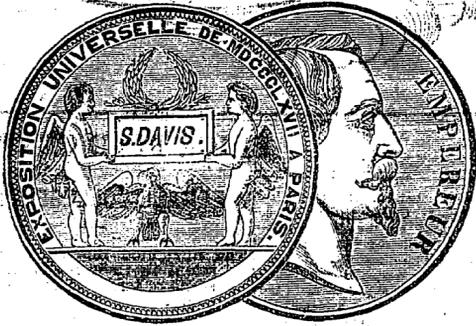


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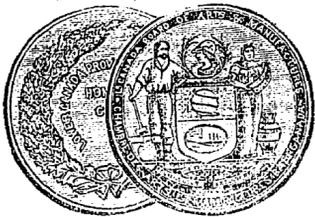
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DO I REMEMBER IRELAND?

Do I remember Ireland? Is it that you ask, Sabine? Well, maybe you have reason child, for my...

Yes, fifty years and over—that's a length of time his true, with all its cares and troubles, its hopes and...

The redbreast's merry chirrup and the thrush's matchless lay, the perfume of the hawthorn; all the beauties of the May...

These pictures from the buried past come trooping up at us, the couch, the house it stopped at, the bridge, the noisy mill...

Yes, I remember Ireland, child, and if it were God's will—a foolish wish you'll call it, perhaps, but I must own it still...

Quebec, 8th Jan., 1883. E. A. SUTTON.

THE DWARF'S SECRET.

"I promised to follow that path." "Whom did you promise? Your patron? His death released you from it. Sabine, who has refused you?"

"My conscience?" said Benedict. "Ah, but then you must have two consciences—your conscience as a man, and your conscience as an artist—the one does not in the least interfere with the other. I understand and approve of your irreproachable life, but it has nothing to do with the marble figures which you represent."

"Hold there," said Benedict, "an artist's work is a reflex of himself. I could never again sculpture a group of Beligion trampling Idols under foot, if those Idols were my own, and if religion were not sacred in my eyes."

"You could never do that, but you could do something else. Let me tell you your groups is superb, but you will probably show your greatest strength in carrying out this government order. You will never persuade artists that it is as great a proof of genius to create a draped figure as an undraped one, or that it is not more difficult to model an Eve than a Lucretia. Whatever may have been the deserved success of your last group, it can never reach the same height that Hylas and the Nymphs will."

"Perhaps you are right," said Benedict; "but I will at least have the inward satisfaction of knowing that I have been faithful to the course I marked out for myself, and that I have never made art subservient to passion."

"Wait forty-eight hours before you give your reply about the fountain," said Lionel; "but do not lose a moment in fixing the price of your group. I am going in that direction and will deliver your letter."

Benedict began to write. "By the way," said Lionel, "I am having a housewarming this evening. I came in fact to give you my new address. Of course I may count on you."

"You do not understand me, Lionel." "I understand that you are despondent, and want cheering."

"I need to be alone." "You need plenty of company to make you laugh."

"I will never laugh much again. I feel as if my youth were over." "Then you should only work for funeral decorations henceforth, my good fellow. Make a statue of Art with his torch extinguished, his compass, his lyre, and his chisel broken, and then have done with it. Make your will, and if you are too good a Christian to use a brace of pistols, set off for La Trappe and take the vows. But do not attempt to live in the world and not be of the world. Fra Angelico became a monk, and Fra Bartolomeo wore the cowl. One must be consistent, so unless you want to put a cloister grating between yourself and the world, you must do as it does, and howl with the wolves, only showing your teeth less and making less noise than the rest. What does this supper amount to after all? Sitting down to table with some friends who appreciate you."

"And who have not a single idea in common with me?" "Upon art perhaps not, but upon *pate aux truffes*, my dear boy, it is another story. You need not drink if wine does not agree with you; you need not sing if you do not feel inclined. You can sulk in the corner if you please; you can rail at your gayety from the heights of reason. You can represent, if you wish, the philosophers strutting about in *Romaine*. There are concessions enough for you, I hope."

"Thank you, Lionel, but I cannot—" "Refuse, you were going to say," said Lionel; "I believe you."

"No, accept," said Benedict; "my wound is too deep."

"The more reason for healing it." "It will reopen." "When the weather changes, perhaps. But try to keep the barometer at fair weather."

"No, Lionel, once more no." "You are wrong, Benedict, and I am sorry to see it. If you nourish your grief in gloomy silence, it will become a disease. It will paralyze your brain and your hand. It will render you incapable of everything. You will be among those to whom the world says with an evil joy, *Va victis!* You must not let yourself be conquered in this struggle. Rise the greater for misfortune. Forget

Sabine, give the mine the place once held in your life by that young girl, and arrested in your course for an instant by an unforeseen obstacle, cross with one foot on the barrier at the foot of which you had lain down to die."

"I have not strength for all this." "Not of yourself alone, perhaps, but sustained by your friends, and I am a friend, Benedict."

"Then leave me to grieve." "To grieve with me, yes. You shall tell me of your dreams of Sabine, of your perished happiness; and I shall speak in glowing terms of the Muse who presides over sculpture. I will paint for you the glory which you now disdain, and in a few months you will not only be contented; but happy."

"If I could believe this." "You may believe me, Benedict, for what you are suffering I have suffered."

"But was the one you loved like Sabine?" "Yes, but I found that art was better and higher still."

"I do not know whether you are my deliverer, or merely a tempting spirit," said Benedict; "but your visit has done me good."

"And an evening spent with us will completely restore you. Will you come?" "I would be a melancholy guest," said Benedict.

"The philosopher of the *Fete Romaine*, it is agreed. We will expect you." "At what hour is supper?" "Nine o'clock."

"You can set a place for me, Lionel." "And I will take your letter to the minister. *Au revoir!*" They shook hands and Lionel went out.

"Ah, *signor mio*, I shall be scolded," said Beppo to him. "Get your master's clothes ready, you young vagabond," said Lionel, "and spend these five francs to my health."

Beppo showed every tooth in a broad grin. Benedict called him in a moment to take his orders.

"Lionel is about right," thought Benedict; "if sorrow is not strong enough to kill us at once, why do we let it do so by degrees? I will not enter into gaudy or folly to-night. But contact with others may cheer me up."

Benedict made an unusually careful toilet, and at the appointed hour arrived at his friend's studio.

It was a large room with a very high ceiling on which draperies forming a sort of tent concealed all defects in the plastering. Brilliant pictures in large gilt frames claimed immediate attention. Lionel had truly an artist's temperament, and everything from his hand showed power and originality. Bare pieces of *statues*, curious coats-of-arms mounted in porcelain, statuary, terra cotta figures, various knick-knacks, canvases by Baphael with female figures, bunches of flowers or wings of birds peeping out from dark crevices, contributed to the charming effect of the whole. All the artist's apparatus had been pushed into corners, and the supper table was served in the centre of the room. It was in excellent taste, but in such sumptuous style as to remind one of the gorgeous feasts which Veronese loved to represent. Venetian crystals filled with flowers, silver and gold ornaments of German workmanship, goblets for champagne, pitchers of foaming ale, flasks of Italian wine, thickest decanters, bottles covered with straw, and long-necked ones of Rhine wine from the royal vineyards of Johannisberg, sparkling Moselle, Chateau, with tops of rose-colored silk and seals of fragrant wax, made up an inviting whole.

Vases of flowers, pyramids of fruit, oblong here of waxen tapers alternated with substantial dishes. Under the tablecloth was a rug of the thickness of two carpets, and the cloth itself was of the finest linen ornamented with lace and with a rich border. In the corners of the studio statues of Venetian negroes holding candelabra completed the ornamentation.

When Benedict entered, nearly all of the guests were assembled. They were deep in conversation and his entrance was scarcely noticed. The late ones having arrived, the curtains were drawn and supper began. Benedict did not regret having come. He sat beside an old brother artist, who indulged in many pleasant reminiscences, and the gayety was for some time within perfectly reasonable limits.

Some literary men, principally art critics, enlivened the occasion by excellent stories. The mirth was real and hearty. The drinking was done slowly. The night was long, and the windows, carefully curtained, did not permit the day to penetrate too quickly into the studio. At length the company began to grow heated. Congratulations were exchanged on mutual success. Benedict received a great many compliments, and as he omitted to mention the purchase of his group by the Minister of Arts, Lionel took care to announce it. Every hand was immediately stretched out to him, and this spontaneous sympathy did him good. He realized how hard it was to live in solitude, and depend on one's self, and he resolved to follow his friend's advice and dispel grief by the pursuit of pleasure. He slowly emptied his glass, touching it to that of an art critic, and his face began to light up; but it was not with the inspired light of old; it was rather with the flush of wine which quickly removed all traces of tears. Conversation became more animated; words flew about like arrows. Foolish stories were told; each one spoke of projected statues or paintings. In turn Benedict was questioned as to his.

"Ah!" said Lionel, "he has no choice—the subject is given him."

"By whom—a banker?" asked one. "Better than that."

"A prince?" "No; a king called Government."

"What is it?" asked a dozen voices. "Hylas and the Nymphs."

"Hylas is luck!" cried they. "You do not know him; he refuses."

"Bah!" "He has sworn to make Madonnas in perpetuity."

"Take care, my good fellow," said one; "that is dangerous."

"In what way?" "To be too fond of draperies. It seems as if you find it easier to dress a lay figure than to reproduce nature."

"No," said Benedict, feeling bound to deny his convictions; "it is because I have too much respect for art to turn it to base uses."

"Bah then you would suppress the best creations of Michael Angelo, and burn Raphael's 'Triumph of Galilee'! Art for art's sake, my boy. A fig for those who shield themselves under a pretence of morality. I could understand your scruples if you were about to marry; but as I hear that is all over, there will be no one to criticise your work, and you need not fear to offend the queen-like conscience of a pretty young girl. To refuse a government order! It is an unheard-of thing."

"Perhaps, sir," said a critic, "you have some idea of reforming society, and remodeling it according to your notion. You will never succeed. To keep the favor of the multitude, go with it. What harm would there be in modelling the Nymphs and the youth Hylas, as depicted in the fable? You

have proved that religion has power to inspire you. Show us now what poetry, the *theogony* of Greece, can gain from your chisel."

"To the fountain of the Nymphs," said Lionel, raising his glass.

Benedict was silent. His neighbor filled his glass. "Empty," said he. "You are free to do as you wish. They will call you a devotee."

Benedict touched glasses with his neighbor. "To art!" cried he, under whatsoever form it be. "To art, whose love never deceives us, and who makes of us what we are, and will make us immortal."

"Gildas now raised his glass, and sang some verses in a ringing voice."

"Bravo, bravo!" cried the young men. Lionel filled the poet's glass.

"The second verse," said he, and the poet improvised a second.

"That is too melancholy," said a voice. And the poet began a third and last stanza, treating of the sublimity of art, and the immortality which it purchases.

This was followed by an outburst of enthusiasm. The poet's hand was warmly shaken, and he was congratulated on his efforts.

Conversation then began to change its tone. Bottles and decanters were emptied with astonishing rapidity; the guests raised their voices, and some became very much affected. The journalists registered in their note-books the names of Presault, the ideal sculptor. The mirth became boisterous; they all talked together in different keys and on different subjects. An amateur, seating himself at the piano, played the "Marche aux Flambeaux," while the artists, half tipsy, took a dish, a chandelier, or a lamp, and walked in procession around the room. Others threw themselves down on sofas to smoke, and the poet began a discourse on the "Visions of Opium."

Heads grew muddled, words inaudible, and soon half the company were asleep. Before they left the studio a servant opened the shutters. It was broad daylight. Each one rose, stretched himself, passed his hands through his dishevelled hair, glanced at his disordered clothing, at the remnants of the feast, and, lighting fresh cigars, went away, thanking Lionel for his royal banquet.

"Stay," said Lionel to Benedict. The young sculptor paused.

"Are you tired?" said the painter. "No," said the other. "Do you feel better?"

"I have less contempt for others and less esteem for myself," said Benedict. "That is not bad. Do you feel like working?"

"I? I have not an idea in my mind." "So much the better. We will rest together. I will dispose of this evening."

"Where will you take me?" "To the theatre."

"To hear some fashionable craze?" "Exactly."

"So you want to kill my soul?" "To kill the worm which is gnawing at it."

"Can you be certain, Lionel, that the soul will survive?" "Its only use just now is to make you suffer."

"Just now—yes; but once it was all my joy and strength."

"Once is far off, Benedict."

"Yes; and Sabine will never be my wife. As you will, I will stay. Take me where you please."

For a week Lionel continued what he called his saving of Benedict. He hurried him from pleasure to pleasure, varying them and inventing new ones with a sort of genius. At first Benedict was wearied and disgusted; then he began to find the pleasures less repulsive, and, as they gave him forgetfulness, he ended by craving them.

One morning, however, he said to Lionel, whose apartments he now shared, "Have you any modelling wax here?"

"I think so. Liddor began his group of Centaurs—a piece of idiosyncy. Use the Centaurs for whatever you want."

Benedict sat down at the table and began to model. Meanwhile Lionel painted on his *Dejanire*. Both were silent, each absorbed in his work. At length the waning day, with its darkness, warned them that their task had been already too far prolonged. Lionel threw aside his brush, and stepped back to judge of the effect of his work. He fixed a mirror in the proper position to show the canvas. Satisfied with his work, he said, rubbing his hands, "The *Dejanire* is the excuse for the Centaurs. That will come. And you?" turning to Benedict.

Benedict did not hear, but continued to model. Lionel leaned over the sculptor's shoulder and watched him. Benedict was just finishing the rough cast of the Fountain of Hylas and the Nymphs.

"Bravo!" said Lionel, with sincere admiration. "It is a great work and will be the beginning of your real fame."

"Perhaps," said the sculptor; adding in a low voice, "something has died within me."

"What is that?" "My conscience," answered Sabine's lover.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GOLDEN CALF.

The fourth floor of the Pomeroy mansion was occupied, as we have said, by the servants and by the Abbe Sulpice. His apartments were so arranged that the first served as antechamber to the second. The antechamber was furnished in straw, the walls covered with dark paper, and in the centre of the room stood a table of black wood loaded with papers. The second was like a monk's cell. A low bed formed the background; a prie-dieu was placed under a handsome crucifix which occupied one of the panels; the third was completely taken up by bookshelves, giving evidence of the abbe's taste for study. A desk full of deeds and manuscripts, a lamp, a sofa for visitors, and a straw chair for the abbe himself completed the furniture.

company with some influential functionary; and, if the Abbe Sulpice showed partiality to any one in the matter of admittance, it was to the most miserable, whose time was naturally most precious. People came from all parts of Paris to see him. Men of the highest rank were often to be met in the antechamber of the Abbe Sulpice; and dignitaries of the Church came to seek counsel of the young priest, whose saintly life placed him so high in public esteem.

Sulpice never felt vain of this influence which he exercised over so many souls. To the poor he simply said, "Suffer patiently." To the rich, "Give of your abundance, and if you have the courage, even make sacrifices in order to give."

One morning the banker, Andre Nicols, presented himself in the antechamber. Whilst the Abbe Sulpice was busy within, consoling, fortifying, advising, the banker passed in review the hapless ones who had come to seek aid of the priest; for all were in some way poor or suffering. Some sought material bread, others food for the soul. Some asked for courage to bear some affliction. Mothers, holding pale and worn children to their famished breasts, asked for alms to keep them from starvation. Young men came for strength and guidance to resist the temptations of life.

The banker having come last was the last to enter the abbe's room. When the young priest recognized him he held out both his hands with the greatest warmth.

"You have come," he said, "as a living reminder of my dead father, who loved you so much."

"Love fully returned to me," said Nicols; "and God is witness that you, your sister, and your unfortunate brother, are equally dear to me."

"What can I do for you?" asked the abbe. "I come in the first place, to make restitution. Thanks to your timely assistance, I passed through a financial crisis. I have come to return you the hundred thousand francs which you placed at my disposal."

"I have no right to refuse it," said the abbe, "was there another heir to my father's fortune; but I want you to promise that, if ever you are in any difficulty, you will apply to me."

"I readily promise," said the banker. "So your affairs have really taken a favorable turn?" said the abbe.

"Yes," replied the banker; "and the present political movement is greatly to my advantage. The war, which has ruined a great many speculators, has thrown an operation in my way by means of which I realized three millions at one stroke."

"Three millions!" cried the abbe. "Yes, three millions," said the banker. "May I ask you a question?" said the abbe.

"Certainly."

"You are fond of money?" "Very fond."

"But you are not avaricious?" "No; for the avaricious love to hoard money. I love to spend it."

"Then you desire to amass a princely fortune by which you can out rival the most luxurious in luxury?"

"I love money," answered Nicols, "because it is the great power of our century; it founds newspapers, buys up the consciences of men, and governs everything."

"Except those who despise it," said the abbe.

"But they are rare," said the banker. "It is strange," said the Abbe Sulpice, "but I seek in vain on your face for any traces of this idolatry of the golden calf. I can find none. I do not believe, if you will allow me to say so, that this thirst after riches is natural to you; it is an excess upon your character. The longer I look at you the more am I convinced that your disposition is generous."

"You may be right," said Nicols; "but, as you know, habit becomes a second nature. My father, who was born rich, was ruined by the failure of a correspondent. I was then seventeen—just at the age when the goods of fortune seem most enviable—and I felt the loss of my father's money bitterly. He did not long survive his misfortune, and his last advice to me, with his dying breath, was to give up all the pleasures of youth, and that enjoyment I so much craved, in order that I might make a second fortune." Nicols said he; the Dufrenois have a daughter, whose dowry will be a million. She is ten years old; you are seventeen. Our late reverses will not prevent Dufrenois from giving you his daughter. I have arranged everything for your happiness. Therefore let all your dreams, hopes, and aspirations tend towards that one goal of wealth. The first million, I grant you, is always hard to make. When you get one from Dufrenois the rest will come of itself. Repair what was not my fault by my misfortune. Take upon the Bourasse the place which I once occupied. Soverings succeed each other upon the throne of France; the kings of finance alone retain their power." I answered in a way which satisfied him, but when he insisted upon my marriage with Mlle. Dufrenois I hesitated. He saw it, and fixed a piercing glance on me. I hung my head.

"I am dying," said he, "and I want your promise."

"I gave it. He died, feeling that my own and my mother's future were secured. I kept my word. Thenceforth I worked with redoubled ardor, not so much for love of money at first, but in obedience to my father's command. Yet at times I reproached myself, reproached myself bitterly."

Nicols paused, and seemed to hesitate. "The abbe took his hand."

"Speak," said he; "it will do you good to tell me the story of your life. I am a friend."

"But a friend who is rather too austere." The abbe pointed to the crucifix.

"A confessor, if you will," said he. "Not yet. But in whatever way you put it, I know I can depend on your discretion."

A slight pressure of the hand he held was the abbe's sole reply.

"I was young," said the banker, "full of youthful ardor and impetuosity. My mother was a good woman in every sense of the word, but indifferent about religion. She bore my father's name with honor, but she did not teach me what she had never known herself, the inviolable principles of duty which depend upon the keeping of God's commandments. Her advice was good, but never rose above social propriety or personal advantage. She wished me to be happy, but she thought I could be so without that faith which had been disregarded in her own education. I was young, ardent, fiery, impulsive, impatient of all restraint, and more ambitious of pleasure than of fortune. The entire liberty I enjoyed, the want of religious belief, at my twenty years of age, necessarily led me into a dangerous path, and I followed it. Without consulting my mother, forgetful of the promise to my dying father, I became engaged to a beautiful young girl, but who, alas! was poor. She believed in me entirely; when it was time for me to settle in life, when I was twenty-five and Mlle Dufrenois eighteen, my mother reminded me of my father's wish. I asked for time. I had not

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