

Marguerite began to fear that her husband had lost his senses, and could scarcely stammer out :

"Why—what is the matter with thee, Maurice?"

"Ah! thou knowest nothing of the happy inspiration which led me to the Golden Sun last week. I was rather ashamed of it at the time, 'tis true, and therefore I have never mentioned it; aye, and if I had failed, never would! Dost thou remember that worthy fellow George Arnold, who was in our village some days since?"

"If that had the lottery tickets for sale—was it not?"

"The same! Well! I bought thirty of his tickets."

"Thou!" cried Marguerite, in amazement.

"Yes, I!" returned her husband, "and 'tis well I did so, for the numbers I chose belong to the series that has just been drawn at Frankfort."

"And that series is——?"

"The twelfth!"

At these words, Dame Wagner fell back in her chair, pale, trembling, and stupified; and it was some time before the cares of her daughter and of Catherine Keller, who had been summoned by her husband, restored her to consciousness.

"Pardon me, Maurice!" she said, as soon as she found utterance. "Unknown to thee, I also visited George Arnold; I also yielded to the desire of becoming rich and noble, and I also have in my possession thirty tickets of the twelfth series."

This avowal, the meaning of which was scarce understood by Clara, overwhelmed Maurice with astonishment, and old Catherine with chagrin.

"Our chance of good fortune, then," said Wagner, "is twice as great as I thought it. We have two-thirds of the winning series, and can scarcely fail of success. Yes, Marguerite! either, as I told thee at first, I will make thee a great lady, or thou wilt make me a rich gentleman. Whichever of us luck may favour, we will equally enjoy our good fortune, or rather that of our child."

"Yes!" said Dame Wagner, "should I gain, poor Clara's happiness is secured."

"And the same, should I be successful," rejoined Maurice; "she will then, as the bride of Albert de Vorn, be one of the highest ladies in the land."

"Say rather, Maurice! that she will then have enough of riches and honour, to share with some one poorer than herself, and may therefore espouse Ulric Müller."

"I will never permit it," cried the father.

"And I," rejoined the mother, "will only give up the castle to her, on condition that she shall choose her own husband."

"If I should make her a baroness, she must promise to obey me."

"But the castle is gained with my earnings."

"No, I have acquired it with mine."

"Thou dost not love thy daughter."

"I will not allow her to misally herself."

"Maurice! it is not right to forget what we have been."

"Marguerite! it is wrong to forget what we are."

The dispute grew warm; reproach succeeded to argument, and their old neighbour neglected no opportunity of stirring up the fire.

"Yes!" whispered she to the husband, "stand by your rights, and show proper energy. The alliance which you propose is the only one which should be entertained for a moment, for it is the husband who should bring a title to the wife, and not the wife to the husband. The united fortunes of Albert and Clara will form a magnificent patrimony, and you may yet, perhaps, see your grandchildren princes."

"Be firm, my good Marguerite!" she muttered in the ear of the wife, "do not give up the poor girl's rights. It is the least they can allow us poor women, that when we have a castle to bestow, we should give our hearts along with it."

Maurice and Marguerite, thus incited, grew into hotter debate; but they were checked by a few words of common sense from Clara, pronounced in an accent rather of hope than of fear.

"But should neither of you win?"

This new view of the question calmed the minds of the two disputants, and reminded them that they had gone rather far in disposing of property, the ownership of which was not yet determined.

They finally agreed, that if the winning ticket should be one of the first thirty numbers,—those purchased by Maurice,—Clara should accept the hand of Albert de Vorn; if, on the other hand, the lot should fall on one of the succeeding thirty numbers,—belonging to Marguerite,—Ulric should be their daughter's spouse, always provided they could find him out.

That the next few days were passed in the greatest anxiety, need scarcely be said. It was no longer merely a castle, an estate, or a title, that was at stake, but the happiness or misery of Clara's future life.

The eventful day at length arrived, and Maurice himself went to Frankfort, where he waited as patiently as he could, till the hour when the winning ticket was proclaimed.

That hour came, and the number announced was 61.

As we have already mentioned, the tickets purchased by Wagner and his wife had been the first sixty numbers; and the former left Frankfort