

"I cannot apologise, because I have done you no wrong, and you can shoot me as I have no means of resistance," replied Samuels, calmly, as if indifferent about the result.

"Then will you fight me, like a man, with pistols or bowie-knives?" shouted Hickman, almost maddened by the seeming impassibility of the other.

"It is not customary for the challenging party to name the weapon, I believe," said the youth, with the slightest possible sneer, "but send me your draft, like a gentleman, and it shall be duly honoured without days of grace."

"Oh! you are manoeuvring for the choice of weapons, are you? but I'll soon put the boot on the other leg. Take that!—and that!" cried the duelist, in tones of thunder, as he struck his enemy blow after blow with the horse whip, applied with all his herculean strength, and continued until his arm grew weary of the cruel exercise.

But although the pain must have been excruciating, as the clothing about his shoulders was torn by the knotted leather, and the blood flowed freely from his neck and face, Samuels did not flinch, did not stir one hair's breadth from his first position. His features might be, perhaps a shade more pallid, and this sign alone evinced his consciousness of the shame and torture he endured. Only one instant, a slight shudder was seen to shake his frame, as a piercing shriek resounded from the ladies' cabin.

In the meanwhile the bell had been rung, as the signal for landing, and the boat was fastened to the wharf, and not till then did the duelist desist from his revengeful labour, turning away with the remark—"There the boot is now on the other leg.—Send me your draft as soon as you like, and I will settle it in coin from the lead mine."

It may appear unaccountable and improbable to persons familiar only with the scenes of moral civilized life, that such an outrage could be perpetrated in the view of a multitude, without an attempt at interference by the bystanders; but those who reason thus do not know, they cannot even imagine the horror inspired by the men of blood that follow, like some fatal curse, the ever receding line of the frontier. These, too, are always attended by friends fearfully armed, like themselves, and prompt to resist and punish the amicable intervention of a third party. Two years ago, the writer saw four individuals of this class in a village of the southwest, provoke a quarrel with almost an entire stranger, insulting him in every offensive manner, and striving to goad him to desperation during a long hour; dogging his footsteps like bloodhounds, through all the streets, demanding he should fight some of their number,—till finally, maddened by shame, the doomed man cried—"Give me a weapon and you shall be gratified." Then a companion of the gentlemanly assassins presented him with a pistol charged only with powder—this forming a part of the concerted scheme—and, without a friend to advise, or a kind voice to encourage, or even a disinterested spectator to whisper "beware!" the unfortunate stanger assumed his position, about ten paces from one of the four antagonists selected to do the work of murder—and in less than a minute the dark deed was done! And all this occurred in the presence of a hundred or more men, with two justices of the peace and one sheriff as witnesses. The sequel turned out still worse. The assassins were indicted, tried and acquitted—the jury, without quitting the box, rendering a verdict of "homicide, justifiable in self-defence!" and this in a state where death in a regular duel is by law, manslaughter!

As soon as the pistol was withdrawn from his breast and the horse-whip ceased to lacerate his face and shoulders, young Samuels gave a hasty order to a porter for the removal of his baggage to the house of a relative on shore, and was hurrying off the boat, when he felt the grasp of a hand on his arm, and looking round met the pitying eyes of Zavala.

"Do not leave without seeing my daughter," said the Mexican, in a low voice; "we have a plan to avenge you."

But the youth repulsed him, almost rudely, and leaping some ten feet on the wharf, made his rapid way up the principal street of the village, as if he sought to hide from the burning glances of those who had witnessed the horrors of his degradation.

Zavala watched his retreating form till it was lost in the darkening twilight, and then returning to his daughter saying, with a sigh—"Poor fellow! Grief and shame have turned his brain—and it is no wonder."

Early the next morning Dr. Harnel was aroused by a loud knocking at the door of his room, and on the words "come in" being pronounced, young Samuels entered showing a countenance of such calm, inflexible determination that it told in ad-

vance the nature of his business. This, however, he did not unfold at once, but sought first of all to elicit an expression of opinion from his friend, in conformity with the purpose of his own mind, and he expected to effect the object by ejaculating abruptly the question:

"Doctor, I have come to ask your advice. What course would you pursue under the terrible circumstances in which I am now placed?"

The other answered without a moment's hesitation—

"I would take a double-barrelled shot-gun and kill the assassin on sight."

"Would you not give him a chance?" inquired the youth.

"No better chance," said the doctor, in a cruel tone, "than I would give a mad wolf which I should happen to meet in the forest. Did he give you any chance yesterday? Then why should you extend him a greater mercy?"

"But will I be justified by the law, or even by public opinion, in the execution of such summary punishment?" asked Samuels, his lips faintly quivering.

The doctor looked at him with astonishment, saying to himself, mentally—"Can it be possible that any one endowed with human feelings can submit to such treatment, and live on?" He replied, however, to the youth's interrogatory, in a somewhat indignant manner—"I do not know or care, whether the law would sanction the deed or not; but of one thing I am sure—that there is not a single honorable man in Texas who would endure the wrong which you have suffered, and not kill the wretch whose murderous malice inflicted it."

"I intend to kill him," responded Samuels, emphasizing the words sharply, as if he would make each one a dagger.

"Certainly you cannot think of a duel with such a wild beast. The idea is madness!" cried Harnel, as a suspicion of the other's intention suddenly crossed his brain.

"The duel or the murder is the only alternative; and as we both cannot exist on the same earth, I prefer the duel to the murder," said Samuels, in accents of such invincible and deadly resolution that his friend dismissed at once all thoughts of trying to change it.

"Well," spoke the doctor, in a kind and encouraging voice, although shuddering internally at the shadows of a gloomy presentiment, "as your mind is made up, nothing remains but to despatch the message; and if you so desire, I will be the bearer."

"Thanks!—unspeakable thanks!" replied the youth, grasping his hand warmly; "and now if you will be so good, let the matter be attended to with the least possible delay."

The challenge was instantly prepared and sent, and Samuels awaited impatiently for the other's return. He was not kept long in suspense. In the course of half an hour Harnel was seen returning, and with a countenance of more auspicious omen than when he took his departure.

"What success?" asked the young man, eagerly, without giving the other time to reach the door.

"Better than I expected," was the answer; "he accepted, chose double-barreled shot-guns, and the affair is to come off at sunrise tomorrow, on the opposite side of the river, at the ferry landing."

Samuels uttered a cry of ferocious joy, exclaiming—"double-barreled shot-guns! my favorite weapon! Now I am sure to kill him, even if I perish myself."

The day passed slowly away, and the rich light of evening had again painted that cloudless sky with gorgeous images, enameled in fiery tints of purple and gold, when Zavala sought a secret interview with the young merchant, in order to dissuade him from the purpose of the hostile meeting, the rumour of which had circulated all over the village, creating the most intense excitement.—The arguments and entreaties of the friendly Mexican, however made no impression,—the answer to every view of the case was still the same,—I and the wretch who dared to touch me with a horse-whip, cannot both live together on the same earth.

"But means may be devised to rid you of this enemy, even to-night," said Zavala. "The Barisa Indians, for instance," he added, with a dark smile.

"No, no, not for the world," cried Samuels, earnestly. "I should never see another happy moment if he were slain by another." Then, observing the speechless amazement his declaration produced, he continued, "his blood can never wash out my shame, if it be shed by any hand but mine."

Zavala looked more and more bewildered; then changing the subject, he inquired,— "will you not see my daughter this evening? She is almost distracted with grief and anxiety."

The youth replied, with a burst of deep emotion, "it would indeed be happiness to die for one so lovely; but I dare not, I will not, exhibit these marks of violence on my wounded face to the eyes of such an angel."

At early dawn of the following day, the principals, seconds and in truth, nearly the whole population of the village and surrounding country, were at the place fixed for the mortal strife. It was necessary for all to come with the first blush of dewy morn, if they wished to witness the combat, for in that warm clime of the south, twilight never lingers, if it may be even said to exist. You see, now, a few pale streaks shooting up out of a sea of darkness; then, the glitter of reddish white tints on the corners of grey clouds, as if all the fields of air were sowed with fresh roses; then a broad burning glow all along the edges of the horizon like an immense river on fire, or the inchoate conflagration of the world, and ere you are aware, the bright day-god leaps upon the earth in all his glory.

As soon as the sun appeared, the weapons were loaded, and placed in the hands of the principals, who took their respective stations twenty paces apart. Face to face, and both facing death, with the muzzles of their guns resting on the ground, and looking steadily at each other, the foes stood waiting for the fatal word.

The striking contrast between the two antagonists could not fail to be remarked by the most careless observer. Hickman, almost a giant in frame, with sharp, bony features, bronzed and bilious complexion, and great swelling bundles of irritable nerves, towered upon the fields, with a countenance proud, sneering and merciless, as if assured of victory. He was about forty years of age.

Samuels did not exceed twenty-one. His face was almost feminine in its soft, symmetrical beauty, with eyes of deep blue, radiant and sparkling like stars. His form was slender and graceful, but harmonious in its proportions, and every gesture, even the slightest movement of a limb,—displayed activity and energy as quick as the flash of a thought.

Universal silence now reigned on the field, save when some brilliant bird from the neighbouring grove, uttered its brief song of gladness, and then soared on high to drink its fill of the morning sunbeams.

The word was to be given by Capt. Logan, the second of Hickman.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?"

"Ready."

"Fire,—one, two, three."

A general shout, in part of astonishment and the residue of anger, rent the air. At the word, with a motion as rapid as lightning,—so rapid the eye could scarcely follow it,—Samuel raised his piece and fired, and Hickman fell a corpse, without a chance to touch the trigger.

"One of the dead man's friends, in order to excite the crowd of spectators against the victor, exclaimed in a loud voice,—

"He has played foul; he fired before the time."

But the revulsion had already taken place. A sentiment of admiration had succeeded that of indifference, among the on-lookers, and there was not one to sustain the speaker. While the excitement continued, and the single partizan of the dead man, was endeavoring to get up a feeling against the challenged party, young Samuels had remained impassable, in appearance, as a man of marble, cold, pitiless, haunted, demonized by the idea of blood. But now, when his fell purpose was consummated, and there could no longer be any doubt as the victory,—when the peril of his existence was passed, when his hated enemy lay lifeless before him, a mass of inanimate clay, harmless as any glassy eye, that never,—no, never more again,—should flash in anger, or be filled with images of beauty, or open at the call of musical May mornings, till the final fire,—then in the full fruition of his triumph, a cloud of unutterable sadness was seen on the face of the conqueror, and he gave way to an agony of the bitterest tears. But whatever may have been the character of the thought so suddenly striking the electric chain of feeling, with such overwhelming power to ring the soul with nameless torture, it went as it came instantaneously; and Samuels, shunning all unseemly congratulations, hurried away from the ground, in the carriage and company of Zavala. He had passed the first crisis of acclamation on the Rio Grande.

#### MINOR MORALS FOR MARRIED PEOPLE.

"The last word" is the most dangerous of the infernal machine. Husband and wife should no more fight to get it, than they would struggle for the possession of a lighted bomb-shell.

Keep an Epictetus in your dining-room, to read while waiting for the completion of your wife's toilet.

Married people should study each other's weak points, as skaters look out for weak parts of the ice in order to keep off them.

Ladies who marry for love, should remember that the union of angels with women has been forbidden since the flood.

The wife is the sun of the social system. Unless she attacks there is nothing to keep heavy bodies, like husbands, from flying off into space.

Wives, be lenient to the marital cigar. The smoke always hides the most disagreeable part of the bottle.

The wife who would properly discharge her duties, must never have a soul" above buttons.

The liberties of Nations have been won by mutual concessions. Let the husband who would acquire the privilege of asking friends to dinner without notice, remember this when his wife hints at a new bonnet. The wife's want, is the husband's opportunity.

Notwithstanding the assertions of mathematicians, the marriage-ring is a circle which husband and wife have the problem set them of making all square.

Don't trust too much to good temper when you get into an argument. The Indians produce fire by the rubbing of the driest sticks.

Sugar is the substance most universally diffused through all natural products. Let married people take a hint from this provision of nature.

#### A SLAVE STORY.

The following extraordinary case occurred in Mississippi, under the slave law of that state:—A planter was afflicted with a loathsome disease.—So offensive were the ulcers that he was deserted by his white friends, and while thus afflicted and forsaken, a girl whom he owned as a slave, kindly and patiently waited upon him, dressed his ulcers, cleansed his person, and watched over him until he finally recovered. With gratitude and affection to his benefactor, he took her to Cincinnati, Ohio, executed to her a deed of manumission, had it recorded, returned to Mississippi and there married her in legal form.—They lived together affectionately for many years, reared a family of children, and, as he lay upon his death bed, by will he divided his property between his wife and his children. His brothers hearing of his death, came forward and demanded the property. The widow and children were indignant at the demand.—They, too, were seized, and the validity of that marriage was tried before Judge Sharkey, of that state who decided that the whole matter was a fraud upon the law of slavery—that the property belonged to the collateral heirs. His widow was sold by the surviving brothers, the children were bid off at public auction, and both mother and children now toil in chains or sleep in servile graves.

#### A SPECIMEN OF THE PARENTAL GOVERNMENT OF RUSSIA.

Mr. Meyers, jeweller, of the Bull-ring, informs us that being recently on the continent, he met a gentleman residing at Smolensk, Russia, to whom he put the question, "What news in your country?" "Oh!" said he, "don't ask me about news; we know nothing, and daren't inquire what is going on; as our servants are all spies, and the least thing would bring us into trouble; no foreign newspapers are permitted to reach us; and as for our own newspapers they tell us where the Emperor goes to, and when a fresh General is made, but nothing else." One event, however, which took place at Smolenska, few days previously, was narrated by Mr. Myer's friend. At the suggestion of government, the ladies of that town went about gathering linen for the purpose of sending to the army as dressings for wounds, and one day the wife of the chief of police, while leaving her contribution of lint at the office where it was received remarked, perhaps jocularly, that there would be little demand for the lint, as such a large army as that of France and England were sure to kill all the Russians. Next morning she was summoned to one of the government offices, and asked how she dared to make such an observation. The result was, that she was thrown upon the floor in the midst of a crowd of men, her cloths were turned up over her head, and forty lashes administered.—Although the flesh and blood of the poor creature was flying in all directions by the time the twelfth lash was inflicted, the whole number was given; and in order, if possible, to increase the torture, they washed the wounds with a strong infusion of saltpetre and water. She was consoled with the information that, but for her husband holding the position he did, she would have been sent to Siberia.—*Birmingham Journal.*