

## A AFFAIR OF HONOR.

"The clotied blood within my nose,  
That froth my wounded body flows,  
With mortal crisis doth portent  
My days to appropriate ad oñd."

*Hudibras.*

That fighting a duel does not imply courage, few, we believe, will pretend to deny. That killing one's man does not imply skill, the following may be taken as a case in proof. It was related to us, some years since, as having happened on the northern frontiers, during the last war. But whenever and wherever, it happened the moral is the same.

There belonged to the army a Lieutenant, who was very cowardly, and an Adjutant, who was supercilious. He treated the lieutenant with great contempt, and especially before his brother officers. Among other modes of expressing this feeling, he gave him a supercilious glance over the shoulder.

This behavior vexed and irritated the lieutenant to such a degree that he consulted his friends as to some mode of retaliation.

"Why," said they, "the next time the adjutant treats you in this contemptuous manner, you must pull his nose."

"I'll be shot if I don't!" said the lieutenant, well pleased with the project, which did not, to his apprehension, involve any idea of gunpowder. Wherefore, coming up to his antagonist the next day, he bade him—"Good morning, Mr. Adjutant!"

The latter treated him with his usual supercilious look over the shoulder, when the lieutenant promptly took his nose between the first and second finger, and gave it a predigious wrench. Well satisfied with this exploit, he went his way, boasting how prettily he had wrung the adjutant's nose. But his feelings of triumph were short, for he was presently served with a challenge.

He was now in more trouble than ever. This was a result he had not looked for; and he again repaired to his friends for advice.

"Wh-wh-what a bloody fellow that adjutant is!" said he, in great perturbation—"he's challenged me!"

"Of course," returned his friends coolly—"no military man would allow his nose to be twisted with impunity."

"No!—Why in the name of blood and thunder did not you tell me of that before? I'd seen the devil had his nose before I'd touched it, if I'd known what was going to be the consequence. But what must I do now?"

"Fight to be sure."

"What! f-f-fight! I—I—fight? No—no—that'll never do—I shall be shot to a dead certainty."

"As like as not. But it's the business of the soldier, you know, to smell gunpowder."

"Yes—but to feel cold lead!—that's the worst of it!"

"Well, better or worse, there's no help for it—the adjutant has challenged you, and fight you must. They say he's a devil of a fellow on the trigger."

"I'm a dead man, then. I wish his

nose had been at the north pole before I'd touched it."

As there was no getting off, however, agreeable to the laws of honor, the lieutenant chose his second and went to meet the adjutant. The combatants took their ground, each with his side towards the other. But such was the tremor of the lieutenant, in order to steady his pistol, he held the breech against his hip, and in this manner let fly. The adjutant fell, bored through the loins with a mortal wound; while the trembling lieutenant, scarcely knowing, for a time, whether he was himself alive or dead, escaped unhurt—conveying with him from the field of glory the reputation of an honorable man! —[Constellation.

## JUSTICE AND MERCY.

*From the Usurer's Daughter.*

Speaking about identifying a person whom the father considers as concerned in the riots which had the previous night put his house in danger:—

"Margaret," continued the father, "you must know that the writer of the letter, which I received on Wednesday night, was among the crowd. You can swear to his person. When the law loses a victim, it loses part of its value, and so fails the object for which it was made, and when law fails of its object, it is a non-entity, a dead letter, a thing of no value; it might as well not have been made at all as made in vain; and when there is no law at all, or what is the same thing, when laws are made in vain, there comes a disruption of the bonds of society, all is confusion and disorder, plunder and murder. Margaret, would you wish to see society in sad disorder, so that there be no safety for life or property?" "Certainly not, my father," answered Margaret;—"but I am of opinion that there is no danger of such a result from my abstaining to give positively a doubtful testimony against accused men." "If all thought as you do, my child, there would be no justice." "And if all thought as you do, my dear father, there would be no mercy."—"Such a reply to any other father than Mr. Erpingham, would have brought a rebuke down upon the child that should have uttered it; but he heeded it not; on the contrary, without any abatement of his usual placid smile, without the slightest wrinkle on his brow, or cloud of anger on his countenance, he continued:—"Mercy, my child, what is the use of mercy? Justice holds society together; but mercy relaxes those bonds, and leaves us in a sad disunion. Mercy is a word of wide, weak, and foolish meaning. It is the insinuating craftiness whereby men plunder the honest and industrious. Margaret my child, I did not gain my wealth by mercy, and I will not lose it by mercy. They who came to me for gold to supply their wanton cravings, and pledged to me their title deeds, and gave me large premiums, measured not those premiums by any mercy towards me. If I had no money at command, they would not have put themselves and their reversions into my power.

Had I been utterly poor and penniless, I might for aught that mercy would have done for me, have sat down in the dust of humility, and have bowed my neck to the foot of the proud man, and have eaten the thankless bread of poverty, and have sunk down to an unmarked grave. Justice is intelligible, definite, written, and marked down. We know where to have it. But mercy is of indefinite and rambling meaning." "Oh, my dear father!" replied the daughter, "it grieves me indeed to hear you talk thus—contradicting all the pleasant and sweet lessons which I heard from my dear departed mother: it pains me to the heart to hear the people almost curse you." "They are foolish to curse me, Margaret; it does them no good and me no harm." Margaret turned her face and wept; and while her tears continued to flow, and her sobs to be heard, her father was silent; but when the passion of her sorrow was abated, he renewed the conversation precisely in the same tone and with the same purpose, saying, "my child, I would fain have you go with me to the Mansion-house, where the aldermen are examining prisoners. You must give your testimony according to the best of your ability." The tears which Margaret had shed, while they relieved her grief, abated the firmness of her resistance to her father's will and she replied, "if it be your pleasure, sir, that I should accompany you, my duty as a daughter compels my obedience; but I must say, that no consideration shall make me give testimony in a doubtful matter." "The testimony required of you will be according to the conviction of your own mind. Besides, in the present case you will not be upon your oath." "My dear father," replied Margaret, "I always speak as though I were upon oath." "In so doing, replied her father, "you do wrong." The daughter echoed the usurer's words with astonishment; and the callous man coldly proceeded—"Yes, my child, you do wrong; you diminish, you destroy the peculiar sanctity of an oath by such a proceeding. Only imagine for a moment how insignificant the law would be, if every one acted upon the principle of being no more bound by an oath than without one." "But think again, sir, how much better than many laws, would be the universal prevalence of the love of truth." "You are supposing, my child, what will never take place.—Besides, it would be inconvenient—very inconvenient. It is enough that a man can be believed on his oath; that is all the law requires—all that can be expected in this imperfect state. You will go with me, Margaret." "I will go with you, sir, but the conscientiousness that makes me obey you in this instance, will make me disobey you if you request of me any testimony which may destroy a life, which the withholding of that testimony may save." "Child, you have strange notions." \* \* \* \*

What is that which lives in winter, dies in summer, and grows with its root upwards?  
An Icicle.