

"The Devil!" cried the kneeling nobleman.

"No. Sackwell's my name," said imperturbable Charlie.

The pair of young stupids contemplated one another speechlessly for a few moments, in which they seemed to be deliberating within themselves whether they ought to laugh, cry or fight. At length the spirit moved the Marquis to say in very sheepish mode:

"Oh! good morrow, I was just—ah! tying my shoe, which got undone."

"You were not," said Charlie Sackwell, coolly, advancing into the arbour. "You were asking Miss Cressy to be your wife. I came to do the same."

"How queer! And how very sharp of you!" cried his lordship, with the facile sleekness of all weak minds.

"Did she accept you?" asked the other in the same way, "for if she did, I intend to shoot myself—or you."

"No, no—not at all," returned his lordship, twitching nervously in prospect of a duel with his big rival. "In fact—ha, ha!—you came on the scene before she could say anything."

"I'm glad to hear it," said young Sackwell, much relieved; and then, as if suddenly recollecting the absurdity of the situation, he laughed outright. "'Tis droll, upon my honor! Isn't it?"

"Y-yawz, v-very!" stammered his lordship, with much the same enthusiasm as the condemned criminal who cracks jokes with Mr. Jack Ketch.

"You needn't blush, my lord—I'd have done the same myself, 'bliss unutterable' and all. Upon my soul, though, it was awkward—I always do come at the wrong moment."

"Ha, ha, d-dont mention it," grinned his lordship, with many incoherent hums and haws.

"'Twas all a mistake, purely a mistake, I assure you. I was making a short-cut through the gardens to see Miss Arslade once for all, and—ahem!—do what you're after doing, when I heard voices in the arbour here, and just turned in to find you—"

"Yes, yes!" cried the Marquis, groaning under this keen surgical hacking and hewing at his wound.

"However," proceeded Charlie, with unabated seriousness, "if you think we *must* fight, I suppose—"

"Oh, no!—decidedly no!" cried the Marquis, with sudden energy. "There's no offence, not the least!"

"Very well, then, my lord, we'll shake hands. There now, get your gun and come with me—"

"E-eh?"

"I'll give you a famous day's duck-shooting at Monard."

"O-oh! Delighted, I'm sure!"

And they went for duck, much to Miss Cressy's relief, who was beginning to fear a marriage or a murder might be the issue of their collision.

(To be continued.)

BEAUTIFY YOUR HOME.

Pleasant surroundings go far to produce a happy life. It is false economy to get along with the cheapest and poorest home possible. Money spent in surrounding yourself with elegant and substantial comforts is money well laid out. It will repay you interest—aye! and compound interest—every day of your life. We are, after all, very much creatures of circumstances. A cheerful, well furnished home is calculated to produce ideas, and it is by ideas that men make money and govern the world. Elegant surroundings tend to soothe, gratify and elevate the mind. Not only are these effects produced upon one's self, but, in an increased degree, they are produced upon the wife and family. The good wife dearly delights in an elegant, well-furnished home. Next to her husband and her children, it is her special pride. The taking care of it gives employment to her thoughts, and the admiration of it, which visitors are sure to evince, is to her a continual gratification, and—our word for it—it is a grand thing to thus gratify the mother of your children. Then the lasting effects produced upon the minds of a growing family by the pleasant character of their surroundings—who shall tell them? What man with soul so dead who does not recall to himself every chair, lounge, and piece of furniture in that old house at home? He may go forth into the world and forget the oft-repeated lessons of his boyhood, but that dear old arm-chair in which his mother sat, when she so often took him on her knee—forget that? Never! As we write, the memory travels back, and every piece of furniture in that home seems to have an individuality that speaks to us of the loved ones, some of whom have gone to their long homes, while others search their fortunes in many lands. If pleasant surroundings produce such lasting memories, it follows that it is true economy to furnish our homes to the very best of our ability.