

## THE MERRY DAYS.

[From the Atlanta Constitution.]

Hang the holly berries—  
Let the red flames glow;  
Cheeks as red as cherries  
Neath the mistletoe!  
Outside voices on the air:  
"Christmas comes but once a year?"

Steeple bells a-ringing  
Over merry throngs,  
And the fiddle slinging  
All the old-time songs!  
And outside voices on the air:  
"Christmas comes but once a year?"

## THE BRAVE COWARD.

"So you will not fight?"

"No. Absolutely and irrevocably, no!"

"But, my dear Carew, you called him a liar!"

"Because he was a liar. But my knowing a man a liar and telling him so is not sufficient reason for deliberately murdering him or inviting him to murder me. I know what you are going to say—the customs of the country and all the rest of it—but the customs of the country may go hang for me! As for apologizing, I shall certainly not apologize for calling a man a liar when I know he is one. That is my final answer, Trevenna."

We were staying at the Chateau d'Orville, the French country seat of the Comte d'Orville, at the invitation of the Comte, between whom and Carew's father there existed a lifelong friendship. There had been a row in the billiard room on the previous evening, and in a moment of passion Carew had called a certain Lieutenant Villiers a liar. Of course Carew was right—the confounded little Frenchman was lying—but that did not alter the case. The absolute code of honor which prevails on the Continent demanded that Carew should meet him, and this Carew had refused to do. But they had no other code here; Carew must fight, apologize, or be dubbed a coward. The last idea was unbearable.

"But think, my dear Carew!" I urged, "Monsieur, le Comte! Your father's friend. What will he think of you? Besides" I blundered on, "this ridiculous duelling is perfectly harmless. A few scratches, perhaps a—"

Carew turned upon me with flashing eyes. "You do not think I am afraid, Trevenna?"

"Afraid! Forgive me my dear fellow, if I have said anything to suggest that I thought you were afraid."

He thanked me and shook my hand warmly after the fashion of us English when we are grateful to a friend.

"As for the good Comte d'Orville," he said quietly, "I know that he is a man to whom this mode of satisfying honor is as the breath of his life. I shall be sorry if he misjudges me, as I fear he will, but whatever happens my decision is unalterable."

We crossed the lawn, and entered the house in silence. When we reached the salon we found the gentlemen congregated there, and from their manner when we entered it was plain that Carew's conduct had been the theme of their conversation.

Comte d'Orville instantly left the group, and advanced to meet us. His face was pale and haughty, his voice cold and constrained.

"Monsieur Carew, I have been informed that you have deliberately insulted one of my guests, and that you refuse him the satisfaction due a gentleman. Tell me that is so?"

Carew's face flushed, but he pulled himself up to his full height, and his voice was as steady as the Comte's.

"It is true that I expressed my opinion of Lieutenant Villiers, Comte d'Orville; and it is also true that I refuse to give him what you understand to be the satisfaction due to a gentleman."

"Then of course you will apologize!"

"I will not! You forget, monsieur, that the honor of the gentleman in question will only be vindicated when he has proved that the opinion I expressed was erroneous. Let him do so and I apologize instantly. Meantime my conscience forbids my attempting to take the life of my fellow-man!"

Comte d'Orville shrugged his shoulders.

"Monsieur Carew, we do not understand qualms of conscience in matters of this kind. And we have only one name for the man who insults a gentleman and then refuses to meet him or to apologize. That is 'Coward!'"

Carew bit his lip until it bled.

"So be it, Comte," he answered, quietly enough. "I hope you will believe that I regret exceedingly that this unfortunate incident has occurred here, where I have been so generously entertained. Under the circumstances, however, my further presence would only be painful to you and to myself. With your permission I shall leave the Chateau d'Orville tomorrow morning."

The Comte turned away and answered coldly, "As you please, monsieur. Your father's son is welcome to the poor hospitality of my house so long as he cares to remain."

We speedily made the necessary arrangements for our departure. Whether we liked it or not, we could not get away from the chateau before the next morning, and, as it was not yet dusk, by way of killing time, I proposed a stroll and a cigar.

In former times the only road to the village was one sloping down from the front of the house to the cliffs. At the end of this road the rock rose sheer up from the sea to a

great height, and it required very careful treading to keep to the path which led to the village. Of late years, however, a new and safer road had been constructed, and the old one was not now used except by an occasional pedestrian.

It was down this old road that we strolled that afternoon. The view from the cliffs was charming; and a delightful breeze blowing up from the sea revived our spirits somewhat. I do not know how long we stood there; but, at any rate, we were in a more cheerful frame of mind as we walked back to the chateau.

"After all, old man," said Carew, cheerfully, "I am not the first man who has been misunderstood, and I daresay I shall get over it in time. Perhaps I may have an opportunity of convincing these Frenchmen that a man is not necessarily a coward because he refuses to take part in an encounter so revolting in his feelings of humanity."

Even as he spoke a shrill scream fell upon our ears; then the sound of galloping horses and men shouting; and a bend in the road brought us in full view of a sight I shall never forget.

Bearing down upon us, heading straight for the cliffs, came the Comte d'Orville's brougham, drawn by two maddened horses, its terror-stricken occupant a child of 10 the Comte's little son. There were figures of men running behind, but they were blurred and indistinct, and we could not see who they were.

The horror of it unnerved me. I looked at Carew. His eyes were fixed intently upon the advancing horses, like a man calculating his chances. "Pray for my soul, Trevenna," I heard him mutter, but the voice seemed strange and far off, and I did not realize his purpose. Then, as the horses came level with us, I saw him spring forward and clutch the bridle-rein—I saw him dashed off his feet, but he still held on; I saw him dragged on and on—then a sickening crash, the horses came down.

I was on the spot in an instant; but almost as I reached it, the Comte, hatless and speechless with excitement, dashed up at the head of the others. We picked up his little son—unconscious, but unhurt; then from out the debris we dragged the bruised and battered body of poor Carew.

Tears streamed from the Comte's eyes as he bent tenderly over him, and he kissed the face of the unconscious man.

"Mon Dieu!" he muttered, huskily, "and I, miserable man, called him a coward!"

Carew was not dead. How badly he was injured we did not know. We carried him back to the chateau. A doctor was summoned, and upon his arrival and at his request we withdrew to the salon to await his verdict the Comte alone remaining with his guest.

It seemed ages to us waiting there before the Comte put in an appearance; but at length he did come, and I saw by his radiant face that all was well.

"Gentlemen!" he said, "I am happy to be able to inform you that Monsieur Carew is recovering and that his injuries are not of a serious nature."

The assembled gentlemen applauded—for they are generous to a fault, these Frenchmen and love, above all things on earth, a brave man.

"And I have this further to say," continued the Comte, "that, as conscientious scruples and conscientious scruples alone, prevent Monsieur Carew from taking any part in an affair of honor, I, Comte d'Orville, who have no such scruples, am at the service of any gentlemen who desire satisfaction of that kind from Monsieur Carew."

He looked straight at Lieutenant Villiers, but that gentleman was not looking his way.

—Norman Taylor.

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## Circumlocutions.

Necessity is the mother of invention and the hungry Frenchman told about in a biography recently published in England illustrates the old adage anew.

He was in an English restaurant and wanted eggs for breakfast but had forgotten the English word. So he got around the difficulty in the following way.

'Vaiterre, vat is dot valking in de yard?'  
'A cock sir.'  
'Ah! And vot you call de cock's wife?'  
'The hen sir.'

'And vot you call de shildrens of de cock and his wife?'  
'Chickens sir.'

'But vot you call de shickens before dey are shicken?'  
Eggs sir.  
Bring me two.

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## From Woman's Point of View.

"I had the significance of what is in a name explained to me the other day," said a friend to a Toledo Blade writer. "Shakespeare was not right in his conclusion. I was in a ladies' tailoring establishment and a lady came in and said: 'Mr.—, I think you forgot to put your name in the back of my jacket when you made those alterations.' 'Yes, I did,' responded the man; 'I will have it put in now.' The lady went away happy, for she did not pay for style or fit. She had paid for that cabalistic word on the back of the collar of her coat, and without it the rose was without odor."

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