

my blade glided along hers, and I perceived that the iron button was broken off from the point of her foil. "You must have made a mistake, *Mademoiselle*," I said, "your foil has no button."

"Well observed, Sir," she replied, with flashing eyes. "I pointed the blade myself! In four weeks a wedding! Your bride loves your false face. She shall not have it. I'll cut it in pieces, as you have done my heart! *En garde, Monsieur*."

"But, Julie"—

"*En garde, Monsieur!*" and her eyes glittered like those of a lioness. "Save yourself if you wish to have a wedding at all." She struck out again with violence. I had to parry with all my skill, but without success. Her sharp *fleuret* cut the flesh of my arm, from the hand to the shoulder.

As soon as she saw my blood flowing, she threw her foil into a corner, and raised me up in her arms. I had sense enough left to tell her to break the point off the foil, before I fainted. When I recovered my senses I found my arm bandaged. Though I could not move, I heard her moaning, and calling out, "Ernest, dear Ernest, I have killed you. I would gladly have died for you a thousand times, and now I have killed you. Oh, Ernest, dear Ernest, don't die," she cried, in deep agony.

I was soon able to speak. "Be quiet, child; but first give me the sword point." When it was brought to me, I examined it and found the point sharp as a needle.

Monsieur Fernand came in. "What has happened?" he cried, in the greatest excitement. "How was this possible?"

"Very simply," I replied. "The button of the foil broke off, and Julie has wounded me accidentally."

"How careless, child; but where is the point? It must be somewhere. I'll speak to the sword-maker for sending me such a blade as this. I am very, very sorry."

After a while the old gentleman begged to excuse himself. He must go to his guest. He left us, telling Julie she must keep me company. Julie came to me deeply affected, and begged me to forgive her.

"With all my heart I forgive you," I answered, looking into her deep dark, but now tearful eyes. "You shall love me, my dear Julie, not as a bride but as a sister; confide in me in everything, and I'll watch over you as a brother." Sighing, she bent over my wounded arm, and burning tears fell upon it. She looked up into my eyes, so grieved, so afflicted; she seemed to think it useless to speak of refusing my request. The heart only could hear the "*No!*" he uttered. While she tried to master her feelings, she said sorrowfully, "I will love you as a brother."

Monsieur Fernand again entered. I soon found myself strong enough to drive home; and with a hearty salute from the old gentleman, and a long hot glance from Julie, I bade adieu to my generous instructor and his warm-hearted daughter. * * * *

* * Ten years have passed away since then. I sit by a writing-table. The children are terribly noisy to-day. "Silence!" All quiet at once, but soon the noise begins again.

"Pa, pa, look what I have found," says my eldest girl.

"Come, child, I have no time now."

"But isn't it sharp?" said the child.—"Sharp." I became interested. "What is sharp?"

"Here, pa."

"Dinner ready," calls my wife, from the dining room.

"Come here, darling," I reply.

"What is it, Ernest?"

"Look here, Julie, do you know this sword point?" My wife blushes. Her eyes look into mine as they did ten years ago. She had improved from a small tiny bud, and had grown up into a beautiful rose, smiling; she puts her arms around my neck and kisses me again and again, till I say playfully: "*Plus machinalment*, Julie!"

The wound had made my arm stiff; my betrothed rejected me. She did not wish to marry a cripple. Julie became my wife. She gave up fencing, for she has now enough to keep her employed with the care of our children.