

the first, and for an hour after the second, under peril of I know not what awful consequences! I took a couple of turns along the avenue beside Porteus's bath-chair, and then concluded my walk in the company of some other fellow-sufferers; but I heard little of what they said, for I could not take my eyes off that young man. I watched him as the islanders watched St. Paul of old, waiting for tardy Nemesis to overtake him, and I was almost disappointed to see that he came out of the ordeal as scathless as the apostle. My faith in my favorite spring received a blow that morning from which it has never fully recovered. Meanwhile the unconscious disturber of my peace was, to all appearance, getting on at a great pace with Mrs. Seymour. Their conversation did not appear to flag for a moment; and every now and then the sound of his laughter reached my ears above the din of the band, the shuffling of footsteps, and the buzz of many voices. Such a jolly, joyous laugh as it was! No snigger, nor cackle, nor half-smothered outburst, but a fine, rich ho-ho-ho! as natural and irresistible as the song of a bird, and, to my ears, nearly as musical. I declare that, if I had been a woman, I should have felt three parts inclined to marry Count Waldemar for the mere sake of his laugh, knowing that it could only proceed from the most manly and honest of hearts. He caught me up after I had set my face homewards, and clapped me on the shoulder with much warmth. "You are my very good friend," he was good enough to say. "I shall never forget what you have done for me."

"You have nothing to thank me for. I should not have introduced you; you had not forced me into doing so," I replied candidly. "The truth is, there is no chance for you. I know my countrywomen better than you can do, and I assure you that, though Mrs. Seymour may find it amusing enough to hear you talk, she will no more think of accepting your offer (if you are foolish enough to make her one) than she would of drinking three glasses of mineral water, highly charged with carbonic acid gas, because her lips happened to touch the rim of the tumbler."

"Now, that we shall see," he rejoined, in no way disconcerted.

"Setting aside the question of your nationality and of her very slight acquaintance with you," I continued, "I must tell you that she is a woman of considerable fortune."

"Ja—so?" quoth he, quite importunately. "That is all the better; for I am myself a poor man. Money brings not happiness, but it is no bad addition to happiness."

The perfect good faith with which this copy-book maxim was enunciated was in its way inimitable. It was clearly absurd to waste more words upon one so ignorant of the first guiding principles of civilized society, so I went home to breakfast.

## II.

I am one of those who look back with regret to the palmy old days of MM. Blanc and Benazet. I never could see that the interests of public morality required the suppression of the gaming-tables, nor, for that matter, that it is the legitimate province of governments to look after the morals of law-abiding people at all. It has always seemed to me that, if I had gambling propensities, it would be far better for me to indulge them in public than in private. Those who stake against the bank with an adversary who at least has no cards up his sleeve, who expects no "revenge" from a winner, who neither takes nor offers I O U's, who gains without unseemingly exultation, and may be "broken" without being ruined. Of course I know all about the clerks who used to rob their master's tills, and the peasants whose hardly-earned wages used to disappear on Saturday nights over the green cloth; but an obligatory deposit of twenty pounds or so, to be returned on the departure of the visitor, would have effectually excluded these simple folks; and really, if our rulers are to begin protecting us against ourselves, where are they to stop? Why should we not be forbidden to back a horse, or to invest our money in South American securities, or to go out in wet weather without an umbrella and cork soles?

I feel the more free to say all this inasmuch as neither M. Blanc nor M. Benazet ever made a single thaler out of me, except in indirect ways. It is not from any love of *trente et quarante* or *roulette* in themselves that I could fain see a restoration of those merry monarchs, but because their little kingdoms, which were once so joyous, are now left desolate, or nearly so. Their flower-gardens are growing less flowery every year; their well-mown lawns are well-mown no longer; their paths are grass-grown, or covered with falling leaves; their *prime donne* and Parisian actors find more lucrative summer engagements elsewhere; the very gilding on their palace walls is beginning to tarnish, and will, perhaps, not be renewed; for where is the money to come from?

Homburg, it is true, is more highly favored than its neighbors, fashion having chosen to decree of late years that it should be the proper thing for the English great world to repair thither for a time at the close of the London season; and I must confess that now, when I do my annual three weeks of water-drinking, I mix in a more aristocratic as well as more respectable society than of yore. But then it is a considerably duller one. In the exception of lawn-tennis and dancing, neither of which relations are altogether suitable to the age of a majority of the *curgaste*. Homburg is somewhat wanting in amusement in these latter days; and I suppose that why everybody was so determined to be present at the steeple-chase mentioned to me by Count Waldemar, that, on the appointed day, there was not a carriage to be had in the town for love or money. I myself was not enough to accept the offer of a box-seat from some friends; for, curious though I was to see how my new friend would acquit himself in the saddle, I had no idea of trudging two or three miles under a blazing sun for that or any other purpose.

(To be Continued.)

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