

"It seems to me," said M. de Berizy, smiling, "much more surprising that a young beauty, like you, should bring ennui to such a place."

There was something so dignified and paternal in the tone of the Marquis as he uttered this playful retort, that Delphine felt flattered by it, and replied, mildly—

"If I am ennuyed, it is because I do not know what to do with myself."

"What to do with yourself!" said the Marquis; "why go and dance, to be sure. I wish I were a young man for your sake, but here is a youth,—turning to Arthur,—who will, if I may judge from his looks, be delighted to relieve you from your ennui."

"I shall be too happy," exclaimed Arthur, with vivacity. A look from his father, however, embarrassed him, and an awkward scene would probably have followed, had not M. Durand said to his daughter—

"Come, Delphine, dance once at least to oblige me. This is surely not too much to expect at a ball." When Delphine, assuming a demure, submissive air, said—

"I shall obey you, papa." Then as the Count withdrew with M. de Berizy and Durand, she turned to Arthur, and said—"you see that I imitate you, and am a most obedient daughter."

Whilst Arthur and Delphine were dancing together—to their mutual satisfaction, M. de Lozeraie, the Marquis, and M. Durand retired into a little saloon, occupied only by a party of whist-players. M. de Berizy first introduced the Count and the banker to each other, and then said—

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen, for troubling you with business in the midst of a ball, but the opportunity is too favourable for me to think of letting it pass. I spoke to you yesterday of a forest I had sold. Monsieur le Comte de Lozeraie is the purchaser, and by the terms of the contract, he is to pay me the purchase money in three months. My object then, in speaking to you together on the subject, is to ascertain whether it will suit you, Monsieur le Comte, to pay this sum into the hands of Monsieur Durand, who has kindly consented to take charge of my funds; and also whether you, M. Durand, are equally willing to receive the deposit directly from the hands of M. de Lozeraie instead of from myself."

"I can have no objection to this arrangement, if it suits you, gentlemen, said M. Durand."

will release me from all responsibility to you, Monsieur de Berizy, I see no objection either," replied the Count, with hauteur.

"It is for you, M. de Berizy, and for your sake only, that I consent to this," retorted the banker, in a tone that shewed that his pride had taken alarm at the Count's insolent bearing. "I beg you will fully understand that."

"In truth," rejoined the Count, in a still more disdainful tone; "if I did not think it would accommodate you, Monsieur le Marquis, I should not swerve from the original terms of my agreement."

"I thank you both, gentlemen, for this extreme complaisance," replied M. de Berizy, smiling, "and I intend to avail myself of it. I am obliged to return into the country for a time, on business, and am delighted that this matter is so well arranged. To-morrow my attorney will draw up the necessary documents to empower Monsieur Durand to receive your payments, and to give you a valid discharge for the same, all which shall be strictly according to rule."

"Has Monsieur le Comte no observation to make, no precaution to take?" sneered the banker.

"My man of business shall call at your house to-morrow, sir," said Monsieur de Lozeraie.

"My cashier will receive him, sir, and he will receive also the money—if any is brought."

These two worthies, who seemed to have acquired for each other a mutual antipathy at first sight, bowed distantly and were about to withdraw, when the party at whist broke up, and Monsieur de Favieri coming in at the moment, said to one of the players—

"Have you been fortunate, Monsieur Felix?"

The Count and the banker both turned suddenly on hearing this name pronounced, and recognized the old man whom they had so shamefully received the morning before. As may be imagined, they were both surprised at seeing him at Monsieur Favieri's; but their surprise was much increased when they heard him reply carelessly to M. de Favieri's question:

"No, indeed! I have lost twenty four points in three rubbers. Fortunately, however," added he, drawing a pocket-book from his pocket, and throwing on the table a bundle of bank notes, "we played for only three hundred franc points."

M. Durand and the Count puzzled themselves to understand who this man could be, that had come to them as an indigent person, asking assistance, and whom they now found

"Provided that Monsieur Durand's receipt