

## WON IN A CANTER.

My dear little pet, you are tired, over-  
tired and excited by the day's work; go  
to bed and get into bed as fast as you can.  
Lady Verriest has just gone down; it is  
late, and the night is getting chilly. I am  
going to smoke a cigar with Verriest and  
Sir John before turning in."

The three gentlemen, for old Mr. Thorn-  
hill was too tired, talked and smoked for a  
long time. The men had a double allowance  
of grog given them, and were smoking and  
chatting on the fore-castle, for no one seemed  
inclined for sleep.

"By George! Sir John," said Lord Verriest-  
fast, "we will be off in a couple of days  
for home. I shall be in a state of perpetual  
excitement after this, till I get Master Charlie  
here home and married; if anything were to  
happen to him that little girl below would  
break her heart."

Three days after that the above conversa-  
tion, a cloud of white canvas might have been  
seen pointing towards Gibraltar; it was the  
"Firefly" on her homeward voyage.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## THE DUEL.

Old Mr. Thornhill was delighted when the  
yacht left for home. He had heard all about  
the Russian nobleman, and this last affair of  
Greece had completely upset him; so it was  
with the utmost satisfaction he saw the class-  
ical land growing fainter in the distance.

The yacht sped swiftly on her way; her  
white wings glistening in the sun, she raced  
along, throwing the blue water aside, as she  
wended her way back to the land all on board  
loved so well.

They had decided on stopping at Gibraltar  
a few days. Charlie had some old friends  
who were quartered there whom he was anx-  
ious to see, and Mary and Lady Verriest  
had been promised a sight of the wonderful  
rock, that has survived so many strange and  
eventful scenes.

At last it loomed in the distance, grand  
and imposing, and as they neared it its bold  
outlines became more distinct.

"It looks even grander now, Mary," said  
Lady Verriest, "than when we passed it  
the other day. Is it not magnificent? but  
beautiful as it is, beautiful as are the different  
places we have visited, there is to me no  
place like home."

"Or me either," replied her friend. "I  
was anxious to come on this trip, and I am  
quite as anxious now to be back again. I do  
not know how it is, but I have a misgiving  
our travels will not end without some disas-  
ter or other."

"I cannot say I share your apprehension,  
Mary; surely we have had enough excite-  
ment for one voyage. Still, I must say it  
will be the utmost satisfaction to me, to all  
of us, when you and Mr. Thornhill are mar-  
ried, and quietly settled at dear old Linden  
Hall. Your father, I see, is fidgety, and  
Lord Verriest, I know, will be glad to be  
home again."

The vessel was soon after the above con-  
versation riding at her anchorage, and as it  
was early in the day, Charlie at once went  
on shore to pay his visits and look his old  
friends up.

He was not long in finding them out, and  
right glad they were to welcome him.

"Who on earth would have thought of  
seeing you here, Charlie?" said Captain  
Ross, an old school-fellow of his. "We have  
heard of all your doings; poor fellow, you  
had a devilish near shave, though; that  
comes of going out with fellows who know  
nothing of shooting, and who are careless  
into the bargain. But you have pulled  
through wonderfully well, and look yourself  
again. The way you rode that steeple-chase  
was splendid, quite your old form. Of course  
you dine with us this evening; I shall take  
no denial. To-morrow all your friends shall  
see the rock; they must lunch with us, and  
we will honor them all over the place."

Charlie agreed to dine with his friends,  
and sent a note to his uncle saying he should  
not be on board till the evening, and to have  
the boat at such a place at ten o'clock.

He wandered about with his friends, talk-  
ing of old times and their boyish days; till the  
hour approached for dressing for mess.

He had sent for his things, and was soon  
in the ante-room.

"By-the-by, Thornhill," said one, "a gen-  
tleman dines with us this evening who knows  
something of you all, and he says Miss  
Thornhill is the most beautiful girl he ever  
saw. He met you at Naples—the Count  
Orloff, he was only speaking of you yester-  
day, and asked if we had seen anything of  
the 'Firefly.' You never saw such a fellow  
at cards in your life; he cleaned us all out a  
few evenings back. He is a good fellow  
though."

"I know something of the gentleman,"  
replied Charlie, dryly, as he turned to listen  
to the baud, which was playing some well-  
remembered English air.

Charlie was relating his adventure amongst  
the Greek brigands when the Russian joined  
their party. He listened attentively whilst  
Thornhill was speaking, and when he had  
finished said, somewhat sarcastically:

"You all got off very well, and I am very  
glad of it, otherwise I should not have had  
the pleasure of meeting you here."

"I am much obliged to you, Count. Yes,  
we had a narrow escape. I do not know how  
we should have fared—a heavy ransom I  
suppose—but I had hit one of the fellows  
with my revolver, so perhaps I might not  
have got off so easily as the rest."

"Mr. Thornhill seems more ready with  
a set of brigands than he does with gentle-  
men," said the other, with the utmost cool-  
ness.

Had a thunderbolt dropped amongst them,  
it could not have caused greater consterna-  
tion than these few words did.

"There is no mistaking your meaning,  
Count," said the young man, with the utmost  
composure; "but I really do not see you  
have any right to say so."

The Count was playing with one of his  
gloves as Thornhill said this.

"You think not, sir," replied the Russian.  
"No doubt you think so; this is an oppor-  
tunity I have been anxiously awaiting, and  
I am delighted to be able to tell you, before  
your friends and countrymen, that I consider  
you a faint-hearted cur," and as he said this  
he struck him across the face with his glove.

The instant this was done the Count was  
laying on his back, for a blow from Charlie  
Thornhill's fist had felled the illustrious for-  
eigner; he was lying on his back, his face  
literally deluged with blood.

"I call you to witness, Ross, Churchill,  
and others, that this was not of my seeking.  
I am very, very sorry it should have occur-  
red here; but take a blow from no man."

The confusion was great. They rallied  
round Charlie, who was pale, but perfectly  
cool.

"Will you see me through this, Ross?"  
he asked, hurriedly; "of course there can  
only be one determination."

The Count had risen to his feet, and looked  
ghastly with his blood-stained features; he  
was trembling with passion, but was at last  
taken from the room by his German friend,  
who presently returned.

The officers were talking in knots as he did  
so.

"Here comes the Baron," said Ross, "with  
a message for you, Charlie. Refer him to  
me; I will see you through it, old boy. It  
may cost me my commission; but I will  
chance it."

"Of course, Monsieur Thornhill," said the  
German with great politeness, in French,  
"you must be aware that after what has  
passed, and the way my friend has been  
treated this evening, there is only one way  
this matter can be arranged."

"He brought it on himself, sir," replied  
the young man sternly. "Do you suppose  
for one instant I would be struck by anyone  
and not return it? I more than regret it  
should have happened here amongst my  
friends, and in their room. I might very  
well decline to go out with your friend for  
various reasons that it is needless to enter  
into now; but I will indulge his wish, and  
give him a meeting. My friend Captain Ross  
will arrange matters with you. But remem-  
ber, Baron, advise the Count to come no  
more here, for I shall this evening put down  
on paper, in case I fall, the reasons why I do  
not think his presence in a mess-room desir-  
able."

"You need not do that, Charlie," replied  
his friend, "he never enters our quarters  
again. It is denied lucky none of the chiefs  
were present this evening; otherwise there  
would have been a devil of a row. Now I  
must go to my quarters with the Baron, and  
do the needful for you. I am quite ready,  
Baron, for you," turning to him; "take a  
cigar, and we will adjourn to my rooms."

Thornhill sat down, lit his weed, and talk-  
ed away; but a cloud had descended on  
them all.

In half an hour Ross came back, and call-  
ed Charlie aside.

"It is all arranged, old fellow," he said;  
"you will go down quietly to the landing-  
place at ten o'clock, meet the 'Firefly' boat,  
and go aboard as if nothing had happened.  
Write what letters you have to, and turn in  
till five o'clock, when I shall send a boat for  
you. Put on your darkest clothes, we shall  
have a drive of nearly six miles to the ground.  
I will bring the tools for you; our fellows  
will be mum, so there is no fear of inter-  
ruption."

"Many thanks," replied Charlie, and they  
turned away to join the others.

At half past nine Ross said: "Now my  
boys, Thornhill is off, we must have a glass  
of grog all round. And mind, not a word to  
a soul. I have your words have I not?"

"Certainly," they answered.

"I am deuced sorry, Charlie, for this,"  
continued his friend, "that it should have  
happened here, but it cannot be helped now.  
I'll see you through it, though. God bless  
you, old fellow." And he tossed off the con-  
tents of his glass. "Now then, come along;  
I will go with you to the boat."

All pressed eagerly forward to take him by  
the hand. "Good-bye, Thornhill. Keep

young man no sooner saw that his uncle was  
well off than he arose, dressed himself care-  
fully, and stole out. It was now past twelve  
o'clock; in the saloon he sat down and wrote  
a long letter to Mary, and another to his  
uncle, explaining everything. Then throw-  
ing himself on one of the sofas, fell into a  
troubled sleep; he awoke every now and  
then with a start, thinking he had overslept  
himself, and looked at his watch, but finding  
it wanted hours to the time dozed off again.

As day approached he grew more restless,  
and finding he could not sleep, went quietly  
on deck. Not a soul was about except the  
watch on the fore-castle; it was just half-past  
four and a lovely morning, everything looked  
so calm and quiet. He thought that this  
might be the last time he would ever see the  
sun again; he was no coward, quite the con-  
trary, but he had a horror of duelling, and  
to take life in cold blood seemed to him ter-  
rible. And to be shot at by a deadly hand  
bore no very pleasing reflection, but as he  
remembered he had been struck, it made his  
blood boil.

He was in deep thought when he saw the  
boat approaching; there was only one man  
rowing it; as it approached closer he saw  
that it was his friend.

Not a word did either utter, and as the  
boat came alongside Charlie stepped into it  
and pushed off.

"Everything is ready, old fellow," said  
the Captain, when they had got out of ear-  
shot of the "Fire-fly." My trap is waiting  
for us. I have been up all night getting  
ready; the tools had to be cleaned, the  
Doctor to be talked over, and the trap to  
order. I can assure you my time has been  
fully occupied. I cannot tell you how I re-  
gret this, but there is no help for it now."

"I am most thankful, I am sure, Ross,  
for all your kindness and the trouble you  
have taken. God knows I had no wish or  
intention of making a quarrel."

"My dear fellow, you could have acted in  
no other way than you have. I am  
afraid he will not apologize for striking you.  
No, Charlie, you could have done nothing  
else. He is a deadly shot I am told, so you  
must be cool, but you are just as good a one."

The boat now touched the shore, and get-  
ting out, Ross gave her over to a man who  
was waiting for him.

The two then stepped smartly away, and  
after some quarter of an hour's walk came to  
the trap which was to take them on to the  
spot chosen. A regimental Doctor was in  
the cart with a servant.

"Here we are, Doctor," said the Captain.  
"I hope we have not kept you waiting for  
for us. Jump up, Charlie," and the four  
drove off. The five or six miles they had to  
go was speedily traversed, for the horse was  
a good one.

"First on the ground, at any rate," re-  
marked the Captain. "Now, Charlie, a  
word or two with you. I have arranged  
with the Baron that with two such shots as  
you and the Count are, that you shall be  
placed at sixteen paces, and fire by drop of  
a handkerchief; we shall toss for it. Be  
cool and collected; very likely the Russian  
will attempt to unnerve you in some way or  
other; he is, I am told, a noted duellist and  
used to these hateful things."

"My nerves are right enough, Ross," re-  
plied the other, "you will take charge of  
these two letters for me, old fellow, and give  
them to whom they are addressed, and if  
anything should happen to me, tell my  
uncle that—well, never mind, all is ex-  
plained in the letter to him. Here they  
come."

It was on rising ground where the three  
stood waiting the others, who were approach-  
ing.

The Count was laughing and smoking a  
cigar, as was the Baron. There was a  
stranger with them who turned out to be a  
medical man as well, and a Frenchman.

They bowed as they met, and the Count as  
he raised his hat slightly took a quick  
anxious glance at Thornhill.

"I brought a medical friend with us, Cap-  
tain," said the Baron, "but I see you have  
Dr M— with you. How are you, Doctor?  
A beautiful morning, is it not? Now, Cap-  
tain, we will just look out for a nice level bit  
of ground, but it all seems pretty good here."

As the two walked away, Charlie was left  
with the regimental surgeon, the Count and  
the other a few paces off. They were con-  
versing in French. But every word they  
said was understood by Thornhill.

"This is my ninth petite affaire, Doctor,"  
said the Russian, gaily, "the last one was  
with a countryman of my own, a husband, he  
fancied I was a little too attentive to his wife.  
A charming creature. He had heard of my  
pistol shooting, and came on the ground as  
nervous as a school-girl, lots of pluck, but he  
was thinking of his young wife, and this sort  
of thing was new to him. I felt certain of  
my man. I would have spared him; just  
taken him in the thigh, or something like  
that, but madame was charming, so I shot  
him through the heart. I was mistaken  
though, the lady would never look at me,  
and died a few months after. I wander  
what mademoiselle will say and do, when  
she hears I have killed her lover."

Charlie moved away to avoid hearing  
more, the words that had dropped from the  
Russian had steeled his heart, and whatever

leaves the Captain, coming up to his friend  
with a flushed face, and anxious look. "I  
must place you—for God's sake, old fellow,  
be cool. I give the word—in as I creep the  
handkerchief—the pistol is light in trigger,  
so keep it well up."

Thornhill took his place, with his right  
side towards his opponent, his left arm be-  
hind his back, giving his adversary as little  
as he could to aim at.

He was a handsome fellow, the model of a  
fine, well-grown young English gentleman as  
as he stood up before the other.

"Mind, gentlemen, you fire together, you  
know the signal, the dropping of my hand-  
chief," cried the Captain; "now attention."

As the Count stood opposite and eyed his  
young opponent, a sneer crossed his face—  
the handkerchief fluttered in the Captain's  
hand and then fell.

Both pistols were discharged simultane-  
ously, and both remained standing, but the  
Count's pistol had dropped to the ground.

"By heavens, Charlie, you've winged  
him," exclaimed his friend, running up to  
him. "Thank God, my boy, you are un-  
hurt, a devilish near shave though, the ball  
has gone clean through your hat, only two  
inches above your head—stay where you are  
whilst I go and see what is the matter."

Charlie had smashed the Count's pistol  
arm just above the elbow.

What an agonizing revengeful look he gave  
the Captain as he came up, a look that gen-  
tleman never forgot.

"My God, Baron!" he exclaimed, as his  
friend the German told him that Thornhill  
was unhurt, that the ball had passed through  
his hat, "it is all your fault. I told you  
twelve paces—and to load lightly—the over-  
charge saved him, curses on it; I'm maimed  
for life!" and as he uttered this he fell faint-  
ing to the ground.

Thornhill seeing this ran up. "Don't say  
I've killed him, Ross;" all his bitter feelings  
had vanished as he regarded the fallen man.  
"Oh, God! don't say I've killed him."

"No, no, Thornhill, my dear boy, be  
calm," said the regimental Doctor, "he's  
worth a dozen dead men yet; you've spoilt  
his shooting for ever though, there is not the  
slightest doubt his arm must come off, we  
must get him back as quickly as possible.  
Now, Ross, take your friend away, and get  
him on board the yacht as quick as possible."

He required no second bidding, and they  
were soon driving rapidly away.

Old Mr. Thornhill was up and on deck at  
six o'clock. "Have you seen Mr. Charles?"  
he asked of the steward.

"No, sir," replied the man, "but Phillips  
who had the morning watch, told me that a  
boat came off this morning at five o'clock,  
and Mr. Charles went ashore in her."

"Very extraordinary," muttered the old  
gentleman. "There is something wrong in  
this; if he had been going on shore this  
morning he would have told us of it." And  
he proceeded at once to call Sir John Forest.

"He has got into some mess for a thou-  
sand," said the Baronet, jumping up; "this  
secret expedition means no good. I would  
not have anything happen to him for all I  
possess; what are we to do?"

"Well, I'm sure I do not know, Forest,  
perhaps we had better wait till after break-  
fast, then we will go on shore; it is close on  
seven now."

Charlie was so anxious, that instead of  
proceeding at once to the "Fire-fly," he went  
to his friend's head-quarters to wait and  
hear what the medical men said.

The news of the duel soon got bruited  
about, and closely as the secret had been  
kept, it was quickly the talk of scores of  
people.

The man-servant, that had gone with  
Charlie and his friend, had said on their re-  
turn that one of the gentlemen had been  
shot; this was passed from mouth to mouth,  
when some one knowing one of the gen-  
tlemen came from the yacht, and concluding it  
was Thornhill who was shot, at once pro-  
ceeded to the "Fire-fly" to give the news.

Mary had got up early, and when she step-  
ped on deck, to her surprise found Sir John  
and her father pacing it.

"Why, papa, dear," running up and kiss-  
ing him, "you are early, and so is Sir John.  
I thought I should be the first up."

Neither gentlemen knew what to say.  
"Why, the fact is, Mary, your father called  
me," said the Baronet, after rather an  
awkward pause. "Charlie got up very  
early and went on shore—funny, is it not?  
I cannot make it out, not that it is anything  
of consequence, he will turn up presently,  
and see, there comes a boat off."

But as the boat came nearer, it was seen  
Charlie was not in it.

"Ah! he is breakfasting with his friends  
and is sending to let us know," observed  
Mary; "too bad of him to steal off in this  
way, and we are all to go on shore, too, to  
see the rock."

"Well, my man, what is it?" asked Sir  
John, as the boat came alongside.

"The young gentleman," replied the man  
—"I'm very sorry, sir, to be the bearer of  
ill news, but—"

The Baronet held up his hand as a warn-  
ing, but he was too late, the girl had heard  
it.

"Go on," she said, looking at her father  
who was as white as a sheet, and trembling