

Highest of all in Leavening Power.—Latest U. S. Gov't Report

Royal Baking Powder

ABSOLUTELY PURE

THE MAID OF MEXICO.

To her all things unreal seem.
Through her black eyes her bright soul
peeps
And sees the world as in a dream,
For with wide open eyes she sleeps.
And what is Mexico today?
A nation ever in a doze,
Where slumber holds eternal sway
Whether or no the eyelids close.
—Lee Fanchild in Overland.

A VENDEAN HEROINE.

It was a pretty little windmill, with its big round tower capped by a weather vane, its long arms or blades which rattled in the west wind like the sails of a boat in stays, and its little round windows looking over the hills of Anjou like the telescopes of an astronomer—such was the windmill of Bernardeau, and when it was working all the windmills around the neighborhood looked like white sea gulls pursued by a bird of prey. It was situated on the slope of the Guigne at the end of a little crooked pathway hardly wide enough for the mill donkey, and in which one might search in vain for traces of human footprints, because it was so dark under its vault of shrubbery, so muddy and rugged that the woman of the mill always took to the vines when on her way to Ancenis on foot.

And a handsome woman, too, was this lady of the mill. She was 25 years old, with a well rounded form, a little hand, flashing dark eyes, lips as red as wild cherries and a well turned leg. She was smart in her attire, and there was little in her appearance to reveal the fact that she was a widow. When she came into the village mounted upon the donkey that carried her bags of flour, all the young fellows came out to admire her fine figure and the beautiful limbs which appeared below her short skirts.

Even the donkey himself seemed proud of his mistress. He traveled along at an easy gait, tossing his head and cocking his ears, as if to say to everybody: "Here she is. You have only to look at her. This is la Meuniere of Bernardeau. There isn't another woman like her in all the country!" And that was the truth. But she was the subject of a great deal of gossip. How the tongues did wag on her account! It was said that since the death of her husband, a poor goose of a fellow who had taken her without a cent from a farm and left her all his property, she frequently tossed her cap over the blades of her windmill. Whether this was true or not, the blades certainly never told, but one thing is certain, and that is that she did hang up her cap there publicly on one occasion, and it cost her her life. Here is her story:

The first thing the Vendean did when they rose in revolt against the republic was to make use of the windmills. Nothing could be better suited for signaling or more troublesome for the enemy. Where the Blues could only see white wings turning round in a melancholy fashion, the Chouans possessed a perfect telegraphic system, which told them of the movements of the republican army.

The windmill of Bernardeau was one of the principal vedettes on the Loire. Three days before the attack upon Nantes, Cathelineau came to the mill of Bernardeau and asked for shelter. It was the 23d of June, 1793. Bonchamp was at Ancenis since the 17th awaiting the main body of the army. The weather was magnificent, and the Vendean camped in the open air. When Cathelineau at the end of a little road found himself face to face with the beautiful woman of the mill, he asked her if she was a royalist.

"One might easily become a royalist to serve under so handsome an officer as you," said she.

"Good enough! Then let me have shelter here tonight."

The meuniere cheerfully welcomed him, and Cathelineau slept that night in the mill. The next morning when he was leaving she sent to him from the threshold of the mill a perfect volley of kisses, after which she went up to the highest little window in the mill and waved her little white handkerchief.

Eight days afterward Cathelineau, mortally wounded, was coming from Ancenis in a carriage, and as he passed by the mill he cast a long and sad look at it. According to the order, its blades were arranged so as to announce the approach of the soldiers of Clancieux.

From the 17th of October to the 17th of December, during the 60 days which separated the two retreats of the Vendean army on the Loire, the mill of Bernardeau continued its signals of intelligence with those of La Vendee. But the 17th of December was its last day.

Harassed by the Mayencais, that crushed them at the battle of Mans, the Vendean reached Ancenis and endeavored to cross the Loire, but for want of sufficient rafts a considerable number of them were obliged to abandon the effort and to advance through the country, in the hope of escaping the enemy.

At sight of this old mill, which they immediately recognized as an ally, about 20 men took refuge in it just at the moment when Westermann came to the heights of Bel Air.

Suddenly a puff of blue smoke rolled from one of the upper windows of the mill. The meuniere herself commenced the fight.

"Good shot!" she said. "There is one less now."

Westermann ordered a company of hussars to surround the old mill. He was in too great a hurry to finish with La Rochejacquin to bother himself with windmills. The hussars had hardly arrived at the mill before his flying artillery began to cannonade the few rafts of the Chouans, who were endeavoring to cross the Loire. The officer who was in command of the company summoned the occupants of the mill to surrender.

The meuniere opened a little window, fastened her lace cap on the point of one of the blades and shouted out: "Come and get it, you ill shaped puppy!"

A volley from the hussars was the only answer to those insolent words. The window panes were broken to fragments. The Vendean inside returned the fire and dropped five of the horsemen. The company then dismounted and rushed against the door of the mill, which they broke with the butts of their guns.

"Surrender, you scoundrels, or in a few moments you'll all be dead!" shouted the officer.

"You are the scoundrels!" yelled the woman of the mill. "Let me see if you are able to get my cap."

The hussars entered the lower story, but the ladder was removed by the Vendean, who now fired upon them from the story above and made terrible ravages in their ranks.

The woman of the mill basied herself with the work of loading the guns, a task which she performed with astonishing rapidity. The Chouans, sheltered behind the flour sacks, cared little for the fire of the Blues.

"Take good aim!" cried la meuniere. "Don't let a single one escape."

The officer, seeing his men fall all around him, ordered them to come out and take the place by storm, scaling the arms of the mill. It was a magnificent assault. Twenty hussars clambered up the blades. With their carbines thrown across their backs they clambered up like sailors to the story above, and from there fell either killed or wounded under the balls or the bayonet thrusts of the Vendean. One brigadier managed to get up to the roof by making a rampart of the bodies of his comrades, who held on to the arms like drowning men to planks.

"We are all right, my friends!" cried he. "Guard well the entrance of the mill!" After planting the color of the company on the weather vane he bored a hole in the roof to admit the barrel of his gun. Three times he fired and mortally wounded three men. This threw the besieged into a panic. Resistance was becoming impossible, and the Vendean were already raising the butts of their guns in the air, when la meuniere pushed down the ladder and out off their retreat. "Now die like men!" she shouted. Then there commenced a perfect massacre. Attacked above and below, the Vendean fought like imprisoned lions. When the ammunition was exhausted, they threw down the sacks of corn and flour, and clubbing their muskets, jumped down among the Blues, who received them on the points of their bayonets. It was a horrible spectacle.

"Where is la meuniere?" shouted the hussars.

"Here she is, citizens," said she as she let herself slip along the shaft of the mill. "I have given to you no quarter, and I don't want any mercy from fellows like you!"

"All right," said the officer. "We'll settle your account in short order. Place yourself against that wall."

There was something singularly graceful and proud in her bearing and a glance of withering contempt in her eye as she advanced toward the wall. Her splendid black hair was now floating in disorder upon her shoulders. She gathered it modestly around her breast, so as to hide her torn corsets. Then she stood against the wall.

"Now fire and be damned!" said she. This piece of feminine boldness made the officer hesitate. "How old are you?" he asked.

"Twenty-five."

"Your name?"

"I am la meuniere du Bernardeau."

"Do you want to live?"

"No, I'd rather die than receive mercy from you."

"Come now, simply shout 'Long live the republic' and I'll let you go free."

"Long live the king!" she cried in a vibrating voice.

A moment afterward there was the rolling sound of a volley. That was the last of the meuniere of Bernardeau.

"She was a plucky piece of flesh, all the same," said the soldiers.

Westermann's hussars lost in that attack 22 men and 8 wounded.

Since then the mill has remained abandoned as if it were cursed. Open to all the winds of heaven, without a roof, without arms, it stands. Occasionally a tramp passing through the country takes shelter there and sleeps with the swallows and the bats. Following its well known habit, the ivy, which seems to be in love with ruins, gradually intertwined itself around it, and from a distance the uncrowned tower has the appearance of a ruined fortress.

How many times have I wandered through that section of the country seeking for details of the dramatic scene which I have endeavored to picture, but la meuniere of Bernardeau had so bad a reputation in that country that her heroic death was not sufficient to cover over, at least in the minds of the peasant, the faults which she had or which were attributed to her.—Figaro.

THE DUDE HAD GRIT.

BUT IT WAS A CLOSE CALL FOR THE SCIENTIFIC GENTLEMAN.

He Picked Up a Frozen Rattler, Which Thawed Out as He Carried It In the Hot August Sun—Florida Snake Sharps Astounded at the Deed.

"I was once on a gunning trip during the month of August in the hammocks along the lower St. Johns river. I came to a hotel on the river bank that was keeping open for the little business brought to it by the river traffic. Back of the hotel was a fringe of pines, and beyond the pines was a reach of barren country covered with a growth of blue palmetto and galberry.

"Among the persons staying at the hotel were two young men whose interest in the region centered in those things which pertained to natural history. Both were well dressed. Their hands were white and smooth. In town they might have been taken for bank tellers. One morning, before the sun had taken the chill out of the air, one of these guests, in a pair of rather genteel top boots, wandered for a considerable distance through the low palmetto scrub. In his path he found a rattlesnake twice as long as the orange wood stick with which he walked.

"The chill of the night air was still in the marrow of the reptile, and it was an easy matter for the young naturalist to clutch the snake just back of his jaws and hold him in a firm grasp with the thumb and circling forefinger of the right hand. Carefully lifting the body of the snake with the left hand the naturalist started for the hotel with his greatly valued prize, carrying his orange wood cane under his left arm.

"There is nothing else that so warms the cockles of a rattlesnake's heart as the vertical rays of the sun, and before the young naturalist had made half the journey to the hotel, the captive snake had managed, unobserved, to twist his tail about his captor's thigh. Thus anchored, he gave an abie-bodied pull, which was the naturalist's first intimation that the snake was putting off his sluggishness. With his left hand the man was about to unwind the coil from his thigh, but he found that if he let go the snake at its middle the muscle of the reptile would be too much for the right hand grasp at its throat, which was the only safeguard against a stroke from its deadly fangs. So he tightened his grasp upon the neck and quickened his pace toward the hotel.

"The sun mounted toward the zenith and his rays became warmer. They gave strength and quickness to the captive reptile. Instead of a steady draw from the tightening coil around the man's thigh came a series of angry writhings which severely tested the strength in the hands and arms unused to endurance. With each convulsion a change in the tint reflected from the monster's scales ran like a thrill from his head to its tail, and then came the warning rattle that nobody has to hear a second time in order that he may know its meaning. The flag on the cupola of the hotel hung limp in the hazy distance. The orange wood stick had fallen from beneath the arm of the young naturalist. A numbness was taking possession of the muscles in his arms and wrists. He knew what that meant. Meanwhile the diamond marked reptile was warming up for the struggle. His eyes from pits of molten lead had become deep set diamonds. His angry writhings were fearful to see. He was venom incarnate.

"It was looking exceedingly serious, not to say desperate, for the young naturalist. Cheerfully would he have put aside his enthusiasm in the cause of science and cast the reptile from him, but that he could not do. The rattler's tail was coiled tightly about his leg, and if the man had loosed his hold upon the neck and middle of the reptile its fangs would have made their deadly mark upon him while yet the coil was unbroken. His life depended upon his reaching the hotel before the strength in his arms gave out, and how much strength he had left he knew not, for the numbness in them had driven out the sense of feeling. Again he quickened his pace.

"It must have seemed an endless journey to the young naturalist as he hurried along, his eyes fixed upon the writhing monster, except when they were raised for an instant to glance at the flag hanging above the hotel; but at last he was within the grounds. His friend rushed forward from the little group on the veranda, but turned and ran back when he saw the look on the young naturalist's face. In a moment he appeared with a strong cord and a cane, which he had caught up in the hallway. While he was tying a slip noose in the cord neither of the men spoke, but it was easy to see that both knew there was no time to waste.

"As the noose was slipped over the reptile's head and tightened by means of the cane a convulsion stronger than any that had preceded it drew together the denuded hands which held the writhing creature, and they yielded to the force that drew them toward the coil, which now twice encircled the man's thigh.

"I've got him," said the man who held the noose.

"Well, kindly untwist his tail. My hands are a trifle tired," said the other.

"This service was done quickly, and the two young naturalists went to their rooms with their captive.

"Among those who had stood speechless while these things were going on was Rattlesnake Bob, a local snake expert from up the creek. As the young men disappeared he said, without shutting his mouth:

"Waal, I'll be — if them dudes hain't got grit!"

"Yes," said one of the guests. "They're catching snakes for the Smithsonian institution to experiment with."

—New York Sun.

AN ARGENTINE SENSATION.

A Deadly Duel That Has Greatly Excited the Southern Republic.

The mails from the Argentine Republic bring news of a terrible tragedy which has caused an unprecedented sensation in that country.

Dr. Lucio de Lopez, one of the leading financiers and most influential men in the republic, who was appointed by the government to investigate the affairs of the Provincial bank of Buenos Ayres, made a report to the courts which caused the arrest of Colonel Sarmiento, a son of the late President Sarmiento, whose memory is revered like that of Lincoln in this country. He was once minister to the United States and is said to have afterward Americanized the Argentines. Colonel Sarmiento was convicted in the court of the first instance and appealed to the superior court, where there was a mistrial, two judges voting to confirm and two to reverse the decree of the lower court. He then published a bitter personal attack upon Dr. Lopez in La Prensa, one of the leading newspapers.

Acting under the advice of foolish friends, Dr. Lopez sent him a challenge, and on Dec. 27 a duel was fought at the Belgrano hippodrome in the suburbs of Buenos Ayres. Dr. Lopez was attended by General Mansilla of the Argentine army and Francis Beazley, assistant secretary of state. Sarmiento was attended by General Bosch of the army and Rear Admiral Soliar of the navy. Shots were twice exchanged at a distance of 12 paces. At the second discharge Dr. Lopez fell wounded, the ball passing through his abdomen. He was taken in an ambulance to his home, where more than 200 of the leading citizens of Buenos Ayres were assembled anxiously awaiting the result of the duel. The wounded man died next day, but Colonel Sarmiento had not been arrested when the steamer left Buenos Ayres. Eighty years ago a decree was issued making dueling a capital offense, but it has been a dead letter for many years, although appeals to the code have been common.

The prominence of the parties engaged makes the sensation the greater, and there is as much excitement in the Argentine Republic today as there was in the United States when Aaron Burr shot Alexander Hamilton.

Redheaded at the Age of 103.

General M. Scott, who resides in the township of Shieldsville, Rice county, is 103 years of age. For upward of 30 years he has been a Rice county farmer. He had some business transactions in Fairbault yesterday that required his presence, and he came to the city on horseback, a distance of 12 miles. Mr. Scott never wears an overcoat nor over shoes, he walks as briskly as a man in middle life, and never wears glasses. His hair, which was always red, has not turned gray, but his whiskers and mustache are white.—Minneapolis Tribune.

A BIG REGULAR ARMY.

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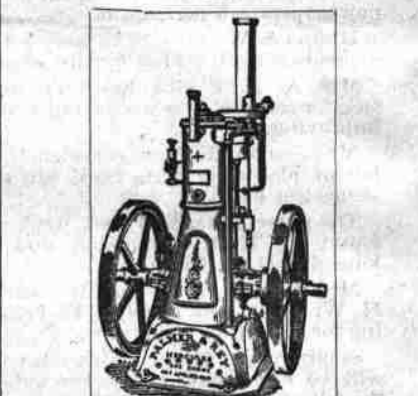
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