

dear to me. On the day in which I had formed this resolution, while we were sitting at our wine after dinner, a note was handed to Charles by a soldier. I can give no reason for the suspicion, but I felt an irresistible and overwhelming conviction that I was, in some way, interested in that note. In the evening, as soon as it was dark, Charles left the barracks, and carefully muffling up myself in a cloak, I proceeded to follow and watch his movements. My suspicions had been but too well founded; he walked directly to the dwelling of my false mistress, and I saw him enter a garden gate in the rear of the building. For one moment I stood motionless, and then rushed home as if pursued by the avenging furies. Every fierce and direful passion raged in my breast, and I rapidly swallowed large draughts of wine, while I attempted in vain to arrange the tumultuous and incoherent thoughts, which crowded in busy throngs through my distracted mind. Hour after hour rolled by, 'till, at length, with maddened brain, I buckled on my sabre, and sallied forth, determined to find and confront my hated rival. There was a cafe and billiard-room much frequented by the military, and to that I bent my steps. He was there, surrounded by a gay and laughing group of officers. There must, I doubt not, have been something dark and menacing in my looks, for the circle gave way, and we stood face to face. He betrayed some surprise at my sudden approach, but made a careless remark, to which I replied with a torrent of insulting reproaches. Irritated, at length he struck me across the face with his glove. In a moment both our sabres were drawn, and a bloody conflict would have ensued, had not some of the older officers rushed between us, and separated us by main force. An affray in a public billiard-room, would excite too much scandal. A meeting was, however, arranged to take place early the next morning, at a short distance from the town. I arose after a sleepless night, pale, haggard, and with aching brow. Dressing myself in haste, I joined my second, who, with a number of my brother officers was waiting to accompany me to the ground. My antagonist, with a party of his friends, was only a few yards in advance. He was dressed with unusual care, and in brilliant spirits. We met a group of peasant-girls on their route to market, with fruit. Charles stopped the prettiest of them, bought a quantity of cherries, which he received in his forage-cap, snatched a kiss, and throwing a dollar to the girl, passed on in high glee. I could have struck him

to the ground, and trampled on him. We entered a small cabaret about a mile from the town, when our seconds informed us that we were to fight with pistols, firing alternately, and that the chance of the dice was to decide who should have the first shot. As usual, his cursed luck attended him, for he threw a higher number than I did. Adjoining to a small meadow in the rear of the house, we took our position ten paces apart. The pistols were placed in our hands, and Charles received the word to fire. He did so, rapidly, and I felt a sharp shock in my right arm. He had continued eating his cherries from his cap, which he held under one arm; but after firing, he throw it to the ground, and calmly stood to receive my shot. The word was given, and I attempted to raise my arm, but it was powerless, and refused to obey my will. The blood, too, began to flow down my arm, and trickled in a small stream from the muzzle of my pistol. I dropped the bloody weapon on the ground with a muttered execration. 'You are wounded,' cried my second; 'yes, I exclaimed bitterly, or that handsome gentleman would not perhaps stand there so much at his ease.'

"On the contrary *mon cher*, you are quite welcome to take your shot whenever you please."

"I accept your offer," I eagerly exclaimed.

"No, no!" said both the seconds, 'impossible!'

"I repeat it," said Charles, in a loud but calm tone of voice, 'and pledge my honor as a gentleman and soldier, to receive that gentleman's fire, whenever and wherever called upon to do so. And I repeat that I accept your pledge, and will hold you, perhaps to its performance.' He then left the ground, and I received the necessary surgical assistance.—My wound was soon healed, but I could not bear to breathe the same air with my detested enemy, and lost no time in forwarding my resignation to the proper quarter, thus putting an end for ever to all my brilliant visions of military glory. Since then, I have lost my father, my only surviving relative; he breathed his last sigh in my arms. I led a restless, wandering life, a prey to one mighty and cherished passion, revenge. To that I dedicated every thought, every faculty. To that I hold my existence sacred. That was the motive of my forbearance toward that hot headed fool last night. An unlucky shot might put an end to all my long cherished plans of vengeance. I loathe and detest the world, and mix as little as possible with my fellow vipers. But you,