

HIS RETIREMENT.

How a Famous Duelist Gave Up the Practice.

By F. A. MITCHEL.

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Count Andreas Mennerzek, a Hungarian who had fought many duels, after having safely come out of his fifteenth encounter determined to retire from the field. On doing this he resolved to give a banquet to those only who could prove that they had participated in at least five duels. Selecting three of his friends, all of whom were entitled under the condition to an invitation, he asked them to examine the credentials of those who claimed the right to be present.

As I have said, the count proposed to retire after his fifteenth encounter. Some said that at his twelfth he had shown a lack of nerve, which was repeated and grew upon him in his subsequent encounters, and that the reason why he intended to retire was that he dare not continue in the field. His twelfth meeting was with a mere boy barely eighteen years old. The challenge was sent with a statement that the count had killed the challenger's brother. Whether it was the youth of



EVERY MAN ROSE.

this his twelfth adversary or the circumstance of that adversary's fighting to avenge his brother or some superstition no one knew, but Mennerzek showed an extreme distaste for killing the boy, intending to plink him. But the youth fought so desperately that the count was finally obliged to run him through to save his own life. The youth did not die, but it was said that he would never recover from his wound.

All these facts and encounters were the talk of Vienna, and never was there so much interest manifested in any function as "the immortal" banquet celebrating his retirement from the field in which he had so long held the most conspicuous place. For two months the committee examined credentials. Among the applicants was one woman. She had been out only once, but claimed that for a woman to fight a duel with a man was equivalent to the record of "the immortal" himself. She declined to appear before the committee, but sent a certificate of a physician who had attended her after her encounter in which she had been wounded. The committee, all of whom were gallant gentlemen, unanimously voted to admit the applicant.

When the evening for the banquet arrived Count Mennerzek received his guests in an anteroom communicating with the banquet hall. He looked about as if for some one and said: "But I have been told that I am to entertain a lady. I don't see her." "She wrote, count," said one of the invitation committee, "that since a woman would be out of place among so many men she would merely appear for a few minutes after coffee is served."

The host led the way into the banquet room and stood at his seat at the head of the table flanked by a man on his right who had fought the next greatest number of duels—thirteen—and on his left by one who had fought the next number—eleven. The others were arranged in accordance with their records. One seat was not occupied—that at the end of the table opposite the count. It was reserved for the lady.

For three hours there was the hum of conversation, naturally about the encounters of the conversers, while the popping of corks represented those contests wherein pistols or rifles had been used. In several cases men met men who had been adversaries. It was singular to hear them discuss in a friendly way combats in which they had tried to kill each other. Then there were those who had fought and had never been reconciled. Despite the injunction of the host that every man should be every other man's friend some of these glared at one another as though they would like to go out again and settle their quarrel. One couple attempted to leave the room for such a purpose, but found themselves locked in. The count had foreseen that the meeting of so many men who had so often fought might kindle anew some smoldering flame and had taken the necessary precautions.

Coffee had been brought on and had been drunk and still the one guest in whom was felt more interest than

in all the rest together did not appear. Mennerzek, whose spirits were at the highest, called out to the committee man who had told him the lady would join them at coffee to know why she did not appear.

"I told her, count," was the reply. "that I could not name the exact time coffee would be served, but I thought it would be at 12 o'clock. She will be here at that hour."

There was something in this fighting woman connected with the witching hour of night that added to the zest of her expected entrance. A clock resting on a mantel over a broad fireplace marked the hour, and many were the glances cast at it by the revelers. When the hands were near the hour of 12 every face was turned toward the door at which the guest would enter. The count, who sat facing the entrance, gave an order that the door should be unlocked. This was done, and the conversation gradually dropped off until the clock struck 12, when it ceased entirely.

A few minutes after 12 the door was thrown open by a servant, and the lady stepped into the apartment. Every man rose.

The woman who was entitled to a place among these duelists was about twenty-five years old, of medium height, a willowy figure and very dark hair and eyes. She wore a cloak, which she handed to the servant who had admitted her. It was evident that she had been beautiful and that her beauty had been lost by sorrow, for her face bore unmistakable signs of having suffered. She advanced to the vacant chair at the end of the table opposite the host, and as she seated herself the others resumed their chairs.

Meanwhile the expression of the count's face changed to one of serious and eager curiosity. He was the first—naturally the first since he was the last—to speak.

"Your face is familiar to me, madam. May I ask where I have met you?" The answer came icy cold:

"On the field. It's my encounter with you that I am entitled to the honor of a place among you here."

"Pardon me; I have never fought a woman."

"You fought one you thought to be a beardless boy. I was that boy."

The count started. A slight pallor overspread his face. The woman continued:

"The duel you fought before that count, was with my husband the day after our marriage. I offered my fortune to any man who would kill you. One tried to oblige me, but lost his life in doing so. Then I felt that it was my own time to act. Personating the brother of this man who tried to avenge me, I challenged you and was carried off the field, as it was supposed, mortally wounded."

There was a pause. The clock on the mantel ticked loudly in the otherwise silent room. Then the woman continued:

"As you see, I recovered. I was planning further effort to punish you for your many crimes when I heard that you were about to retire from the dueling field. I secured an invitation here in order that you might grace your retirement with one more victim. I have a proposition."

The count continued to stare at his only woman guest, but did not speak.

"Gentlemen," continued the lady, "I have no formal challenge for our host. I simply request that we be furnished with pistols and that some one of your number will give us a signal. We can do so as we sit and with a large number of expert witnesses to see fair play."

No one spoke for a few moments; then the man on the host's right said:

"Gentlemen, you hear the lady's proposition. It seems to me that we are in honor bound to accord her the opportunity she asks provided our host consents to her terms."

"I will not fight a woman," said the count, almost with a groan.

"You shall fight a woman," said the lady, "or I will post you as a coward all over the capital."

All looked toward the count. It seemed that he read the hand of fate in the coming of this woman whose life he had wrecked. He sat irresolute, as if trying to make up his mind what to do, whether to sacrifice her or himself. There were too many witnesses for him to act any other part than that of a man. He could not kill a woman before them, especially one he had so injured. If he did not kill her she would kill him. He must accept one or the other of these alternatives.

"Come, count," said his friend on his right, "what is your decision?" "Bring the pistols," he replied in a scarcely audible voice.

A smile of triumph lighted the face of his adversary.

One of the guests who was to stand as second in an affair to come off in the early morning had a case of dueling pistols within reach. They were brought. The count appointed one of his guests to act for him, and the lady appointed another to act for her.

But such action was superfluous. The count knew that he was doomed and it mattered not whether he was or was not properly served. As for the lady, she cared not for her life provided she could kill the man who had slain her husband almost at the very bridal.

The pistols having been examined, one was handed to the count, the other to the lady. One of the guests rose from his chair, holding a handkerchief in his hand.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"Ready," said the lady in a firm voice.

The count gave the speaker a look to signify that he was ready.

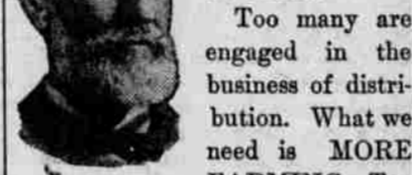
The handkerchief fluttered to the table. A single shot rang out. The count fell dead. His weapon had not been discharged.

Why the Present Cost of Living Is High.

By Various Authorities

By JAMES WILSON, Secretary of Agriculture.

THAT prices are higher now than ever before is certain. The American standard of living is HIGHER THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY ON THE GLOBE, and that is one of the reasons why food prices have been forced up to such an extent.



Too many are engaged in the business of distribution. What we need is MORE FARMING. Too many persons are rushing to the cities, and not enough are staying in the country. Too many are TRYING TO GET ALONG WITHOUT WORK, and not enough of them are in the business of producing something.

ONE MAN COULD DO THE DISTRIBUTING WHERE TWENTY ARE NOW ENGAGED IN IT. THAT IS THE REASON WHY THE COST OF LIVING IS HIGH AND EVERY ONE COMPLAINING.

By Senator MOSES E. CLAPP of Minnesota.

THE NEW TARIFF LAW HAS COST AND IS COSTING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN INCREASED COST OF LIVING.

The thing STARTED WITH THE TARIFF INCREASES AND IS GOING ALL ALONG THE LINE apparently.

Raise the price of one necessity of life and the man who is compelled to pay that increased price must get more for what he has to sell in order that he may pay it; therefore it necessarily affects the price of what he produces. He must either TAKE LESS PROFIT OR ELSE RAISE HIS PRICE.

By Professor J. R. KENNEDY of Illinois University.

THERE is no mystery about the increased cost of commodities. It is the result of perfectly NATURAL AND INEVITABLE CAUSES.

Food used to be cheap, largely because land was cheaper. The country is filling up, and the price of land naturally rises and with the cost of the food products it produces. AS LAND COSTS MORE TODAY THAN FORMERLY, FOOD NATURALLY COSTS MORE. It is the same with ores.

IT COSTS MORE TO FARM TODAY THAN FORMERLY. IT COSTS MORE TO MINE ORES THAN TEN YEARS AGO. THIS MAY BE PROVED IN A HUNDRED WAYS. AS A RESULT THE PRICES OF THE PRODUCTS OF THE FARMS AND OF THE MINES HAVE BEEN GRADUALLY RISING.

By Senator JOSEPH L. BRISTOW of Kansas.

THE increased cost of living is due to a COMBINATION OF A HUNDRED CAUSES. The chief is the tendency to COMBINATIONS OF MEN WHO CONTROL COMMODITIES and fix arbitrary prices on them.

THE FARMER CANNOT COMBINE. THERE ARE TOO MANY OF HIM, AND HIS CIRCUMSTANCES DO NOT LEND THEMSELVES TO COMBINATION.

THE INFLUENCES THAT COME BETWEEN THE FARMERS AND THE CONSUMER are responsible for that.

By Senator WILLIAM E. BORAH of Idaho.

THAT high prices are worldwide is conceded. That it is true of articles affected by the tariff and articles upon the free list is easily proved. It must, in my judgment, be considered as due to a MULTITUDE OF CAUSES.

We seem to be approaching a time when we shall be importing food products, and this is due to the failure to FERTILIZE AND KEEP UP THE PRODUCING POWER of our lands and the failure to utilize the 25,000,000 acres of arid lands of the west.

No doubt the TRUSTS OR COMBINATIONS have had an unfavorable effect upon prices. They have not only manipulated prices, but by reason of these manipulations and by reason of their controlling the market they have discouraged live stock producers, many of whom have gone out of business, while others have decreased their flocks and herds.

By Senator CHARLES DICK of Ohio.

THE present TARIFF LAW HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE INCREASE in the price of commodities or the cost of living.

We cut the tariff on lumber in two, but we are not getting it any cheaper. What we took off the Canadian product is added to the price, and we are not benefiting any. We put hides on the free list, but shoes have not become cheaper. The tariff on sugar was reduced 20 per cent, but the price of sugar is no less, and the sugar trust is putting the difference into its pocket.

Three things are to blame for the increase in the cost of living—the INCREASED PRODUCTION OF GOLD, which has raised the price of staple products; the great INFLUX OF PEOPLE FROM THE COUNTRY INTO THE CITIES, making the demand for food products greater than the supply, and general EXTRAVAGANCE IN LIVING.

By BYRON W. HOLT, Vice President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

MANY explanations, MOSTLY FOOLISH AND INCONSISTENT, of the cause of high prices are given to us. They tell us in scholarly language that the real causes of rising prices are monopolies and trusts, the tariff, the growing scarcity of land, the laziness and indifference of farmers, speculation, corruption, high freight rates, population outrunning production, too many people in cities, cold storage, lessening supply, rising land values, pure food laws, labor unions, the greediness of "middlemen," automobiles, hookworms, etc.

All advances in prices when confined to particular commodities or to particular localities or countries could perhaps be explained in ordinary ways. But no such explanation will answer for a worldwide rise of the general price level such as has been occurring during the last twelve or thirteen years.

THERE IS AND CAN BE BUT ONE CAUSE FOR SUCH AN ADVANCE—NAMELY, A DEPRECIATING MONEY UNIT OR STANDARD OF VALUE.

Count the Times a Horse Rolls.

To see a horse when out at pasture rolling on the ground and endeavoring to turn over on his back is a common sight, but how many people have noticed that in doing this he observes an invariable rule? The rule is that he always rolls over either at the first or third attempt—never at the second—and more than three attempts are never made. In other words, if the horse succeeds in rolling over at the first try, well and good—that satisfies him. But if the first attempt is a failure the second one always is. Then he either rolls quite over at the third or gives it up. He never makes a fourth. If horses are rolling on sloping ground they usually roll uphill. This is more easy of explanation than the strange custom—regulating the number of attempts. As to this no adequate reason has ever been offered. Will those ingenious people who tell us why a dog turns around before lying down and why ducks walk behind each other in a string instead of abreast explain why a horse never makes four attempts to roll over and never succeeds at the second?—Exchange.

Diseases of Fear.

If you are afflicted with an unreasonable fear of anything do not waste time being ashamed of yourself; hurry at once to a doctor, advises a writer in Success Magazine. A writer in the Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette has compiled a list of fear diseases from which it appears that everything, from screaming at mice to being afraid to go home in the dark, is a well recognized mental ailment. The tramp is in reality a sufferer from ergophobia, or fear of work, often complicated with aquaphobia and asphobia, which make him shun the bathtub. Siderophobia and astrophobia cause timid ladies to go into the closet when it thunders and lightens. Any number of people have cat and dog phobias. Phantophobia is what you would have if you were afraid of your shadow, while an all around unqualified coward might be called a phantophobiaic. The list is long and includes every human weakness except the actress' horror of publicity.

A Useful Pest.

Despite the fact that the spider, next to the mouse, is most violently stimulating to feminine sensitiveness, it is an insect of a very good character. It feeds exclusively upon other freshly killed insects, and they are the kinds denounced by sanitary authorities, the housefly being its favorite quarry. His service in reducing the numbers of this pest is considerable, because the spider is always busy, and he is present in countless numbers, says Leslie's Weekly. The reason why he is not more frequently seen is that he is retiring in his habits and shuns human society quite as much as that shuns him. He seldom bites anything but food, and even when in self defense he does assert himself the result is no worse than a mosquito bite or a bee sting. The touching story of "The Spider and the Fly" was evidently intended to invite sympathy for the fly.

Buttered Side Up.

One of the stories which Levi Hutchins, the old time clockmaker of Concord, N. H., delighted to tell related to the youth of Daniel Webster. "One day," said the old man, "while I was taking breakfast at the tavern kept by Daniel's father, Daniel and his brother Ezekiel, who were little boys with dirty faces and snarly hair, came to the table and asked me for bread and butter. I complied with their request, little thinking that they would become very distinguished men. Daniel dropped his piece of bread on the sandy floor, and the buttered side, of course, was down. He looked at it a moment, then picked it up and showed it to me, saying: "What a pity! Please give me a piece of bread buttered on both sides; then if I let it fall one of the buttered sides will be up."

Comets of the Past Century.

During the nineteenth century 235 new comets were discovered as against sixty-two in the eighteenth century. The nineteenth century also beheld a greater number of large and brilliant comets than did its predecessor. The finest of these were the comets of 1811, 1843, 1858, 1881 and 1882. In the year 1800 only one periodical comet was known, Halley's. Now many are known, of which at least seventeen have been seen at more than one return to perihelion.

Alabama's Capitals.

When Alabama was a territory its capital was at St. Stephens, in Washington county. The convention that framed the constitution under which it was admitted into the Union was held in Huntsville, where the first legislature met in October, 1819, and the first governor was inaugurated. Cahaba became the seat of government in 1820. In 1825 the capital was removed to Tuscaloosa, and in 1846 it was again removed, this time to Montgomery.

Didn't Want to See Much.

"What are you wearing that monocle for?" asked the theatrical manager. "You paid to see the show?" "Yes," replied the young man, "but I can see all I want of this show with the monocle."—Yonkers Statesman.

Caustic.

Saplegh—The doctor says there's something the matter with my head. Sharp—You surely didn't pay a doctor to tell you that!—Boston Transcript.

How Good He Was.

George—Do you think I'm good enough for you, darling? Darling—No, George, but you're too good for any other girl.—Illustrated Bits.

A Bernard Shaw Criticism.

Before fame came to him Bernard Shaw wrote dramatic criticisms for the London Saturday Review. The following sample is characteristic of the man:

"I am in a somewhat foolish position concerning a play at the Opera Comique, whither I was bidden this day week. For some reason I was not supplied with a program, so that I never learned the name of the play. At the end of the second act the play had advanced about as far as an ordinary dramatist would have brought it five minutes after the first rising of the curtain or, say, as far as Ibsen would have brought it ten years before that event. Taking advantage of the second interval to stroll out into the Strand for a little exercise, I unfortunately forgot all about my business and actually reached home before it occurred to me that I had not seen the end of the play. Under these circumstances it would ill become me to dogmatize on the merits of the work or its performance. I can only offer the management my apologies."—Everybody's.

An Obliging Father.

A man who grew rich had a son of whom he disapproved, and when the son was married against the father's wishes the father made him an allowance of \$20 a week and said that was all he could have.

A while later he was discussing the matter with a friend of his pioneer days. "Do you think \$20 a week is enough for the boy?" he asked. "Well," replied the friend judicially, "I don't know about that."

"It's a darn sight more than we had when we started in," argued the father.

"Perhaps it is," said the friend, "but you must remember that times have changed. We used to dig clams for our dinner."

"By George," said the father, "I guess I have been too severe with him! I'll be kinder in the future. I'll buy him a spade and show him where the clams are."—Exchange.

His Conciliatory Way.

Mr. and Mrs. Pickaway, although really fond of each other, had frequent quarrels owing no doubt to infirmities of temper on the part of both. Mr. Pickaway was telling his troubles to his elderly maiden aunt.

"I try to be as good a husband to Bertha as I know how to be," he said, "but we don't seem to get along. It takes so little to irritate her, and when she starts to scolding she never knows when to stop. She takes offense, too, at such little things."

"Then don't say those little things, Joshua," said his aunt. "When she is cross you must try to be conciliatory."

"I am conciliatory, Aunt Betty," he answered. "I often say to her, 'Bertha, I know the utter uselessness of trying to reason with you, but will you listen to me just a minute?' and she gets mad even at that."—Youth's Companion.

They Like Fat Girls in Tunisia.

A Tunisian girl has no chance of marriage unless she tips the scale at 200 pounds, and to that end she commences to fatten when she is fifteen years old. She takes aperients and eats a great deal of sweet stuff and leads a sedentary life to hasten the process. Up to fifteen she is very handsome, but at twenty what an immense, unwieldy mass of fat she becomes! She waddles, or, rather, undulates along the street. Her costume is very picturesque, especially if she be of the richer class. She is clothed in fine silks of resplendent hues of a bright red, yellow or green and wears a sort of conical shaped headdress, from which depends a loose white drapery. Turkish trousers and dainty slippers, the heels of which barely reach the middle of the feet, complete the costume.

Evolution of the Apple.

Apples are new in the economy of the world's use and taste. At the beginning of the last century few varieties were known, and we can go back in history to a time when all apples were little, sour and puckery—crab apples and nothing else. The crab apple was and is in its wildness nothing but a rosebush. Away back in time the wild rose, with its pretty blossoms that turn to little red balls, apple flavored, and the thorny crab had the same grandmother.

A Curious Error.

The Rev. Dr. Edward Everett Hale told how a curious error crept into the translation of the Lord's Prayer into the Delaware Indian tongue. The English translator had as an assistant an Indian who knew English. "What is 'hallow' in Delaware?" asked the translator. The Indian thought he said "halloo" and gave him the equivalent. Therefore the Delaware version of the Lord's Prayer reads, "Our Father, who art in heaven, halloosed be thy name."

As Corrected.

"Tommy," said the teacher to a bright grammar class pupil, "correct the sentence 'I kissed Jennie two times.'"

"I kissed Jennie three times," replied Tommy proudly.—Chicago News.

His Ad. Answered.

A man stopped at a newspaper office on his way to the theater and placed an advertisement for a boy. Half an hour later one fell from the gallery into his lap.

Simple.

"How do you keep your razor sharp?" "Easy enough. I hide it where my wife can't find it."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.