

"NOBLESSE OBLIGE."

Honor to the ancient maxim,
Gospel of a far-off day,
Mid whose conflict and confusion
Stubborn spirits owned its sway—
Owned it on the crimsoned scaffold,
Owned it on the stricken field,
As, defying pain and peril,
With their blood their faith they sealed.

Brave old words, ye taught your scholars,
Knight and noble, fierce of mood,
Lofty deeds should grace high lineage,
Gentle manners, gentle blood:
Thus your wild controlling influence,
Mid vicissitudes and strife,
Cherished in a barren present
Seeds with future promise rife.

Now that Prejudice has yielded
Place to Reason's temperate rule,
Teach the maxim in the cottage,
Teach it in the village school—
Watchword this in every station,
Of the wise, the pure, the strong
(Heaven's own chivalry), contending
Evermore with guilt and wrong.

Thus the wealthy learn that riches
For some useful end are lent,
Thus the lore the student gathers
Is for man's advancement spent;
And the light that pierces our fathers'
Fetters gleamed with steeper ray
Gilds the upward path we follow,
Wishful of the perfect day.

As from toil of buried ages
Thus we gather precious fruit
(Deep within the Past the wisdom
Of the Present strikes its root),
Shining through the fine old motto
The Great Master's words we see,
"He who will be chief among you,
Let him, serving, follow Me!"

VERA.

THE MARQUIS JEANNE HYACINTH DE ST. PALAYE.

BY J. HENRY BORTHORSE.

IV.

A few days after these events the Count removed his family to Paris, travelling in several large carriages, and accompanied by numerous servants on horseback. The Marquis accompanied them, and, by what might appear a curious coincidence, on the very morning upon which they set out on their journey, the Chevalier received, at the little *Auberge* on the farther side of the forest, where he lodged, an imperative order to join his regiment without delay. Furious at the success of what he conceived to be the interference of the Marquis and the Count, he obeyed the order, resolved to return to Paris at the earliest opportunity.

The winter passed in Paris as winters in great cities usually do. The Chevalier stole up from the frontier more than once, and at court balls, at the theatre, and at the private assemblies he succeeded in seeing Mademoiselle de Frontenac more often than he perhaps had expected, but though his opportunities exceeded his hopes, the result was not proportionally favourable. Whether Mademoiselle had succumbed to the paternal influence, or whether the Marquis had succeeded in substituting his own attractions for those of the Chevalier, it was evident that her manner became colder and more reserved at each interview.

The winter at last was over, and one evening in summer, after a royal concert at Versailles, when the king's violins had performed such delicate and yet pathetic music of Monsieur Rousseau's that the court was ravished by it, the Chevalier met his mistress by appointment in one of the pavilions of the orangery. He had secret means of obtaining admission to the precincts of the palaces which were well understood by the courtiers of those days.

Mademoiselle de Frontenac was perfectly pale as she came into the pavilion, and she seemed to walk with difficulty; she stopped immediately when within the door, and spoke at once, as though she were repeating a lesson.

"Do not come any nearer, Monsieur le Chevalier," she said; "I am the wife of another."

He stopped, therefore, where he was, on the other side of the small pavilion, and across the summer evening light that mingled with the shimmer of the candelabras, he saw her for the last time.

Neither spoke for a moment or two, and then she said, still as though conning a part—

"I have promised, Monsieur le Chevalier de Grissolles, to be the wife of the Marquis de St. Palaye, and I will keep my word."

"You are not speaking your own words, Madeleine," he said, eagerly; "let your own heart speak!" and coming forward across the pavilion, he was on the point of taking her hand.

Then the door by which she had entered opened again, and the Count de Frontenac, with a quiet and firm step, glided in, and stood by his daughter's side.

At this sight, which revealed to him, as it seemed, the faithlessness of his mistress, and the plot which was woven around him on every side, the Chevalier lost his self-control.

"I was aware, Monsieur le Comte," he burst forth, "that in this *pays du diable* the privileges of parents were numerous and inalienable, but till this moment I did not know that eaves-dropping was one of them."

The Count made no reply, except by raising his hat; and his daughter, bowing with a mechanical grace that was pitiful to see, said—

"I wish you farewell, Monsieur le Chevalier."

"Madeleine," said the young man, "I wish you farewell for ever; and I pray God, with what sincerity will be known when we stand, each of us, before His judgment bar, that you may not bitterly regret your words this night." Then, perfectly pale, but more composed than before he had spoken, he too raised his hat courteously, and left the room.

That evening there were enacted within a stone's throw of each other, two very different scenes.

When the Marquis de St. Palaye returned to his hotel he was told that the family lawyer, Monsieur Cacotte, was waiting to see him, having at the first possible moment brought him some deeds which Monsieur le Marquis was very anxious should be completed.

The Marquis would see him at once, and, after a few minutes' delay, he entered the room in which the lawyer was seated at a table which was covered with parchments. The room was one in which the Marquis usually sat when the festivities of the day, whether at home or abroad, were over: it was richly furnished as a library, and upon the wide hearth there burned a fire of wood, though it was summer. Greeting the lawyer with great friendliness of manner, St. Palaye threw himself somewhat wearily into a chair, and gazed at the blazing wood-ashes.

A servant entered the room with wine. "I am sorry, Monsieur le Marquis," said the lawyer, "to come to you at so unseasonable an hour; but your instructions were so precise that the moment this first will was ready it should be brought to you to sign, that I did not dare to wait till the morrow."

"You did quite right, Monsieur Cacotte," said the Marquis. "No one can tell what may happen before the morrow."

"I have indeed," continued the lawyer, "prepared both wills, so that Monsieur can satisfy himself that they are both exactly alike. The one will be signed immediately after the marriage; the other at once. They both contain the same clauses, and especially the one upon which Monsieur le Marquis so much insisted; that the sum of fifty thousand louis d'or, charged upon the unsettled estates in Poitou and Auvergne, should be paid within three months of the death of the testator to Monsieur le Chevalier de Grissolles, for a purpose which he will appreciate and understand." Those, I think, were the words Monsieur wished to have used.

"They seem quite correct," said the Marquis.

"I am sorry," continued the lawyer, "that this extra expense, which seems to me unnecessary, should be entailed."

"In that," said the Marquis, politely, "you only show, Monsieur Cacotte, that care and interest in the good of the family which you have always manifested both in the time of my father and of myself. My father, the late Marquis de St. Palaye, always expressed to me the obligation under which he conceived himself to be in this respect, and this obligation is, of course, much increased in my case."

"The obligation, Monsieur le Marquis," said the lawyer, "if such there be, has been too liberally repaid both by your father and yourself."

"To tell the truth, Monsieur Cacotte," said the Marquis, leaning back in his chair, with his feet stretched out towards the fire, and speaking with an appearance of being perfectly at home with his companion, and desirous of confiding in him, "to tell the truth I am even in this age of science and encyclopedias somewhat superstitious, and I have a presentiment—the St. Palayes often had it—that I have not long to live. Do not suppose that I shrink from this prospect, though it is a singular statement for a man to make who is about to marry, and to marry such a bride as mine! Yet I do not mind confiding to you, Monsieur Cacotte, that I am somewhat wearied of life. The world grows very old, and it does not seem to mend."

"Monsieur le Marquis has been too long unmarried," said the lawyer. "I am not surprised that he should be wearied of the enjoyments which he has had the opportunity of tasting to such repletion. He will speak differently when he has a lovely woman by his side, and knows the felicity of wife and child."

"Ah, Monsieur Cacotte!" said the Marquis, smiling, "you speak, as they all do, of felicity. There is such a thing, believe me, as the intolerable weariness of a too constant felicity. When I hear even of the joy of the future, and of the bliss of heaven, it seems to me sometimes that the most blissful heaven is to cease to exist. Let me sign the deed!"

A servant was called in as a witness, and the Marquis signed the first will. Then he said to Monsieur Cacotte—

"The marriage will take place in six weeks in Auvergne; I hope that Monsieur Cacotte will honour the ceremony with his presence. I can assure you from my own experience that you will have nothing to complain of in the hospitality of Monsieur le Comte."

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The Chevalier returned to his lodging about the same time that the Marquis entered his hotel. His valet awaited him that he might change his dress as usual before going into the town to spend the remainder of the evening. The man perceived at once that his master was excited and unhappy. He was an Italian by birth, and had accompanied the Chevalier in his campaigns, and in his secret visits to the Château de Frontenac. He saw that the crisis had arrived.

"Does Monsieur go down into Auvergne this autumn?" he said.

"We go down once more," said the Chevalier, gloomily. He had divested himself of his court dress, and was taking from his valet a suit of dark clothes somewhat resembling a hunting suit. "Yes, we go down once more: this cursed marriage will take place a month hence."

"Monsieur takes this marriage too much to heart," said the Italian—as he spoke he handed the coat, which his master put on—"it may never take place. A month hence in the country they will begin to hunt—to hunt the boar. No doubt the party at the château will divert themselves in this way while the nuptial ceremonies are arranged. It is a dangerous sport. Many accidents take place, many unfortunate shots—quite unintentional. Monsieur le Chevalier is a finished sportsman. He has a steady hand, and a sure eye. *C'est un fait accompli.*"

The Chevalier started: in the large glass before him he saw a terrible figure dressed as for the chase, but pale as a corpse, and trembling in every limb as with the palsy. He shuddered, and turned away.

V.

The *piqueurs* sent up word to the château that a magnificent boar had been lodged in a copse at the foot of the forest road. An answer was sent down accordingly that the Marquis would drive him early in the morning, and that he should be turned if possible towards the château.

In the morning, therefore, very early, the whole household was astir. The ladies were mounted, and divided into parties, entered down the road and along the forest paths to those points where, according to the advice of their several attendant cavaliers, the hunt would most likely be seen to advantage. The Marquis, it was said, had been down at a still earlier hour to rouse the boar. Every now and then a distant horn sounding over the waving autumn forest told that the sport had commenced.

The ladies were gay and delighted, and those of the gentlemen who, like Monsieur Cacotte, were not much accustomed to country life and scenes, shared their enjoyment to the full. And indeed it seemed a morning out of fairyland. From every branch and spray upon which the leaves, tinted with a thousand colours, were trembling already to their fall, hung sparkling festoons of fairy lace, the mysterious gossamer web which in a single night wreathes a whole forest with a magic covering which the first hour of sunlight as soon destroys. Yellows, browns, and purples formed the background of this dazzling network of fairy silver which crossed in all directions the forest rides.

But though the morning was so lovely the ladies grew tired of riding up and down waiting for the hunt. The horns became fainter and more distant, and it became evident that the chase had drifted to the eastward.

"Why do you stay here, Monsieur de Cirassonne?" said Mademoiselle de Frontenac, smiling, to a young man, almost a boy, who had with the utmost devotion remained by the side of herself and a very pretty girl, her companion. "Why do you stay here! You are not wont to desert the chase. What can have happened to the Marquis and the rest?"

The boy looked somewhat sheepish, and replied to the latter part of the question only.

"I fancy that the boar has broken out, in spite of the *piqueurs*, and that the Marquis has fallen to turn him. They have probably lost him in the forest."

"But is not that very dangerous?" said the pretty girl. "If they do not know where the boar is, he may burst out upon us at any moment."

The boy looked at her as though much pleased.

"That is quite true," he said. "It was one reason why I stayed."

Monsieur de Cirassonne was not far wrong in his opinion. This is what had happened.

When the Marquis arrived at the cover, very soon after sunrise, he found that the boar, ungraciously refusing to wait his opponent's convenience, had broken cover, and wounding one of the *piqueurs*, who attempted to turn him, had gone down the valley. He was described as an unusually fine animal, and the dogs were upon his track.

The course which the boar had taken lay through the thick of the forest. It was rugged and uneven, and he could only be pursued on foot. After some distance had been traversed, the scent was suddenly crossed by a large sow, as frequently happened, apparently with the express purpose of diverting the pursuit from her companion, crossed immediately in front of the dogs and went crashing down through the copse to the right. Most of the hounds followed her, and the *piqueurs*, with few exceptions, followed the dogs. The Marquis, however, succeeded in calling off some of the oldest hounds, and accompanied by two or three *piqueurs*, followed the original chase. Some distance farther on, however, the boar had taken to the water, and the scent was lost. At the same time the horns sounding in the valley to the right, showed that the deserters had come up with their quarry, and distracted the attention of both *piqueurs* and dogs. The former were of opinion that the boar had simply crossed the river, and taking the dogs across they made a cast on the opposite bank, where the dogs ran backwards and forwards baying disconsolately. The Marquis, however, believing that the boar

had followed the course of the stream for at least some distance, kept on the left bank, and forcing his way round one or two craggy points, found at last the spot where the boar, apparently but a few moments before, had scrambled up the bank. He sounded his horn, but either from the baying of the dogs, or the noise and excitement in the valley below, he was disregarded, and pushing aside the branches before him, the Marquis found himself at the foot of a ravine down which a mountain torrent was rushing to join the river below. The bed of the ravine was composed of turf over-strewn with craggy rock, and on either side rugged cliffs, out of the fissures of which lofty oaks and chest-nuts had grown for centuries, towered up towards the sky.

The Marquis waited for a moment, but hearing no reply to his horn, he entered the ravine alone.

As he did so, the strange shapes which the hanging roots and branches of the trees assumed might seem to beckon and warn him back; but, on the other hand, a thousand happy and pleasing objects spoke of life and joy. The sun shone brilliantly through the trembling leaves, birds of many colours flitted from spray to spray, butterflies and bright insects crossed the fretted work of light and shade. The chase was evidently before him—why should he turn back?

Some fifty yards up the valley the rocks retreated on either side, leaving a wide and open grassy space, down which the torrent was rushing and over which fragments of basaltic rock, split from the wooded cliffs above, were strewn. At the summit of this grassy slope, standing beneath a bare escarpment of basalt, the Marquis saw the boar.

Its sides and legs were stained with mud and soil, but the chase had been very short, and the animal seemed to have turned to bay more out of curiosity and interest than from terror or exhaustion. It stood sniffing the air and panting with excitement, its hair bristling with anger, its white and polished tusks shining in the sun.

When the Marquis saw this superb creature standing above him on the turf, a glow of healthy and genuine pleasure passed over his face. He swung his horn round far out of reach behind his back, and drew his long and jewelled knife. The boar and he would try this issue alone.

For some seconds they stood facing each other. Then the posture of the Marquis changed inexplicably. He rose to his full height, his gaze was fixed as if by fascination upon a long range of low rocks above him to the left, and an expression of surprise, which did not amount to anxiety even, came into his face. Then he dropped his knife, threw his arms up suddenly over his head, and falling backwards, rolled once over and lay motionless upon the uneven turf in an uneasy posture, his head lower than the limbs. A puff of white smoke rose from the rocks above, and the reverberating echo of a hunting piece struck the rocks and went on sounding alternately from side to side down the valley.

The boar, startled at the shot, and, still more, probably, by the sudden fall of his adversary, crept into the thicket, and, while a man might count sixty, an awful silence fell upon hill and rock, and wood. The myriad happy creatures that filled the air with murmur and with life, became invisible and silent, and even the rushing torrent ceased to sound. Then a terrible figure, habited in the costume of the chase, but trembling in every limb as with a palsy, rose from behind the rocks upon the left. With tottering and uneven steps, it staggered down the grassy slope, and stood beside the fallen man. The Marquis opened his eyes, and when he saw this figure he tried to raise himself from the uneasy posture in which he had fallen. When he found it was impossible, a smile of indescribably serene courtesy formed itself gradually upon his face.

"Ah, Chevalier," he said, speaking slowly, and at intervals, "that was scarcely fair! Make my regrets to the Marquis. Monsieur Cacotte will speak to you—about—my—will."

Then, the smile fading from the lips, his head fell back into the uneasy posture in which it had lain, and the Marquis Jeanne Hyacinth de St. Palaye rested in peace upon the blood-stained grass.

BROWN'S YOUNG MEN.

Brown, it appears from the statements of people who are supposed to know, and who have not hesitated to divulge the secret, invested capital in the purchase of a stock of young men, whom he supplies in quantities to suit all customers about to give parties. They are let out for the evening at reasonable rates, warranted quiet and in good going order. Dancing young men, who are not expected to say more than "May I have the pleasure?" and "Very warm this evening, is it not?" are sent out at the low price of twenty-five dollars per dozen. Talking young men come a little higher, but those that can manage to keep up a sort of conversation—not a universal accomplishment in ballrooms—may be had for as little as thirty dollars. When the æsthetic movement began long hair and a languid look came rather high, and the genuine "greenery yallery, Grosvenor Gallery, foot-in-the-grave young man" was expensive. Now that æstheticism is played out, there is a large stock of the latter on hand, who are having their hair cut, and developing into more of the "common-place type, with a stick and a pipe, and a half-bred black and tan."