

believe I felt my hair standing erect on my head. "Precisely," he added, "and it is my turn to fire. I have come to discharge my debt. Are you ready?" "I could see a pistol peeping from his side pocket. I stepped twelve paces, and I stood there, in that corner, praying him to make haste and fire before my wife came back. He was in no hurry, he said, and he asked for lights. They brought in some wax candles. I shut the door, ordered the servants to let nobody enter, and again I called on him to fire. He raised his pistol and took aim at me. I counted the seconds. I thought of her. This lasted one awful minute. Silvio lowered his weapon.

"I am very much annoyed," he said, "that my pistol is not charged with—cherry-stones. A bullet is hard. But I have another idea. This business is more like a murder than a duel. I am not accustomed to pull trigger on an unarmed man. Let us begin it all over again, and draw lots for the first fire."

"My head turned. At first, I imagine, I refused, but finally we loaded another pistol. We rolled two scraps of paper, and he put them into the very cap he had worn when I sent a bullet whizzing through it. I dipped into the cap, and I drew the paper marked number one.

"You have the devil's luck, Count!" he said, with a grin. I shall never forget.

"I cannot understand what power took possession of me, or how he succeeded in constraining me; but I did fire, and my bullet lodged in that picture."

The Count pointed with his finger to the canvas traversed by the pistol-shot. His face was as red as hot iron. The Countess was whiter than her lace handkerchief. As for me, I could hardly repress a cry.

"I had fired my shot, therefore," pursued the Count, "and, thanks be to God, I had missed. Then Silvio—how demoniac a visage he had at that moment!—deliberately adjusted his weapon and leveled the deadly barrel straight between my eyes. Suddenly the door flew open. Maeha burst into the room and clasped herself round my neck. Her presence restored me to firmness.

"My dear," I said, "can you not see that we are joking? What a tremor you are in! Go, go; drink a glass of water and return, and I will introduce you to an old friend and comrade."

"Maeha mistrusted me.

"Tell me, is this that my husband says true?" she implored of the terrible Silvio. "Is it true that you are joking?"

"He is always joking, Countess," replied Silvio. "Once out of pure jest he gave me a box on the ear; out of pure jest he planted a bullet in my cap; out of pure jest a while ago he missed me with his pistol. Now it is my turn to have my little laugh."

"At these words he covered me anew under the eyes of my wife. Maeha fell at his feet.

"Rise, Maeha! Are you not ashamed of yourself?" I shouted with rage. "And you, sir, do you wish to drive an unfortunate woman delirious? Will you fire? Yes or no?"

"I do not care to now, thank you. I am satisfied. I have enjoyed your suffering and your weakness. I have compelled you to fire upon me. You will recollect me. I leave you to your conscience."

"He made a step toward the door, and, halting at the threshold, he threw a quick glance at the perforated picture, and, almost without troubling to take aim, he fired, doubled my bullet, and walked out. My wife swooned. My domestics did not dare to bar his passage, but retreated before him appalled. He reached the entrance-steps, called his postillion, and, before I had time to recover my presence of mind, he had disappeared."

The Count had told his story.

Thus I learned the end of an episode, the opening of which had puzzled me. I never saw the hero of it again. They say that Silvio joined the insurrection of Alexandre Ypsilanti, and was slain at the head of a band of partisans at the disaster of Skouliani.—*Times's Magazine*.

WORK AND FEED.—An instance of an inventive genius in an illiterate farmer's boy is too good to be forgotten. A small farmer hired a youth to assist him in the work of his farm as an irid-or servant. The first piece of work he was set to do was to thresh out some corn. As the farmer was passing the barn in which the youth was at work, he heard the flail lazily keeping time to a tune the lad was singing. Stopping to listen, he ascertained that the words were, "Bread and cheese, tak' thy ease." Going into the house, the farmer said to his wife: "This is a queer sort of lad we have gotten; he seems to think that the speed at which he ought to work should be measured by the kind of food he gets." And then relating what he had heard, he suggested, "Suppose we give him something different for dinner tomorrow, and see how that acts?" This being agreed to, he had apple pie added to his bread and cheese. This brought down his flail somewhat more rapidly, for it was going to the speed where with the lad sang "Apple pie accordingly." "Bob's doing a bit better to-day, lass," said the farmer to his wife; "let us mend his dinner again tomorrow, and see what that will bring forth." So, when the next dinner time came around, he had a good plate of beef and puddings set before him, which went down right grandly, and brought the flail into splendid action to the words, "Beef and puddin', I'll gi' thee a drubbin'," and to a jolly good tune. "I see plainly," said the farmer, "if I wish to get good work out of Bob, we must feed him well." So Bob had his bill of fare improved without having recourse to a strike.—*Chambers' Journal*.

The Rev. Dr. Spurgeon is reported to have written in a letter in reference to Mr. Bradlaugh: "No man should be made to suffer for his religious opinions, and men of all creeds and of no creed have a right to be represented in the House of Commons if they are numerous enough to be able return a member. The fitness of a man to represent us politically cannot be measured by his piety or orthodoxy. We employ a physician, not because he is a Baptist, but because he understands medicine, and so we vote for a man to sit in Parliament, not because he is orthodox in religion, but because he holds views in politics that we regard to be right." These are brave words from a minister of religion and will surprise a large number of his admirers.—*Ex.*

The diamond fields of South Africa seem to be growing richer, and new diggings are discovered quite frequently. The *Natal Mercury* says the rush of prospectors to that region is unabated. Last year \$40,000,000 worth of diamonds were taken out, some of the gems being as pure as have yet been found.

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