

They, shame-faced, kept telling him it was the law of the duel. He could either apologise on his knees, using any terms his adversary saw fit to impose, or he must fight. There were no two ways about. Mr Martin whispered into his ear, 'Your uncle will not speak to you if you do not fight.'

They thrust a sword into his hand, pointed towards that of his adversary. The chief second held them on his outstretched blade, cried 'Gentlemen, engage,' and strode back.

Two, three or even four clashes and Miller's flew into the air, it landing between them. Stephen put his foot on it and his sword point against [Miller]. 'Do you withdraw?' he asked. 'Miller, do you withdraw your words entirely?'

'I do, entirely.'

'Yes? Then we have said enough. Good day to you, gentlemen; and I thank you heartily for your presence.'

'He shared all with a set of tarts,' said Wainright into Killick's eager ear. He was Miller's servant and he cordially disliked his master: but since he was a child and grandchild of Caxley House he had learnt to express himself in gentler expressions -- not that these had any currency whatsoever with Killick or nine-tenths of the lower deck.

'Where does he stow himself now?'

'Why, in the little cabin behind his Lordship: and I doubt he comes out of it so soon. It is fair wonderful what a face of brass will do, but I doubt anyone could face the country -- the English country, the part around us, or in London - having as near as dammit refused to fight. I remember how his Lordship went out half-dozen times when I was young and always bloodied his sword ... Coming sir,' he cried, and vanished aft.

Killick delighted in pineapple-shrub and pig's trotters; but they did not nearly reach his high and exalted pleasure in very specifically obscene stories however improbable (which alas he could never remember accurately or even at all) and accounts of high life.