels, like a billiard ball, inclines with the rolling, plunges with the pitching, goes, comes, stops, seems to meditate, resumes its course, shoots from one end of the ship to the other like an arrow shot from a bow, whirls, steals away, evades, dances, strikes, breaks, kills, exterminates.

It is a ram which capriciously assails a wall.

Add this—the ram is of iron, the wall is of wood.

This furious bulk has the leaps of a panther, the weight of the elephant, the agility of the mouse, the pertinacity of the ape, the unexpectedness of the surge, the rapidity of lightning, the silence of the sphinx.

It weighs full ten thousand pounds, and it rebounds like a child's rubber ball.

Its whirrings are suddenly cut at right angles.

What is to be done?

How shall an end be put to this?

A tempest ceases, a cyclone passes, a wind goes down, a broken mast is replaced, a leak is stopped, a fire put out; but what shall be done with this monster cannon—this enormous brute of bronze?

How try to secure it?

You can reason with a bulldog, astonish a bull, fascinate a boar, frighten a tiger, soften a lion; no resource with such a monster as a loose cannon.

You cannot kill it; it is dead; and at the same time it lives with a sinister life which comes from the infinite.

It is moved by the ship which is moved by the sea, which is moved by the wind.

This exterminator is a plaything.

The horrible cannon struggles, advances, retreats, strikes to the right, strikes to the left, flies, passes, repasses, disconcerts expectation, grinds obstacles and crushes men like flies.

The cannonade, hurled by the pitching, made havoc in the group of men, crushing four at the first blow; then recoiling and brought back by the rolling, it cut a fifth unfortunate man in two, and dashed against the larboard side a piece of the battery which it dismounted.

Thence came the cry of distress which had been heard. All the men rushed toward the ladder. The battery was emptied in the twinkling of an eye.

The captain and lieutenant, although both intrepid men, had halted at the head of the ladder, and, dumb, pale, hesitating, looked down into the lower deck.

Some one suddenly pushed them to one side and descended.

It was an old man, a passenger.

Once at the foot of the ladder he stood still. Hither and thither along the lower deck came the cannon. One might have thought it the living chariot of the Atyntes.

The four wheels passed and repassed over the dead men, cutting, carving and slashing them, and of the five corpses made twenty fragments which rolled across the battery; the lifeless heads seemed to cry out, streams of blood wreathed on the floor following the rolling of the ship. The ceiling, damaged in several places, commenced to open a little.

All the vessel was filled with a monstrous noise.

The captain presently regained his presence of mind and caused to be thrown into the lower deck all that could ally and fetter the course of the cannon—mattresses, hammocks, spare sails, rolls of cordage, bags of equipment, and balls of counterweight, of which the corvette had a full cargo.

But of what avail these rage?

Nobody daring to go down and place them properly in a few minutes they were lying flat.

There was just sea enough to make the accident as complete as possible.

A tempest would have been desirable. It might have thrown the cannon upside down, and, once the four wheels were in the air its fury would have been stayed and it would have been mastered.

As it was the havoc increased.

There were chafings and even fractures in the masts, which, joined into the frame of the keel, go through the floors of vessels and are like great round pillars.

Under the convulsive blows of the cannon the foremast had cracked, the mainmast itself was cut.

The battery was dismounted.

Ten pieces out of the thirty were hors de combat.

The breeches in the sides multiplied and the corvette commenced to take in water.

The old passenger who had gone down to the lower deck seemed a man of stone at the bottom of the ladder. He cast a severe look on the devastation.

He did not stir.

It seemed impossible to take a step in the battery.

They must perish, or cut short the disaster; something must be done. But what?

What a combatant that cannonade was!

That frightful maniac must be stopped. That lightning must be averted. That thunder-bolt must be conquered.

"Do you believe in God, Chevalier?"

"Yes. No. Sometimes."

"In the temple?"

"Yes. And in moments like these."

"In reality God only can rid us of this trouble."

All were hushed and powerless, leaving the cannonade to do its horrible work.

Outside the billows, beating the vessel, answered the fearful blows of the cannon.

It was like two hammers alternating. All of a sudden, in that kind of unapproachable circuit wherein the escaped cannon bounded, a man appeared, with an iron bar in his hand.

It was the author of the catastrophe, the chief gunner, guilty of negligence and the cause of the accident, the master of the corvette.

Having done the harm he wished to repair it.

He had grasped the handspike in one and, some guttural with a slip-knot in the other, and jumped down upon the lower deck.

Then a wild exploit commenced!

A Titanic spectacle!

The combat of the gunner with the gun!

The duel of the animate and the inanimate.

The man had posted himself in a corner.

With his bar and rope in his two fists, leaning against one of the riders, stand-

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ing firmly on his legs, which seemed like two pillars of steel, livid, calm, though, as though, rooted to the floor, he was dead.

He was waiting for the cannon to pass near him.

The gunner knew his place, and it seemed to him that it surely must know him.

He had lived for some time with it.

How many times he had thrust his hand in its jaws!

It was his tamed monster.

He commenced talking to it as he would to his dog.

"Come," said he.

He loved it maybe.

He seemed to wish that it would come toward him.

But to come toward him would be to come upon him.

And then he was lost.

He tried to evade it, maybe?

That was the question.

All looked upon the scene, terrified.

Not a breath breathed freely, except, perhaps, that of the old man who alone was on the lower deck with the two combatants, a sinister witness.

He might himself be crushed by the piece.

He stirred not.

Under them the blinded sea directed the combat.

At the moment when, accepting this dreadful last-to-last encounter, the gunner challenged the cannon, a chance rolling of the sea kept it immovable as if stupefied. "Come then!" said the man.

It seemed to listen.

Suddenly it jumped toward him.

The man could not take the shock.

The struggle began.

Struggle unheard of!

The fragile wrestling with the invulnerable!

The monster of flesh attacking the human beast!

On one side force, on the other a soul!

All this was passing in a shadow. It was like the indistinct vision of a prodigy.

A soul's strange thing!

One would have thought the cannon had one soul.

But it was a soul of hate and rage.

The slightest thing seemed to have eyes.

The monster appeared to watch the man.

There was one would have thought his at least—cunning, human cunning, in this mass.

It also chose its moment.

It was a kind of gigantic insect of iron, having, or seeming to have, the will of a demon.

At times, a colossal grasshopper would strike the roof of the battery, then fall back on its four wheels like a tiger on its four paws, and commence again to dart upon the man.

He, supple, agile, adroit, without like an animal in his movements, against these lightning movements.

He avoided encounters, but the fierce blows he shunned were received by the unresisting vessel, and continued to demolish it.

An end of broken chain had remained hanging to the cannonade. One end of it was fastened to the carriage. The other, free, turned desperately around the cannon and exaggerated all its shocks.

The chain, multiplying the blows of the iron, rolled back and forth, caused a terrible whirl around the cannon—an iron whip in a list of brass—and complicated the awful combat.

Yet the man struggled.

At times, even to the watchers, it seemed it was the man who attacked the cannon, and he, the cannon, was the prey.

With eyes fixed on the mighty gun watching its every move, he crouched along the side, holding bar and rope.

But the cannon seemed to understand, and, as though divining a snare, fed.

The man, formidable, pursued it.

Such things cannot last long.

The cannon seemed to say at once—"Come! there must be an end to this!"

Then it stopped.

The approach of the denouement was felt.

The cannon, as in suspense, seemed to have, or did have, because to all it was like a living thing, a ferocious predation.

Suddenly, it precipitated itself on the gunner.

The gunner drew to one side, let it pass, and called to it, laughingly—"Try again!"

The cannon, as though furious at the taunt, broke a cannonade to larboard.

Then, seized again by the invisible side which held it, it bounded to starboard toward the gunner, who escaped.

Three cannonades sank down under the pressure of the cannon; then, as though blind and knowing no longer what it was doing, it turned its back to the man, rolled backward, and, toward, put the stem out of order, and made a breach in the wall of the prow.

The man had taken refuge at the foot of the ladder, a few steps from the old man who was present.

The gunner held his handspike at rest.

The cannon seemed to perceive him.

And without taking the trouble to turn around, fell back on the man with the promptness of an axe-stroke.

The man if driven against this side was lost.

All the crew gave a cry.

But the old passenger, till then immovable, sprang forward, more rapidly than all those wild riders.

He had seized a bale of false assigns, and, at the risk of being crushed, he had succeeded in throwing it between the wheels of the cannonade.

This decisive and perilous movement could not have been executed with more promptness and precision by a man accustomed by long experience to the manœuvres of sea and land.

The bale had the effect of a plug.

A pebble stops a ball; a branch of a tree diverts the fall of an avalanche.

The cannonade stumbled.

The gunner in his turn, taking advantage of this terrible lull, plunged his iron bar between the spokes of one of the hind wheels.

The cannon stopped.

It leaned forward.

The man using his bar as a lever, made it rock.

The heavy mass turned over, with the noise of a bell tumbling down, and the man, rushing headlong, trampling with sweat, by a quick well-guided movement attached the slip-knot of the gun-tackle to the bronze neck of the conquered monster.

It was finished!

The man had vanquished!

The ant-subduer the mastodon!

The plucky had made a prisoner of the thunderbolt!

**Diphtheria.**

From *Albion Globe*, Oct. 6, 1889.

Rigg & Co.'s great discovery and manufacture of their diphtheria cure in this city has been one of the greatest blessings ever known to the human race.

There has never been a case developed every family with children in this city has a bottle in the house, and wherever any symptom of this terrible disease is seen, not one single case has ever been lost under this treatment. Rigg & Co. have thousands of testimonials from all over the United States testifying to the wonderful cure it has made. Any citizen of this city, Alma, Hickman, Wilber, Neb., Decatur, Ill., Atkin, Minn., Denver and Georgetown, Col., and Silver City, New Mexico, will testify to its merits. This remedy is for sale by Blake, Bruce & Co., Omaha.

## OF INTEREST TO THE FARMER.

Directions for Building a Cheap and Comfortable Poultry House.

HOW TO KEEP STOCK COMFORTABLE.

Points in Regard to Sheep Feeding—A Cheap Poultry House—Applying Manure—The Feeding Value of Roots.

I have inspected poultry houses that have cost all the way from \$1 to \$1,500, and I am ready to say that it does not necessarily follow because you have a fine poultry house that you have the finest of poultry, says Dr. Robinson in the American Poultry Journal, or that they will do better than in cheaper houses; nor is the opposite always true. But I did not start out to write a dissertation upon rich men's or poor men's poultry houses, but to tell about a poultry house that I am building, and which I propose to cover and weatherboard with straw.

I first cut four posts seven feet long; two of them have forks at the top. These I planted in the ground two feet deep. In diameter, I suppose they would measure eight inches. I then cut four more posts like the ones just described and placed them two feet in the ground also. You will readily see that one lot of posts stood three and a half feet above ground and the other set five. I planted the first four in a row, extending north and south, and placed them ten feet apart. The other four I placed in a parallel to the one first mentioned; and ten feet from it as well as ten feet apart. You can readily see that I have a beginning for a poultry house 10x30 feet, which will accommodate seventy-five fowls in the manner I propose to house and care for them.

On the tops of these posts and in the forks I shall plant long poles, each extending the long way of the building; crosswise, from one pole to the other, I shall put shorter poles, which I have already cut and dragged up to the place I expect to use them. So much for the "running gears" of a cheap house. In this manner, I shall begin to weather-board it. This I shall do by stacking along the west side and north end, the chaff that comes from fifteen acres of Alaska clover, to be threshed in a week or so. This will hardly make a enough along the sides and top if cut properly, so I will finish it when I thresh my wheat a few weeks later.

This, you see, will be a very warm house, so far as the west and north sides are concerned. The east side will be boarded up inside with a layer of boards, and between the two layers of boards there will be clover chaff packed. This will make it sufficiently warm on the east side, and the south end will be left open. If the winter grows very cold it will be an easy matter to close the south end and make a door in it.

This gives a very comfortable place for fowls in the severest weather, and there can be no doubt about their laying if proper food be given them. More or less straw will always accumulate on the ground, and here, where they will have to scratch for the grain that is thrown into the straw.

**Keep the Stock Comfortable.**

In handling stock of all kinds extremes should be avoided. They should not suffer from excessive heat during the winter. Stock that are comfortable all seasons will thrive better and keep in better health, says the Nebraska Farmer. During the summer shade or shelter is necessary, a deep covering of hay, straw or corn stalks, and a good light, pure air and comfortable bedding are important items in keeping stock comfortable as well as avoiding heat and cold.

What is wanted with stock of all kinds is a steady, healthy growth, receiving the greatest gain at the lowest cost, and having the stock comfortable is an important item in securing this. Less feed will be required and better health can be maintained if care is taken, not only to keep the stock warm in winter, but to arrange so that the quarters will be light, clean and sufficiently ventilated to keep the air pure. Many of the things that will add to the comfort of the stock both winter and summer cost but little labor or money, yet they will add to the health and thrift of the stock. As with much other farm work, the best results can be secured by planning ahead, and in many cases a little work now will add much to the comfort of the stock later on.

Making the stock comfortable lessens the feed necessary to keep in a good, thrifty condition, and much that will add to their comfort can be given at a less cost than to feed. Feed regular, water and salt regularly, give plenty of bedding, give exercise whenever the weather permits, and keep the quarters light and convenient. Give a variety of food as far as possible. That will aid in keeping the stock comfortable and add nothing to the cost of keeping.

**Points in Sheep Feeding.**

There is a science in fattening sheep for best results which seems to be not understood or else ignored, says a writer in the Stockman and Farmer.

In the first place, instead of feeding for five months, seven or eight days is sufficient. Then take on the fat flesh in the latter time that it is possible for mature sheep to do.

Feeding sheep four or five months is on a par with feeding fowls a month to fatten them, when half the time is all that is necessary. Feeders get into this rut because wethers can be bought cheaper in the fall; and then they have a crop of wool in spring as well as a carcass of mutton.

They forget that the wool is worth just as much as the sheep's back will be off, and good salesmen usually get the value of it too. And then mutton will bring more in the spring than any other time. This used to be the case more than it is now, but granting all these claims, just as much is gained by not fattening for five months as by fattening for seven or eight months. There is a waste of nearly half the grain when sheep are fed five months, as in the case of fowls that are fed a month. It must be remembered that a ninety or one hundred-pound wether cannot be made to gain more than twelve to twenty pounds, no matter how long fed.

Sheep feeders would do better to stop out of this rut and feed younger animals. The following well-authenticated data ought to be convincing. Sheep of the age of seven to ten months for each 100 pounds of digestible material consumed made a gain of fourteen pounds live weight; those ten to thirteen months of age made a gain of twelve and a half pounds; those from thirteen to eighteen months made a gain of ten and seven-eighths pounds; and those from one and one-half to two years

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old made a gain of five and four-tenths pounds. It is seen, therefore, that it is more profitable to feed sheep of from seven to twelve months of age than are older. Lambs are of quicker sale any time of the year than older sheep and always bring better prices, weight for weight. Lambs can be fed on winter wheat, and sheep on clover. The latter will be eliminated from the sheep trade very long. There is more profit in ewes and lambs. If sheep feeders will try a bunch of lambs and a bunch of mature wethers next winter, keeping strict separate accounts of all outgoes and incomes, they will abandon their feeding in the future and feed lambs instead.

**Applying Manure.**

Generally manure should be applied and worked into the surface. The natural course of all manure is downward, and the objection to applying manure in the fall and plowing it under is that the rain and snow during the winter have a natural tendency to carry the more soluble portion of the manure down to the bottom of the soil, leaving the surface soil, says the Farm, Field and Stockman. Of course it makes some difference what kind of crop is grown, as the roots of some plants reach down into the soil while others grow near the surface.

An application of manure is not usually solely intended to enrich the soil, but effect will generally be felt by several crops, and when the manure is fresh it is often the case that the second crop will derive more benefit than the first.

Generally with cultivated land the best plan of applying manure is after plowing, whether in the spring or fall, and with a harrow or cultivator work well into the soil as soon as possible after the application is given. The soluble portion of the manure is then taken up by the soil near the surface. The necessary working of the soil prepared to seed in planting aids very materially to incorporate it well with the soil and the plants derive more or less benefit.

Apply manure on plowed land and let it lie, as it is necessary to do, during the winter, and the valuable portions will be largely soaked into the soil.

Apply manure to unplowed land and turn it under, and the soluble parts will be out of the reach of the roots of that class of plants whose roots grow near the surface.

So that the best results from application are not always possible by plowing under, and if left on the surface of unplowed land there will be more or less waste during the winter of the soluble portions.

With a little planning plowed land can always be ready for an application of manure whenever there is time to haul it out.

**The Feeding Value of Roots.**

While considering the influence of root crops as green foods, it will be convenient, says J. W. Sanborn in Western Farmer, to consider the pressure of enthusiasm for the last few years upon the American farmer to raise root crops because they are the "sheet anchor" of British agriculture. Britain has a better country to grow root crops in, cheap labor and has not the corn crop, which is the mainstay of the American farmer, to the same extent as the British farmer. The influence of these factors on the succeeding barley crop so profitable for sale to her breweries. The case of corn culture will forbid root crops on a large scale, but the matter is not one of labor and land remain. It is not at all likely that they will ever fill a great place in our agriculture. If it is decided that we must have green food in the winter, then in corn ensilage I believe that we have a cheaper source.

Root crops, however, are a valuable finger-work in weeding, require turning, are 85 to 92 per cent water (more of it than in corn ensilage), have to be cut for use, kept from frost, hoisted out of the cellar and then the cut pieces are stored in the cellar for use in the winter. All this while only some eight pounds to ten pounds of water are handled for each pound of food. The cost of handling the water very nearly offsets the value of the food material.

A Disease Unaccountably Prevalent.

A disease, apparently about as mysterious as the one which has been reported in the water they drink is well known unaccountably. Not infrequently in pestilential countries exposed to the sun's rays by the receding tide, is the source of humanity found. Even in great cities, healthfully located, and where the water supply is in every respect in a sanitary way, we find malaria. Its presence is often inexplicable, but its attacks are always preventable.

The eradicator bears the same name—a name known to thousands throughout our broad land and elsewhere as a synonym of relief, comfort and cure of the most distressing of its ailments phases—chills and fever, bilious remittent, dumb ague and ague, as well as others. It is the bitterest foe to the physician, and the most difficult to cure for the patient. It is the cause of nervous prostration, indigestion, biliousness and rheumatism.

**Marie Baskin's Mother.**

The mother of Marie Baskin, whose grief is morbid, spends much of her time in the cemetery of Paris, near to which she has placed the monument erected to her memory. The tomb of the young artist is more like a home than a grave. In a glass case open to view are the girl's rocking chair, writing table and favorite books; on the wall are inscribed in letters of gold the subjects of her paintings. The only picture is a life size portrait of the deceased, hung above a flower-covered bier, before which a lantern burns day and night.

**Deafness on the Increase in England.**

LONDON, Oct. 26.—The recent introduction in England of the south dyes, invented by A. Wales of Bridgport, Conn., bids fair to perceptibly decrease deafness throughout the British Isles.

**The Count de Paris' Record.**

The military services of the Count of Paris in America is recorded thus in the books of the Loyal Legion of the United States: "Louis Philippe D'Orleans, of France, was a member of the United States volunteers serving at his own request without pay or allowances, September 24, 1861; resigned and honorably discharged July 15, 1862. Elected November 10, 1880."

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They are suited to every age, and being sugar-coated, are easy to take. Though containing no harmful ingredients, they are mild and pleasant in action, and their use is attended with no injurious results.

**Musk Is to Be Cheaper.**