

"You see, mademoiselle," continued De Maurevert, tranquilly, indicating Raoul by a significant toss of the head, "that is as he always is. Instead of listening he flies into a passion, and instead of receiving thankfully my good-natured advice, he insults and threatens me. But there! I love him in spite of all. Oblige me, Raoul, by allowing me to go on without interrupting me."

"Yes, go on, captain—go on," cried Diane, eagerly.

"Raoul reconciled with the duke, the horizon of our unfortunate friend would be very appreciably cleared. Relieved of the house of Valois, we pass to the house of Lorraine. The Duc d'Epernon hates the Duchesse de Montpensier with all his soul—if the dear nobleman has one—and it would be a great satisfaction to him to checkmate her in her projects. That is the point at which brave Captain de Maurevert would appear on the scene. With that rare ingenuity which distinguishes him, he would speedily find means, while preserving entire right on his side, to rouse the duchess to such fury against him as to treat him with a high hand and drive him from her presence; whereupon, freed from the engagements which at present bind him to Madame la Duchesse de Montpensier, he would proceed straight to the Duc d'Epernon, inform him of my misadventure, and make him the offer of my services. The duke and the captain once in each other's presence, it is impossible that something new, bold, serious, should not come from the contact of two such active and intelligent minds. Monsieur d'Epernon—my impartiality compels me to render him this justice—is a man of resource and action; and, by putting our heads together, he and I, we should certainly finish by triumphing over the house of Lorraine.

"The Marquis de la Tremblais remains to be dealt with. This nobleman, powerful and almost invulnerable as he is in his strong castle of Auvergne, is no more than a simple mortal in Paris. He never goes about except well guarded, it is true; but have not I also a troop of brave fellows at my command? chosen with a care, a tact, a discernment, mademoiselle, of which I alone am capable of exercising! All men reared in theft, broken in to murder, hot in fight, hungry for plunder—all scoundrels who have at least twenty times deserved the gallows, the wheel, and the stake; in a word, the flower of the bandits of Lutetia! I meet the marquis, then, and he looks at me askance; I frown at him and swear—he grows angry; the fight instantly begins; the shops are hastily shut, pistols crack, swords clatter, and—Lucifer exterminate me!—if before five minutes are past, the escort of the Marquis de la Tremblais is not in flight, and their master stretched on the ground as dead as he can be made. Such, dear Sforzi, and you, gentle demoiselle, are my prolecta."

"Humiliate myself before Monsieur Lavayette—that parvenu of yesterday!" cried Raoul. "Never, De Maurevert, never! Mademoiselle," he continued sadly, after a slight pause, "if you truly love me, if you have confidence in me, there is but one course for us to pursue—that of expatriating ourselves. Far from France—in the Low Countries, in Italy, or in Spain—I shall find glorious and loyal employment for my sword. I have left behind me some reputation in Piedmont, and I do not doubt that wherever I may present myself my services would be readily accepted."

"Happy inspiration!" interrupted De Maurevert, in a bantering tone, "to associate the fate of her you love with your present misfortune and the dangers of a long journey—that is what is called exhibiting devotion, giving proof of generosity and unselfishness!"

"Monsieur Sforzi," cried Diane, interposing, so as not to give the young man time to reply to the captain's sarcasms, "I thoroughly appreciate your proposition; it springs from a noble heart, a generous nature; but, alas! it is impossible for me to accept it. Chevalier, when, just now, I heard you refuse with noble indignation to humiliate yourself to Monsieur d'Epernon, my heart bounded with joy! Your pride is truly that of a loyal gentleman. I, also, have my pride, and that pride imperiously commands me not to fly, not to quit France."

"What do you say, mademoiselle?" interrupted De Maurevert.

"I say, captain, that I owe it to the name I bear to continue the struggle in which I am engaged to the end. I say that I have no right to expatriate myself, leaving behind me the Château of Tauve and the Comté of Erlanges in the hands of a coward and a thief. I attach no importance to fortune, and undeserved poverty has nothing in it to make me fear; but, noblesse oblige, captain, and I will not quail before the duties it imposes."

"Mademoiselle," cried Raoul with enthusiasm, "if anything could render you in my eyes greater, more perfect, more adorable, than you are, it would be the virtuous pride you have now exhibited, of which I did not before know you to be possessed. You are right, a thousand times right! Oh! Is it possible that heaven will not reward so much virtue and courage? I have a presentiment that, before long, a brilliant triumph will recompense your heroic resolution."

"I do not believe in presentiments," said De Maurevert; "the word is void of sense. I understand only what is logical. Nevertheless, I declare to you, my dear mademoiselle, that your courage pleases me. I find it wholly out of place; but, I repeat, it pleases me. Let us try and talk a little more reasonably. On what hope, mademoiselle, do you found the success of your project?"

"I trust in heaven, captain, and my wish is immediately to address myself to his Majesty the King of France."

"Alas, mademoiselle!—the saying is, Help yourself and heaven will help you,' to which I add: 'Do not count on the king.' Be sure of it, Diane—I beg your pardon for treating you with such familiarity, but sometimes it really seems to me as if you were my daughter—be sure of it, that from the moment the Due d'Epernon is no longer with us, and when, consequently, we cannot longer look for the countenance of De Joyeuse, the gates of the Louvre will be shut and triply barred against us. The king is a sort of phantom of doubtful sex, who speaks, acts, shows itself, and disappears at the will and pleasure of Messieurs d'Epernon and De Joyeuse. By himself, the king has no existence. He is the reflection of his favorites—nothing more.

"Now, I ask you, would it ever be possible for you, without quitting your reserve, without sacrifice to your dignity, to succeed in gaining the good graces of De Joyeuse and D'Epernon?—I doubt it. These young insolents have such a detestable opinion of women, that they would never understand the nobleness of your solicitations, the sanctity of your proceedings; they would only see in you an ambitious young girl, and heaven only knows at what point their impudent pretensions might stop. Besides these noblemen, there is the queen, and the queen-mother: the first, wrapped up in her devotions, would never consent to protect a young girl professing the so-called reformed religion. As regards the second—that is to say, Madame Catherine, it is altogether different; she would willingly aid you with her immense credit, fervent Catholique as she is—if she had anything to gain by so doing! Undertake to detach some powerful Huguenot chief from his party, or instill into her the idea of some dark and profitable treason, and then she will help you warmly. But except on these conditions, you have nothing to expect from her. You see, my gentle Diane, there is absolutely no ground for your presentiments."

A long silence followed these extremely discouraging remarks. It was Sforzi who was the first to continue the conversation.

"Mademoiselle Diane," he cried, "the captain is right. It is not possible for you to set foot within that wild-beast lair called the Louvre; but where you cannot go I can go. Trust your interests to me—give me full power, and I swear before heaven that justice shall be done to you! I do not believe in all that De Maurevert has told us as to the nullity and powerlessness of his majesty. The glorious title of a king is so great, so divine, as to place those who bear it high above humanity! That Henry III. has his weaknesses is, alas! only too certain; but I remain none the less convinced that there are times when the man disappears before the majesty. The king has had, and still has, to suffer much from the insolence, pretension, and pride of the nobles of his kingdom. I feel sure that my complaints will awaken in him the sentiment of his wounded dignity, and find an echo in his heart! I beseech you, Diane, not to attempt anything yourself until I have failed."

"By Monsieur Cicero!" cried De Maurevert—"you have now expressed yourself with a fire that advantageously replaces eloquence! After all, who knows?—have I not often seen the recklessness of youth succeed when the experience of ripe age could do nothing? Try, Raoul, try. Only—what steps are you going to take to reach the king?"

"I have a means, captain."

"Aha!—let us see it."

"I request on the contrary, your permission to keep it secret."

"It is a very bad means, then?"

"That I do not know. If it is a good means, it will not become better by my imparting it to you; if doubtful, you would only discourage me by adverse criticism, and thus render it still less efficacious. I prefer, therefore, to keep it to myself."

"Faith, that is not badly reasoned, for a young man!" said De Maurevert. "And when, dear Raoul, do you propose to see the king?"

"To-morrow, captain."

(To be continued.)

HOW MY GRANDMOTHER LOST A DAY.

When my grandfather died, my grandmother, finding her house too large as well as too expensive to maintain, determined on leaving it; and, with that view, commenced seeking for a residence, smaller and more suitable, a little out of town. Suburb after suburb was searched, till at last her fancy rested on an old-fashioned red brick house in a quiet neighborhood."

The house itself was, perhaps, rather more extensive than she cared for; but it had one great attraction in her eyes—a large garden at the back, in which, with its shady trees and high walls, she fancied she could walk or sit unobserved by her neighbors.

Thither she prepared to move; but a few weeks' delay was required, owing to the somewhat dilapidated state of the house—it having been untenanted for some time. Accordingly, workmen were sent in, and all that was necessary seemed approaching completion. During this interval, people in the vicinity began to throw out hints about the house—nothing definite, but such as—

"I should not care to live in that house," (A strong emphasis on "that.")

"Is it haunted?" said my grandmother.

"Oh, no."

"Is there a distinguished ghost?"

"Oh, no—at least, I don't think so."

But that was all my ancestral parent could obtain in the way of information. It was said "strange things" had happened to several families who had lived in it: people lost their memory, or forgot the day, or the month, and made curious mistakes. The house had got an "uncanny" name, which perhaps accounted for its being let at a lower rent than it would seem to be really worth.

My grandmother laughed at these idle tales, and said she did not fear. Such things only happened to people of lazy habits and indolent temperaments; and as both she and her sister were, if not altogether strong-minded, at least not easily frightened, she felt no further anxiety on the subject, and proceeded with her preparations for moving, and finally settled in the red brick house. She had considerably reduced her establishment; so the family consisted of my grandmother, my mother—then a little girl of twelve (both my uncles being settled in life, one serving with his regiment in the Peninsula), a maiden sister, and two domestics—Sarah, the cook, and Mistress Betty, the factotum, nursemaid, housemaid, lady's maid, and general tyrant. The household thus literally consisted of females—the men servants having been dispensed with after my grandfather's death.

It was in the autumn that my grandmother took possession of the house, and perfectly satisfied she was with it. In winter it was warm and free from draughts, and, containing all the little et cetera that people desire in their dwellings, proved a very satisfactory residence; so all rumors faded out of her mind. No ghost appeared; no midnight visitant disturbed the equanimity of the in-dwellers of the red-brick house. Winter budded into spring, spring blossomed into summer, and nothing occurred to decrease my grandmother's satisfaction in the choice of her new abode.

One Friday came, as Fridays have a way of coming towards the end of the week, when my grandmother and great-aunt decided to go into town for a day's shopping. So they went, making a long day of it, and returning rather tired. Before retiring to rest that night, they had a grand council of war with Betty, without whom no family affair ever could be settled. Woe betide any member of the household who dared to overlook Betty's right to be consulted on every point, from a spring cleaning downwards.

The weather was fine, my aunt said, and next morning they would have a clear-starching. Now, a clear-starching was a real business in every respectable family in the early part of the present century, when our ancestresses delighted in ruffles to their elbows, and ruffs to their necks, not to speak of the responsibility of "getting up" those edificial caps under which they strove to conceal nature's best gift to a woman—a good head of hair. Besides all this, there were those wonderful net or muslin kerchiefs which were so generally affected by the dames of that period. So you will see that a clear-starching was a business not to be lightly undertaken, or without due consideration as regards weather, sunshine, and such necessary adjuncts. It was only done once or twice a year, as in those days, before "Glenfield's Patent" was invented, starch was an expensive commodity. A heavy tax was put on it during the war, when things were at famine prices, to prevent the too rapid consumption of flour, and many cheaper things were used as substitutes by those who could not make up their minds to do without.

The point of the next day's clear-starching being settled, a'so the question of some new strings to be put to their Sunday bonnets—or hats, as they were called in those days—my grandmother, her sister, and the rest of the household retired to rest.

The morrow came, and with it the requisite sunshine. So, after breakfast, Mistress Betty descended to the garden to commence operations, my great-aunt intending to overlook and assist her, as ladies of that period were not above seeing after some few of their own concerns. I ought here to say something of my great-aunt, who was the most energetic and active-minded person I ever knew, and who was the presiding genius of my grandmother's household the seventy years of her life; but I must hasten on with my chronicle. When all was put en train below, my great-aunt returned to the drawing-room, where she found my grandmother gazing steadily out of window, and looking rather puzzled.

"I cannot make it out," she said; "but the streets appear so unusually quiet and still—no carts, no carriages, few passers-by; and what there are all walking so gr. vely."

Presently the bells of the neighboring church began to ring.

"A fire!" said my great-aunt.

"A funeral!" said her sister.

For this was in the Georgian era, when daily services were ignored, and the rubric a dead letter. Had my beloved ancestresses lived today, the church bell on Saturday night might not have proved so startling. Presently a family passed by in mourning.

"I knew it was a funeral," said my grandmother, triumphantly.

"A soldier's funeral, then," said my great-aunt, not to be outdone, as a drum was heard, by no means muffled, and some companies of soldiers, headed by their officers, marched past.

At this moment Sarah appeared from the lower regions, with indignation depicted on her countenance.

"Well, ma'am, as never I saw the likes.

Here's eleven o'clock, and neither the butcher, nor the baker, nor the grocer has been near us; and this Saturday, too! Them tradespeople is just unbearable—so they are—never to come this morning for the week's orders."

My grandmother, the gentlest of matrons, attempted to mollify her angry cuisinière, and finally persuaded her to issue forth, basket on arm, to see what had become of "them tradespeople."

She returned rather quickly, more irate than ever.

All the shops were shut, and she could get in nowhere; and when she had asked what was the matter, she was only answered by the Jeers of the small boys.

"And you must know, ma'am," continued she "that they said I was no better than a heathen, to be out shopping on a Sunday."

Scarcely had the infuriated Sarah finished her speech, when Betsy arrived from the garden, her stout arms much bestroked, "clearing" a lace cap of my grandmother, with loud claps between her red palms.

"I can't stand it any longer, ma'am," quoth the female Nero. "Mrs. Smith's Mary, next door, has been laughing at me, and saying we are pretty kind of Christians to be working like that on the Sabbath. I gave her as good as I got, though; but Mr. Smith puts his head out of window, and says, 'My good girl, don't be making such a noise there, as the neighbors like their Sunday quiet'"

My grandmother looked astagh, and let the bonnet, on which she was arranging the new ribbons, fall from her hand.

There was a pretty commotion in that orderly and Sabbatarian household; and it was not until evening they could be quite persuaded of what really was the case—that they had entirely lost Saturday, and that what they thought was a funeral was only the troops from the neighboring barracks marching to service along with the respectable folks of the "quarter."

My grandmother felt rather ashamed of the whole transaction; but became less so when, a few weeks afterwards, a friend from a distant county told her that the very same thing had happened to some relations of his, who had occupied the red brick house some years before.

Subsequently, it was found that the much-abused butcher, baker, and grocer had called on the Saturday, but had rung and knocked in vain; and, seeing the smokeless chimneys and closed shutters, had concluded that the family had suddenly gone from home.

Had they all slept, or had they become totally oblivious for thirty-six hours—*qui sait?* It never was unravelled.

My grandmother lived many years afterwards in the same house, and finally died there; but nothing of the kind ever occurred again. I have often passed the red brick house when a child, but never without calling to mind Mistress Betty's clear starching, and how my grandmother lost a day.

A POINT FOR PIANISTS.

The *Vox Humana*, a musical publication, shows that a pretty experiment in acoustics is within the reach of all. Every tone of a piano string is composed of four or more different sounds. They seem to be but one, and it is difficult to realize that four or more distinct and separate notes are merged in the sound we hear. A very keen ear can resolve the notes, and hear one and sometimes two of the added tones that accompany the lowest tone. The lowest tone is very much louder than the rest, and gives the name to the note or group of notes. These added tones that accompany every note of the piano, are known as over tones. Their existence was only discovered a few years ago, and at first it was very hard to prove that they were really present in every note we hear from a piano string. This is now so well understood that it no longer attracts attention, and is treated as one of the common scientific facts known to everybody. Moreover, the number and power of these over tones determine the character or quality of every musical sound we hear, whether it be from voice or instrument. To prove the existence of these unnoticed, and yet audible over tones the following experiment may be tried: Touch gently the notes C, E, and G, one octave above middle (two foot) C, and press the keys down till all the sound has died away. Then, while these keys are held down, strike the C below (two foot C) one quick, hard blow. The damper will at once fall, and the sound will stop abruptly. At the same instant will be heard a low soft chord from the piano. The keys are not struck, and yet the piano sounds plainly. Lift the fingers, and the chord will stop at once. Try the experiment over, and the same result will follow every time. The fingers pressed on the three notes do not give the chord, and yet the strings sound. The explanation is easily found. The middle C had all the three notes in it. They were present as over tones. The three strings corresponding to these over tones, were free to sound as the dampers were raised, and out of sympathy with the over tones they too sounded and gave the same notes. So we see that these over tones really exist in what we call the one note of the C string. Were they absent, we should quickly notice the changed character of the note, and we should be surprised at the thinness and cloying sweetness of a single really pure note without over tones. A note without over tones would be characterless, tiresome and insipid. Well supplied with them, it is clangy, individual and interesting.