

NOT YET.

Not yet, O friend! not yet:
The patient stars
Lean from their lattices, content to wait.
All is illusion till the morning bars
Slip from the levels of the Eastern gate.
Night is too young, O friend! day is too near:
Wait for the day that maketh all things clear—
Not yet, O friend! not yet.

Not yet, O friend! not yet:
All is not true;
All is not ever as it seemeth now:
Soon shall the river take another blue,
Soon does your light upon the mountain brow.
What! Beth dark, O love! bright day will fill;
Wait for thy morning, be it good or ill—
Not yet, O love! not yet.

THE TWO COMEDIANS.

HOW AN ACTOR AND A DIPLOMAT MET AT A
HOTEL AND CHANGED THEIR ROLES.

I.

At the close of the month of July, 1830, a carriage drew up at the door of the Hotel de France, the most fashionable hostelry of Orleans, and a traveller, a man about sixty years of age, but still sprightly and well-preserved, descended and was received with solemn and excessive courtesy by the people of the hotel. He was led to a splendid suite of rooms already prepared for his accommodation by the host, who bowed to the ground before him, murmuring a hundred times, "highness," "prince" and "excellency," and left with three liveried servants in the ante-room ready to fly upon his errands.

An hour later a second carriage clattered up from which stepped a second traveller, also an old man, with a keen and witty face and a distinguished appearance. His valet inquired for the rooms directed to be in readiness and was disdainfully shown two small and indifferently furnished and lighted apartments against the meanness and poverty of which the faithful servant was about to lift up his voice when he was silenced by an imperious gesture from his master.

The "prince" was the actor Potier, and the traveller relegated to the best inn's worst room was only M. de Talleyrand.

II.

In an hour or so the truth as to the real quality of the two guests and the frightful way in which he had mixed them up dawned upon the hotel-keeper, who with tears and genuflections hastened to apologize to the great diplomatist.

"I pardon you," said Talleyrand, extending his crutch in guise of a golden sceptre, "but who is the audacious person who has robbed me of my quarters and my titles?"

"Alas, monseigneur, he robbed you of nothing; I, like a stupid idiot, gave him all. He simply accepted what I gave."

"Be so good, then, as to ask him to return to me my property."

"Your excellency, he insists on retaining it."

"Who is he, pray? Some old diplomatist?"

"No, your highness, but a comedian named Potier. The cursed buffoon replied to me: 'You have showered M. de Talleyrand's honours and titles on me—he is welcome to mine; I intend enjoying my greatness for one day; my name is Prince de Perigord Talleyrand; he can be Potier the actor if he wishes to.'"

"Ha!" said the prince, after a moment's reflection, "that would not be a bad idea. Be so good as to wait upon his excellency and inform that illustrious personage that the actor Potier solicits the honour of being permitted to present his compliments and respects."

"What would my colleagues of the congress of Vienna say, I wonder," continued the prince, as the astonished innkeeper left the room, "to see me figuring in such a farce in a wretched country tavern? Talleyrand and a professional clown! Well, this is at least one rôle that was missing from my repertory, and I began my career among the seminarists of Saint-Sulpice!"

III.

Playgoers of half a century ago will recall with rare delight Potier's rare talent and infinite resources in creating or copying a character—no matter how difficult. The challenge Talleyrand had sent him put him on his mettle, though at first it startled and frightened him, and the oddity and piquancy of the situation nerved him to do his best. Hastily he donned a fine black coat, such as befit the gravity of a thinker and profound politician, covered his head with a majestic white wig, slipped into silk breeches, black stockings and gold-buckled shoes, caught up a cane in lieu of a crutch and placing a bunch of decorations at his button hole bade the servant show in the actor Potier.

Talleyrand's surprise was great on entering to find his face, figure, dress and peculiarities so faithfully imitated—one might say photographed—and he would almost have thrown up the game but for resentment of the comedian's assurance. Entering as thoroughly into the spirit of his part, he became humble and timid as a poor actor should be in the presence of a great prince, slipped modestly into the chair towards which his entertainer nodded condescendingly, and stammered a few half-heard and incoherent phrases of excuse and apology.

IV.

"Pardon me, sir," said suddenly the pseudo-diplomatist, glancing at a copy of the *Moniteur*, "but there is something in this paper which greatly interests me. The *Moniteur*, as you know, is a sort of barometer to indicate fair weather or foul to political loungers like myself."

"Monseigneur," replied the real prince, "I know it because you tell me so."

"The barometer stands at 'stormy' to-day; it has been so every July since the fall of the Bastille."

"Indeed, your excellency, I did not know that."

"Ah, you know nothing of politics?"

"I know nothing except about comedy."

"True; I was forgetting. Let us talk of you, sir, and of your talent—your successes, for I am not altogether unfamiliar with the stage."

"You, your excellency?" said Talleyrand.

"Yes; I. When public comedies have been played for the last forty years, who has not been forced to take some part in farce or tragedy? What think you, Monsieur Potier?"

Talleyrand bit his lips and answered: "You are right, your highness. We are all actors, whether we will or no. Unhappily, some are applauded and others hissed."

"As I know only too sadly," replied the pseudo-diplomatist. "So great a man as I am, I have had my experience of hisses. There is where you folk upon the stage have the advantage. To hiss you people must pay at the door, whereas we poor devils of ministers, diplomatists and statesmen can be mobbed gratis."

"This is hardly just, monseigneur," said Talleyrand, after a moment's pause; "people should not thus treat the star actors who govern the world."

"Ah," answered the comedian prince, "then you think one should not expose himself to be hissed without being sure he is to be well paid for it. Quite right, Potier; quite right!"

V.

"I say, Potier," affably continued the pseudo-prince, "how long have you been on the stage?"

"Your pardon, sir," replied Talleyrand, "but I have no memory for dates; but, since your excellency thinks that we are all actors, does your excellency recall your *début*?"

"Well, yes," answered Potier, summoning up all his history. "I began in a little piece called 'The Seminary,' in which I took the rôle of the Abbé de Perigord. Later I acted in comedy with my friend the count of Choiseul-Gouffier, general agent of the French clergy; I equipped a corsair. But what would you? At that time everybody was playing in comedy or farce; the pope accepted a dedicatory epistle from Voltaire; generals were embroidering; abbés celebrated mass in boudoirs and nobles amused themselves with the democratic insolences of Beaumarchais' 'Figaro.' I played my part. An aristocrat, I demanded the equality of classes; bishop of Autun, I went in for the liberty of conscience; brought up in the church, I brought about the sale of ecclesiastical property for the national benefit; the head of my house, I helped on a revolution to proscriber titles and privileges. Ah, my dear fellow, what comedies have I not taken part in!"

"And since then, your excellency?" questioned Talleyrand.

"Since then," continued Potier, "the importance of my parts has increased with the growth of my fame. I figured on the stage of the Luxembourg at Bonaparte's first ovation; also, in the laughable interlude of the 18th Brumaire. I have been the confidant of a terrible personage known as the first consul and the emperor. I am old and my memory is somewhat clogged, but I fancy that I took part in a tragedy once, though I only had to say a few words of approbation or cruel indifference."

"What tragedy was that, your excellency?" asked Talleyrand.

"I think, if I remember rightly, it was called 'The Duke of Enghien,'" replied Potier, playing with one of his orders.

VI.

"Sir!" cried Talleyrand, half starting up; but controlling himself he resumed his seat, saying, "Pray go on, your excellency."

"What more shall I say, Monsieur Potier?" went on the actor; "my hundred-act play is so confused, so dark, so complicated. I have had to do with so many audiences, actors and plays. Nevertheless, I may say that I have always acted by taste or by vocation without bothering myself much about the name of the dramatist or the real merit of the piece or its morality. I have made it my aim to accept every part I was cast for and to play it like a conscientious actor who desires first of all to protect and advance the interests of his theatre. In politics perhaps I have been only a great artist. I have made art for art's sake."

Talleyrand took up his parable in turn, wishing perhaps that history might be as lenient in its summing up of his career as had been his double.

"Your excellency," he said to Potier, "your play applied to the realities of high places in this world frightens me for you. I find myself more fortunate than you and envy your excellency neither your wit, your grandeur nor your reminiscences; the successes of an actor like myself are ephemeral, but they cause no one to

weep; my memories are of populace laughing with merriment; I have had but to deal with charming illusions. Frankly I say, hurrah for Potier's wand! Mine is a sceptre that has weighed heavily on none of my subjects. I am a king neither tyrannical, nor jealous, nor ambitious, but sharing willingly my glory and my power with other kings, such as Odry, Arnal and Brunet."

VII.

In his turn the actor could not fail to feel flattered with the delicacy and good taste of M. de Talleyrand's compliment, but he could not resist the temptation of launching a Parthian arrow at his rival in this game of comedy.

"Mons. Potier," he said to Talleyrand, "I have frequently noticed you acting, and recall many of the characters you have played, but I am a little surprised when I reflect that once you figured in a tragedy—very sorrowful one—played in Paris some years ago."

"When was that? What was it?" said Talleyrand.

"It was in 1814—the piece was called 'L'Hotel de la Rue Saint Florentin.'"

Talleyrand winced visibly, and his witty double went on:

"I hate the play, and to my mind your performance in it has hurt you in the public estimation. The part, I confess, was not an agreeable one. I believe that in that play a great conqueror is sinking and a clever negotiator abandons him after having adored him; in it, if I remember rightly, the action sacrifices a duty to a fact, a principle to an event, the interest of a country to that of an individual, a whole nation to a handful of outcasts or of strangers. Ah, Mons. Potier, what an unpleasant play; and what an unsatisfactory part you were cast for in it! Never, never should there be presented on any stage to any public the spectacle of a man who, when he sees the hopes of his country's cause blasted, sets himself to share in the triumphs of her foes instead of retiring in silence to share in her mourning!"

VIII.

The real Talleyrand rose—possibly because he did not care to hear anything further—when a footman entered with the *Moniteur* of the 26th that instant received.

"This is for your excellency," he said, bowing and handing it to Potier.

"Be good enough, M. Potier, to read it for me, or for yourself—if you are interested in such subjects," retorted the actor with equal self-possession.

Talleyrand opened and glanced at the paper and dropped it in surprise.

The old councillor of Louis XVIII. had read in it the fatal ordinance of Charles X.

After a moment's pause he turned smilingly towards Potier, and bowing deeply said:

"I regret, your excellency, that I must at once set out for Paris. I am invited to reappear at my old theatre, and probably shall consent to create a new character—my last—in a new piece they are rehearsing."

"May I ask the name of this drama with which your professional career is likely to be brought to a close?"

"The name," said Talleyrand, "has not yet been finally settled upon, but I fancy it will be called 'The Revolution of 1830.'"

As he said these words Talleyrand was about to withdraw, when Potier threw off his wig and decorations and hastening after him excused himself for his rudeness in the first instance. Shaking hands with him cordially the great diplomatist bade him farewell.

"Adieu, Monsieur Potier; which of us came off second best in our little tilt?"

"Your excellency did," replied the actor, "but it was the first time that you ever condescended to allow yourself to be outdone."

IX.

A few days later the monarchy fell, the elder branch of the Bourbons were replaced by a new dynasty, and Talleyrand went to London as plenipotentiary of the court of France.

He and Potier met once again, when both were travelling, each in his own carriage, one bound for the vaults of Valencay, one for the cemetery of Père la Chaise!

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

The boy who had to be driven to the bathtub last winter now bathes for hours at a time in the canals and rivers.

What is the difference between the weather and the baby? One never rains but it pours; the other never pains but it roars.

There's no special style of engraving engagement rings. A spider's web with a fly in it is a very pretty device.

"Woman is a delusion," said a crusty old bachelor in our sanctum recently. Snodgrass retorted: "Well, man is always hugging some delusion or other."

A JUPON recently refused a divorce in a case in which the parties had lived together 49 years, on the ground that it was not right to spoil a golden wedding.

"NEVER deceive your children," says Prof. Swing. No, don't do it. Many a child has been ruined for life by a pill hidden under a spoonful of preserves.

It has been discovered that the young men are more bashful in summer than in winter. You can't get some chaps within fifty yards of a girl during the ice-cream season.

"You want a flogging—that's what you want," said a parent to an unruly son. "I know it, dad, but I'll try to get along without it," said the independent hopeful.

FAITH may be able to remove a mountain, but when a woman takes her knitting and patch-work and visits her next-door neighbour, it will take a derrick as well as faith to remove her to her own house in time to prepare her husband's dinner.

AFTER an enthusiastic lover spends two hours' hard labour over a letter to his girl, and then mars its beauty by spilling a drop of ink on it, he first swears in a very scientific manner for a few moments, and then draws a circle around the blot and tells her it is a kiss.

At a recent examination of a ladies' class in Scotland, the following dialogue occurred? Instructor: "What does Condillac say about brutes in the scale of being?" Student: "He says a brute is an imperfect animal." Instructor: "And what is man?" Student: "Man is a perfect brute."

JEANETTE: "Ma, are you going to give me another piece of pie?" Ma: "What do you want to know for?" Jeanette: "Because if you ain't I want to eat this piece slowly."

An ethereal maiden called Maud
Was suspected of being a fraud.
Scarce a crumb she was able
To eat at the table—

But in the back pantry . . . O Lawd!

If there is anything in the spring time that makes a man yearn to come home early at night, it is the last fond words of his wife, who says to him just as he starts down town after breakfast: "Dear, come home early, so you can put up the new window-curtains." That man agonizes to go home early, but he sometimes stays out late, just to show his wife that he can resist temptation.

The breath of spring is in the air,
Take care, take care;
Your wife for you has laid a snare,
Beware, beware;

She meets you when you come from town,
She gently smiles when you sit down,
She gets your slippers and your gown,
She drives away each care and frown.

Take care, beware;
She wants a new spring bonnet!

HUMOROUS.

HOPZ is the sugar-coating on the pill of life.

THE saddest words of tongue or pen: "I intend to pay; I can't say when."

THE soul that is in earnest will not stop to count the cost. It is the same way with a hen.

STREET dialogue: "So you are out again?" "I should say so." "How do you feel?" "Only so-so." "Well, so long."

IN shoeing a fly the more experienced blacksmith uses a cloth instead of a hammer. It is not so liable to damage the furniture.

A SMALL boy threw a lump of ice at another recently, and came very near being arrested for carrying concealed weapons.

IT is one of the physiological mysteries why a boy's hands will blister so much sooner on a hot handle than they will on a base ball bat.

NOW the winds that softly breathe, and the flowers that garlands wreaths, a gentle hint of summer in the mind implants; and so do the beetles and the spiders and the ants.

MR. HOWELLS says he saw an English family stop before Titian's "John the Baptist," and heard the father sum up his impressions in one sentence: "Quite my idea of the party's character."

A MAN with a pair of creaky boots always has music in his sole, and he generally executes a solo just at the very moment when the rest of the congregation have settled down to a quiet nap.

NOTHING exceeds that peaceful calm which steals over a young man as he sits in the shade and watches his mother maul a carpet on the clothes-line. He pities her, but he didn't invent carpets.

"FATHER," said a cobbler's lad, as he was pegging away at an old shoe, "they say that trout bite good now." "Well, well," replied the old gentleman, "you stick to your work and they won't bite you."

AN Irishman, at the immediate risk of his life, stopped a runaway horse a few days ago. The owner came up after awhile, and quietly remarked: "Thank you, sir." "An' faith, an' how are ye a goin' to divide that betwixt two of us?" replied Pat.

OUR sisters and our cousins and our aunts can't understand why two boys, when they sleep together, enjoy varying the monotony of talk by wrestling until the bed is upside down, or pelting each other with pillows till their strength gives out. Only the boys can tell.

CLOTHING dealers should be particular to take off the placard when they make a sale. It doesn't look well to see "This suit \$77" on the back of a man's coat as he goes walking down the street, and the man is apt to feel sensitive about it when he finds out that he is a walking signboard.

A GENTLEMAN of our acquaintance—a good judge of pictures—who was viewing through his glass a fine picture of "Moses Smiling the Rock," was considerably shocked by a party who approached him with this question, pointing to the figure of Moses: "Pray, sir, can you tell me who that old gentleman is, with a stick in his hand?"

ONE of the secretaries of a church missionary society, a distinguished man, was about to preach to a coloured congregation, when he was introduced by the regular minister of the church, a black man, in these words: "Now, den, brudren, I's heah to info'm you dat Brudrah Blank is gwine to preach to you to-day. He is de secretary of de missionary society, a distinguished an' a eloquent man—in fac', my braddinn, he is a sound in 'brass an' a think in 'cymbal'."