

A DUEL SCENE.

FROM NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.

It was a profligate haunt of the worst repute, and not a place in which such an affair was likely to awaken any sympathy for either party, or to call forth any further remonstrance or interposition. Elsewhere its further progress would have been instantly prevented, and time allowed for sober and cool reflection; but not there. Disturbed in their orgies, the party broke up; some reeled away with looks of tipsy gravity, others withdrew noisily discussing what had just occurred; the gentlemen of honour who lived upon their winnings remarked to each other as they went out that Hawk was a good shot; and those who had been most noisy fell fast asleep upon the sofas, and thought no more about it.

Meanwhile the two seconds, as they may be called now, after a long conference, each with his principal, met together in another room. Both utterly heartless, both men upon town, both thoroughly initiated in its worst vices, both deeply in debt, both fallen from some higher estate, both addicted to every depravity for which society can find some genteel name and plead its most depraving conventionalities as an excuse, they were naturally gentlemen of most unblemished honour themselves, and of great nicety concerning the honour of other people.

These two gentlemen were unusually cheerful just now, for the affair was pretty certain to make some noise, and could scarcely fail to enhance their reputations considerably.

"This is an awkward affair, Adams," said Mr. Westwood, drawing himself up.

"Very," returned the captain; "a blow has been struck, and there is but one course, of course."

"No apology, I suppose?" said Mr. Westwood.

"Not a syllable, sir, from my man, if we talk till doomsday," returned the captain. "The original cause of dispute, I understand, was some girl or other, to whom your principal applied certain terms, which Lord Frederick, defending the girl, repelled. But this led to a long recrimination upon a great many sore subjects, charges, and countercharges. Sir Mulberry was sarcastic; Lord Frederick was excited, and struck him in the heat of provocation, and under circumstances of great aggravation. That blow, unless there is a full retraction on the part of Sir Mulberry, Lord Frederick is ready to justify."

"There is no more to be said," returned the other, "but to settle the hour and the place of meeting. It's a responsibility; but there is a strong feeling to have it over: do you object to say at sunrise?"

"Sharp work," replied the captain, referring to his watch; "however, as this seems to have been a long time brooding, and negotiation is only a waste of words—no."

"Something may possibly be said out of doors after what passed in the other room, which renders it desirable that we should be off without delay, and quite clear of town," said Mr. Westwood. "What do you say to one of the meadows opposite Twickenham, by the river-side?"

The captain saw no objection.

"Shall we join company in the avenue of trees which leads from Petersham to Ham House, and settle the exact spot when we arrive there?" said Mr. Westwood.

To this the captain also assented. After a few other preliminaries, equally brief, and having settled the road—each party should take to avoid suspicion, they separated.

"We shall just have comfortable time, my lord," said the captain, when he had communicated the arrangements, "to call at my rooms for a case of pistols, and then jog coolly down. If you will allow me to dismiss your servant, we'll take my cab, for yours, perhaps, might be recognised."

What a contrast when they reached the street, to the scene they had just left! It was already day-break. For the glaring yellow light within, was substituted the clear, bright, glorious morning; for a hot, close atmosphere, tainted with the smell of expiring lamps, and reeking with the steams of riot and dissipation, the free, fresh, wholesome air. But to the fevered head on which that cool air blew, it seemed to come laden with remorse for time mis-spent and countless opportunities neglected. With throbbing veins and burning skin, eyes wild and heavy, thoughts hurried and disordered, he felt as though the light were a reproach, and shrunk involuntarily from the day as if he were some foul and hideous thing.

"Shivering?" said the captain. "You are cold."

"Rather."

"It does strike cool, coming out of those hot rooms. Wrap that cloak about you. So, so; now we're off."

They rattled through the quiet streets, made their call at the captain's lodgings, cleared the town, and emerged upon the open road, without hindrance or molestation.

Fields, trees, gardens, hedges, every thing looked very beautiful; the young man scarcely seemed to have noticed them before, though he had passed the same objects a thousand times. There was a peace and serenity upon them all strangely at variance with the bewilderment and confusion of his own half-sobered thoughts, and yet impressive and welcome. He had no fear upon his mind; but as he looked about him he had less anger,

and though all old delusions, relative to his worthless late companion, were now cleared away, he rather wished he had never known him than thought of its having come to this.

The past night, the day before, and many other days and nights beside, all mingled themselves up in one unintelligible and senseless whirl; he could not separate the transactions of one time from those of another. Last night seemed a week ago, and months ago were as last night. Now the noise of the wheels resolved itself into some wild tune in which he could recognise scraps of airs he knew, and now there was nothing in his ears but a stinging and bewildering sound like rushing water. But his companion railed at him on being so silent, and they talked and laughed boisterously. When they stopped he was a little surprised to find himself in the act of smoking, but on reflection he remembered when and where he had taken the cigar.

They stopped at the avenue gate and alighted, leaving the carriage to the care of the servant, who was a smart fellow, and nearly as well accustomed to such proceedings as his master. Sir Mulberry and his friend were already there, and all four walked in profound silence up the aisle of stately elm-trees, which, meeting far above their heads, formed a long green perspective of gothic arches, terminating like some old ruin in the open sky.

After a pause, and a brief conference between the seconds, they at length turned to the right, and taking a tack across a little meadow, passed Ham House and came into some fields beyond. In one of these they stopped. The ground was measured, some usual forms gone through, the two principals were placed front to front at the distance agreed upon, and Sir Mulberry turned his face towards his young adversary for the first time. He was very pale—his eyes were bloodshot, his dress disordered, and his hair dishevelled,—all most probably the consequences of the previous day and night. For the face, it expressed nothing but violent and evil passions. He shaded his eyes with his hand, gazed at his opponent steadfastly for a few moments, and then taking the weapon which was tendered to him, bent his eyes upon that, and looked up no more until the word was given, when he instantly fired.

The two shots were fired as nearly as possible at the same instant. In that instant the young lord turned his head sharply round, fixed upon his adversary a ghastly stare, and, without a groan or stagger, fell down dead.

"He's gone," cried Westwood, who, with the other second, had run up to the body, and fallen on one knee beside it.

"His blood on his own head," said Sir Mulberry. "He brought this upon himself, and forced it upon me."

"Captain Adams," cried Westwood hastily, "I call you to witness that this was fairly done. Hawk, we have not a moment to lose. We must leave this place immediately, push for Brighton, and cross to France with all speed. This has been a bad business, and may be worse if we delay a moment. Adams, consult your own safety, and don't remain here; the living before the dead—good bye."

With these words, he seized Sir Mulberry by the arm, and hurried him away. Captain Adams, only pausing to convince himself beyond all question of the fatal result, sped off in the same direction to concert measures with his servant for removing the body, and securing his own safety likewise.

So died Lord Frederick Verisopht, by the hand which he had loaded with gifts and clasped a thousand times; by the act of him but for whom and others like him he might have lived a happy man, and died with children's faces round his bed.

The sun came proudly up in all his majesty, the noble river ran its winding course, the leaves quivered and rustled in the air, the birds poured their cheerful songs from every tree, the short-lived butterfly fluttered its little wings; all the light and life of day came on, and amidst it all, and pressing down the grass whose every blade bore twenty tiny lives, lay the dead man, with his stark and rigid face turned upwards to the sky.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

TRUTH BEAUTIFULLY EXPRESSED.—The following passage, beautiful in its truth and in the expression of that truth, is by the editor of the Baltimore American.

"If children could only be made aware of the heartfelt delight with which parents behold the development of talent and noble sentiment in their offspring, with what avidity would they seek the means of expanding the sphere of their intelligence, and cherishing the moral sentiments that impart dignity to the human character. From infancy to manhood the welfare and happiness of the child is the sole object of the parent's solicitude. Under all circumstances, through good or evil fortune, the present and future condition of those whom they have rocked in the cradle, or dandled on the knee, is the polar star to which their affections point with undeviating constancy. Should their path through life be prosperous, the possession of wealth and distinction is only precious in their eyes, as affording the means of conferring on those who are, in future years, to be their representatives, the honors that attend riches and exalted character; and should adversity be their lot, and difficulties beset them, they are forgotten in the hope that circumstances may ensure a better fate to

their children. The child may be affectionate and tender, but the filial relation is not susceptible of the intensity of affection which belongs to the parental tie. It is this depth of love that enables the old to pass the stage of life without regret. They feel that in their children they will continue to live, and that, however this world and its concerns may be lost to them, succeeding generations will recognise in their offspring portions of themselves. With what unspeakable delight does a father behold the first manifestations of exalted intelligence in a son, and how does he dwell upon actions that bespeak nobleness of purpose and soundness of integrity. If these feelings of gratification are inexpressibly delightful, so on the other hand the emotions with which he views indications of an opposite character, are unutterably painful. To see the object of his paternal solicitude, over whom he has watched day after day, and year after year, fall off from the path of virtue, and deaf to the appeals of honorable motives, is to have a source of bitterness of regret, to which no temporal blessing can furnish an antidote. Honors may await, and the confidence and love of his fellow beings may, for a moment, cheer his path through life, but when he reflects that his honor and his love are to be changed into contempt and dislike in the person of his own child, he feels as if it were better to be deprived of all, than to witness so heart-rending a contrast. If there be reserved for human life a joy more exalted than all others, it is that of beholding its last moments cheered by the fondness and affection of a worthy and virtuous progeny, and if there be a pang more agonizing than any other, it is that of a dying parent, whose last thoughts rest upon the crimes of a depraved but fondly loved child."

DEDICATION OF GREEN MOUNT CEMETERY, NEAR BALTIMORE.—This solemn and impressive ceremony took place recently in a beautiful grove near the centre of the grounds, in presence of a large number of ladies and gentlemen, not less, probably, than four thousand. The weather during the afternoon and evening was exceedingly pleasant; and the refreshing breeze that played through the foliage, and over the grounds, with the moral calm, and the stillness that reigned around the secluded spot chosen for the ceremonial, served well to predispose the mind of the auditor, and fit it at once to enjoy and to profit by the allotted exercises. A more impressive ceremonial, or one which more thoroughly and earnestly engaged the attention of the assemblage present, is of rare occurrence.

A temporary rostrum had been fitted up, and a stage erected, with seats placed thereon, sufficient to accommodate the reverend clergy, the orator of the day, the Musical Association, the Mayor and City Council, and a few others present by special invitation. In front of the rostrum, on the right and left, there were placed long lines of benches for the accommodation of the auditory.

The exercises of the dedication commenced shortly after five o'clock, with the performance by the Musical Association, of a chorale, from the oratorio of St. Paul, beginning, "Sleepers, awake, a voice is calling!" The composition thus chosen, was "beautiful and appropriate;" and it is not too much to add, and yet "sufficient for praise," that the performance by the association, was such as to do justice to the subject and the occasion. So soon as the sound of the music died away, the Rev. Dr. Wyatt, arose, and whilst the attendant multitude stood uncovered, offered up to the throne of the Most High a Prayer, in which deep devotional feeling was happily blended with great beauty of language and perfect appropriateness of thought to the occasion. In his appeal he adverted to the usage of the patriarchs of old in setting apart "a field for the burial of the dead," and dwelt with touching eloquence upon the moral and religious influences that arose from manifestations of due respect to the remains of departed worth. He spoke of the grave as the vestibule to another world, where the loves and friendships of this transitory life may be renewed, never again to be marred by care and suffering, but to become purer and brighter throughout eternity.

The prayer was succeeded by a hymn, composed for the occasion by J. H. B. Latrobe, Esq.

At the conclusion of the hymn, which was sung with touching effect, to the time-honored and excellent tune of Old Hundred, Mr. Kennedy followed with his Oration. This was, in all those qualities that constitute an eloquent and finished composition, a masterly performance. An address more able and suitable to the interesting occasion—more likely to take both judgment and feeling captive—and in its subjects and illustrations, more true to the heart and "faithful to its fires," we venture to assert, has seldom fallen on the ear of any one of that numerous auditory. When the oration was concluded, the choir sang (to the tune of Pleyel's German Hymn) another hymn, composed for the occasion, by F. H. Davidge, Esq.

A benediction, pronounced by the Rev. Mr. Hamner, closed the interesting and impressive ceremonies.

Remember, though God promises forgiveness to repentant sinners, he does not promise they shall have to-morrow to repent in.—Make much of time, especially in the mighty matter of salvation.—Thomas Aquinas.