

# A DUEL BY GASLIGHT.

## Exciting Sword Combat in This City.

Fight Between a Cuban and an Englishman—  
The Battle Ground a Fashionable House  
Up Town—They Fight With Sabres—  
Both Men Wounded.

A duel! a duel! Away with clubs and stungshots, sneaking murder and vile dens, dark and reeking with their hideous crimes, that make night sorry and the eyes of the sweet Aurora dim with tears. Good old times have come again—the times of the gallant cavaliers who would not brook a word of insult unless the aggressor answered with his sword.

Another duel, and that, too, in New York, and fair play, deep cuts and wrongs redressed and friends made better and firmer still. It is a novelty to be sure, but the age is nothing without its fun and frolic, fights and fisticuffs. Like fashion, the customs of former days may come again. Who knows but that the Legislature in its kind indulgence may generously proclaim the wearing of rapiers upon the thigh? Out upon your pistol. It is a tempting weapon that courts the owner to be employed, often perhaps with justice, yet seldom with satisfaction. Tybalt had no firearm, yet the brave Mercutio was disposed of, while in turn the overbearing Tybalt met his doom, no fust shot being fired. Again, but for the treachery of the Danish royalty, young Hamlet and Laertes might, after a pleasant tilt, have shaken hands and drunk together. But of the duel last night. Mark well the fact it was not in Paris, but in this great and rising metropolis—a rousing, rattling affair, vigorous and decisive, earnest and determined. Devoid of braggart characteristics, it was a genuine encounter, instigated by insult and revenged by a patriot's victory.

### THE DUELLISTS.

The name of Francisco de Porto is well known. He is a Cuban, and has already proved his love of country. Young, his age being twenty-eight, muscular, though lithe and active, and of ordinary height, De Porto is a handsome, dashing fellow, with a brilliant black eye, denoting fire and energy. If appearances form any criterion he is modest and unpretending. He has already displayed his prowess as a duellist at the Heidelberg University, where he was some years a student, but more recently in Canada, where last summer he met in mortal combat De Couto, the editor of the Spanish journal *El Cronista*, who, it appeared, had cast some aspersions upon his reputation. The parties connected with that affair met in a secluded grove on the Canadian side, between four and five o'clock in the morning. The duel was fought with pistols and terminated in De Porto being severely wounded in both thighs, the Spanish editor narrowly escaping. It may be mentioned that De Porto has already figured prominently in the Cuban war, and since his return to this city has taken an active part in the affairs of the Cuban Junta. His latest opponent was a Mr. George Froude, an Englishman, not very dissimilar in either age or appearance to his antagonist. If anything he might be said to be more powerful, though he lacked the fiery aspect of De Porto. Froude is said to be a gentleman of some pretension as well as of moderate means and respectability. But the physical capabilities of the combatants not being just so serviceable as their scientific qualifications in the progress of the encounter last night, we forbear further reference to their *physique*.

### WHAT CAUSED THE QUARREL.

That the members of the Cuban Junta have recently been subjected to severe criticism for the alleged tardiness of their actions has heretofore fully been explained. Moreover, the Cubans in this city, those at least ever seemingly anxious about expeditions, have from time to time been subjected to censure from some cause which even their critics could not clearly define. It was alleged, forsooth, that the Junta intended nothing practicable, that the young Cubans were dispersing them around the city, wishing at the same time that men of other nationalities should go forth and fight for their freedom. Nor did those with busy mouths hesitate to proclaim that the Junta and their followers were reclining in *otium cum dignitate*, intent on harvesting the funds and disposing of them for other purposes than was generally supposed. Such like rumors were abroad, with what effect it is needless to observe. Their truth or falsity has long been determined. Howbeit, such insinuations were not calculated to act favorably on the minds of the brave Cubans who had so nobly banded together to support their gallant cause. Besides, a Cuban, with his proud associations, is not the one to listen calmly to stories affecting his honor, more especially when the derogatory expressions emanate from one supposed to be more or less indifferent to the result of the present war. Now, Mr. Froude being an Englishman, and considering the conduct of his own countrymen in the late rebellion, it was natural to infer that his extreme sympathy did not entirely rest with the slaves of Cuba.

### DE PORTO AND FROUDE WERE FRIENDS.

For months they had known each other, and it appears that a mutual feeling of regard sprung up between them. Latterly, however, the friendship began to cool. Along with others Froude had freely indulged in bitter taunts, frequently accompanied by cutting sarcasm about the action of the Cubans in this city. Again and again did De Porto urge upon his quondam friend to desist from expressing himself so recklessly and unwarrantably about the Junta. Matters went on in this way for a week or two, when at length the seeds of enmity which had so quickly ripened bloomed forth in anger on Saturday night. By design or accident the parties met in a certain hotel up town. The old quarrel was renewed. Words were spent freely until at length a characteristic observation by Froude—an observation significant of an approaching kick—placed De Porto in fever heat, the result of which was that he

### SPAT IN HIS OPPONENT'S FACE.

There was a crowd present and the issue was apparent. The circumstance created considerable excitement—the duel was at hand. Boiling with indignation, Froude immediately tendered the challenge to mortal combat—a challenge which was at once accepted, and a feeling of contentment was thereupon displayed by all. With great promptness the preliminary arrangements were proceeded with, the discussion being marked by much coolness, notwithstanding that the previous wrathful debate had just concluded. The seconds were not far away, and, after a little consultation, there was chosen on behalf of De Porto a Mr. Alfred Neil, and for Froude, Mr. Charles Pittman. The compact was then agreed to, the only question to be disposed of was as to

### THE WEAPONS AND THE BATTLE GROUND.

The combatants were determined to fight. Both were good swordsmen; both had wrongs—the Cuban to avenge the slander on his countrymen, his opponent to wipe out the stain that the defiant expectation of De Porto had inflicted. With what weapons should they fight? Pistols? no; for, said they, "any fool can shoot; it takes a swordsman to fight a duel," and so swords were the weapons. De Porto insisted on foils, but Froude desired the ordinary sabre used by cavalry. This question formed the subject of much wrangling, but finally De Porto consented, and so far matters afforded mutual satisfaction. All this occurred up town, near the house of a common friend, and a fashionable one at that, in West Nineteenth street.

To that house, then, the parties, accompanied by their seconds, on Sunday night repaired. There was no noise, no unusual sound to disturb the quietude of the place. Few were aware that within an hour one of two human beings might probably breathe his last. The preparations were made in silence, and the hour of two o'clock yesterday morning was awaited with anxiety. The edges of the keen blades were carefully examined and for a lengthened period scarcely a word was spoken.

### STRIPPING FOR THE FIGHT.

Ding, dong—it was two o'clock. In the spacious back parlor of the house in question the parties assembled ere the echo of the chimes had died out. Both combatants stripped for the contest, the seconds now and then whispering something to those about to engage. Only a half dozen persons were present, each one of whom was thrilled by a nervous excitement. A splendid chandelier shed a flood of light around the room, though otherwise the place was excessively cold, so cold, indeed, as to necessitate the wearing of a thin walking coat by each of the duellists, both of whom were attired in tight pantaloons, all underclothing being entirely dispensed with. All the arrangements having been completed the combatants announced their readiness to proceed.

### A DEAD SILENCE.

ensued, while an deadly paleness seemed to be the prevalent complexion of every man in the room. The word was given and the duellists crossed swords, and, having taken three paces backwards, the fight commenced. At first a slight timidity was apparent on both sides—not so much timidity, perhaps, as the nervous expectation incident to the opening of the encounter. Finally, after some little hesitation, De Porto advanced, Froude meanwhile on the alert to receive him. The scene was exciting. All at once the few spectators were startled by a sudden cut made by Froude at the head of his opponent, who, however, deftly parried and retired a pace or two. Up to the present both had observed a comparatively serene demeanor, but it was evident the duel could not be a prolonged one, each being bent on a deadly strife. Having axially crossed, great skill was displayed by both, their eyes flashing with fire and endeavoring, as it were, to penetrate each other's intent.

### ADMIRABLE SWORDSMANSHIP.

was displayed, the cuts being rapid, well directed and parried with precision. Up to the present, which was about five minutes from the commencement, De Porto had escaped with a slight scratch on the chest, Froude being unharmed, when suddenly De Porto offering a tempting chance, Froude advanced upon him and inflicted a diagonal cut upon the right thigh. It was a fatal move for Froude, for no sooner had he leaned forward to make the cut

than, with lightning-like rapidity, De Porto following up the *contra-atta*, gashed his opponent on the right shoulder, causing a wound some five inches in length and about one and a half inches in depth. His sword arm was disabled.

### THE DUEL WAS OVER.

Froude dropped his blade exclaiming, "Enough for to-day; you will give me my revenge another time," to which De Porto replied:—  
"I am always at your disposition."

Subsequently the parties shook hands and the wounds were examined. That inflicted on De Porto, though some eight inches in length, was scarcely a quarter of an inch in depth, while Froude's was of a serious character, the blood streaming from it in profusion. He was immediately conveyed to his residence in Brooklyn, where the proper assistance was procured.

And thus terminated the sanguinary contest, the chivalrous Cuban on the one hand vindicating the slight cast upon his countrymen, and the Englishman avenging the bitter insult he had sustained. At the conclusion of the duel De Porto—who, by the way, was an officer on the—Lillianintimated with marked coolness that he was always at home in West Twenty-second street for any person who took the liberty of questioning the rectitude of the Cuban cause and its supporters in this city.