

he had been dragged up with the teaspoons and the toothpicks on the table. But since the days of the American invasion this had been so common that I had never seriously pondered over the past which overhung my father. However, I was not in the mood to allow him to see my perturbation. I would show him that education had not been wasted on me, and so with the utmost sang-froid I answered him.

"'Father,' I said, "'I am not surprised at what you have just told me, and I will proceed to make good by choosing my profession according to the custom of those good old forbears of the Society out of whom I mean to make my living.'

"So saying I walked over to the bookshelf whereon he kept what he called the Old Family Bible. It had always been somewhat of a puzzle to me, as I had seen him buy it, dirty it, fill it with enough ancestors to show our direct descent from the animals in the Ark, but had never once read it. With a theatrical air I threw it open and laid my finger on a verse. I read, 'I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' "There, father," I said, "I will be one of these."

A hush fell over the apartment of the Marquis at the sound of these words. I fell into the nearest chair, a mental wreck and mechanically helped myself to another drink. Outside could be heard the hum of the traffic, the buzzing of the bees and the song of the birds; but within was silence between the interviewer and the self-confessed fraud.

"So I left my father," continued the Marquis, "and used the £5,000 together with my good education as a working capital. I took a passage to New York and the title of Marquis de Cavalcanti. I took that title for three reasons. First of all because everyone has heard of it; secondly because nobody was likely to be able to place it, Dumas being out of fashion in these days, when only the latest novel is read, and thirdly because everyone knowing of it by heresay and nobody being able to place it, it was extremely unlikely that anyone would care about the responsibility of questioning it. A few hundred dollars judiciously scat-

tered about the newspaper offices, together with my irreproachable manners and clothes, amongst which latter I made use of some extraordinary garments that I had once worn at a fancy dress ball, gave me the entree into New York Society. For the rest, you know that I am engaged to Constantina, the only daughter of Paul, the Pork Butcher, and that the wedding takes place in exactly three-quarters of an hour."

The marquis straightened his legs, yawned, lit another cigarette and looked reproachfully at the empty decanter.

"But, my lord," stammered I. "There is only one question I wish to ask you, why you told me all this?"

"Well, you see, Mr. Martin, I have arranged that you will be unable to make any use of your knowledge till after the ceremony is over. By the way, you must pardon me, but you will be virtually a prisoner for an hour, and I had a desire to let Americans know what great offenders they are. They condone in titles what they punish in the lower strata of society. My father as a burglar of mere family jewels might have spent his days in Sing Sing had he practised over here, but I, his son, am actually enticed to burglarise their flesh and blood together with the family jewels, plate and whatever else goes with the family, just because I happen to choose as my cognomen the title of one of Dumas' most consummate scoundrels. When the 'Sensational Gazette' comes out to-morrow I suppose there will be what you vulgarly call a row, but, *cela ne fait rien*; I have my settlements, mostly in cash already received, and the lady will get what she desires, namely, notoriety. And I don't think that Solomon in all his——. Gee whiz! You must excuse me, Mr. Martin, but I have only left myself ten minutes to dress in. You will be at liberty in exactly one hour. Good-bye, and thanks very much. There's another decanter on the sideboard."

It was nearly twilight before I awoke, and as I stumbled out of the house I heard the newsboys shouting their specials. "All about the wedding in high life." I heard, and from the depths of my heart came the answering refrain: "Well, who the devil can blame him?"