

most deeply for their melancholy situation. Deprived in these dull, monotonous, peaceable times, of all opportunities of evincing, in the hardy contest of the tented field, that heroic flame that burns within their hearts, they were happy to vent the lofty flaming of their souls in the more domestic and less dangerous encounters of the duel, like the warrior in the East, who, deprived of the pleasure of slaughtering armies, contented himself with cutting down cabbages.

Here a solemn pause ensued. I called to mind all the tales I had heard or read of ancient knights; their amours, their quarrels, and their combats; how, on a fair summer's morning, the knight of the Golden Goshawk met the knight of the Fiery Fiddle; how the knight of the Fiery Fiddle exclaimed in lofty tones, "whoever denies that Donna Fiddlecote is the most peerless beauty in the universe, must brave the strength of this arm!" how they both engaged with dreadful fury; and, after fighting till sunset, the knight of the Fiery Fiddle fell a martyr to his constancy; murmuring in melodious accents, with his latest breath, the beloved name of Fiddlecote.

From these ancient engagements, I descended to others more modern in their dates, but equally intimate in their origin. I recalled the genuine politeness and polished ceremony with which duels were conducted in my youthful days, when that gentlemanly weapon, the *small sword*, was in highest vogue. A challenge was worded with the most particular comeliness; and one that I have still in my possession, ends with the words, "*your friend and affectionate servant Nicholas Stubbs*." When the parties met on the field, the same decorum was observed; they pulled off their hats, wished one another a good day, and helped to draw off each other's coats and boots, with the most respectful civility. Their fighting too was so humbly conducted: no awkward movements; no eager and angry pushes; all cool, elegant and graceful. Every thrust had its *sauvé*; and a *bis-bis* lunged you gently through the body. Then nothing could equal the tenderness and attention with which a wounded antagonist was treated: his adversary, after wiping his sword deliberately, kindly supported him in his arms, examined his pulse, and enquired, with the most affectionate solicitude, "how he felt himself now?" Thus every thing was conducted in a well-bred, gentlemanly manner.

Our present customs I can't say I much admire, a *twelve inch barrel pistol* and *ounce ball*, are blunt, unceremonious affairs, and prevent that display of grace and ele-

gance allowed by the small sword; besides, there is something so awkward in having the muzzle of a pistol staring one full in the face, that I should think it might be apt to make some of our youthful heroes feel rather disagreeable, unless, as I am told has been sometimes the case, the duel was fought by twilight.

The ceremony of loading, priming, cocking, &c. has not the most soothing effect on a person's feelings; and I am told that some of our warriors have been known to tremble and make wry faces during these preparations, though this has been attributed, and doubtless with much justice, to the violence of their wrath and fierceness of their courage.

I had thus been musing for some time, when I broke silence at last by hinting to friend Quoz some of my objections to the mode of fighting with pistols.

Truly, my friend Oldstyle, said Quoz, I am surprised at your ignorance of modern custom: trust me, I know of no amusement that is, generally speaking, more harmless. To be sure, there may now and then a couple of determined fellows take the field who resolve to do the thing in good earnest; but in general our formidable duellists are content with only one discharge; and then, either they are poor shots, or their triggers pull hard, or they shut the wrong eye, or some other cause intervenes, so that it is ten, ay, twenty chances to one in their favour.

Here I begged leave to differ from friend Andrew; I am well convinced, said I, of the valour of our young men, and that they determine, when they march forth to the field, either to conquer or die; but it generally happens that their seconds are of a more peaceable mind, and interpose after the first shot; but I am informed that they come often very near being killed, having bullet holes through their hats and coats, which, like Falstaff's hack'd sword, are strong proofs of the serious nature of their encounters.

My sister Dorothy, who is of a humane and benevolent disposition, would no doubt detect the idea of duels, did she not regard them as the last gleams of these days of chivalry to which she looks back with a degree of romantic enthusiasm. She now considered them as having received their death-blow; for how can even the challenges be conveyed, said she, when the very messengers are considered as principals in the offence?

Nothing more easy, said friend Quoz: a man gives me the lie, very well; I tread on