

His servant had lit the lamps, so he drew a chair to the table to write some letters. At the top of a sheet of paper he wrote these words: "This is my last will and testament," then sprang from his seat and moved away, feeling utterly powerless to form an idea, to make a resolution, to decide upon anything one way or another.

Ah! he was going to fight. He could no longer avoid that alternative. But what was this strange emotion that held him under its spell? He was going to fight, this was his firm and unalterable intention, and yet he felt in spite of every effort of his mind, every exertion of his will, when the hour came he should not have the requisite courage to meet his opponent. He tried to picture in his own mind the combat, his attitude, and that of his adversary.

From time to time he ground his teeth from pure nervousness and with a harsh sound that made him shiver. He would read, and took down the "Code of Duel Laws" by Chaleanvillard. Presently he murmured:

"Is my opponent a frequenter of the shooting-galleries? Is he known at them? Is he a member? How can I find this out?"

Then he remembered the book of Baron de Vaux on good marksmen, and he ran through it from beginning to end. No such name as George Lamil was given. At the same time were this man but an indifferent shot he had never accepted so promptly such dangerous weapons, such terrible conditions.

Pausing before a small cabinet he took from a box of Gastinne Renette a handsomely mounted pistol and placed himself in position, raising his arm as if to fire. But he trembled from head to foot and the mere sight of the weapon made every nerve quiver. "It is impossible. I can never fight in this way."

He looked down the barrel, through which death comes, and thought of the dishonour, of the scandal, the laugh in the salons, the contempt of the women, of the insinuations in the newspapers, the insults that would assuredly be heaped upon him by his inferiors.

Still gazing at the pistol he lifted the cock and saw beneath it a cartridge shining like a tiny red flame; it had been left loaded through carelessness; this gave him a vague inexplicable thrill of delight.

Suppose he could not preserve before his adversary a calm and dignified self-possession would he not forever be a lost, a ruined man, scorned by his world? And in his inmost soul he knew, he felt that never would this calm and dignified self-possession be his; he could not command it; and yet he was brave since he wished to fight—he was brave since he—The thought that rushed to his mind had scarcely time to form, when, opening his mouth to its widest extent, he forced the barrel of the pistol with all his strength down his throat, and pulled the trigger.

When his valet hastened in, alarmed at the report, he found his master lying dead upon the floor. The sheet of paper still lay upon the table, but a great red stain now pointed with deadly meaning to the words: "This is my last will and testament!"

REN.

THE SCRAP BOOK.

REV. MR. SPURGEON ON SMOKING.

RESPONDING to a speech made by a co-religionist upon the evils of smoking, Mr. Spurgeon once said: "If anybody can show me in the Bible the command, 'Thou shalt not smoke,' I am ready to keep it; but I haven't found it yet. I find ten commandments, and it's as much as I can do to keep them; and I've no desire to make them into eleven or twelve." Great was the scandal produced by this manly utterance of the great preacher; but he stuck to it, and wrote to the *Daily Telegraph*: "As I would not knowingly live even in the smallest violation of the law of God, I will not own to sin when I am not conscious of it. There is growing up in society a Pharisaic system which adds to the commands of God the precepts of men; to that system I will not yield for an hour. The preservation of my liberty may bring upon me the upbraiding of many of the good, and the sneers of the self-righteous; but I shall endure both with serenity so long as I feel clear in my conscience before God. The expression, 'smoking to the glory of God,' standing alone, has an ill sound, and I do not justify it; but in the sense in which I employed it I shall stand to it. No Christian should do anything in which he cannot glorify God; and this may be done, according to Scripture, in eating, and drinking, and the common actions of life. When I have found intense pain relieved, a weary brain soothed, and calm, refreshing sleep obtained by a cigar, I have felt grateful to God, and have blessed his name; this is what I meant, and by no means did I use sacred words triflingly. If through smoking I had wasted an hour of my time, if I had stinted my gifts to the poor, if I had rendered my mind less vigorous, I trust I should see my fault and turn from it; but he who charges me with these things shall have no answer but my forgiveness. I am told that my open avowal will lessen my influence; and my reply is that if I have gained any influence through being thought different from what I am, I have no wish to retain it. I will do nothing upon the sly, and nothing about which I have a doubt. I am most sorry that prominence has been given to what seems to me so small a matter, and the last thing in my thoughts would have been the mention of it from the pulpit; but I was placed in such a position that I must either by my silence plead guilty to living in sin, or else bring down upon my unfortunate self the fierce rebukes of the anti-tobacco advocates by speaking out honestly. I chose the latter; and although I am now the target for these worthy brethren, I would sooner endure their severest censures than sneakingly do what I could not justify, and earn immunity from their criticisms by tamely submitting to be charged with sin in an action which my conscience allows."—From *Tobacco Talk*.

THE PETRIFIED MAN.

"Now, what have you got to say for yourself, you rogue?" inquired the proprietor with much wrath. "I have caught you myself, in the very act, and you cannot escape with any more of your lies. What have you to say for yourself, you rascal?" "Say for myself?" replied Mateo, with an innocent expression on his face. "What should I have to say for myself, but that I am gathering grapes for your interest and profit?" "But you are eating more than you pick, you scoundrel!" said the master, indignantly. "Do you mean to tell me that I, who have been watching you for the last twenty minutes, am blind or drunk, or that I am accusing you falsely of eating my most valuable grapes?" "Eating your grapes!" said Mateo fiercely. "Do I not know—I, a vine-grower myself (and a not unsuccessful one)—that these are a rare and choice kind of grape, especially grown for a very rare and choice kind of wine? Va—senor, you could not think so ill of me as that! May the blessed saints turn me into a stone image if I have committed such a fraud upon you, or robbed you in the smallest way!" Here he stopped and placed his basket on his arm, preparatory to leaving, and in a moment a curious change came over Mateo. The proprietor and overseer were almost frozen with fear. The saints, whom Mateo had invoked, had taken him at his word. His feet seemed glued to the spot. He tried in vain to move. And gradually his legs turned to white stone. Mateo's face was full of horror. "What is the matter with me? I cannot move!" Here he looked down at his feet and uttered a shriek when he saw that they were turned to stone. "Oh senores! dear senores!" he cried in his agony, "cannot you help me? Pull me out of this! don't stand looking at me, but pull me out! If I could only get my feet out, I should be all right. See! my body is quite as usual. I have lied to you, oh my master! and I did eat the grapes; but I did not mean to steal from you—I did not indeed. And I will never do it again, if you will only forgive me and help me out of this!" His eyes were almost staring out of his head as he held out his arms appealingly to his employer. Both men did what they could for him. They tried to move him by main force, but it was of no use. They pulled and they tugged. Then they called all the workmen, and together they tried to pull him from the ground. They rubbed him with vinegar and oil to take the stiffness out. Some of the strongest men fainted with fear when they saw their comrade's plight. But it was all of no use. The stone seemed to creep further along his body. They then fell on their knees and implored the saints to stay their vengeance upon a penitent man. "He appealed to you because he believed himself innocent," they cried, "and because he was so poor. Who knows better than you, oh blessed and merciful saints, that perhaps these grapes were his only food and sustenance in his poverty? We have been too hard upon him." But they appealed in vain. When they turned towards the object of their prayers he was beyond the reach of human aid. He was turned to stone, just as he stood, his basket on his arm and his eyes staring into vacancy. . . . In the corner of an old garden in Daroca travellers are to this day shown with great awe the "Man of Stone."—From *Mrs. S. G. Middlemore's Spanish Legendary Tales*.

MUSIC.

AT the recent festival given in the Crystal Palace in commemoration of the Handel bicentenary, one of the most interesting features was the performance of a concerto for double orchestra never printed, and, so far as is known, never before performed. Mr. W. S. Rockstro discovered the unfinished MS. of this work in the Buckingham Palace Library, and completed it from another in the British Museum. The MS. at Buckingham Palace is contained in a volume labelled "Sketches." It consists of nine separate movements arranged for a *concerto grosso* of stringed instruments only, and two separate wind bands each comprising two oboes, a bassoon and two horns in F. Of the last two allegros the Buckingham Palace MS. contains only the first two bars and then breaks off abruptly, but Mr. Rockstro found the continuation among the Handel autographs at the British Museum. The opening bars of the missing ninth movement correspond with those of another concerto arranged for the organ. Consulting the MS. at the British Museum and Arnold's edition of the Organ Concerto Mr. Rockstro was able to add three final movements to the double concerto. As usual with Handel the concerto contains several themes which occur in other compositions, well-known strains from "Esther," the "Messiah," and "Israel in Egypt" being recognizable. The concerto is not one of Handel's great works, but was of course well performed and excited interest on account of the quaint effect produced by the preservation of Handel's own instrumentation. Another instrumental work which formed an important feature was the violin sonata in A, which, instead of being played by one violin as originally intended, was given by two hundred in unison. All the critics have declaimed against such a barbarous violation of the composer's intentions, but, having uttered their protest and satisfactorily posed as purists as in duty bound, they all admit that the effect on that occasion, bearing in mind the size of the building and number present, was very good.

THE vexed question of musical pitch has been once more raised, this time by a communication from the English Foreign Office to the directors of the Royal Academy of Music, in response to which a meeting was held, and presided over by Sir George Macfarren, "to consider the advisability of a standard musical pitch for the United Kingdom." At this meeting the following resolutions were carried: (1st) "That it is desirable to fix a standard for musical pitch throughout the United Kingdom which may accord with that of other countries"; (2nd) "That in order to annul the great inconvenience consequent on the discrepancy of pitch in this and other countries, it is desirable to adopt the French normal diapason of 518