

THE GIANT IN GLEE.

("Ho, guerriers! je suis né dans le pays des Gaules.")

[V., March 11, 1825.]

Ho, warriors! I was reared in the land of the Gauls;
O'er the Rhine my ancestors came bounding like balls
Of the snow at the Pole, where, a babe, I was bathed
Ere in bear and in walrus-skin I was enswathed.

Then my father was strong, whom the years lowly bow,--
A bison could wallow in the grooves of his brow.
He is weak, very old--he can scarcely uptear
A young pine-tree for staff since his legs cease to bear;

But here's to replace him!--I can toy with his axe;
As I sit on the hill my feet swing in the flax,
And my knee caps the boulders and troubles the trees.
How they shiver, yea, quake if I happen to sneeze!

I was still but a springald when, cleaving the Alps,
I brushed snowy periwigs off granitic scalps,
And my head, o'er the pinnacles, stopped the fleet clouds,
Where I captured the eagles and caged them by crowds.

There were tempests! I blew them back into their source!
And put out their lightnings! More than once in a course,
Through the ocean I went wading after the whale,
And stirred up the bottom as did never a gale.

Fond of rambling, I hunted the shark 'long the beach,
And no osprey in ether soared out of my reach;
And the bear that I pinched 'twixt my finger and thumb,
Like the lynx and the wolf, perished harmless and dumb.

But these pleasures of childhood have lost all their zest;
It is warfare and carnage that now I love best:
The sounds that I wish to awaken and hear
Are the cheers raised by courage, the shrieks due to fear;

When the riot of flames, ruin, smoke, steel and blood,
Announces an army rolls along as a flood,
Which I follow, to harry the clamorous ranks,
Sharp-goading the laggards and pressing the flanks,
Till, a thresher 'mid ripest of corn, up I stand
With an oak for a flail in my unflagging hand.

Rise the groans! rise the screams! on my feet fall vain tears
As the roar of my laughter redoubles their fears.
I am naked. At armor of steel I should joke--

True, I'm helmed--a brass pot you could draw with ten yoke.

I look for no ladder to invade the king's hall--

I stride o'er the ramparts, and down the walls fall,

Till choked are the ditches with the stones, dead and quick,

Whilst the flagstaff I use 'midst my teeth as a pick.

Oh, when cometh my turn to succumb like my prey,

May brave men my body snatch away from th' array

Of the crows--may they heap on the rocks till they loom

Like a mountain, befitting a colossus' tomb!

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