

THE AMARANTH.

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FOR THE AMARANTH.

THE BANKER AND THE COUNT.

A TALE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Adapted from the French.

(Concluded.)

CHAPTER VI.

No sooner did the irritated Count leave the residence of the banker, than, blinded with indignation, he repaired to the house of the Marquis de Favieri, whom he found in company with the Marquis de Berizy. To both of these he complained vehemently of the insufferable insolence of his antagonist, calling upon them, as his friends, to assist him in seeking reparation for an offence, of the particulars of which they were entirely ignorant.

Knowing that to reason with the Count, in his present excited state, would be worse than useless, they at once accepted his proposal, as the only means that could possibly put it in their power to mediate with effect; and, in consequence, the morrow brought them both to the residence of the banker, whom they found equally as indisposed to explain the cause of the quarrel, or to listen to terms of accommodation, as his opponent.

Having then, by virtue of their authority as seconds, protracted the affair as long as possible, without obtaining the slightest prospect of overcoming the obstinacy of either, these excellent men at length declared that they could by no means be accessory to a duel, the cause of which they did not know; and that unless they were allowed to judge of the grounds of the quarrel, they should wash their hands of the whole matter.

M. Durand, to whom this objection was first made, declared that he could not reveal the affair, the secret of which belonged to M. de Lozeraie; but the latter, to whom they related both their objection and the banker's

reply, decided on explaining to M. M. de Berizy and de Favieri, both the motive of his visit to M. Durand and the turn it had taken. At the same time he was obliged to allow, that M. Durand had acted as a man of honour by so faithfully keeping his secret; and, on his side, the banker could not but approve of the conduct of M. de Lozeraie, in thus sacrificing his vanity to his desire to smooth down all the difficulties that opposed their meeting. An opening, then, having thus been made, and the facts of the case being known, the two Marquises had no great difficulty in shewing to both of the belligerent parties, that there were no real grounds for fighting, and in inducing them to declare themselves mutually satisfied.

Perhaps the attainment of this object was somewhat facilitated, on one side at least, by M. de Berizy's proposal to M. de Lozeraie for the resumption of his contract, which was made upon the plea that another purchaser had offered himself for the forest, in the person of old M. Felix; and delighted as the Count was at this unexpected opportunity of extricating himself from his difficulties, he could not restrain an expression of astonishment, on hearing of the source from whence the relief had come, especially when he was given to understand, from the great anxiety M. Felix had evinced during the progress of the quarrel, that this enormous outlay had evidently been made by him for the purpose of preventing a fatal termination of the affair.

Monsieur de Lozeraie then having accepted the proposition of M. de Berizy, found himself master of twelve hundred thousand francs, in the hands of M. Durand, who hastened to offer him the immediate reimbursement of the funds, as soon as he was aware of the new arrangements made; but M. de Lozeraie, who thought that it comported more with his dignity, not to withdraw them as yet, and who felt satisfied from the brilliant position in which the banker