

Gaston was welcome to stay in his house till something turned up: he would be lonely now without Sophia, and wanted somebody to help in the reformation of the mujik, which he intended to begin without delay. Gaston made all suitable acknowledgments for his hospitable offer, hinted his own unfitness to assist in the revision of the mujik's morals, and added in a penitential tone, that he considered the post of second-valet quite sufficient for his deserts; but as there were probabilities of preferment to come, he requested the councillor to see that mademoiselle, his daughter, did not recognise him in the Grodzoff palace. The old man was much edified by the present humility and future prospects of his young friend. The second-valet's place was speedily obtained. Sophia was duly warned to know nothing of the new servant; and under the name of Jacques le Noir, Gaston entered on his humble duties.

The office of second-valet was not a sinecure in the household of her excellency. Like most of the great ladies of that age, half the duties of her toilet, and all her confidential errands, were done by the gentlemen of the chamber, which courtly term included the above-mentioned Jacques and his commander, an Italian, named Paulo, who had been first-valet ever since the princess became a widow. Paulo did nothing but eat spiced macaroni and prepare it for himself in a private kitchen, which he had constructed behind his suit of apartments. He also kept the keys of her highness's shoe-room, and all the other rooms in which the treasures of her wardrobe were laid up, and a very strict eye over the second-valet, who was expected never to go out but when sent on an errand—then to make no delay in returning; to attend the bells of the princess, her three ladies-in-waiting, her two hair-dressers, her secretary, and, chief of all, Paulo, who liberally scolded him when there was an opportunity. Of these rites and duties the *roi-disant* Jacques had a full allowance. The eight bells rang him up at all hours. The ringers sent him to every corner of St. Petersburg in all weathers, and no city in Europe enjoys such a variety of the undoubtedly bad. He ate with the serfs, he slept above the horses. The housekeeper had to get presents for not finding fault with him; the laundress tore his shirts; Paulo called him names in Italian, French, and Russ; and the entire household laughed at him for having white hands and expecting washed dishes. It was not a congenial life for a young man fond of elegance, and anxious to be somebody; but Gaston kept his post for almost six months, with the self-devotion and endurance of a Jesuit missionary; yet not the smallest thread of the Grodzoff secret could he unravel. If Paulo had any good graces to be gained, they were beyond the reach of his Gallic subordinate. All the French servants were new, and could tell nothing. The secretary, though gracious to a countryman, had been long in Russia, and spoke little except in praise of his employer. All the maids were Russians from the princess's estates, and all Gaston's efforts failed to make an impression on any of their hearts. The errands they sent him were of the most commonplace and overt description; indeed, there was nothing strange about the palace but that inexplicable tale. Like other great Russian houses of the period, its chief apartments were all magnificence, its inferior ones given up to dirt and squalor. There was a constant succession of festivities, and no lack of card-tables, at which he got an occasional view of the princess, conspicuous by the magnitude of her hoop, her diamonds, and her immovable face of the north. Sometimes, too, he caught sight of Sophia, richly dressed, attended by waiting-women and pages, keeping well in mind the charge against recognition, yet now and then looking as if she had not forgotten him, too.

It was marvellous that the poor girl's head was not turned by her sudden transition from the old house with all the work to do, the mujik to keep in order, and the state-councillor in good temper; but Sophia kept her balance, and seemed to make her footing sure. At the end of the first month, the princess was boasting of the accomplishments her young protégée had acquired from the half-score of masters and mistresses retained for that purpose. Before a second had expired, all her highness's circle voted Sophia brilliant; and with a Frenchman's perception of such matters, the second-valet at length discovered that Feodor Baselovich, one of the Orloff family, was about to offer his hand and fortune, lands and peasants, at the shrine of her charms.

That was a discovery for which he had not bargained; but common report soon assured him of its reality. The wealth and rank of young Baselovich would have made him a welcome suitor to the best families of St. Petersburg. Like most of his line, he was tall and handsome. The princess openly favoured his suit, the state-councillor concurred in the background he was expected to occupy, and everybody agreed that the bride-elect must be well inclined if she were in her senses. Gaston had observed her looking absent and thoughtful, as if balancing something in her mind. Was it for this he had become a second-valet, answered Russian bells, and abstained from kicking Paulo? The thought was sufficient to send a less sensitive subject upon the road to self-destruction. Gaston was nearing the borders of that romantic land one evening late in the St. Petersburg winter, when the princess had given her last ball before Lent. From a corner in the picture-gallery, where he stood as if in waiting, he could see through the open doors of the ball-room Sophia dancing the *minuet de la cour* with the young scion of the Orloff line. The lady was gay with frills of Flanders lace and pendants of pearl; the gentleman was grand in his uniform as a colonel of hussars. A consciousness of their approaching alliance seemed to pervade the company; the princess smiled graciously on the pair; it was afterwards remembered that her highness said she hoped Providence would permit her to send one bride from the Grodzoff palace; and Gaston, like other disappointed men, was making severe reflections on the fickleness, vanity, and mercenary mind of the sex, when Paulo's bell recalled him to his humble duties. He was received at the foot of the back-stairs with the usual volley of names. A carrier from the south had just arrived, bringing, among sundry packages of less value, two small cases of polished ebony, which Gaston was commanded to place on the toilets of their owners—one was addressed to the princess, and the other to Mademoiselle Petrova. Both were labelled '*l'eau d'or*,' and Gaston's Versailles education made him acquainted at least with the repute of that article. In it the rank and fashion of those days put faith as a specific against all their dreaded ills, the loss of spirits, the decay of charms, and a thousand other evils quite as serious. Its composition was kept a profound secret by the manufacturing chemists. It was believed to be made only in Paris somewhere about the Sorbonne, and if not extracted from the precious metal, it cost nearly its weight in gold; to the

vulgar eye, however, there was nothing remarkable about it but a clear tasteless fluid, thicker than common water, which, according to the invariable direction on the label, was to be drunk up the moment it was opened.

It was a long way up to the dressing-rooms of the princess and her protégée: they were situated in the eastern wing of the palace, and at the opposite ends of a long corridor. As Gaston went up with the cases and his lantern into the darkness and silence of the upper floors, which the sounds of the festival scarcely reached, strange thoughts came over him. Why were the cases so distinctly addressed, and forwarded from Paris? Was he carrying to Sophia's toilet a passport to the vaults of our Lady of Kazan? Perhaps she meant to marry young Baselovich? Well, she had made him no promise, and he would disappoint the princess. Paulo's bell rang till the whole palace could hear it. He shouted on his lagging vassal, and cursed him in his three languages, for the carrier's bringings were all to be put away; but in her highness's own magnificent dressing-room, inlaid with mirrors, and hung with rose-coloured damask, the cards of address were removed, skilfully transferred so as to leave no trace of tampering, and the exchanged cases deposited on each lady's toilet.

The ball was not over till five in the morning. Her Highness and the whole household retired soon after. There were yet some hours till the breaking of the Russian day, but it was long till Gaston slept; his attic above the horses had never seemed so full of moaning wind and creaking rafters; and when he did sleep at last, it was to dream that he was following Sophia's funeral arm-in-arm with Clozoff, who rehearsed to him the whole history of the seven-and-twenty girls as they went. Suddenly, his slumbers were broken by a sound of loud and mingled cries. It was broad day, but the whole palace seemed to be turning upside down; there were hurrying feet and wild lamentations, for her Siberian maid, the oldest and most favoured, who always drew the princess's curtains, had found her highness seated at her toilet, as the maids had left her duly dressed for the night in her satin pinner and lace lapets, but stone-dead, and nothing to account for the fact—only an empty phial, labelled '*l'eau d'or*,' lay on the carpet at her feet.

There was a great gathering of her highness's family, and a strict investigation commenced, but not proceeded with; for the same day a stranger presented himself at the gate of the Hermitage, craving an audience of her majesty's private secretary, by whom he was conducted through one of the secret corridors to the imperial closet. He was seen to leave the palace within an hour; immediately after the Grodzoff family received certain intimations, according to which it was publicly announced that the princess had died from a stroke of apoplexy; that Sophia Petrova was heiress of her Finland estates; that the rest of the property should pass to the male heirs; but whoever the young lady married must take the name and arms of Grodzoff. After her highness had been laid with becoming pomp beside her twenty-seven protégées, the fashionables of St. Petersburg mourned over the shutting-up of her palace for some time; but it was opened again, though with reduced splendour; for Sophia, the heiress, married a French nobleman, who appeared at court as the Marquis de Thienville, sent on a secret embassy from Versailles. The princess's papers and all the water of gold which could be found were carried off at an early stage of the business by a messenger from the Hermitage. Among the former were the title-deeds of the newly purchased estate on the Vistula, which once more reverted to the crown; and also a prediction, written in the old Slavonic language of Russia, by one who called himself Vlademer of Kioff, setting forth that her highness would never die except by a girl of her family, who should inherit her wealth. All enquiries failed to discover either the prophet or the chemist with whom her highness had dealt; nor did time or chance throw any further light on the doings of that singular and most unscrupulous lady, who is still remembered in the traditional gossip of St. Petersburg by the equivocal title of "The Killing Princess."

THE EDUCATION OF DAUGHTERS.

In these days, when so much is said, both justly and unjustly, in regard to the useless education and frivolous lives of many of our young women, the careful and judicious mother, in every station of life, will think seriously how she can best train her young daughters to a practical knowledge of those things which will most contribute to their future usefulness and happiness. Mental and moral education, knowledge of books, and accomplishments, of household duties, and of the world at large, are to be combined in such proportions as circumstances render suitable and possible. A young girl may have a special taste or capacity, which she should be encouraged to develop, but not to the exclusion of all other branches of education. And though, while under the mother's eye, perfectness may not be attained in any department, a wise training of the powers will tend towards a harmonious and happy development of character and abilities in after life, as circumstances shall require. No mother, therefore, should excuse herself from giving her daughters suitable instruction in those household duties which so much affect the comfort of a family. Whatever position in society she may occupy, the knowledge thus gained, and the imperceptible influence on the character, not merely of the knowledge itself, but of the early impressions of its importance, are genuinely valuable. It is by no means necessary to keep your daughter in the kitchen half the time to accomplish these results; nor is it essential that she should be skilled on her marriage day in every kind of cookery, and be able to get up a first-class dinner on short notice. This should not be expected any more than that she should go to the blackboard and unerringly demonstrate the forty-seventh proposition of Euclid. If the elements of domestic knowledge are thoroughly mastered, and a suitable amount of practice given in important details, the intelligent girl will know how to order her household aright when the proper time comes, and to put her own hand to labour if there be occasion.

In regard to this matter, mothers who are themselves genuinely interested in the proper management of their own households, will find but little trouble if they could avail themselves of the natural imitativeness of children. The little ones like to be useful if they see others about them useful; they like to follow the mother about the house under pretence of helping, though often hindering her; they enjoy using their little hands about something that older people do; they like, in general, to work, until false notions are instilled into their minds. We know a little girl of six years—and there are many others in quiet homes all over the country

who exhibit similar tastes—who already bids fair to be the nicest little housekeeper possible. Ever since she has been old enough to understand her mission—three years at least!—she has been eager to do what she fancies is useful to others. She takes her tiny duster and flourishes it over the chairs and sofas with positive results. After breakfast she demurely gathers up the teaspoons from the table, and thinks it very nice to wipe them on the soft cloth after they are washed; nothing suits her better than to make some miniature pies, and have them actually put upon the dinner table; with her little broom she forestalls the servant, and sweeps down the front-door steps before breakfast in the morning. She puts a particular room in order every day, and quite of her own accord has assumed so much the care of her father's wardrobe that her mother will gradually be supplanted in that duty. "Papa, you've put on the wrong cravat," she seriously says some morning; "that's your best one." She reminds him to put on a clean collar and wristbands; says, "Why, papa, you haven't brushed your hat," and herself seizes his beaver and plies the brush. She seems to consider herself responsible for his neat personal appearance. Almost all little girls delight to have some small household duty committed to their care; and if this disposition should be fostered, instead of being discouraged, as it often is, on the ground that they cannot do the thing so well as an older person, they would, with rare exceptions, grow up with sufficient knowledge of, and interest in, these home matters, about which, nowadays, there is so much complaint that young ladies know little and care less.

The Hindoos, more particularly the Brahmins, certainly have a natural ability for making grammars and dictionaries. From a notice in the *Times of India* of a new English-Mahratti Lexicon, by Baba Hadmanji, of Poona, it would appear that in it he has, in an introduction, given lists of all the English words derived from the Greek, Latin, Norman-French, Anglo-Saxon, and Danish, and collected in groups all the English words derived from the same root, placing first what may be called the head of the family or group, and arranging under it the other derivatives in alphabetical order. In England we still have to search through many books, and rare ones, such as the "Transactions of the Philological Society," for all this information, brought together in a popular manner by this Mahratta Brahmin. His dedication is characteristically "Unto God, the only Wise;" for whatever a Hindoo does it is, in intention at least, to the glory of his God; a Hindoo caddy before mounting the box and taking ruins and whip in hand, always first formally prays that his driving may be to the glory of his God. Baba Hadmanji, it would seem, is a "gentle convertite" to Protestantism.

OLD CÆSAR AND THE ANGEL.—There used to be a pious old negro in Boston named Cæsar, and he was in the habit of praying so loudly as to be heard by many of the neighbors. On retiring for the night his petition invariably was: "Lord, send dy angel for ole Cæsar—ole Cæsar always ready." One evening two of his neighbors, good men, but sometimes bored by his "style," thought they would try him on. They took position at his door—and when the usual petition was made that "the Lord would send the angel," ole Cæsar being always ready, they knocked loudly at the door.

"Who dar?" said the old darkey.

"The angel of the Lord, come for old Cæsar," was the reply.

Out went the light, a scrambling into bed was heard, and then, in a trembling voice, that same old uncle said:

"Go way, dar! go way! Old Cæsar been dead dis ten years!"

A strange story comes from Berlin. A ballet-dancer of the name of R—, belonging to the Royal Opera of Berlin, had got into a quarrel with the Graf von S—, an officer in the Royal Guard, and had insulted his adversary in the presence of several of the officers of the Guard. But the officer was much too fine a gentleman to fight a man so much beneath him in social standing as a ballet-dancer. A duel, if it can so be called, was accordingly agreed on, by the terms of which the first of the two opponents who was seen without a glove on his left hand was to kill himself. It may easily be imagined that for several days neither Count von S—nor R— took off their left-hand gloves either by night or day. At last the unfortunate R— having gone out for a walk with a young lady to whom he was engaged to be married, his companion teased him so much about his obstinacy in keeping his glove on that in a fatal moment he bared his hand. Just then Count von S—passed, accompanied by two friends, and immediately called their attention to the fact that R—had forfeited his life. The same evening the unfortunate dancer shot himself through the heart, in accordance with the conditions agreed upon.

King William of Prussia is not lavish on personal apparel. His valet recently gave him a hint by substituting a new coat for one which he had worn two or three years longer than he ought, and was thereupon summoned to the royal presence. "Where is my old coat, Jean?" "I have taken it away, your Majesty; it is no longer fit to be worn." "What are you going to do with it, Jean?" "I believe I am going to sell it." "How much do you think you will get for it?" This was hard to answer, for no old clo' Jew in the world would have given a shilling for the old coat. Jean, therefore, hesitated a moment, and then answered: "I believe I shall get about a dollar for it, your Majesty." The king took his pocket-book from the table, opened it, and handed Jean a dollar. "Here is your dollar, Jean," said he. "That coat is so comfortable; bring it back to me; I want it yet."

A new cotillon figure has been inaugurated at a Parisian ball. Two gentlemen place themselves before a lady, one of them holding a hat. She is presented with two balls bearing the words "Yes" and "No." If she votes "Yes," she retains the services of her partner; if she votes "No," it is a sign that her choice has fallen on the other. This is called the *plebiscite*.

A GOON REASON.—A country laird, who had lately been elevated to the office of a county magistrate, meeting the Rev. Mr. Thom, of Govau, on horseback, attempted jocularly by remarking that he was more ambitious than his Master, who was content to ride upon an ass. "They canna be gotten noo," said Mr. Thom, "for they're a' made justices o' the peace."

THE RETORT INQUISITIVE.—Dr. Hill, an Edinburgh professor of the last century, met in the suburbs of the city an inoffensive creature, who was generally regarded as an imbecile. Somewhat irritated by the creature's intrusion on the privacy of his walk, Dr. Hill said to him, "How long, Tom, may one live without brains?" "I dinna ken," said Tom; "how long hae ye lived yerseel?"