

DUELS.

Duelling in England was carried to its greatest possible excess in the reigns of James I. and the two Charles's. In the reign of the latter Charles, the seconds always fought as well as their principals; and as they were chosen for their courage and adroitness, their combats were generally the most fatal. Lord Howard, of Carlisle, in the reign of Charles II., gave a grand fête champêtre at Spring Gardens, near the village of Charing, the Vauxhall of that day. This fête was to facilitate an intrigue between Lord Howard and the profligate Duchess of Shrewsbury: but the gay and insinuating Sidney flirted with the Duchess, abstracted her attention from Howard, and ridiculed the fête. The next day his lordship sent a challenge to Sidney, who chose as his second a tall, furious, adroit swordsman, named Dillon; Howard selected a young gentleman, named Rawlings, just come into possession of an estate of £10,000 a year. Sidney was wounded in two or three places, whilst his second was run through the heart, and left dead on the field. The Duke of Shrewsbury became afterwards so irritated as to challenge the infamous Buckingham for intriguing with his wife, The Duchess of Shrewsbury, in the disguise of a page, attended Buckingham to the field, and held his horse whilst he fought and killed her husband. The profligate king, in spite of every remonstrance from the queen, received the Duke of Buckingham with open arms, after this brutal murder.

In 172 duels fought during the last 60 years, 69 persons were killed; (in three of these duels, neither of the combatants survived;) 96 persons were wounded, 48 desperately and 48 slightly; and 188 escaped unhurt. Thus, rather more than one-fifth lost their lives, and nearly one-half received the bullets of their antagonists. It appears, also, that out of this number of duels, 18 trials took place; 6 of the arraigned were acquitted, 7 found guilty of manslaughter, and 3 of murder; two were executed, and 8 imprisoned for different periods.

About thirty years ago, there was a duelling society held in Charleston, South Carolina, where each "gentleman" took precedence according to the numbers he had killed or wounded in duels. The president and deputy had killed many. It happened that an old weather-beaten lieutenant of the English navy arrived at Charleston, to see after some property which had devolved upon him, in right of a Charleston lady, whom he had married; and on going into a coffee-house, engaged in conversation with a native, whose insults against England were resented, and the English lieutenant received a challenge. As soon as the affair was known, some gentlemen waited upon the stranger to inform him that the man who had called him out was a duellist, a "dead shot," the president of the duellist club; they added, that the society and all its members, though the wealthiest people of the place, were considered so infamous by really respectable persons, that he would not be held in disesteem by not meeting the challenger. The lieutenant replied, that he was not afraid of any duellist; he had accepted the challenge, and would meet his man. They accordingly did meet, and at the first fire the lieutenant mortally wounded his antagonist. In great agony, and conscience-stricken, he invoked the aid of several divines, and calling the "duellist society" to his bed-side, lectured them upon the atrocity of their conduct, and begged, as his dying request, that the club might be broken up. The death of this ruffian suppressed a society which the country did not possess sufficient morals or gentlemanly spirit to subdue.

In Virginia, a Mr. Powell, a notorious duellist, purposely met and insulted an English traveller, for having said, that "the Virginians were of no use to the American Union, it requiring one half of the Virginians to keep the other half in order;" the newspapers took it up as a national quarrel, and anticipated the meeting, without the magistracy having decency, morals, or public spirit sufficient to interfere. The

Englishman, therefore, got an American duellist as his second, went into training and practice, and met his adversary amidst a mob of many thousands to witness the fight. Mr. Powell was killed on the first shot, and the Englishman remained unhurt.

The brother of General Delaney, the late barrack master-general, having high words with "a gentleman" in a coffee-house at New York, the American immediately called for pistols, and insisted upon fighting in the public coffee-room, across one of the tables. None of the "gentlemen" present interfered; they fought across the table, and the American dishonestly firing before his time, the Englishman was shot dead upon the spot. Lately, at Nashville, a gentleman was shot dead before his own door, in a duel, in the principal square of the city.

In 1763, the secretary of the English treasury, Mr. Martin, notoriously trained himself as a duellist, for the avowed purpose of shooting Mr. Wilkes, whom he first insulted in the House of Commons, and afterwards wounded in the Park. This gave rise to Churchill's poem of "The Duellist;" the House of Commons ordered his Majesty's sergeant surgeon to attend Mr. Wilkes, and Mr. Martin was considered to "have done the state some service."

At that period duels were frequent among clergymen. In 1764, the Reverend Mr. Hill was killed in a duel by Cornet Gardener, of the carabineers. The Reverend Mr. Bate fought two duels, and was subsequently created a baronet, and preferred to a deanery after he had fought another duel. The Reverend Mr. Allen killed a Mr. Delany in a duel, in Hyde Park, without incurring any ecclesiastical censure, though Judge Buller, on account of his extremely bad conduct, strongly charged his guilt upon the jury.

In 1765, occurred a celebrated duel between the father of the late Lord Byron and Mr. Chaworth, a famous duellist. They quarrelled at a club-dinner at the Star and Garter, Pall Mall, about game; Chaworth was a great game preserver, and Lord Byron had argued upon the cruelty and impolicy of the game laws. They agreed to fight in an adjoining room, by the light of only one candle. Lord Byron entered first; and, as Chaworth was shutting the door, turning his head round, he beheld Lord Byron's sword half undrawn; he immediately whipped his own weapon out, and making a lunge at his lordship, ran it through his waistcoat, conceiving that his sword had gone through his body: Lord Byron closed, and, shortening his sword, stabbed Mr. Chaworth in the belly. The challenge had proceeded from Chaworth. Lord Byron read his defence to the House of Lords, and was found guilty of manslaughter: and, upon the privilege of his peerage, was discharged on paying his fees.

In 1772, a Mr. McLean was challenged and killed by a Mr. Cameron; and the mother of Mr. McLean, on hearing of the shocking event, instantly lost her senses, whilst a Miss McLeod, who was to have been married to the deceased, was seized with fits, and died in three days.

In Mr. Sheridan's duel with Mr. Mathews, the parties cut and slashed at each other, *a la mode de theatre*, until Mr. Mathews left a part of his sword sticking in Mr. Sheridan's ear.

In a famous duel, in which Mr. Riddell was killed, and Mr. Cunningham very severely wounded, the challenge, by mistake, had fallen in the first instance into the hands of Sir James Riddell, father to Mr. Riddell, who, on having it delivered to him, did no more than provide surgeons for the event.

In 1789, colonel Lennox conceived himself to have been insulted by the late Duke of York having told him, before all the officers on the parade of St. James's, "that he desired to derive no protection from his rank of prince."—The colonel accordingly fought his royal highness, it was said, with cork bullets; but be that as it may, he contrived to disturb one of the huge rows of curls which it was then the fashion to wear on the side of the head.