

that it strips the bully of the advantage which physical strength affords him. True; but does it not give impunity to any contemptible but inalienable being who feels no dread of the horsewhip if he is able to direct the pistol with skill: that skill is of great avail, has been proved in numerous instances; men are as liable to be unfairly matched in its use as in the more manly contest of hand to hand. Modern duels, it is said, are conducted with moderation. Most true: so moderate as to become farcical; the unfrequency of fatal results is the worst argument in its favour: divest duelling of its terrors, it becomes contemptible. There seems an exquisite absurdity in compelling the injured husband or outraged brother to seek redress by exposing him to the bullet of the injurer. Opinion demands it!—but if opinion be so strong, cannot it be exerted to punish the offender, without an awful risk to those who are already wronged?

But to our story. Thompson was prepared for a challenge. "Winton," said he, "carry back this letter to your principal, and let me advise you in future to ascertain whether your friend has a right to demand such a favour at your hands. I cannot recognize any claims upon me from this boy; he is beneath my notice; and tell him to be discreet in his language, or I shall make use of unpleasant means to abate his presumption."

This contemptuous reception of his message completely mystified Mr. Winton, who returned to his quarters, where he had left Charles, and related what had passed.

"I am at a loss to account for this behaviour, Mr. Wilson," said he; "Thompson has had an affair before, and is the wrong man to flinch; he certainly considers that you have no right to call him out; you must know best if there is any reason."

"Reason!" thundered Charles, in a transport of rage; "do you mean to insult me, Sir, by supposing such a thing? Lend me a horsewhip; the villain shall find if I have claims or not."

He sallied forth, and soon found Thompson, who was in company with several brother officers. He advanced towards the youth, raising a cane he held in his hand:

"Now, Sir, your business with me?" said he, in a tone of bitter contempt.

The officers interposed instantly to prevent an encounter.

"We cannot permit violence, Mr. Wilson," said they. "But what is the meaning of this, Thompson?" was asked by one of them.

"Gentlemen," replied Thompson, "this young man has thought proper to send me a challenge; you know enough of me to be assured that I am

ready to reply in a manner befitting a gentleman to such affairs, but I cannot comply with a call made by a stripling who does not even know his own name."

"My name, scoundrel!" returned Charles, astonished at Thompson's assertion.

"Yes, sir, your name! I have no wish to expose you further unless you provoke me. Go home to your father, and ask him why he dropped the name of Rose."

Thompson's triumph was complete; poor Charles was paralysed; what could this mean? He looked from one to the other, and fancied he read contempt in every countenance: he uttered not a word, but turned, and with a bursting heart darted homewards. Thompson laughed in derision.

Emily, poor girl, saw that she had done wrong, and truly conjectured the reason of Charles' abrupt departure. In an agony of fear and surprise, she waited her parents' return; upon their arrival in a short time, she gave the note to her father, and, almost fainting, she cried—

"Oh, father! what can be the reason of this?"

Wilson read it, and instantly turned pale as death. He called to a servant, and said, "Tell Mr. West," (who was still an inmate) "I wish to speak with him this moment."

"Frederick, my husband, for mercy's sake, what has happened?" said his wife.

"You will know too soon," West entered the room at this moment. "Look at this; tell me is it so or not? Thompson! how infatuated not to have known the name before!"

"I fear," said West, "it must mean that—I must be a son of his; but my dear friend, let us hope it is not so,—and yet I can find no other way of understanding this intimation."

Emily looked on in vague terror; her mother, now comprehending the reason of her husband's agitation, burst into tears.

"Where is Charles?" asked the father. "West, this must be kept from him at present, or God knows what may follow."

Emily fell at his feet; "Oh, forgive me! I have shown it to him."

"Wilson wrung his hands; "Where is he?" he almost shrieked.

"He left the house about an hour since," replied West; "but my dear friend, calm yourself; even if it is as we suspect, you are too well known here to be injured by it. I will seek Charles immediately."

He was in the act of leaving the room, when young Wilson rushed in. His eye met his father's: Wilson, shrinking from his gaze, sank into a chair, and covering his face with his hands, groaned with anguish. West, unable to comfort him, leant over him in mute sorrow. Emily, not