

under pretexts persuaded him to accompany him to Versailles. He was extremely careful to meet the princesses several times during the drive. He went to see them in the evening and was received very coolly, but was asked, as he had expected, with whom he had been driving.

"With my father," he responded.

Great astonishment; explanations followed, and Beaumarchais begged the honor of presenting his father who was in the ante chamber. The old gentleman was admitted, and with paternal pride he sounded the praises of his son. In fact the honest citizen who had expelled his scapegrace son, had learned to hold him in high esteem, and was ready enough to proclaim it. And his son gave him an opportunity soon after.

In order to obtain a patent for nobility, he had, for 85,000 frs., purchased the titular position of Secretary to the King. There was only one obstacle, his father still pursued the business of watchmaker, a vocation incompatible with the high pretensions of his son. Wherefore he persuaded him by letter to retire, and bound himself to honorably support him and his sisters. The father in order not to thwart the aspirations of his son, succeeded, the latter obtained his patent, and the former lived afterward, in company with his four unmarried daughters, as *rentier*, amply supported by the munificence of his son.

We cannot part from so interesting a member of the horological fraternity without following his fortunes, the more so, since he was destined to play a large part in the future events of France.

Beaumarchais, a favorite of fortune in everything he undertook, in his new relation engaged in the sale of arms to America, and other speculations, and soon became a very rich man. Three law suits made him known everywhere, and two theatre pieces raised him to the rank of the most celebrated of French authors. His lawsuits, which he conducted against a high functionary, obtained their great popularity because Beaumarchais skilfully defended himself, and with it, all the rights of citizens heretofore wronged by justice.

In them, he attacked the ancient establishment, the defended and ossified right, the corruption of the administration, the preferences of the higher ranks. The great minds were impelling France to that immense revolution, destined to

change the face of the entire civilized world, and Beaumarchais shook with vigor and energy, in his law documents on the decayed pillars of the temple of justice, the tumbling down of which speedily followed thereby. What he termed *Memoirs*, in which he recounted in a masterly manner his disputes, were illustrious pamphlets against the government, which long ago had become odious to the people. Beaumarchais published them, and his lawsuits became themes of national interest. They exerted such a power that the German poet Goethe dramatized it, and personified M. de Beaumarchais in his drama "Clavigo."

His two theatre pieces scarcely earned him less fame. "The Marriage of Figaro," and the "Barber of Seville," are known to everyone.

The "Marriage of Figaro," was first played in Paris in 1784, and its success was simply immense. Not on account of its special beauties, but of its wit and poetical proclivities. In Figaro, the merry Barber, the everywhere felt democratic idea was reduced for the first time; this servant of the Count Almaviva represented the third estate, the citizenship, which was still regarded as subject by both the nobility and the government, and as inferior in rights, but which was already in ferment, caused by this political and social inferiority. Everything he felt was expressed in this pert and witty Figaro, and laughs were not wanting even in the highest circles. This established before the whole world the moral right of these attacks upon the privileges of the nobility and the principles of social equality were thus sanctioned. The saying of Figaro, were secret thoughts of the people, and silenced all those against whom it was aimed.

The infirmities of existing society were laid bare at once, as if the last shred of deception had been dropped. All ancient authorities, the existence of which, simply because they were things handed down from the past, was still sanctioned and commanded respect, could be seen tumbling together in a miserable manner, and became a laughing stock, whereby their respect was lost forever. If there was a rotten concern, Beaumarchais aimed a shaft of derision thereat, and it never failed its mark. Before this, letters had been written lacking signatures, he affixed them. He was another Aristophanes, who pointed with his finger at

what he assailed, and at the same time he had been a successful aspirant for that nobility himself.

It is remarkable that this piece, which the French government critic would not permit, was performed at the special command of Marie Antoinette. Beaumarchais was greatly liked by her, as well as by the King, and both did naturally not dream that they were loading a cannon with Figaro the charge of which should hit themselves. The right of the nobility to all the preferments in the State could not be derided better than by the words of Figaro, "because he had taken the trouble to be born."

Beaumarchais was the witty genius who predicted the Revolution as an inevitable fact. When it entered into the arena of history with an earnest face, and finally played its tragical part, carried away by passion, a genius like that of "Figaro's Marriage," was of no further consequence. He whose works had struck such heavy blows at the old regime, could not escape the Nemesis; to fall with it, as it had carried him upward. In the year 1784, he was the most honored man in France, rich, popular with the citizens, feared by the nobility, and his piece was performed 72 times in succession, calling forth an ever-increasing applause from the public, until he himself said: "There is only one madder thing than my piece, and that is its success."

Fifteen years afterward, at the end of the century, the same Beaumarchais died almost unknown, and impoverished, after having been proclaimed the enemy of the people, and barely escaped with his life.—*Jewelers' Circular*.

THE WAY TO WEALTH.

From Poor Richard's Almanac.

We are pleased to present to our readers a reprint of the celebrated maxims and apothegms of Benjamin Franklin, printed in his almanac, which bore the feigned name of Richard Saunders, and hence acquired the title of "Poor Richard's Almanac." Its publication began in the year 1732, and continued twenty-five years. When it was brought to a close a collection of the maxims was published in the last number in an address to the readers, entitled "The Way to Wealth." The admirable digest has been translated into various languages, and is widely known. We reproduce it herewith as follows:—