

RENOWNED DUELS OF MODERN TIMES.

BY A. DE BURGH.

At Coventry
There shall your swords and lances arbitrate
The swelling difference of your settled hate.—
Shakespeare's King Richard II. Scene I.

NOT the least remarkable fact to be observed at the end of the present century is the frequency of duels in Continental countries. These are mostly political duels, as we may aptly call them, although there are also some to record which have been the outcome of family quarrels or private misunderstandings. But it is a healthy trait of our own country that this last survival of feudalism is obsolete with us.

It may not be generally known that formerly duelling was legally permitted even here, although it was never a general practice. Up to the reign of Henry II., for instance, duels were the only mode for determining a suit for the recovery of land.

As late as 1817, Lord Ellenborough, in the case of Thornton (who was accused of murdering Mary Ashford) *v.* Ashford, pronounced that "the general law of the land is that there shall be trial by battle in cases of appeal, unless the party brings himself within some of the exceptions." This law was abolished only in the following year, 1818.

Throughout the reign of the Georges duels were very frequent in our country, and in the last century

we had to record the duels of such men as the Royal Duke of York, the Duke of Richmond, Castlereagh, Fox, Pitt, Canning, Wilkes, Grattan, Sir Francis Burdett, Daniel O'Connell, who killed D'Esterre at Bishops-court by a pistol shot, and many others.

There was always the danger, however, of a prosecution hanging over the heads of those who engaged in combats (such as were not legalised in the Statute Book), and in 1808

Major Campbell was actually sentenced to death and executed for killing Captain Boyd in a duel.

The most renowned duel of the Victorian Era was fought in 1843, when Lieutenant Munro killed his brother-in-law, Colonel Fawcett. This country has to thank the late Prince Consort for his interference with the practice, as he prevailed upon the Duke of Wellington (who had been fighting himself) to take the matter in hand, and in 1844 a military law was passed against duelling. Since then nothing further was heard of this most curious development of mediæval society.

When, in the year 1547, the celebrated duel, the last authorised by magistrates, was fought between François de Vivonne de la Châtaignerie and Guy de Jarnac, in which the former was killed by an unexpected blow, from which occurrence the French language was enriched by the phrase "Coup de Jarnac," it



BARON FEJERVÁRY.

Photo by Kolkstanar, Euda Pest.

was thought that duelling had come to an end in France, as the King was so grieved over the death of his favourite that he swore a solemn oath he never again would permit a duel to be fought.

But France of to-day does not seem to have profited by this royal decree. A list of duels fought within the last fifty years in that country would fill a good-sized volume, and would include some of the most famous names in literature and politics, of which I will give a few: Emile de Girardin, Armand Carrel, Alexandre Dumas, Lamartine, Edmond About, Ledru-Rollin, Thiers, Paul de Casagnac, Floquet and Boulanger, not to forget Max Régis, the anti-Semitic ex-Mayor of Algiers. Of recent date is the duel arising out of divergent opinions on Madame Bernhardt's *Hamlet*.

What we have just said about France is also true of other Continental countries, where duels are still very frequent, and statistics from Italy alone show that between 1879 and 1887 there were reported 2,739 duels in which 3,901 wounds were inflicted, and fifty of these proved fatal. It is true that various reigning sovereigns have tried to abolish the practice of duelling by instituting a Court of Honour, but the attempts have mostly proved ineffective.

America has not formed any exception to this love of redress by arms, and even one of the Presidents of the United States as a young man was engaged in a duel. This was General Andrew Jackson, who killed Charles Dickinson in 1806, twenty-two years before he was elected to

the highest post in the Republic.

It is said that that form of duelling which was known during this century as "the American duel" originated first in the United States, and was introduced from there into Europe. The disputants agreed that they would decide by lot which should blow out his brains. This recalls to one's mind the older form of the duel, the judicial combat, a way of trial which prevailed in the Mediaeval Ages, ordained by law as a test of guilt and innocence, it being expected that Providence would inter-

vene and the guilty would be punished. It has always been considered that a great many so-called suicides were simply due to self-execution under compulsion as decreed by lot.

Since the duel between M. Floquet, President of the Chamber of Deputies, and General Boulanger, in January, 1888, which created such a sensation and had such a surprising result, two Prime Ministers have had to fight duels with private Members of the Opposition in Parliament. The Floquet-Boulanger duel was fought with rapiers, and as it was well known that the President of the Chamber of Deputies was advanced in years, and had little experience in duelling, grave fears were entertained for his safety. However, almost by the first thrust made, the General was seriously wounded in the neck by M. Floquet, and had to be carried to his carriage and placed under the care of a surgeon.

Only a couple of years ago the then Prime Minister of the Austrian section of Austro-



BARON BÁNFFY.

Photo by Fllinger Ede, Buda Pest.



HERR WOLF.

Photo by Müller, Reichenberg.



COUNT BADENI.

Photo by Löwry, Wien.



THE COUNT OF TURIN.

Photo by Schaarwächter, Berlin.

Hungary, Count Badeni, was challenged by Herr Wolf, a Deputy, and, having received the permission of the Emperor, the two fought a duel with swords, in which the Count was wounded in the right arm. A few months later the occurrence repeated itself in the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy, and the Prime Minister, Baron Bánffy, measured arms with a gallant Hungarian nobleman, now himself in the Cabinet, Baron Fejerváry. The latter duel ended bloodlessly, various pistol shots having been exchanged without result. It goes without saying that these duels created an enormous sensation.

The Hungarian "ministerial" duel was only the forerunner of many other parliamentary combats, of which the one fought between Count Karolyi, leader of the Opposition, and Herr Gojary, chief editor of the journal *Nemzet*, was the most prominent.

How small a matter may provoke men to challenge one another, when excited, is shown by the last-named case. Karolyi had

declined to satisfy Herr Gojary as to the sources whence the Opposition obtained the sinews of war for the last elections, and the journalist hinted that Count Karolyi was afflicted by a lack of intelligence. This was deemed sufficient reason for a challenge.

Perhaps the most interesting duel fought during the last decade was that which took place a short time ago near Paris, between Prince Henry of Orleans, the great African explorer, and the Count of Turin, a scion of the Royal House of Savoy. Both gentlemen are well known, and are quite young. Prince Henry has travelled extensively in Abyssinia, and acted as correspondent for the *Figaro* and the *New York Herald*. In one of his letters home he spoke strongly about the questionable behaviour of the Italian army at the battle of Adouan, and accused Italian officers of cowardice. The corps of officers decided



PRINCE HENRI D'ORLEANS.

Photo by Clement Maurice, Paris.

to vindicate their honour by challenging the Prince, and various officers were selected for the purpose, but his Royal Highness the Count of Turin, an officer in the Italian Army and a royal prince, claimed himself the right to represent the Army in this affair, which would obviate any possible objection to the duel from the side of the Orleans Prince, on account of his exalted position. The King of Italy reluctantly yielded to the request of his nephew, and the duel took place. Prince Henry was severely wounded, and remained two months under the care of doctors. The Count of Turin has become one of the most popular personages in Italy.

Duels, even when fought with deadly weapons, very seldom terminate fatally, and honour is generally satisfied with the first blood shed.

So often does duelling play an important part in Continental life, and so frequently is

the result, as far as wounds are concerned, *nil*, that it has lost a great deal of its former solemn dignity, and many look askance at affairs which, to a certain extent, are due to bravado, pure and simple. In fact, the duel of the *fin de siècle* has fallen into discredit among thinking people, and it is certain soon to be dubbed unfashionable, which fiat will, as a matter of course, put an end to the practice altogether.

The last sensational duel was that fought on the shore of the Mediterranean, between Prince Philip of Coburg-Gotha, the husband of the eldest daughter of the King of Belgium, and Lieutenant Keglewitch, a former member of the Prince's household. There were but few witnesses, and the result was a dangerous wound in the lieutenant's chest. The young officer was subsequently tried and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.



PRINCE PHILIP OF COBURG.

Photo by Koller, Buda Pest.