

A Shooting Match

At Which One of the Parties Was Sure to Win.

By AINSWORTH RHODES.
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The first time I saw Daisy she was coming over her father's broad acres on a horse whose pelt was very like a rocking chair. She was riding straddle with divided skirts. No other woman on the ranches thereabout would ride in any other costume. Barker was riding beside her, and the two made a very handsome pair. The brim of his sombrero was flattened against his forehead by the wind, a lariat hung at his saddle bow, and his splendid figure was revealed by his costume—viz., flannel shirt and trousers, with boots to his knee.

Daisy had gone out from the east with her father, who became a sheep raiser, and she had become fascinated with ranch life. Unfortunately she had conceived a romantic idea of the genus cowboy, and Barker being physically a perfect type, she had persuaded herself, or, rather, he had persuaded her, that he was just the man for her. I say "unfortunately" because he was not an educated man and in every way beneath her. There were other features about him to render him undesirable which will appear presently.

The couple passed me, all of us saluting, though they were unknown to me, and I rode on to the ranch house, where I had business with John Nolan with reference to a large purchase of wool. While dickering with him on his veranda up the roadway came the couple I had met and alighted at the foot of the steps. Throwing their bridle reins over a post, they walked up on to the veranda. Then I learned that Daisy was Nolan's daughter.

As the pair passed into the house I noticed a cloud fill over the face of the girl's father. I knew by Barker's bearing toward her that he was in love with her, and I judged that his attentions were not rebuffed by Nolan. But he said nothing to me then, and we went on with our dickering. When I arose to go he said:

"There's no place about here in which you will be comfortable except my house. Send for your traps."

I accepted the invitation, especially as I was pleased at being under the same roof with Miss Daisy. I knew she had a lover, but my attraction for her did not then go so far as to intend to come between them. I merely liked the idea of being near her during my stay.

But I stayed a good while, and it was not very long before she and I each made a discovery. I discovered that I wanted her, and she discovered that she didn't want Barker. Meanwhile I found out something else—that he had become frightfully jealous of me, and if I took her away from him he would probably kill me. At first he and I spoke to each other when we met either on the ranch or elsewhere. Then he only noticed me at the Nolan house.

I thought it best after awhile to remove to the (so called) hotel, a mile from Nolan's. If anything happened between Barker and myself I preferred that it should not happen under Nolan's roof. So one day I removed my luggage to my new quarters.

One morning I was sitting on the porch of the hotel smoking a briar-wood pipe. Barker came out of the barroom, where he had been drinking, and took a seat about thirty feet from me. I didn't know he was there till, turning my head, I saw him out of the corner of my eye sighting his revolver at me.

Naturally I started.

"Hold on a minute," said Barker. "Your pipe makes a fine target. We don't allow people to smoke such expensive pipes out here!"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when I felt a faint tick on the bowl of the pipe, heard the crack of a gun and knew that a bullet had passed through the pipe.

"Wait up!" he growled as I was about to rise. "Your pipe won't draw with a hole in it, but it's still a mighty good target!"

I snatched a look at him. He was evidently under the influence of liquor. I felt sure that if I didn't let him shoot at my pipe he would shoot at me and I would stand another shot. Indeed, this was all I could do, for I was unarmed. But a cold chill ran down my back and a cold sweat stood out all over me. Nevertheless I put up a pretty good front. I sat with comparative composure, occasionally letting a faint cloud of tobacco smoke escape from between my lips, but not daring to move a hairbreadth for fear of interfering with the man's aim.

Several persons from inside the hotel, having heard a shot, came out to discover who had been killed. They arrived just in time to see the second shot and the top of the bowl of my pipe cut off. They at once took in the situation, and, seeing me coolly puffing, not knowing my internal condition, they cried out, "Good luck, stranger!" "Steady nerve!" "He ain't no tenderfoot!" and such like compliments.

Presently a third shot shattered what was left of the bowl of my pipe, and only the stem remained in my mouth. Whether my nerve made Barker half ashamed of himself or that he was headed off by the admiration of the others I don't know, but he desisted from further shooting. I fancy, however, he was satisfied with what he had doubtless intended for a warning that if I took Daisy Nolan away from him I would have to face sure death. The witnesses urged me to go in and have something, but I declined, saying that I was anxious for a smoke and would go upstairs for another pipe. The truth is I wanted a chance to go where I could, unobserved, give way to my feelings for a few moments, they having been controlled only by a most desperate effort.

When I was alone I staggered to the bed, fell on it and for a few minutes trembled like a leaf. But when I be-

gan to recover I started to get mad at the same time. Men will fight more desperately for a woman than for any other cause, and it occurred to me that, Daisy being the bone of contention, if she preferred me either Barker or I must die. I spent some time considering what to do, then went to the ranch, intending to offer myself to Daisy. If she refused me I would leave the field at once to all suitors. If she accepted me I would have it out with Barker.

I found Miss Daisy very much excited. She had heard of Barker's shooting escapade and had turned bitterly against him. I told her that I wanted her and if she wanted me I was willing to settle the matter between Barker and myself. Her reply was all I could have asked for, but she positively forbade my coming into collision with my rival. I told her frankly that I believed he would kill me if I married her and that the matter had better be settled before the wedding. Being a woman, she wished to get round the matter by subterfuge and for the time being would consent to nothing definite.

Daisy was very fond of an old rancher called Jake Hutchins. To her he was "Uncle Jake." A day or two after Barker's shooting as I was riding over the country on horseback Hutchins came up behind me and ambled alongside of me.

"I hear about the shootin' of your pipe enter yer mouth," he said. "Litt'le Daisy was tellin' me about it."

"Oh, it was Miss Nolan who told you, was it?"

"Yes, and what's more, she asked me to suggest some way of settlin' the matter without blood spillin'."

"That's impossible," said I.

"So I thort at fast, but arter awhile I thort of a plan. Barker's mighty proud of his shootin', and he's prest most made up his mind that he's lost Daisy. I reckon he'd agree to settle the matter by a trial of skill between him and you. He'd consider it his only chance."

"I'm no shot. Such a contest would give Miss Daisy to him, and she doesn't want him."

"Not so fast. You don't need to be much of a shot. Could you hit a hen's egg at twenty feet?"

"I might in two or three shots."

"Well, I give Daisy my plan, and she's decided to try it. Here's a note for you, and here's a note for Barker. Whoever hits a hen's egg with a forty-two the most outen five shots she'll marry."

He handed me a note to that effect from Daisy and showed me another he was commissioned to deliver to Barker.

"Do you consent?" he added, drawing his gun.

"Yes," I said; "I consent to anything Daisy desires."

Without waiting for more he turned about and rode back in the direction from whence he came.

The next day Uncle Jake informed me that Barker had gladly agreed to the terms.

On the appointed day I made my appearance at the barn, wondering what was to be the upshot of this singular contest. I found an egg suspended over a basket by a fine thread. I won the toss and with it the right to fire five consecutive shots at the egg. I missed the first and the fourth, but put a hole in the egg on the second, third and the fifth. For my life I could not see why I had not lost. It would be nothing for Barker to hit the egg every time.

A new egg was attached to the thread for him to shoot at, and, whipping out his revolver, he fired with apparent carelessness. He was surprised to see the egg oscillate violently, but the shell was not broken. The next time he fired he took careful aim, but with no better success. He was thunder-struck. Since I had hit the egg three times he could now only tie me.

"You must hit it in the center," said Uncle Jake. "If you don't you'll glance."

Barker aimed long and carefully at the center and sent the egg bobbing, but still the shell was unbroken. Flinging his revolver on the barn floor, he strode away.

I knew that Barker had been tricked, but could not conceive how. It appeared to me that nothing could be more fair than the trial. I asked Uncle Jake how he had managed to let me, a poor shot, beat the best shot in the territory. He would not tell me. Barker was never seen there again. Daisy had induced him to sign a promise that if I beat him he would leave the field clear for me.

I married Daisy and took her east with me. She said she had had enough of the wild west and had no further use for cowboys, not considering them the romantic creatures she had thought them when she first went to the country. She learned the secret of the shooting match from Uncle Jake the day we were married and told it to me on our wedding journey. The meat had been taken from the egg Barker shot at, and the featherweight shell had been moved aside each time by the wind of the ball. To hit it was impossible.

Uncle Jake had learned the trick from a prestidigitator who had passed through the locality with a circus.

His Ailment.

The captain had been tortured with a million questions about everything between heaven and earth, bearing it all heroically and patiently—the names of the towns they passed, the number of passengers on board, the size of his family, how much his salary, dangers, storms, etc.

One of the Ladies—How long have you been in charge here, captain?

Captain—Not very long, madam; only two years.

Lady—Indeed? And why did the former captain leave?

Captain—He died, madam.

Lady—How sad! And what did he die of?

Captain—He was asked to death by the ladies.—Judge.

Heaven and earth fight in vain against a dunce.—Schiller.

Spoiling a Poet.

"He has been spoiled as a poet."

"How so?"

"A judge recently gave him thirty days in default of a ten dollar fine."

"How does that spoil him as a poet?"

"Oh, it gave him an exaggerated idea of the value of his time."

SHERIFF'S SALE!

OF VALUABLE REAL ESTATE!

By virtue of a certain writ of Levari Facias, issued out of the Court of Common Pleas of Montour County, to me directed, will expose to Public Sale or Outcry, on

Saturday, March 5th, 1910, at 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon at the Court House, the following described Real Estate:

All that certain message and tract of land situate partly in the Townships of Cooper, Mahoning, Valley and West Hemlock in the County of Montour and State of Pennsylvania, less the tracts hereinafter described and sold to the public, beginning at a stone corner of land now or formerly of Jacob Rudy, thence by the said land now or formerly of the said Jacob Rudy North eighty-five degrees East twenty-three and five-tenths perches to a stone, thence North seventy-five degrees East five and five-tenths perches to a white oak grub, thence by land now or formerly of Henry Bass, North seven degrees West one hundred and twenty-two perches to a post, thence by lands now or formerly of Cornelius Still and Samuel R. Wood West two hundred and twenty-nine perches to a pole, thence by land now or formerly of Andrew Overpeck, South twenty-one degrees East one hundred and forty-nine perches to a stone, thence by land now or formerly of John Cashner, South five degrees West twenty-eight perches to a post, thence by land now or formerly of Cornelius Still, South twenty-one degrees East fifty-eight and eight-tenths perches to a post, thence by land now or formerly of Peter Baldy North seventy-five degrees East one hundred and thirty-nine and four-tenths perches to a pole, thence by land now or formerly of Jacob Rudy North forty-six degrees East fifty-three and five-tenths perches to the place of beginning, Containing Two Hundred and Sixteen Acres and One Hundred and Forty-eight Perches and allowances, excepting and reserving the following described pieces and parcels of land.

No. 1. Beginning at a white oak corner of land of John Fern and Jeremiah Donovan, thence North seven degrees West forty-three perches to a stone in the line of James V. Gillaspay, thence along the line of lands of said James V. Gillaspay South eighty-nine degrees East twenty-eight and five-tenths perches to a stone in the line of lands formerly of Grove Brothers, thence along said last mentioned land South six degrees and one-half degrees East thirty-six and six-tenths perches to a stone in the line of land of John F. Fern, thence along said last mentioned land South seventy-eight and one-fourth degrees West twenty-six and nine-tenths perches to a white oak tree, corner of a beginning, Containing Six Acres and One Hundred and Nine Perches, more or less.

No. 2. Beginning at a stone in the public road at corner of land of said Catherine E. Fern and Baldy and Frick, thence North eight and one-half degrees East sixteen and one-tenth perches to a stone in a public road corner of lands of said Baldy and Frick and Grove Brothers, thence North thirteen and one-half degrees East twenty-one perches to a post and stone in said public road, corner of lands of said Grove Brothers, thence South seventy-eight degrees West twenty-six and nine-tenths perches to lands of said Catherine E. Fern and the said Grove Brothers, thence South by the same seventeen and one-fourth degrees East eighteen and eight-tenths perches to the place of beginning, Containing Two Acres and Eighty-Four Perches strict measure.

No. 3. Beginning at a stone in line of lands of James V. Gillaspay North seventy-two and one-half degrees East nine and one-tenth perches to a stone in line of lands of Grove Brothers, North twenty-two and three-fourths degrees West twenty-three and five one-hundredths perches to a stone in line of lands of said Grove Brothers, North eighty-seven and three-fourths degrees West seven and one-tenth perches to a stone, thence South seventeen and one-fourth degrees East twenty-five and four-tenths perches to the place of beginning, Containing One Acre and Thirty-four Perches.

Upon which are erected a

2-STORY FRAME DWELLING HOUSE;

a two-story Frame Tenant House, a Bank Barn, necessary out-buildings, Three springs of never-failing water, Valuable Timber Land, Seized, taken in execution and to be sold as the property of Jacob Dewald, Pennsylvania Paper Mills, terra tenant.

WM. B. STARTZEL, Sheriff. W. V. Oglesby, Attorney.

A Tragedy in Writing.

Illegible handwriting, which is given rise to so many comedies, led to a tragedy in the case of Bacher, a musical enthusiast of the last century who devoted several years to the country who devoted several years to the composition of a history of Viennese music. His task finished, he submitted the manuscript to the Austrian imperial academy, which he had been led to believe would defray the cost of its publication. After three months his manuscript was returned. Despite their best efforts the members had been unable to decipher it. Bacher then endeavored to have his work copied, but every professional copyist who undertook the task had to confess himself baffled. He thereupon attempted dictating the work, only to find that even he could not decipher it, and, heartbroken at the discovery that his years of toil had proved fruitless, he took to the bottle and finished his days in a lunatic asylum.

Her Cab.

Mary Ann of Lancaster Gate, basement, was having a weak off and had arrived back at her little native village in all her metropolitan paint and feathers.

It was a very little native village, and Mary Ann, after her many months' service in town, didn't think so very much of it. Even James, the station porter and her old sweetheart, seemed hopelessly insignificant, and instead of staggering him with the kiss that he expected she looked him up and down, comparing him with a certain gentleman whose acquaintance she had recently made and who wore plush breeches and silk stockings.

"Porter," she said grandly, "do you know if there is a cab here to convey me and my luggage home?"

"Well, I don't know about a cab," responded the staggered yokel, "but there's yer mother outside w' a barret?"—London Straps.

QUESTION OF DESCENT

Settled to the Satisfaction of All Concerned.

By CLARISSA MACKIE.
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"There's no use talking, Addison, I've got it all fixed in my mind plain as can be that you're descended from 'Over the Mountain Dodge,' who used to live in the white farm on the east slope."

Mr. Luke Goddard knocked the ashes from his pipe and carefully refilled the bowl.

When he had returned it to his lips and applied a match, he lifted his keen gray eyes to the obstinate face of the young man on the other side of the hearth.

"What say, Addison?" he insisted. Addison Dodge arose to his great height and looked down on the little gray bearded father of Emily Goddard.

"I ought to know who my great grandfather was," he said with cold dignity. "Over the Mountain Dodge" wasn't any ancestor of mine. I'm descended from Philemon Dodge of Exeter and nobody else, sir."

Emily Goddard's father shook a crooked forefinger at Emily's lover, and his shrill voice quavered with rage.

"Don't you dare contradict me to my face, Addison Dodge! I'd like to know who 'twas that taught school on the mountain here for thirty years—eh?"

"You did," returned Addison crisply. "Who is it that's allowed to know the genealogy of every man, woman and child in Peters county, eh?"

"You."

"Who is it that's referred to when the committee wants to find out who it is in the wars, eh?"

"You."

Luke Goddard's voice rose triumphant. "And who are you that set up and tells me that you ain't descended from 'Over the Mountain Dodge' when I say you are, eh?"

"I'm Philemon Dodge's great-grandson," retorted Addison firmly, "and nobody else."

There was a long silence after that while the two men measured the depth

of each other's obstinacy with narrowed eyes.

Pretty Emily came and peeped at them through the kitchen door, and at sight of their angry faces her own went quite pale.

Finally her father spoke. "My daughter Emily shan't marry any one except he descends from 'Over the Mountain Dodge.' No need to make that any plainer, eh?"

Addison Dodge grew white to the lips, and for the first time his eyes met the pleading ones of his sweetheart.

His teeth snapped angrily, and he turned his miserable glance away from Emily's face.

"I don't know what you're getting at, sir," he said hoarsely. "Do you mean to say that if I don't admit I'm a descendant of 'Over the Mountain Dodge' that you'll forbid Emily's marrying me?"

"That's what I mean," snapped Luke Goddard.

Addison turned toward the door. "Very well, sir, I'm not going to let about the matter to gain anything, not even Emily. She wouldn't want me to, would you, dear?"

His voice dropped into tenderness as she came forward and slipped her hand into his.

"No," said Emily with trembling lips. "Father knows I shall never marry without his consent, and if he feels that he is justified in making me unhappy over the question of some man who is dead and buried this hundred years, why, I have nothing to say."

She broke into sobs and hid her face in her hands.

"Except 'goodby,'" added Addison Dodge, kissing her golden head.

The outer door opened and closed and left Luke Goddard and his daughter alone in the mountain cabin.

Outside the door Addison Dodge thrust his arms savagely into the sleeves of his heavy jacket, belted it snugly about his waist and pulled his cap down over his ears.

Then he strapped on the snowshoes that he had left beside the door and, throwing his gun over his shoulder,

Cleveland's Thirty Cent Egg Club. Frank S. Krause, a lawyer, of Cleveland, O., recently began circulating pledges for membership in a "thirty cent egg club." He declares that 30 cents is the natural price for eggs and insists that the price can be kept at that figure if Clevelanders refuse to pay more. He asserts that eggs are rushed into cold storage whenever the supply threatens to cut prices.

Chance For Our Manufacturers. There are 1,000 motorcars registered in Bombay, and not one of them is of American make.

strode away up the steep mountain path.

Great pines heavy with snow leaned above the narrow trail.

As he crashed through the thin crust with fiercely placed steps a light wind sent the snow crystals in icy stinging gusts against his face.

As he plodded upward the crust was thicker, and when he reached the top of Bald Knob walking was difficult.

He paused and looked around at the mountains of snow glistening with icy caps in the bright sunshine.

Overhead was a sky of deep blue. Below nestled the village, with his school in the center, and under the shoulder of Bald Knob was Luke Goddard's comfortable home.

Addison could see the smoke pouring from the wide chimney. It crept like a blue mist up over the shoulder and curled away into nothingness in the light air.

The house was long and low, and it was built so snugly under the mountain that the kitchen opened directly into a great natural cave in the rocks, and that cave was Luke Goddard's woodshed.

Addison's strong arms had hewed vigorously that long autumn to fill the woodshed. Every night after school he had come up the mountain and, with Emily sitting near by to gladden his eyes, he had cheerily reduced the pile of cord wood to kindling.

In the spring he and Emily were to be married and come to live with Luke, and their plans for the future had been so long in making and so interwoven with love and little self sacrifices that now, standing alone on the mountain top, with a loveless future before him, Addison Dodge was very miserable.

His was a nature that would never yield to an unjust claim. Neither would he lie to save his soul.

Luke Goddard, in his own way, was obdurate. He loved Addison Dodge as his own son, and yet his domineering spirit would not concede one inch in the controversy which had separated them that morning and in which the old schoolmaster believed himself to be in the right.

Genealogy was his hobby. That any one should dispute him upon his beloved subject was unbearable.

Pretty Emily would have fared hardly between these two unrelenting men she so dearly loved, but kind Providence intervened and made clear the descent of Addison beyond all doubt and quite to the satisfaction of his future father-in-law.

Addison roamed over the mountain top all the afternoon, rejoicing in the keen wind that arose and chilled him to the bone.

His snowshoes glided over the frozen crust and bore him along against the bitter wind with startling swiftness.

He always remembered that day on the mountain as one of pain and self torture.

His love for Emily sent him toward the trail a dozen times, and his pride sent him back again as many more.

At sunset, when the whole west was a glorious blaze of crimson and purple and gold and the expanse of frozen snow was blinding in the glare, Addison skirted the shoulder of Bald Knob, seeking for a short cut to the village below.

He had made up his mind. He would not take back what he had said to Luke Goddard.

When he reached a point above the cottage of his sweetheart he paused and looked down the glittering slope to where the blue smoke curled upward from the chimney.

While he gazed Emily and her father came out of the cottage and looked toward the west, as was their custom at sunset. He could see the pink shawl about Emily's head, and in the clear air he heard Luke Goddard's sharp cough.

In another second they would see him silhouetted against the sunset sky, and he turned abruptly away.

As I said before, Providence intervened. The mass of snow upon which he stood suddenly slipped forward, and before the young man could throw himself from the little avalanche he was speeding downward, downward with startling swiftness.

He heard Luke's shout of dismay and Emily's frightened scream as he swept down toward them—toward a goal which could be no other than the roof of their home.

It was growing larger, larger now, and the stinging blue smoke of the chimney smote his eyes, and then—the avalanche of snow struck into a high plateau about the tall chimney.

Addison clambered out of the great bank of snow to find Luke Goddard, poised on a tall ladder, staring at him over the eaves of the roof.

"Boy, I thought you were killed," said the old man hoarsely as he helped Addison to descend to the ground.

Emily's arms were around her lover. "Father and I came out to look for you. Father made a mistake"—She looked at Luke with loving, sympathetic eyes.

Luke smiled grimly. "I looked up that Dodge matter after you went out, Addison, and—as near as I can make it out 'Over the Mountain Dodge' was a crabbled old bachelor that lived and died a hermit. So I'll have to give in that you came from Exeter after all." He held out his hand, and Addison grasped it warmly.

"We're both wrong and both right," asserted the young man as he stood between his sweetheart and her father. "I was wrong not to give in about an insignificant matter, yet I am descended from Philemon Dodge of Exeter, and at the same time I might be called 'Over the Mountain Dodge,' because I just came down that way."

"You've established an independent line of descent," chuckled Luke from the doorstep, "and now you two can watch the moonrise while I get that birthday supper ready."

Took It Back.

"I give you my word, the next person who interrupts the proceedings," said the judge sternly, "will be expelled from the courtroom and ordered home."

"Hooray!" cried the prisoner. Then the judge pondered.—Judge.

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

the boy or the youth of the 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.