

PAID IN HIS OWN COIN.

A GOOD STORY.

IN the year 18—there lived at Bordeaux the fast—or one of the last—of a long line of scoundrels who had made that part of France infamous (to our ideas) by a succession of cold-blooded murders, committed under the sanction of what people were pleased to call the *Code of Honor*. This was a certain Comte de V—, a man of great physical strength, imperturbable sangfroid, and relentless cruelty. Not a bad sort of companion, as some said, when the fit—was not on him, but this came on once in about every six months, and then he must have blood, it matters little whose. He had killed and maimed boys of sixteen, fathers of families, military officers, journalists, advocates, peaceful country gentlemen.—The cause of a quarrel was of no importance; if one did not present itself readily, he made one; always contriving that according to the *code* aforesaid, he should be the insulted party, thus having the choice of weapons; and he was deadly with the small-sword. It is difficult for us to realize a state of society in which such a wild beast could be permitted to go at large; but we know it to be historically true that such creatures were endured in France; just as we are assured that there were at one time wolves in Yorkshire, only the less noisome vermin had a harder time of it as civilization progressed than was dealt out to the human brute.

The latest exploit of the Comte de V— previous to the story that I am about to tell, was to goad a poor young student into a challenge; and when it was represented to him that the boy had never held a sword in his life, so that it would be fairer to use pistols, he replied that "fools sometimes make mistakes with pistols", and the next morning ran him through the lungs. The evil fit was on him; but the blood thus shed quieted him for another half year and rather more, for public opinion was unfavorable, and the air of Bordeaux became too warm for him.

But the scandal blew over after a time, and he came back to his old haunts, one of which was a cafe by the river side, where many used to spend their Sunday. Into the little garden of this establishment our wolf swaggered one fine summer afternoon, with the heavy dark look and nervous twitching of the hands which those who were acquainted with him knew well meant mischief. The evil fit was on him; consequently he found himself in the center of a circle which expanded as he went on. This did not displease him. He liked to be feared. He knew he could make a quarrel when he chose, so he looked around for a victim.

At a table almost in the middle of the garden sat a man of about thirty years of age, of middle height, and an expression of countenance which at first struck one as mild and good humored. He was engaged reading a journal which seemed to interest him, and eating strawberries, an occupation which does not call forth any latent strength of character. Above all, he was profoundly unconscious of the presence of M. le Comte de V—, and continued eating his strawberries and reading his paper as though no wolf were in that pleasant fold.

As the Count approached this table, it became sufficiently well known whom he was about to honor with his insolence; and the circle again narrowed to see the play. It is not bad sport, with some of us, to see a fellow-creature baited—especially when we are out of danger ourselves.

The strawberry eaters' costume was not such as was ordinarily worn in France at that time, and he had a curious hat, which—the weather being warm—he had placed on the table by his side. "He is a foreigner," whispered some in the dress-circle. "Perhaps he does not know Monsieur le Comte."

Monsieur le Comte seated himself at the table opposite the unconscious stranger, and called loudly, "Garçon."

"Garçon," he said, when the functionary appeared, take away that nasty thing," pointing to the hat aforesaid.

Now the stranger's elbow, as he read his journal, was on the brim of the "nasty thing," which was a very good hat, but of British form and make. The garçon was embarrassed.

"Do you hear me?" thundered the Count. "Take me that thing away! No one has a right to place his hat on the table."

"I beg your pardon," said the strawberry-eater, politely, placing the offending article on his head, and drawing his chair a little aside; "I will make room for Monsieur."

The garçon was about to retire well satisfied, when the bully called after him—

"Have I not commanded you to take that thing which annoys me away?"

"But Monsieur le Comte, the gentleman has covered himself."

"What does that matter to me?"

"But Monsieur le Comte, it is impossible."

"What is impossible?"

"That I should take the gentleman's hat."

"By no means," observed the stranger, uncovering again. "Be so good as to carry my hat to the lady at the counter, and ask her on my behalf to do me the favor to accept charge of it for the present."

"You speak French passably well for a foreigner," said the bully, stretching his arms over the table, and looking his neighbor full in the face—a titter of contempt going round the circle.

"I am not a foreigner, Monsieur."

"I am sorry for that."

"So am I."

"May one, without discretion, inquire why?"

"Certainly. Because, if I were a foreigner, I should be spared the pain of seeing a compatriot behave himself very rudely."

"Meaning me?"

"Meaning precisely you."

"Do you know who I am?" asked the Count, half turning his back upon him and facing the lookers-on, as much as to say, "Now observe how I will crush this poor creature."

"Monsieur," replied the strawberry-eater, with perfect politeness in his tone, "I have the honor not to know you."

"Death of my life! I am the Comte de V—."

The strawberry-eater looked up, and the easy, good-natured face was gone. In its place was one with two gray eyes which flashed like fire, and a mouth that set itself very firmly.

"The Comte de V—," he repeated in a low voice.

"Yes, Monsieur. And what have you to say against him?"

"I? O, nothing."

"That may be well for you."

"But there are those who say he is a coward."

"That is enough," said the bully, starting to his feet. "Monsieur will find me in two hours at this address," flinging him a card.

"I shall not trouble myself to seek Monsieur le Compe," replied the strawberry-eater, calmly tearing the card in two.

"Then I shall say of Monsieur what he, permitting himself to lie, said just now of me."

"And that is?"

"That he is a coward."

"You may say what you please, Monsieur le Compe. Those who know me would not believe you, and those who do not—my faith! what care I what they think?"

"And thou—thou art a Frenchman?"

No one but a Frenchman could have thrown so much disdain as he did into the "thou."

The strawberry-eater made no reply, but turned his head and called "Garçon!"

The poor trembling creature came up again, wondering what new dilemma was prepared for him, and stood quaking some ten yards off.

"Garçon," said the stranger, "is there a room vacant in the hotel?"

"Without doubt, Monsieur."

"A large one?"

"But certainly. They are all large—fine apartments."

"Then engage the largest for me for to-day, and another—no matter what—for Monsieur le Comte."

"Monsieur, I give my own orders when necessary," said the Count, loftily.

"I thought to spare you the trouble. Go, if you please, (this to the waiter,) and prepare my rooms."

Then the strawberry-eater returned to his strawberries. The bully gnawed his lip. He could not make head nor tail of this phlegmatic opponent. The circle grew a little wider, for a horrid idea got abroad that the Count had not found one who was likely to suit him and that he would have to seek elsewhere what he wanted.

The murmur that went round roused the bully.

"Monsieur," he hissed, "has presumed to make use of a word which among men of honor—"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Which among men of honor—"

"But what can Monsieur le Comte possibly know what is felt among men of hon-

or?" asked the other, with a shrug of incredulity.

"Will you fight yourself with me, or will you not?" roared the Count, goaded to fury.

"If Monsieur le Comte will give himself the trouble to accompany me to the apartment which no doubt, is now prepared for me," replied the stranger rising, "I will satisfy him."

"Good," said the other, kicking down his chair; "I am with you. I waive the usual preliminaries. I only beg to observe that I am without arms; but if you—"

"O, don't trouble yourself on that score," said the stranger with a grim smile. "If you are not afraid, follow me."

This he said in a voice sufficiently loud for the nearest to hear, and the circle parted right and left, like startled sheep as the two walked toward the house.

Was there no one to call "police," no one to try and prevent what to all seemed imminent? Not a soul! The dreaded duelist had his evil fit on, and every one breathed freely now that he knew the victim was selected. Moreover, no one supposed it would end there.

The Count and his friend (?) were ushered into the apartment prepared for the latter, who, as soon as the garçon had left, took of his coat and waistcoat, and proceeded to move the furniture so as to leave the room free for what was to follow—the Count standing with folded arms, glaring at him the while. The decks being cleared for the action, the stranger locked the door, placed the key on the mantel-piece behind him, and said:

"I think you might have helped a little; but never mind. Will you give me your attention for five minutes?"

"Perfectly."

"Thank you. I am, as I have told you, a Frenchman, but I was educated in England, at one of her famous public schools. Had I been sent to one of our own Lycees, I should, perhaps, have gained more book knowledge, but, as it is, I have learned some things which we do not teach, and one of them is, not to take a mean advantage of any man, but to keep my own head with my own hands. Do you understand me, Monsieur le Comte?"

"I cannot flatter myself that I do."

"Ha! Then I must be more explicit. I learned, then, that one who takes advantage of mere brute strength against the weak, or when, practiced in any art, compels one unpracticed in it to contend with him, is a coward and a knave. Do you follow me now, Monsieur le Compe?"

"I came here, Monsieur—"

"Never mind for what you came, be content with what you will get. For example—to follow what I was observing—if a man skilled with the small sword, for the mere vicious love of quarreling, goes to madness a boy who has never fenced in his life, and kills him, that man is a murderer; and more—a cowardly murderer, and knavish."

"I think I catch your meaning; but if you have pistols here—" foamed the bully.

"I do not come to eat strawberries with pistols in my pocket," replied the other, in the same calm tone he used throughout. "Allow me to continue. At that school of which I have spoken, and in the society of men who have grown out of it, and others where the same habit of thought prevails, it would be considered that a man who had been guilty of such cowardice and knavery as I have mentioned, would be justly punished if, some day, he should be paid in his own coin by meeting some one who would take him at the same disadvantage as he placed that poor boy at."

"Our seconds shall fix your own weapons, Monsieur," said the Count; "let this farce end."

"Presently. Those gentlemen whose opinions I now venture to express, not having that craze for blood which distinguishes some—who have not had a similar enlightened education—would probably think that such a coward and knave as we have been considering would best meet his deserts by receiving a humiliating castigation befitting his knavery and his cowardice."

"Ah! I see; I have a lawyer to deal with," sneered the Count.

"Yes. I have studied a little law, but I regret to say I am about to break one of its provisions."

"You will fight me then?"

"Yes. At the school we have been speaking of, I learned among other things the use of my hands; and if I mistake not, I am about to give you as sound a thrashing as any bully ever got."

"You would take advantage of your

skill in the box?" said the Count, getting a little pale.

"Exactly. Just as you took advantage of your skill in the small-sword with poor young I—"

"But it is degrading—brutal!"

"My dear Monsieur, just consider. You are four inches taller and some thirty to forty kilogrammes heavier than I am. I have seldom seen so fine an outside. If you were to hit me a good swinging blow, it would go hard with me. In the same way, if poor young B— had got over your guard, it would have gone hard with you. But' then, I shall only black both your eyes' and perhaps deprive you of a tooth or so, unhappily in front; whereas you killed him."

"I will not accept this barbarous encounter."

"You must; I have done talking. Would you like a little brandy before we begin? No? Place yourself on guard, then if you please. When I have done with you, and you are fit to appear, then you shall have your revenge—even with the small sword, if you please. At present, bully—coward—knave, take thine, and that, and that!"

And the wiry little Anglo-Frank was as good as his word. In less time than it takes to write it the great braggart was rendered unrepresentable for many a long day. That number one caused him to see fifty suns beaming in the firmament with his right eye; that number two produced a similar phenomenon with his left; that number three obliged him to swallow a front tooth, and to observe the ceiling; more attentively than he had hitherto done. And when one or two other *thats* had completely cowed him, and he threw open the window and called for help, the strawberry-eater took him by the neck and breeches and flung him out of it on to the flower-bed below.

The strawberry-eater remained a month at Bordeaux to fulfil his promise of giving the Count his revenge. But then, again, the bully met with more than his match. The strawberry-eater had had Angelo for a master as well Owen Swift, and after a few passes the Count, who was too eager to kill his man, felt an unpleasant sensation in his right shoulder. The seconds interposed, and there was an end of the affair. It was his last duel. Some one produced a sketch of him as he appeared being thrown out of the hotel window, and ridicule—so awful to a Frenchman—rid the country of him. The strawberry-eater was alive when the Battle of the Alma was fought, and is the only man to whom the above facts are known who never talks about them.

Boston a Century Ago.

The *Boston Gazette and County Journal* of a century ago, was a curiosity in its way. It was about 14 inches by 10, and half of its twelve columns were filled with advertisements. From a copy, dated 12th June, 1769, we clip the following advertisements:

A Few Silk Worm's Eggs to be given away.

Will be sold by public vendue, at the Bunch of Grapes in King's street, two stout, able-bodied negro men. Also a negro boy and two negro women.

Umbrellas, made in the neatest manner, to be sold at 61.5 apiece, by Oliver Greenleaf, at his shop the corner of Winter street, opposite Seven Star lane, South End, Boston.

David Burnitt gives notice to all gentlemen that he "makes in a new fashion, which has never been done in Boston."

"Major General Makay" advertises "a free pardon" to every deserter who shall surrender himself and join his regiment, on or before the last day of June—except some eighteen soldiers who are named, for whose apprehension the General offers three guineas each. The paper has no list of marriages and deaths, but simply the following announcement:

"Buried in the Town of Boston since our last, nine Whites, two blacks, Baptised in the several churches, four."

The news from England is to April 29, by "Capt. Hall arrived about six weeks from London." The most important intelligence is the rejection of John Wilkes by the House of Commons. The latest news from Philadelphia is to June 1—eleven days old.

"See here!" exclaimed a returned Irish soldier to a gaping crowd as he exhibited with some pride, his tall hat with a bullet hole in it. Look at that bullet hole, will you? If it had been a low-crowned hat I should have been killed outright.

SUNDAY READING.

The Best Use of the Bible.

"My mother gave me a Bible for my gift last Christmas," said a little girl, complacently, "and Louise gave Cousin Harry one, at the same time. Now just look at them, and see the difference."

Harry's was a little worn. Its gilt edges were tarnished, and the newness was gone from the cover, but it looked as if it had been read very often. Here and there I saw pencil marks near favorite verses, and in one or two places it seemed as if tears might have fallen. Little Harry Gordon had become a Christian lately, and his Bible had evidently been very precious to him.

Minnie said triumphantly, after I had finished my look at Harry's, "Now see mine!" She unfolded the tissue paper from it, and there it was just as fresh and fair and uninjured as when it came out of the shop.

"I've never had it out of the drawer but once," said Miss Minnie, "and that was to show to somebody."

"Minnie," said I, "if your father was away from home, and should send you a letter, telling you just what he wanted you to do and be, would it be good treatment never to break the seal, and to lay it away in a drawer unread? Would it not rather be better to take it out every day and to read it over and over, trying all the more each time to obey his injunctions?"

"Yes!" said Minnie, blushing and hanging her head, as she began to see my meaning.

"This is God's letter to you, my love! Like the man who folded away his talent in a napkin, you have folded up your precious Bible. Hereafter, my child, use it as God wants you to. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

The Runaway Knock.

"Teacher," said a bright, earnest-faced boy, "why is it that so many prayers are unanswered? I do not understand. The Bible says, 'Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you,' but it seems to me a great many knock and are not admitted."

"Did you ever sit by your cheerful parlor fire," said the teacher, "on some dark evening, and hear a loud knocking at the door? Going to answer the summons, have you not looked out into the darkness, seeing nothing, but hearing the pattering feet of some mischievous boy, who knocked, but did not wish to enter, and therefore ran away! Thus it is often with us. We ask for blessings, but we do not really expect them; we knock, but we do not wish to enter; we fear that Jesus will not hear us, will not fulfil His promises, will not admit us and so we go away."

"Ah, I see," said the earnest-faced boy, his eyes shining with the new light in his soul, "Jesus cannot be expected to answer runaway knocks. He has never promised it. I mean to keep knocking, knocking. Until He cannot help opening the door."

Is Your Soul Insured.

"Pa," said a little boy, as he climbed to his father's knee, and looked into his face as earnestly as if he understood the importance of the subject, "Pa, is your soul insured?"

"What are you thinking about my son?" replied the agitated father, "Why do you ask that question?"

"Why, pa, I heard Uncle George say that you had your houses insured, and your life insured, but he didn't believe you had thought of your soul, and he was afraid you would lose it; won't you get it insured right away?"

The father leaned his head on his hand, and was silent. He owned broad acres of land that were covered with a bountiful produce, his barns were even now filled with plenty, his buildings were all well covered by insurance; but, as if that would not suffice for the maintenance of his wife and only child in case of his decease, he had, the day before, taken a life policy for a large amount; yet not one thought had he given to his own immortal soul.

God has not chosen to flatter our curiosity by any of His revelations. What He reveals to man is in the end assigned him, and the means of attaining that end. Doctrines and morals constitute an essential part of these means.

Prayer without faith is like a gun discharged without a bullet, which makes a noise, but doeth no execution.