

The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer — Volume 4 eBook

The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer — Volume 4 by Charles Lever

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CHAPTER XXIV.

THE GEN D'ARME.

I had fortunately sufficient influence upon my fair friends to persuade them to leave Calais early on the morning following; and two hours before Kilkee had opened his eyes upon this mortal life, we were far upon the road to Paris.

Having thus far perfectly succeeded in my plot, my spirit rose rapidly, and I made every exertion to make the road appear short to my fellow-travellers. This part of France is unfortunately deficient in any interest from scenery; large undivided tracts of waving cornfields, with a back-ground of apparently interminable forests, and occasionally, but rarely, the glimpse of some old time-worn chateau, with its pointed gable and terraced walk, are nearly all that the eye can detect in the intervals between the small towns and villages. Nothing, however, is “flat or unprofitable” to those who desire to make it otherwise; good health, good spirits, and fine weather, are wonderful travelling companions, and render one tolerably independent of the charms of scenery. Every mile that separated me from Calais, and took away the chance of being overtaken, added to my gaiety, and I flatter myself that a happier party have rarely travelled that well frequented road.

We reached Abbeville to dinner, and adjourned to the beautiful little garden of the inn for our coffee; the evening was so delightful that I proposed to walk on the Paris road, until the coming up of the carriage, which required a screw, or a washer, or some such trifle as always occurs in French posting. To this *la chere mamma* objected, she being tired, but added, that *Isabella* and I might go on, and that she would take us up in half an hour. This was an arrangement so very agreeable and unlooked for by me, that I pressed *Miss Bingham* as far as I well could, and at last succeeded in overcoming her scruples, and permitting me to shawl her. One has always a tremendous power of argument with the uninitiated abroad, by a reference to a standard of manners and habits totally different from our own. Thus the talismanic words—“Oh! don't be shocked; remember you are in France,” did more to satisfy my young friend's mind than all I could have said for an hour. Little did she know that in England only, has an unmarried young lady any liberty, and that the standard of foreign propriety on this head is far, very far more rigid than our own.

“*La premiere Rue a gauche*,” said an old man of whom I inquired the road; “*et puis*,” added I.

“And then quite straight; it is a *chaussee* all the way, and you cannot mistake it.”

“Now for it, *mademoiselle*,” said I. “Let us try if we cannot see a good deal of the country before the carriage comes up.”



We had soon left the town behind and reached a beautifully shaded high road, with blossoming fruit trees, and honeysuckle-covered cottages; there had been several light showers during the day, and the air had all the fresh fragrant feeling of an autumn evening, so tranquillizing and calming that few there are who have not felt at some time or other of their lives, its influence upon their minds. I fancied my fair companion did so, for, as she walked beside me, her silence, and the gentle pressure of her arm, were far more eloquent than words.

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If that extraordinary flutter and flurry of sensations which will now and then seize you, when walking upon a lonely country road with a pretty girl for your companion, whose arm is linked in yours, and whose thoughts, as far you can guess at least, are travelling the same path with your own—if this be animal magnetism, or one of its phenomena, then do I swear by Mesmer, whatever it be, delusion or otherwise, it has given me the brightest moments of my life—these are the real “winged dreams” of pleasures which outlive others of more absorbing and actual interest at the time. After all, for how many of our happiest feelings are we indebted to the weakness of our nature. The man that is wise at nineteen, “Je l’en fais mon compliment,” but I assuredly do not envy him; and now, even now, when I number more years than I should like to “confess,” rather than suffer the suspicious watchfulness of age to creep on me, I prefer to “go on believing,” even though every hour of the day should show me, duped and deceived. While I plead guilty to this impeachment, let me show mitigation, that it has its enjoyments—first, although I am the most constant and devoted man breathing, as a very cursory glance at these confessions may prove, yet I have never been able to restrain myself from a propensity to make love, merely as a pastime. The gambler that sits down to play cards, or hazard against himself, may perhaps be the only person that can comprehend this tendency of mine. We both of us are playing for nothing (or love, which I suppose is synonymous;) we neither of us put forth our strength; for that very reason, and in fact like the waiter at Vauxhall who was complimented upon the dexterity with which he poured out the lemonade, and confessed that he spent his mornings “practising with vater,” we pass a considerable portion of our lives in a mimic warfare, which, if it seem unprofitable, is, nevertheless, pleasant.

After all this long tirade, need I say how our walk proceeded? We had fallen into a kind of discussion upon the singular intimacy which had so rapidly grown up amongst us, and which years long might have failed to engender. Our attempts to analyse the reasons for, and the nature of the friendship thus so suddenly established—a rather dangerous and difficult topic, when the parties are both young—one eminently handsome, and the other disposed to be most agreeable. Oh, my dear young friends of either sex, whatever your feelings be for one another, keep them to yourselves; I know of nothing half so hazardous as that “comparing of notes” which sometimes happens. Analysis is a beautiful thing in mathematics or chemistry, but it makes sad havoc when applied to the “functions of the heart.”

“Mamma appears to have forgotten us,” said Isabella, as she spoke, after walking for some time in silence beside me.

“Oh, depend upon it, the carriage has taken all this time to repair; but are you tired?”



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“Oh, by no means; the evening is delightful, but—”

“Then perhaps you are ennuyee,” said I, half pettishly, to provoke a disclaimer if possible. To this insidiously put quere I received, as I deserved, no answer, and again we sauntered on without speaking.

“To whom does that chateau belong, my old friend?” said I addressing a man on the road-side.

“A Monsieur le Marquis, sir,” replied he.

“But what’s his name, though?”

“Ah, that I can’t tell you,” replied the man again.

There you may perceive how, even yet, in provincial France, the old respect for the aristocracy still survives; it is sufficient that the possessor of that fine place is “Monsieur le Marquis;” but any other knowledge of who he is, and what, is superfluous. “How far are we from the next village, do you know?”

“About a league.”

“Indeed. Why I thought ‘La Scarpe’ was quite near us.”

“Ah, you are thinking of the Amiens road.”

“Yes, of course; and is not this the Amiens road?”

“Oh, no; the Amiens road lies beyond those low hills to the right. You passed the turn at the first ‘barriere’.”

“Is it possible we could have come wrong?”

“Oh, Mr. Lorrequer, don’t say so, I entreat of you.”

“And what road is this, then, my friend?”

“This is the road to Albert and Peronne.”

“Unfortunately, I believe he is quite right. Is there any crossroad from the village before us now, to the Amiens road?”

“Yes; you can reach it about three leagues hence.”

“And we can get a carriage at the inn probably?”



“Ah, that I am not sure of—. Perhaps at the Lion d’or you may.”

“But why not go back to Abbeville?”

“Oh, Mrs. Bingham must have left long since, and beside you forget the distance; we have been walking two hours.”

“Now for the village,” said I, as I drew my friend’s arm closer within mine, and we set out in a fast walk.

Isabella seemed terribly frightened at the whole affair; what her mamma might think, and what might be her fears at not finding us on the road, and a hundred other encouraging reflections of this nature she poured forth unceasingly. As for myself, I did not know well what to think of it; my old fondness for adventure being ever sufficiently strong in me to give a relish to any thing which bore the least resemblance to one. This I now concealed, and sympathised with my fair friend upon our mishap, and assuring her, at the same time, that there could be no doubt of our overtaking Mrs. Bingham before her arrival at Amiens.

“Ah, there is the village in the valley; how beautifully situated.”

“Oh, I can’t admire any thing now, Mr. Lorrequer, I am so frightened.”

“But surely without cause,” said I, looking tenderly beneath her bonnet.

“Is this,” she answered, “nothing,” and we walked on in silence again.



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On reaching the Lion d'or we discovered that the only conveyance to be had was a species of open market-cart drawn by two horses, and in which it was necessary that my fair friend and myself should seat ourselves side by side upon straw: there was no choice, and as for Miss Bingham, I believe if an ass with panniers had presented itself, she would have preferred it to remaining where she was. We therefore took our places, and she could not refrain from laughing as we set out upon our journey in this absurd equipage, every jolt of which threw us from side to side, and rendered every attention on my part requisite to prevent her being upset.

After about two hours' travelling we arrived at the Amiens road, and stopped at the barriere. I immediately inquired if a carriage had passed, resembling Mrs. Bingham's, and learned that it had, about an hour before, and that the lady in it had been informed that two persons, like those she asked after, had been seen in a caleche driving rapidly to Amiens, upon which she set out as fast as possible in pursuit.

"Certainly," said I, "the plot is thickening; but for that unlucky mistake she might in all probability have waited here for us. Amiens is only two leagues now, so our drive will not be long, and before six o'clock we shall all be laughing over the matter as a very good joke."

On we rattled, and as the road became less frequented, and the shadows lengthened, I could not but wonder at the strange situations which the adventurous character of my life had so often involved me in. Meanwhile, my fair friend's spirits became more and more depressed, and it was not without the greatest difficulty I was enabled to support her courage. I assured her, and not altogether without reason, that though so often in my eventful career accidents were occurring which rendered it dubious and difficult to reach the goal I aimed at, yet the results had so often been more pleasant than I could have anticipated, that I always felt a kind of involuntary satisfaction at some apparent obstacle to my path, setting it down as some especial means of fortune, to heighten the pleasure awaiting me; "and now," added I, "even here, perhaps, in this very mistake of our road—the sentiments I have heard—the feelings I have given utterance to—" What I was about to say, heaven knows—perhaps nothing less than a downright proposal was coming; but at that critical moment a gen-d'arme rode up to the side of our waggon, and surveyed us with the peculiarly significant scowl his order is gifted with. After trotting alongside for a few seconds he ordered the driver to halt, and, turning abruptly to us, demanded our passports. Now our passports were, at that precise moment, peaceably reposing in the side pocket of Mrs. Bingham's carriage; I therefore explained to the gen-d'arme how we were circumstanced, and added, that on arriving at Amiens the passport should be produced. To this he replied that all might be perfectly true, but he did not believe a word of it—that he had received an order for the apprehension of two English persons travelling that road—and that he should accordingly request our company back to Chantraine, the commissionaire of which place was his officer.

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“But why not take us to Amiens,” said I; “particularly when I tell you that we can then show our passports?”

“I belong to the Chantraine district,” was the laconic answer; and like the gentleman who could not weep at the sermon because he belonged to another parish, this specimen of a French Dogberry would not hear reason except in his own “commune.”

No arguments which I could think of had any effect upon him, and amid a volley of entreaty and imprecation, both equally vain, we saw ourselves turn back upon the road to Amiens, and set out at a round trot to Chantraine, on the road to Calais.

Poor Isabella, I really pitied her; hitherto her courage had been principally sustained by the prospect of soon reaching Amiens; now there was no seeing where our adventure was to end. Besides that, actual fatigue from the wretched conveyance began to distress her, and she was scarcely able to support herself, though assisted by my arm. What a perilous position mine, whispering consolation and comfort to a pretty girl on a lonely road, the only person near being one who comprehended nothing of the language we spoke in. Ah, how little do we know of fate, and how often do we despise circumstances that determine all our fortunes in the world. To think that a gen-d’arme should have any thing to do with my future lot in life, and that the real want of a passport to travel should involve the probable want of a licence to marry. Yes, it is quite in keeping, thought I, with every step I have taken through life. I may be brought before the “maire” as a culprit, and leave him as a Benedict.

On reaching the town, we were not permitted to drive to the inn, but at once conveyed to the house of the “commissaire,” who was also the “maire” of the district. The worthy functionary was long since in bed, and it was only after ringing violently for half an hour that a head, surmounted with a dirty cotton night-cap, peeped from an upper window, and seemed to survey the assemblage beneath with patient attention. By this time a considerable crowd had collected from the neighbouring ale-houses and cabarets, who deemed it a most fitting occasion to honour us with the most infernal yells and shouts, as indicating their love of justice, and delight in detecting knavery; and that we were both involved in such suspicion, we had not long to learn. Meanwhile the poor old maire, who had been an employe in the stormy days of the revolution, and also under Napoleon, and who full concurred with Swift that “a crowd is a mob, if composed even of bishops,” firmly believed that the uproar beneath in the street was the announcement of a new change of affairs at Paris, determined to be early in the field, and shouted therefore with all his lungs—“vive le peuple”—“Vive la charte”—“A bas les autres.” A tremendous shout of laughter saluted this exhibition of unexpected republicanism, and the poor maire retired from the window, having learned his mistake, covered with shame and confusion.



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Before the mirth caused by this blunder had subsided, the door had opened, and we were ushered into the bureau of the commissaire, accompanied by the anxious crowd, all curious to know the particulars of our crime.

The maire soon appeared, his night-cap being replaced by a small black velvet skull-cap, and his lanky figure enveloped in a tarnished silk dressing-gown; he permitted us to be seated, while the gen-d'arme recounted the suspicious circumstances of our travelling, and produced the order to arrest an Englishman and his wife who had arrived in one of the late Boulogne packets, and who had carried off from some banking-house money and bills for a large amount.

"I have no doubt these are the people," said the gen-d'arme; "and here is the 'carte descriptive.' Let us compare it—'Forty-two or forty-three years of age.'"

"I trust, M. le Maire," said I, overhearing this, "that ladies do not recognize me as so much."

"Of a pale and cadaverous aspect," continued the gen-d'arme.

Upon this the old functionary, wiping his spectacles with a snuffy handkerchief, as if preparing them to examine an eclipse of the sun, regarded me fixedly for several minutes, and said—"Oh, yes, I perceive it plainly; continue the description."

"Five feet three inches," said the gen-d'arme.

"Six feet one in England, whatever this climate may have done since."

"Speaks broken and bad French."

"Like a native," said I; "at least so said my friends in the chaussee D'Antin, in the year fifteen."

Here the catalogue ended, and a short conference between the maire and the gen-d'arme ensued, which ended in our being committed for examination on the morrow; meanwhile we were to remain at the inn, under the surveillance of the gen-d'arme.

On reaching the inn my poor friend was so completely exhausted that she at once retired to her room, and I proceeded to fulfil a promise I had made her to despatch a note to Mrs. Bingham at Amiens by a special messenger, acquainting her with all our mishaps, and requesting her to come or send to our assistance. This done, and a good supper smoking before me, of which with difficulty I persuaded Isabella to partake in her own room, I again regained my equanimity, and felt once more at ease.

The gen-d'arme in whose guardianship I had been left was a fine specimen of his caste; a large and powerfully built man of about fifty, with an enormous beard of grizzly brown



and grey hair, meeting above and beneath his nether lip; his eyebrows were heavy and beetling, and nearly concealed his sharp grey eyes, while a deep sabre-wound had left upon his cheek a long white scar, giving a most warlike and ferocious look to his features.



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As he sat apart from me for some time, silent and motionless, I could not help imagining in how many a hard-fought day he had borne a part, for he evidently, from his age and bearing, had been one of the soldiers of the empire. I invited him to partake of my bottle of Medoc, by which he seemed flattered. When the flask became low, and was replaced by another, he appeared to have lost much of his constrained air, and seemed forgetting rapidly the suspicious circumstances which he supposed attached to me—waxed wondrous confidential and communicative, and condescended to impart some traits of a life which was not without its vicissitudes, for he had been, as I suspected, one of the “Guarde”—the old garde—was wounded at Marengo, and received the croix d’honneur in the field of Wagram, from the hands of the Emperor himself. The headlong enthusiasm of attachment to Napoleon, which his brief and stormy career elicited even from those who suffered long and deeply in his behalf, is not one of the least singular circumstances which this portion of history displays. While the rigours of the conscription had invaded every family in France, from Normandie to La Vendee—while the untilled fields, the ruined granaries, the half-deserted villages, all attested the depopulation of the land, those talismanic words, “l’Empereur et la gloire,” by some magic mechanism seemed all-sufficient not only to repress regret and suffering, but even stimulate pride, and nourish valour; and even yet, when it might be supposed that like the brilliant glass of a magic lantern, the gaudy pageant had passed away, leaving only the darkness and desolation behind it—the memory of those days under the empire survives untarnished and unimpaired, and every sacrifice of friends or fortune is accounted but little in the balance when the honour of La Belle France, and the triumphs of the grand “armee,” are weighted against them. The infatuated and enthusiastic followers of this great man would seem, in some respects, to resemble the drunkard in the “Vaudeville,” who alleged as his excuse for drinking, that whenever he was sober his poverty disgusted him. “My cabin,” said he, “is a cell, my wife a mass of old rags, my child a wretched object of misery and malady. But give me brandy; let me only have that, and then my hut is a palace, my wife is a princess, and my child the very picture of health and happiness;” so with these people—intoxicated with the triumphs of their nation, “tete monte” with victory—they cannot exist in the horror of sobriety which peace necessarily enforces; and whenever the subject turns in conversation upon the distresses of the time or the evil prospects of the country, they call out, not like the drunkard, for brandy, but in the same spirit they say—“Ah, if you would again see France flourishing and happy, let us once more have our croix d’honneur, our epaulettes, our voluntary contributions, our Murillos, our Velasquez, our spoils from Venice, and our increased



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territories to rule over.” This is the language of the Buonapartiste every where, and at all seasons; and the mass of the nation is wonderfully disposed to participate in the sentiment. The empire was the Aeneid of the nation, and Napoleon the only hero they now believe in. You may satisfy yourself of this easily. Every cafe will give evidence of it, every society bears its testimony to it, and even the most wretched Vaudeville, however, trivial the interest—however meagre the story, and poor the diction, let the emperor but have his “role”—let him be as laconic as possible, carry his hands behind his back, wear the well-known low cocked-hat, and the “redingote gris”—the success is certain—every sentence he utters is applauded, and not a single allusion to the Pyramids, the sun of Austerlitz, l’honneur, et al vieille garde, but is sure to bring down thunders of acclamation. But I am forgetting myself, and perhaps my reader too; the conversation of the old gen-d’arme accidentally led me into reflections like these, and he was well calculated, in many ways, to call them forth. His devoted attachment—his personal love of the emperor—of which he gave me some touching instances, was admirably illustrated by an incident, which I am inclined to tell, and hope it may amuse the reader as much as it did myself on hearing it.

When Napoleon had taken possession of the papal dominions, as he virtually did, and carried off the pope, Pius VI, to Paris, this old soldier, then a musketeer in the garde, formed part of the company that mounted guard over the holy father. During the earlier months of the holy father’s confinement he was at liberty to leave his apartments at any hour he pleased, and cross the court-yard of the palace to the chapel where he performed mass. At such moments the portion of the Imperial Guard then on duty stood under arms, and received from the august hand of the pope his benediction as he passed. But one morning a hasty express arrived from the Tuilleries, and the officer on duty communicated his instructions to his party, that the apostolic vicar was not to be permitted to pass, as heretofore, to the chapel, and that a most rigid superintendence was to be exercised over his movements. My poor companion had his turn for duty on that ill-starred day; he had not been long at his post when the sound of footsteps was heard approaching, and he soon saw the procession which always attended the holy father to his devotions, advancing towards him; he immediately placed himself across the passage, and with his musket in rest barred the exit, declaring, at the same time, that such were his orders. In vain the priests who formed the cortege addressed themselves to his heart, and spoke to his feelings, and at last finding little success by these methods, explained to him the mortal sin and crime for which eternal damnation itself might not be a too heavy retribution if he persisted in preventing his holiness to pass, and thus be the



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means of opposing an obstacle to the head of the whole Catholic church, for celebrating the mass; the soldier remained firm and unmoved, the only answer he returned being, "that he had his orders, and dared not disobey them." The pope, however, persisted in his resolution, and endeavoured to get by, when the hardy veteran retreated a step, and placing his musket and bayonet at the charge, called out "au nom de l'Empereur," when the pious party at last yielded and slowly retired within the palace.

Not many days after, this severe restriction was recalled, and once more the father was permitted to go to and from the chapel of the palace, at such times as he pleased, and again, as before, in passing the corridor, the guards presented arms and received the holy benediction, all except one; upon him the head of the church frowned severely, and turned his back, while extending his pious hands towards the others. "And yet," said the poor fellow in concluding his story, "and yet I could not have done otherwise; I had my orders and must have followed them, and had the emperor commanded it, I should have run my bayonet through the body of the holy father himself.

"Thus, you see, my dear sir, how I have loved the emperor, for I have many a day stood under fire for him in this world, 'et il faut que j'aïlle encore au feu pour lui apres ma mort.'"

He received in good part the consolations I offered him on this head, but I plainly saw they did not, could not relieve his mind from the horrible conviction he lay under, that his soul's safety for ever had been bartered for his attachment to the emperor.

This story had brought us to the end of the third bottle of Medoc; and, as I was neither the pope, nor had any very decided intentions of saying mass, he offered no obstacle to my retiring for the night, and betaking myself to my bed.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE INN AT CHANTRAINE.

When contrasted with the comforts of an English bed-room in a good hotel, how miserably short does the appearance of a French one fall in the estimation of the tired traveller. In exchange for the carpeted floor, the well-curtained windows, the richly tapestried bed, the well cushioned arm-chair, and the innumerable other luxuries which await him; he has nought but a narrow, uncurtained bed, a bare floor, occasionally a flagged one, three hard cane-bottomed chairs, and a looking-glass which may convey an idea of how you would look under the combined influence of the cholera, and a stroke of apoplexy, one half of your face being twice the length of the other, and the entire of it of a bluish-green tint—pretty enough in one of Turner's landscapes, but not at

all becoming when applied to the “human face divine.” Let no late arrival from the continent contradict me here by his late experiences, which a stray twenty pounds and the railroads—(confound them for the same) —have enabled him to acquire.



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I speak of matters before it occurred to all Charing-Cross and Cheapside to “take the water” between Dover and Calais, and inundate the world with the wit of the Cider Cellar, and the Hole in the Wall. No! In the days I write of, the travelled were of another genus, and you might dine at Very’s or have your loge at “Les Italiens,” without being dunned by your tailor at the one, or confronted with your washer-woman at the other. Perhaps I have written all this in the spite and malice of a man who feels that his louis-d’or only goes half as far now as heretofore; and attributes all his diminished enjoyments and restricted luxuries to the unceasing current of his countrymen, whom fate, and the law of imprisonment for debt, impel hither. Whether I am so far guilty or not, is not now the question; suffice it to say, that Harry Lorrequer, for reasons best known to himself, lives abroad, where he will be most happy to see any of his old and former friends who take his quarters en route; and in the words of a bellicose brother of the pen, but in a far different spirit, he would add, “that any person who feels himself here alluded to, may learn the author’s address at his publishers.” “Now let us go back to our muttons,” as Barney Coyle used to say in the Dublin Library formerly—for Barney was fond of French allusions, which occasionally too he gave in their own tongue, as once describing an interview with Lord Cloncurry, in which he broke off suddenly the conference, adding, “I told him I never could consent to such a proposition, and putting my chateau (chapeau) on my head, I left the house at once.”

It was nearly three o’clock in the morning, as accompanied by the waiter, who, like others of his tribe, had become a kind of somnambulist ex-officio, I wended my way up one flight of stairs, and down another, along a narrow corridor, down two steps, through an antechamber, and into another corridor, to No. 82, my habitation for the night. Why I should have been so far conducted from the habitable portion of the house I had spent my evening in, I leave the learned in such matters to explain; as for me, I have ever remarked it, while asking for a chamber in a large roomy hotel, the singular pride with which you are ushered up grand stair-cases, down passages, through corridors, and up narrow back flights, till the blue sky is seen through the sky-light, to No. 199, “the only spare bed-room in the house,” while the silence and desolation of the whole establishment would seem to imply far otherwise—the only evidence of occupation being a pair of dirty Wellingtons at the door of No. 2.

“Well, we have arrived at last,” said I, drawing a deep sigh, as I threw myself upon a ricketty chair, and surveyed rapidly my meagre-looking apartment.

“Yes, this is Monsieur’s chamber,” said the waiter, with a very peculiar look, half servile, half droll. “Madame se couche, No. 28.”

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“Very well, good night,” said I, closing the door hastily, and not liking the farther scrutiny of the fellow’s eye, as he fastened it on me, as if to search what precise degree of relationship existed between myself and my fair friend, whom he had called “Madame” purposely to elicit an observation from me. “Ten to one though,” said I, as I undressed myself, “but they think she is my wife—how good—but again—ay, it is very possible, considering we are in France. Numero vingt-huit, quite far enough from this part of the house I should suppose from my number,—that old gen-d’arme was a fine fellow—what strong attachment to Napoleon; and the story of the pope; I hope I may remember that. Isabella, poor girl —this adventure must really distress her—hope she is not crying over it —what a devil of a hard bed—and it is not five feet long too—and, bless my soul, is this all by way of covering; why I shall be perished here. Oh! I must certainly put all my clothes over me in addition, unfortunately there is no hearth-rug—well, there is no help for it now —so let me try to sleep—numero vingt-huit.”

How long I remained in a kind of uneasy, fitful slumber, I cannot tell; but I awoke shivering with cold—puzzled to tell where I was, and my brain addled with the broken fragments of half a dozen dreams, all mingling and mixing themselves with the unpleasant realities of my situation. What an infernal contrivance for a bed, thought I, as my head came thump against the top, while my legs projected far beyond the foot-rail; the miserable portion of clothing over me at the same time being only sufficient to temper the night air, which in autumn is occasionally severe and cutting. This will never do. I must ring the bell and rouse the house, if only to get a fire, if they don’t possess such a thing as blankets. I immediately rose, and groping my way along the wall endeavoured to discover the bell, but in vain; and for the same satisfactory reason that Von Troil did not devote one chapter of his work on “Iceland” to “snakes,” because there were none such there. What was now to be done? About the geography of my present abode I knew, perhaps, as much as the public at large know about the Coppermine river and Behring’s straits. The world, it was true, was before me, “where top choose,” admirable things for an epic, but decidedly an unfortunate circumstance for a very cold gentleman in search of a blanket. Thus thinking, I opened the door of my chamber, and not in any way resolved how I should proceed, I stepped forth into the long corridor, which was dark as midnight itself.

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Tracing my path along the wall, I soon reached a door which I in vain attempted to open; in another moment I found another and another, each of which were locked. Thus along the entire corridor I felt my way, making every effort to discover where any of the people of the house might have concealed themselves, but without success. What was to be done now? It was of no use to go back to my late abode, and find it comfortless as I left it; so I resolved to proceed in my search; by this time I had arrived at the top of a small flight of stairs, which I remembered having come up, and which led to another long passage similar to the one I had explored, but running in a transverse direction, down this I now crept, and reached the landing, along the wall of which I was guided by my hand, as well for safety as to discover the architrave of some friendly door, where the inhabitant might be sufficiently Samaritan to lend some portion of his bed-clothes; door after door followed in succession along this confounded passage, which I began to think as long as the gallery of the lower one; at last, however, just as my heart was sinking within me from disappointment, the handle of a lock turned, and I found myself inside a chamber. How was I now to proceed? for if this apartment did not contain any of the people of the hotel, I had but a sorry excuse for disturbing the repose of any traveller who might have been more fortunate than myself in the article of blankets. To go back however, would be absurd, having already taken so much trouble to find out a room that was inhabited—for that such was the case, a short, thick snore assured me —so that my resolve was at once made, to waken the sleeper, and endeavour to interest him in my destitute situation. I accordingly approached the place where the nasal sounds seemed to issue from, and soon reached the post of a bed. I waited for an instant, and then began,

“Monsier, voulez vous bien me permettre—”

“As to short whist, I never could make it out, so there is an end of it,” said my unknown friend, in a low, husky voice, which, strangely enough, was not totally unfamiliar to me: but when or how I had heard it before I could not then think.

Well, thought I, he is an Englishman at all events, so I hope his patriotism may forgive my intrusion, so here goes once more to rouse him, though he seems a confoundedly heavy sleeper. “I beg your pardon, sir, but unfortunately in a point like the present, perhaps—”

“Well, do you mark the points, and I’ll score the rubber,” said he.

“The devil take the gambling fellow’s dreaming,” thought I, raising my voice at the same time.

“Perhaps a cold night, sir, may suffice as my apology.”

“Cold, oh, ay! put a hot poker to it,” muttered he; “a hot poker, a little sugar, and a spice of nutmeg—nothing else—then it’s delicious.”

“Upon my soul, this is too bad,” said I to myself. “Let us see what shaking will do. Sir, sir, I shall feel obliged by—”



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“Well there, don’t shake me, and I’ll tell you where I hid the cigars —they are under my straw hat in the window.”

“Well, really,” thought I, “if this gentleman’s confessions were of an interesting nature, this might be good fun; but as the night is cold, I must shorten the ‘seance,’ so here goes for one effort more.

“If, sir, you could kindly spare me even a small portion of your bed-clothes.”

“No, thank you, no more wine; but I’ll sing with pleasure;” and here the wretch, in something like the voice of a frog with the quinsy, began, “I’d mourn the hopes that leave me.”

“You shall mourn something else for the same reason,” said I, as losing all patience, I seized quilts and blankets by the corner, and with one vigorous pull wrenched them from the bed, and darted from the room—in a second I was in the corridor, trailing my spoil behind—which in my haste I had not time to collect in a bundle. I flew rather than ran along the passage, reached the stairs, and in another minute had reached the second gallery, but not before I heard the slam of a door behind me, and the same instant the footsteps of a person running along the corridor, who could be no other than my pursuer, effectually aroused by my last appeal to his charity. I darted along the dark and narrow passage; but soon to my horror discovered that I must have passed the door of my chamber, for I had reached the foot of a narrow back stair, which led to the grenier and the servants’ rooms, beneath the roof. To turn now would only have led me plump in the face of my injured countryman, of whose thew and sinew I was perfectly ignorant, and did not much like to venture upon. There was little time for reflection, for he had now reached the top of the stair, and was evidently listening for some clue to guide him on; stealthily and silently, and scarcely drawing breath, I mounted the narrow stairs step by step, but before I had arrived at the landing, he heard the rustle of the bed-clothes, and again gave chase. There was something in the unrelenting ardour of his pursuit, which suggested to my mind the idea of a most uncompromising foe; and as fear added speed to my steps, I dashed along beneath the low-roofed passage, wondering what chance of escape might yet present itself. Just at this instant, the hand by which I had guided myself along the wall, touched the handle of a door—I turned it—it opened—I drew in my precious bundle, and closing the door noiselessly, sat down, breathless and still, upon the floor.

Scarcely was this, the work of a second, accomplished, when the heavy tread of my pursuer resounded on the floor.

“Upon my conscience it’s strange if I haven’t you now, my friend,” said he: “you’re in a cul de sac here, as they say, if I know any thing of the house; and faith I’ll make a salad of you, when I get you, that’s all. Devil a dirtier trick ever I heard tell of.”

Need I say that these words had the true smack of an Irish accent, which circumstance, from whatever cause, did not by any means tend to assuage my fears in the event of discovery.



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However, from such a misfortune my good genius now delivered me; for after traversing the passage to the end, he at last discovered another, which led by a long flight to the second story, down which he proceeded, venting at every step his determination for vengeance, and his resolution not to desist from the pursuit, if it took the entire night for it.

“Well now,” thought I, “as he will scarcely venture up here again, and as I may, by leaving this, be only incurring the risk of encountering him, my best plan is to stay where I am if it be possible.” With this intent I proceeded to explore the apartment, which from its perfect stillness, I concluded to be unoccupied. After some few minutes groping I reached a low bed, fortunately empty, and although the touch of the bed-clothes led to no very favourable augury of its neatness or elegance, there was little choice at this moment, so I rolled myself up in my recent booty, and resolved to wait patiently for day-break to regain my apartment.

As always happens in such circumstances, sleep came on me unawares —so at least every one’s experience I am sure can testify, that if you are forced to awake early to start by some morning coach, and that unfortunately you have not got to bed till late at night, the chances are ten to one, that you get no sleep whatever, simply because you are desirous for it; but make up your mind ever so resolutely, that you’ll not sleep, and whether your determination be built on motives of propriety, duty, convenience, or health, and the chances are just as strong that you are sound and snoring before ten minutes.

How many a man has found it impossible, with every effort of his heart and brain aiding his good wishes, to sit with unclosed eyes and ears through a dull sermon in the dog-days; how many an expectant, longing heir has yielded to the drowsy influence when endeavouring to look contrite under the severe correction of a lecture on extravagance from his uncle. Who has not felt the irresistible tendency to “drop off” in the half hour before dinner at a stupid country-house? I need not catalogue the thousand other situations in life infinitely more “sleep-compelling” than Morphine; for myself, my pleasantest and soundest moments of perfect forgetfulness of this dreary world and all its cares, have been taken in an oaken bench, seated bolt upright and vis a vis to a lecturer on botany, whose calming accents, united with the softened light of an autumnal day, piercing its difficult rays through the narrow and cobwebbed windows, the odour of the recent plants and flowers aiding and abetting, all combined to steep the soul in sleep, and you sank by imperceptible and gradual steps into that state of easy slumber, in which “come no dreams,” and the last sounds of the lecturer’s “hypogenous and perigenous” died away, becoming beautifully less, till your senses sank into rest, the syllables “rigging us, rigging us,” seemed to melt away in the distance and fade from your memory—Peace

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be with you, Doctor A. If I owe gratitude any where I have my debt with you. The very memory I bear of you has saved me no inconsiderable sum in hop and henbane. Without any assistance from the sciences on the present occasion, I was soon asleep, and woke not till the cracking of whips, and trampling of horses' feet on the pavement of the coach-yard apprised me that the world had risen to its daily labour, and so should I. From the short survey of my present chamber which I took on waking, I conjectured it must have been the den of some of the servants of the house upon occasion—two low truckle-beds of the meanest description lay along the wall opposite to mine; one of them appeared to have been slept in during the past night, but by what species of animal the Fates alone can tell. An old demi-peak saddle, capped and tipped with brass, some rusty bits, and stray stirrup-irons lay here and there upon the floor; while upon a species of clothes-rack, attached to a rafter, hung a tarnished suit of postillion's livery, cap, jacket, leathers, and jack-boots, all ready for use; and evidently from their arrangement supposed by the owner to be a rather creditable "turn out."

I turned over these singular habiliments with much of the curiosity with which an antiquary would survey a suit of chain armour; the long epaulettes of yellow cotton cord, the heavy belt with its brass buckle, the cumbrous boots, plaited and bound with iron like churns were in rather a ludicrous contrast to the equipment of our light and jockey-like boys in nankeen jackets and neat tops, that spin along over our level "macadam."

"But," thought I, "it is full time I should get back to No. 82, and make my appearance below stairs;" though in what part of the building my room lay, and how I was to reach it without my clothes, I had not the slightest idea. A blanket is an excessively comfortable article of wearing apparel when in bed, but as a walking costume is by no means convenient or appropriate; while to making a *sorti en sauvage*, however appropriate during the night, there were many serious objections if done "en plein jour," and with the whole establishment awake and active; the noise of mopping, scrubbing, and polishing, which is eternally going forward in a foreign inn amply testified there was nothing which I could adopt in my present naked and forlorn condition, save the bizarre and ridiculous dress of the postillion, and I need not say the thought of so doing presented nothing agreeable. I looked from the narrow window out upon the tiled roof, but without any prospect of being heard if I called ever so loudly.

The infernal noise of floor-cleansing, assisted by a Norman peasant's "*chanson du pays*," the time being well marked by her heavy sabots, gave even less chance to me within; so that after more than half an hour passed in weighing difficulties, and canvassing plans, upon donning the blue and yellow, and setting out for my own room without delay, hoping sincerely, that with proper precaution, I should be able to reach it unseen and unobserved.



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As I laid but little stress upon the figure I should make in my new habiliments, it did not cause me much mortification to find that the clothes were considerably too small, the jacket scarcely coming beneath my arms, and the sleeves being so short that my hands and wrists projected beyond the cuffs like two enormous claws; the leathers were also limited in their length, and when drawn up to a proper height, permitted my knees to be seen beneath, like the short costume of a Spanish Tauridor, but scarcely as graceful; not wishing to encumber myself in the heavy and noisy masses of wood, iron, and leather, they call “les bottes forts,” I slipped my feet into my slippers, and stole gently from the room. How I must have looked at the moment I leave my reader to guess, as with anxious and stealthy pace I crept along the low gallery that led to the narrow staircase, down which I proceeded, step by step; but just as I reached the bottom, perceived a little distance from me, with her back turned towards me, a short, squat peasant on her knees, belabouring with a brush the well waxed floor; to pass therefore, unobserved was impossible, so that I did not hesitate to address her, and endeavour to interest her in my behalf, and enlist her as my guide.

“Bon jour, ma chere,” said I in a soft insinuating tone; she did not hear me, so I repeated,

“Bon jour, ma chere, bon jour.”

Upon this she turned round, and looking fixedly at me for a second, called out in a thick pathos, “Ah, le bon Dieu! qu’il est drole comme ca, Francois, savez vous, mais ce n’est pas Francois;” saying which, she sprang from her kneeling position to her feet, and with a speed that her shape and sabots seemed little to promise, rushed down the stairs as if she had seen the devil himself.

“Why, what is the matter with the woman?” said I, “surely if I am not Francois—which God be thanked is true—yet I cannot look so frightful as all this would imply.” I had not much time given me for consideration now, for before I had well deciphered the number over a door before me, the loud noise of several voices on the floor beneath attracted my attention, and the moment after the heavy tramp of feet followed, and in an instant the gallery was thronged by the men and women of the house —waiters, hostlers, cooks, scullions, filles de chambre, mingled with gens-d’armes, peasants, and town’s people, all eagerly forcing their way up stairs; yet all on arriving at the landing-place, seemed disposed to keep at a respectful distance, and bundling themselves at one end of the corridor, while I, feelingly alive to the ridiculous appearance I made, occupied the other—the gravity with which they seemed at first disposed to regard me soon gave way, and peal after peal of laughter broke out, and young and old, men and women, even to the most farouche gens-d’armes, all appearing incapable of controlling the desire for merriment my most singular figure inspired; and unfortunately this emotion seemed to promise no very speedy conclusion; for the jokes and witticisms made upon my appearance threatened to renew the festivities, ad libitum.



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“Regardez donc ses epaules,” said one.

“Ah, mon Dieu! Il me fait l’idée d’une grenouille avec ses jambes jaunes,” cried another.

“Il vaut son pesant de fromage pour une Vaudeville,” said the director of the strolling theatre of the place.

“I’ll give seventy francs a week, ‘d’appointment,’ and ‘Scribe’ shall write a piece express for himself, if he’ll take it.”

“May the devil fly away with your grinning baboon faces,” said I, as I rushed up the stairs again, pursued by the mob at full cry; scarcely, however, had I reached the top step, when the rough hand of the gen-d’arme seized me by the shoulder, while he said in a low, husky voice, “c’est inutile, Monsieur, you cannot escape—the thing was well contrived, it is true; but the gens-d’armes of France are not easily outwitted, and you could not have long avoided detection, even in that dress.” It was my turn to laugh now, which, to their very great amazement, I did, loud and long; that I should have thought my present costume could ever have been the means of screening me from observation, however it might have been calculated to attract it, was rather too absurd a supposition even for the mayor of a village to entertain; besides, it only now occurred to me that I was figuring in the character of a prisoner. The continued peals of laughing which this mistake on their part elicited from me seemed to afford but slight pleasure to my captor, who gruffly said—

“When you have done amusing yourself, mon ami, perhaps you will do us the favour to come before the mayor.”

“Certainly,” I replied; “but you will first permit me to resume my own clothes, I am quite sick of masquerading ‘en postillion.’”

“Not so fast, my friend,” said the suspicious old follower of Fouché —“not so fast; it is but right the maire should see you in the disguise you attempted your escape in. It must be especially mentioned in the proces verbal.”

“Well, this is becoming too ludicrous,” said I. “It need not take five minutes to satisfy you why, how, and where, I put on these confounded rags—”

“Then tell it to the maire, at the Bureau.”

“But for that purpose it is not necessary I should be conducted through the streets in broad day, to be laughed at. No, positively, I’ll not go. In my own dress I’ll accompany you with pleasure.”

“Victor, Henri, Guillame,” said the gen-d’arme, addressing his companions, who immediately closed round me. “You see,” added he, “there is no use in resisting.”



Need I recount my own shame and ineffable disgrace? Alas! it is too, too true. Harry Lorrequer—whom Stultze entreated to wear his coats, the ornament of Hyde Park, the last appeal in dress, fashion, and equipage—was obliged to parade through the mob of a market-town in France, with four gens-d'armes for his companions, and he himself habited in a mongrel character—half postillion, half Delaware Indian. The incessant yells of laughter—the screams of the children, and the outpouring of every species of sarcasm and ridicule, at my expense, were not all—for, as I emerged from the portechochere I saw Isabella in the window: her eyes were red with weeping; but no sooner had she beheld me, than she broke out into a fit of laughter that was audible even in the street.



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Rage had now taken such a hold upon me, that I forgot my ridiculous appearance in my thirst for vengeance. I marched on through the grinning crowd, with the step of a martyr. I suppose my heroic bearing and warlike deportment must have heightened the drollery of the scene; for the devils only laughed the more. The bureau of the maire could not contain one-tenth of the anxious and curious individuals who thronged the entrance, and for about twenty minutes the whole efforts of the gens-d'armes were little enough to keep order and maintain silence. At length the maire made his appearance, and accustomed as he had been for a long life to scenes of an absurd and extraordinary nature, yet the ridicule of my look and costume was too much, and he laughed outright. This was of course the signal for renewed mirth for the crowd, while those without doors, infected by the example, took up the jest, and I had the pleasure of a short calculation, a la Babbage, of how many maxillary jaws were at that same moment wagging at my expense.

However, the examination commenced; and I at length obtained an opportunity of explaining under what circumstances I had left my room, and how and why I had been induced to don this confounded cause of all my misery.

“This may be very true,” said the mayor, “as it is very plausible; if you have evidence to prove what you have stated—”

“If it's evidence only is wanting, Mr. Maire, I'll confirm one part of the story,” said a voice in the crowd, in an accent and tone that assured me the speaker was the injured proprietor of the stolen blankets. I turned round hastily to look at my victim, and what was my surprise to recognize a very old Dublin acquaintance, Mr. Fitzmaurice O'Leary.

“Good morning, Mr. Lorrequer,” said he; “this is mighty like our ould practices in Collegegreen; but upon my conscience the maire has the advantage of Gabbet. It's lucky for you I know his worship, as we'd call him at home, or this might be a serious business. Nothing would persuade them that you were not Lucien Buonaparte, or the iron mask, or something of that sort, if they took it into their heads.”

Mr. O'Leary was as good as his word. In a species of French, that I'd venture to say would be perfectly intelligible in Mullingar, he contrived to explain to the maire that I was neither a runaway nor a swindler, but a very old friend of his, and consequently sans reproche. The official was now as profuse of his civilities as he had before been of his suspicions, and most hospitably pressed us to stay for breakfast. This, for many reasons, I was obliged to decline—not the least of which was, my impatience to get out of my present costume. We accordingly procured a carriage, and I returned to the hotel, screened from the gaze but still accompanied by the shouts of the mob, who evidently took a most lively interest in the entire proceeding.



I lost no time in changing my costume, and was about to descend to the saloon, when the master of the house came to inform me that Mrs. Bingham's courier had arrived with the carriage, and that she expected us at Amiens as soon as possible.



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“That is all right. Now, Mr. O’Leary, I must pray you to forgive all the liberty I have taken with you, and also permit me to defer the explanation of many circumstances which seem at present strange, till—”

“Till sine die, if the story be a long one, my dear sir—there’s nothing I hate so much, except cold punch.”

“You are going to Paris,” said I; “is it not so?”

“Yes, I’m thinking of it. I was up at Trolhatten, in Norway, three weeks ago, and I was obliged to leave it hastily, for I’ve an appointment with a friend in Geneva.”

“Then how do you travel?”

“On foot, just as you see, except that I’ve a tobacco bag up stairs, and an umbrella.”

“Light equipment, certainly; but you must allow me to give you a set down as far as Amiens, and also to present you to my friends there.”

To this Mr. O’Leary made no objection; and as Miss Bingham could not bear any delay, in her anxiety to join her mother, we set out at once—the only thing to mar my full enjoyment at the moment being the sight of the identical vestments I had so lately figured in, bobbing up and down before my eyes for the whole length of the stage, and leading to innumerable mischievous allusions from my friend Mr. O’Leary, which were far too much relished by my fair companion.

At twelve we arrived at Amiens, when I presented my friend Mr. O’Leary to Mrs. Bingham.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mr. O’LEARY.

At the conclusion of my last chapter I was about to introduce to my reader’s acquaintance my friend Mr. O’Leary; and, as he is destined to occupy some place in the history of these Confessions, I may, perhaps, be permitted to do so at more length than his intrinsic merit at first sight might appear to warrant.

Mr. O’Leary was, and I am induced to believe is, a particularly short, fat, greasy-looking gentleman, with a head as free from phrenological development as a billiard-ball, and a countenance which, in feature and colour, nearly resembled the face of a cherub, carved in oak, as we see them in old pulpits.



Short as is his stature, his limbs compose the least part of it. His hands and feet, forming some compensation by their ample proportions, with short, thick fins, vulgarly called a cobbler's thumb. His voice varying in cadence from a deep barytone, to a high falsetto, maintains throughout the distinctive characteristic of a Dublin accent and pronunciation, and he talks of the "Veel of Ovoca, and a beef-steek," with some pride of intonation. What part of the Island he came originally from, or what may be his age, are questions I have the most profound ignorance of; I have heard many anecdotes which would imply his being what the French call "d'un age mur"—but his own observations are generally limited to events occurring since the peace of "fifteen." To his personal attractions, such as they are, he has never been solicitous of contributing by the meretricious aids of dress. His coat, calculating from its length of waist, and ample skirt, would fit Bumbo Green, while his trowsers, being made of some cheap and shrinking material, have gradually contracted their limits, and look now exactly like knee-breeches, without the usual buttons at the bottom.



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These, with the addition of a pair of green spectacles, the glass of one being absent, and permitting the look-out of a sharp, grey eye, twinkling with drollery and good humour, form the most palpable of his externals. In point of character, they who best knew him represented him as the best-tempered, best-hearted fellow breathing; ever ready to assist a friend, and always postponing his own plans and his own views, when he had any, to the wishes and intentions of others. Among the many odd things about him, was a constant preference to travelling on foot, and a great passion for living abroad, both of which tastes he gratified, although his size might seem to offer obstacles to the one, and his total ignorance of every continental language, would appear to preclude the other; with a great liking for tobacco, which he smoked all day—a fondness for whist and malt liquors—his antipathies were few; so that except when called upon to shave more than once in the week, or wash his hands twice on the same day, it was difficult to disconcert him. His fortune was very ample; but although his mode of living was neither very ostentatious nor costly, he contrived always to spend his income. Such was the gentleman I now presented to my friends, who, I must confess, appeared strangely puzzled by his manner and appearance. This feeling, however, soon wore off; and before he had spent the morning in their company, he had made more way in their good graces, and gone farther to establish intimacy, than many a more accomplished person, with an unexceptionable coat and accurate whisker might have effected in a fortnight. What were his gifts in this way, I am, alas, most deplorably ignorant of; it was not, heaven knows, that he possessed any conversational talent—of successful flattery he knew as much as a negro does of the national debt—and yet the “bon-homme” of his character seemed to tell at once; and I never knew him fail in any one instance to establish an interest for himself before he had completed the ordinary period of a visit.

I think it is Washington Irving who has so admirably depicted the mortification of a dandy angler, who, with his beaver garnished with brown hackles, his well-posed rod, polished gaff, and handsome landing-net, with every thing befitting, spends his long summer day whipping a trout stream without a rise or even a ripple to reward him, while a ragged urchin, with a willow wand, and a bent pin, not ten yards distant, is covering the greensward with myriads of speckled and scaly backs, from one pound weight to four; so it is in every thing—“the race is not to the swift;” the elements of success in life, whatever be the object of pursuit, are very, very different from what we think them at first sight, and so it was with Mr. O’Leary, and I have more than once witnessed the triumph of his homely manner and blunt humour over the more polished and well-bred taste of his competitors for favour; and what might

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have been the limit to such success, heaven alone can tell, if it were not that he laboured under a counter-balancing infirmity, sufficient to have swamped a line-of-battle ship itself. It was simply this—a most unfortunate propensity to talk of the wrong place, person, or time, in any society he found himself; and this taste for the mal apropos, extended so far, that no one ever ventured into company with him as his friend, without trembling for the result; but even this, I believe his only fault, resulted from the natural goodness of his character and intentions; for, believing as he did, in his honest simplicity, that the arbitrary distinctions of class and rank were held as cheaply by others as himself, he felt small scruple at recounting to a duchess a scene in a cabaret, and with as little hesitation would he, if asked, have sung the “Cruiskeen lawn,” or the “Jug of Punch,” after Lablanche had finished the “Al Idea,” from Figaro. ‘Mauvaise honte,’ he had none; indeed I am not sure that he had any kind of shame whatever, except possibly when detected with a coat that bore any appearance of newness, or if overpersuaded to wear gloves, which he ever considered as a special effeminacy.

Such, in a few words, was the gentleman I now presented to my friends, and how far he insinuated himself into their good graces, let the fact tell, that on my return to the breakfast-room, after about an hour’s absence, I heard him detailing the particulars of a route they were to take by his advice, and also learned that he had been offered and had accepted a seat in their carriage to Paris.

“Then I’ll do myself the pleasure of joining your party, Mrs. Bingham,” said he. “Bingham, I think, madam, is your name.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Any relation, may I ask, of a most dear friend of mine, of the same name, from Currynaslattery, in the county Wexford?”

“I am really not aware,” said Mrs. Bingham. “My husband’s family are, I believe, many of them from that county.”

“Ah, what a pleasant fellow was Tom!” said Mr. O’Leary musingly, and with that peculiar tone which made me tremble, for I knew well that a reminiscence was coming. “A pleasant fellow indeed.”

“Is he alive, sir, now?”

“I believe so, ma’am; but I hear the climate does not agree with him.”

“Ah, then, he’s abroad! In Italy probably?”



“No, ma’am, in Botany Bay. His brother, they say, might have saved him, but he left poor Tom to his fate, for he was just then paying court to a Miss Crow, I think, with a large fortune. Oh, Lord, what have I said, it’s always the luck of me!” The latter exclamation was the result of a heavy saugh upon the floor, Mrs. Bingham having fallen in a faint—she being the identical lady alluded to, and her husband the brother of pleasant Tom Bingham.

To hurl Mr. O’Leary out of the room by one hand, and ring the bell with the other, was the work of a moment; and with proper care, and in due time, Mrs. Bingham was brought to herself, when most fortunately, she entirely forgot the cause of her sudden indisposition; and, of course, neither her daughter nor myself suffered any clue to escape us which might lead to its discovery.



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When we were once more upon the road, to efface if it might be necessary any unpleasant recurrence to the late scene, I proceeded to give Mrs. Bingham an account of my adventure at Chantraine, in which, of course, I endeavoured to render my friend O'Leary all the honours of being laughed at in preference to myself, laying little stress upon my masquerading in the jack-boots.

"You are quite right," said O'Leary, joining in the hearty laugh against him, "quite right, I was always a very heavy sleeper—indeed if I wasn't I wouldn't be here now, travelling about en garçon, free as air;" here he heaved a sigh, which from its incongruity with his jovial look and happy expression, threw us all into renewed laughter.

"But why, Mr. O'Leary—what can your sleepiness have to do with such tender recollections, for such, I am sure, that sigh bespeaks them?"

"Ah! ma'am, it may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, if it were not for that unfortunate tendency, I should now be the happy possessor of a most accomplished and amiable lady, and eight hundred per annum three and a half per cent. stock."

"You overslept yourself on the wedding-day, I suppose."

"You shall hear, ma'am, the story is a very short one: It is now about eight years ago, I was rambling through the south of France, and had just reached Lyons, where the confounded pavement, that sticks up like pears, with the point upwards, had compelled me to rest some days and recruit; for this purpose I installed myself in the pension of Madame Gourgead, Rue de Petits Carmes, a quiet house—where we dined at twelve, ten in number, upon about two pounds of stewed beef, with garlic and carrots—a light soup, being the water which accompanied the same to render it tender in stewing—some preserved cherries, and an omelette, with a pint bottle of Beaune, 6me qualite, I believe—a species of pyroligneous wine made from the vine stalks, but pleasant in summer with your salad; then we played dominos in the evening, or whist for sous points, leading altogether a very quiet and virtuous existence, or as Madame herself expressed it, 'une vie tout-a-fait patriarchale;' of this I cannot myself affirm how far she was right in supposing the patriarchs did exactly like us. But to proceed, in the same establishment there lived a widow whose late husband had been a wine merchant at Dijon—he had also, I suppose from residing in that country, been imitating the patriarchs, for he died one day. Well, the lady was delayed at Lyons for some law business, and thus it came about, that her husband's testament and the sharp paving stones in the streets determined we should be acquainted. I cannot express to you the delight of my fair countrywoman at finding that a person who spoke English had arrived at the 'pension'—a feeling I myself somewhat participated in; for to say truth, I was not at that time a very great proficient in French. We soon became intimate, in less time probably than it could otherwise have happened, for from the ignorance of all the others of one word of English, I was enabled during dinner to say many soft and tender things, which one does not usually venture on in company.



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“I recounted my travels, and told various adventures of my wanderings, till at last, from being merely amused, I found that my fair friend began to be interested in my narratives; and frequently when passing the bouillon to her, I have seen a tear in the corner of her eye: in a word, ‘she loved me for the dangers I had passed,’ as Othello says. Well, laugh away if you like, but it’s truth I am telling you.” At this part of Mr. O’Leary’s story we all found it impossible to withstand the ludicrous mock heroic of his face and tone, and laughed loud and long. When we at length became silent he resumed—“Before three weeks had passed over, I had proposed and was accepted, just your own way, Mr. Lorrequer, taking the ball at the hop, the very same way you did at Cheltenham, the time the lady jilted you, and ran off with your friend Mr. Waller; I read it all in the news, though I was then in Norway fishing.” Here there was another interruption by a laugh, not, however, at Mr. O’Leary’s expense. I gave him a most menacing look, while he continued—“the settlements were soon drawn up, and consisted, like all great diplomatic documents, of a series of ‘gains and compensations;’ thus, she was not to taste any thing stronger than kirsch wasser, or Nantz brandy; and I limited myself to a pound of short-cut weekly, and so on: but to proceed, the lady being a good Catholic, insisted upon being married by a priest of her own persuasion, before the performance of the ceremony at the British embassy in Paris; to this I could offer no objection, and we were accordingly united in the holy bonds the same morning, after signing the law papers.”

“Then, Mr. O’Leary, you are really a married man.”

“That’s the very point I’m coming to, ma’am; for I’ve consulted all the jurists upon the subject, and they never can agree. But you shall hear. I despatched a polite note to Bishop Luscombe, and made every arrangement for the approaching ceremony, took a quartier in the Rue Helder, near the Estaminet, and looked forward with anxiety for the day which was to make me happy; for our marriage in Lyons was only a kind of betrothal. Now, my fair friend had but one difficulty remaining, poor dear soul—I refrain from mentioning her name for delicacy sake; but poor dear Mrs. Ram could not bear the notion of our going up to Paris in the same conveyance, for long as she had lived abroad, she had avoided every thing French, even the language, so she proposed that I should go in the early ‘Diligence,’ which starts at four-o’clock in the morning, while she took her departure at nine; thus I should be some hours sooner in Paris, and ready to receive her on her arriving; besides sparing her bashfulness all reproach of our travelling together. It was no use my telling her that I always travelled on foot, and hated a ‘Diligence;’ she coolly replied that at our time of life we could not spare the time necessary for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, for so she supposed the journey from Lyons to Paris to be; so fearing lest any doubt might be thrown upon the ardour of my attachment, I yielded at once, remembering at the moment what my poor friend Tom Bing—Oh Lord, I’m at it again!”



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“Sir, I did not hear.”

“Nothing, ma’am, I was just going to observe, that ladies of a certain time of life, and widows especially, like a lover that seems a little ardent or so, all the better.” Here Mrs. Bingham blushed, her daughter bridled, and I nearly suffocated with shame and suppressed laughter.

“After a most tender farewell of my bride or wife, I don’t know which, I retired for the night with a mind vacillating between my hopes of happiness and my fears for the result of a journey so foreign to all my habits of travelling, and in which I could not but tremble at the many casualties my habitual laziness and dislike to any hours but of my own choosing might involve me in.

“I had scarcely lain down in bed, ere these thoughts took such possession of me, that sleep for once in my life was out of the question; and then the misery of getting up at four in the morning—putting on your clothes by the flickering light of the porter’s candle—getting your boots on the wrong feet, and all that kind of annoyance—I am sure I fretted myself into the feeling of a downright martyr before an hour was over. Well at least, thought I, one thing is well done,—I have been quite right in coming to sleep here at the Messagerie Hotel, where the diligence starts from, or the chances are ten to one that I never should wake till the time was past. Now, however, they are sure to call me; so I may sleep tranquilly till then. Meanwhile I had forgotten to pack my trunk—my papers, &c. laying all about the room in a state of considerable confusion. I rose at once with all the despatch I could muster; this took a long time to effect, and it was nearly two o’clock ere I finished, and sat down to smoke a solitary pipe,—the last, as I supposed it might be my lot to enjoy for heaven knows how long, Mrs. R. having expressed, rather late in our intimacy I confess, strong opinions against tobacco within doors.

“When I had finished my little sac of the ‘weed,’ the clock struck three, and I started to think how little time I was destined to have in bed. In bed! why, said I, there is no use thinking of it now, for I shall scarcely have lain down ere I shall be obliged to get up again. So thinking, I set about dressing myself for the road; and by the time I had enveloped myself in a pair of long Hungarian gaiters, and a kurtcha of sheep’s wool, with a brown bear-skin outside, with a Welsh wig, and a pair of large dark glass goggles to defend the eyes from the snow, I was not only perfectly impervious to all effects of the weather, but so thoroughly defended from any influence of sight or sound, that a volcano might be hissing and thundering within ten yards of me, without attracting my slightest attention. Now, I thought, instead of remaining here, I’ll just step down to the coach, and get snugly in the diligence, and having secured the corner of the coupe, resign myself to sleep with the certainty of not being left behind, and, probably, too, be some miles on my journey before awaking.



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"I accordingly went down stairs, and to my surprise found, even at that early hour, that many of the garçons of the house were stirring and bustling about, getting all the luggage up in the huge wooden leviathan that was to convey us on our road. There they stood, like bees around a hive, clustering and buzzing, and all so engaged that with difficulty could I get an answer to my question of, What diligence it was? 'La diligence pour Paris, Monsieur.'

"'Ah, all right then,' said I; so watching an opportunity to do so unobserved, for I supposed they might have laughed at me, I stepped quietly into the coupe; and amid the creaking of cordage, and the thumping of feet on the roof, fell as sound asleep as ever I did in my life—these sounds coming to my muffled ears, soft as the echoes on the Rhine. When it was that I awoke I cannot say; but as I rubbed my eyes and yawned after a most refreshing sleep, I perceived that it was still quite dark all around, and that the diligence was standing before the door of some inn and not moving. Ah, thought I, this is the first stage; how naturally one always wakes at the change of horses,—a kind of instinct implanted by Providence, I suppose, to direct us to a little refreshment on the road. With these pious feelings I let down the glass, and called out to the garçon for a glass of brandy and a cigar. While he was bringing them, I had time to look about, and perceived, to my very great delight, that I had the whole coupe to myself. 'Are there any passengers coming in here?' said I, as the waiter came forward with my petit verre. 'I should think not, sir,' said the fellow with a leer. 'Then I shall have the whole coupe to myself?' said I. 'Monsieur need have no fear of being disturbed; I can safely assure him that he will have no one there for the next twenty-four hours.' This was really pleasant intelligence; so I chucked him a ten sous piece, and closing up the window as the morning was cold, once more lay back to sleep with a success that has never failed me. It was to a bright blue cloudless sky, and the sharp clear air of a fine day in winter, that I at length opened my eyes. I pulled out my watch, and discovered it was exactly two o'clock; I next lowered the glass and looked about me, and very much to my surprise discovered that the diligence was not moving, but standing very peaceably in a very crowded congregation of other similar and dissimilar conveyances, all of which seemed, I thought, to labour under some physical ailment, some wanting a box, others a body, &c., &c. and in fact suggesting the idea of an infirmary for old and disabled carriages of either sex, mails and others. 'Oh, I have it,' cried I, 'we are arrived at Mt. Geran, and they are all at dinner, and from my being alone in the coupe, they have forgotten to call me.' I immediately opened the door and stepped out into the innyard, crowded with conducteurs, grooms, and ostlers, who, I thought, looked rather surprised at seeing me emerge from the diligence.



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“You did not know I was there,” said I, with a knowing wink at one of them as I passed.

“Assurement non,” said the fellow with a laugh, that was the signal for all the others to join in it. ‘Is the table d’hote over?’ said I, regardless of the mirth around me. ‘Monsieur is just in time,’ said the waiter, who happened to pass with a soup-tureen in his hand. ‘Have the goodness to step this way.’ I had barely time to remark the close resemblance of the waiter to the fellow who presented me with my brandy and cigar in the morning, when he ushered me into a large room with about forty persons sitting at a long table, evidently waiting with impatience for the ‘Potage’ to begin their dinner. Whether it was they enjoyed the joke of having neglected to call me, or that they were laughing at my travelling costume, I cannot say, but the moment I came in, I could perceive a general titter run through the assembly. ‘Not too late, after all, gentlemen,’ said I, marching gravely up the table.

“Monsieur is in excellent time,” said the host, making room for me beside his chair. Notwithstanding the incumbrance of my weighty habiliments, I proceeded to do ample justice to the viands before me, apologizing laughingly to the host, by pleading a traveller’s appetite.

“Then you have perhaps come far this morning,” said a gentleman opposite.

“Yes,” said I, ‘I have been on the road since four o’clock.’

“And how are the roads?” said another. ‘Very bad,’ said I, ‘the first few stages from Lyons, afterwards much better.’ This was said at a venture, as I began to be ashamed of being always asleep before my fellow-travellers. They did not seem, however, to understand me perfectly; and one old fellow putting down his spectacles from his forehead, leaned over and said: ‘And where, may I ask, has Monsieur come from this morning?’

“From Lyons,” said I, with the proud air of a man who has done a stout feat, and is not ashamed of the exploit.

“From Lyons!” said one. ‘From Lyons!’ cried another. ‘From Lyons!’ repeated a third.

“Yes,” said I; ‘what the devil is so strange in it; travelling is so quick now-a-days, one thinks nothing of twenty leagues before dinner.’

“The infernal shout of laughing that followed my explanation is still in my ears; from one end of the table to the other there was one continued ha, ha, ha—from the greasy host to the little hunchbacked waiter, they were all grinning away.

“And how did Monsieur travel?” said the old gentleman, who seemed to carry on the prosecution against me.



“By the diligence, the “Aigle noir,”” said I, giving the name with some pride, that I was not altogether ignorant of the conveyance.

“The you should certainly not complain of the roads,’ said the host chuckling; ‘for the only journey that diligence has made this day has been from the street-door to the inn-yard; for as they found when the luggage was nearly packed that the axle was almost broken through, they wheeled it round to the court, and prepared another for the travellers.’



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“And where am I now?’ said I.

“In Lyons,’ said twenty voices, half choked with laughter at my question.

“I was thunderstruck at the news at first; but as I proceeded with my dinner, I joined in the mirth of the party, which certainly was not diminished on my telling them the object of my intended journey.

“I think, young man,’ said the old fellow with the spectacles, ‘that you should take the occurrence as a warning of Providence that marriage will not suit you.’ I began to be of the same opinion;—but then there was the jointure. To be sure, I was to give up tobacco; and perhaps I should not be as free to ramble about as when en garçon. So taking all things into consideration, I ordered in another bottle of burgundy, to drink Mrs. Ram’s health—got my passport vised for Barege—and set out for the Pyrenees the same evening.”

“And have you never heard any thing more of the lady?” said Mrs. Bingham.

“Oh, yes. She was faithful to the last; for I found out when at Rome last winter that she had offered a reward for me in the newspapers, and indeed had commenced a regular pursuit of me through the whole continent. And to tell the real fact, I should not now fancy turning my steps towards Paris, if I had not very tolerable information that she is in full cry after me through the Wengen Alps, I having contrived a paragraph in Galignani, to seduce her thither, and where, with the blessing of Providence, if the snow set in early, she must pass the winter.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

Paris.

Nothing more worthy of recording occurred before our arrival at Meurice on the third day of our journey. My friend O’Leary had, with his usual good fortune, become indispensable to his new acquaintance, and it was not altogether without some little lurking discontent that I perceived how much less often my services were called in request since his having joined our party; his information, notwithstanding its very scanty extent, was continually relied upon, and his very imperfect French everlastingly called into requisition to interpret a question for the ladies. Yes, thought I, “Othello’s occupation’s gone;” one of two things has certainly happened, either Mrs. Bingham and her daughter have noticed my continued abstraction of mind, and have attributed it to the real cause, the pre-occupation of my affections; or thinking, on the other hand, that I am desperately in love with one or other of them, have thought that a little show of preference to Mr. O’Leary may stimulate me to a proposal at once. In either case I resolved to lose no time in taking my leave, which there could be no difficulty in doing



now, as the ladies had reached their intended destination, and had numerous friends in Paris to advise and assist them; besides that I had too long neglected the real object of my trip, and should lose no time in finding out the Callonbys, and at once learn what prospect of success awaited me in that quarter. Leaving my fair friends then to refresh themselves after the journey, and consigning Mr. O'Leary to the enjoyment of his meershaum, through the aid of which he had rendered his apartment like a Dutch swamp in autumn, the only portion of his own figure visible through the mist being his short legs and heavy shoes.



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On reaching the house in the Rue de la Paix, where the Callonbys had resided, I learned that they were still at Baden, and were not expected in Paris for some weeks; that Lord Kilkee had arrived that morning, and was then dining at the Embassy, having left an invitation for me to dine with him on the following day, if I happened to call. As I turned from the door, uncertain whither to turn my steps, I walked on unconsciously towards the Boulevard, and occupied as I was, thinking over all the chances before me, did not perceive where I stood till the bright glare of a large gas lamp over my head apprised me that I was at the door of the well known Salon des Etrangers, at the corner of the Rue Richelieu; carriages, citadines, and vigilantes were crowding, crashing, and clattering on all sides, as the host of fashion and the gaming-table were hastening to their champ de bataille. Not being a member of the Salon, and having little disposition to enter, if I had been, I stood for some minutes looking at the crowd as it continued to press on towards the splendid and brilliantly lighted stairs, which leads from the very street to the rooms of the palace, for such, in the magnificence and luxury of its decorations, it really is. As I was on the very eve of turning away, a large and very handsome cab-horse turned the corner from the balustrade, with the most perfect appointment of harness and carriage I had seen for a long time.

While I continued to admire the taste and propriety of the equipage, a young man in deep mourning sprung from the inside and stood upon the pavement before me. "A deux heures, Charles," said he to his servant, as the cab turned slowly around. The voice struck me as well known. I waited till he approached the lamp, to catch a glimpse of the face; and what was my surprise to recognise my cousin, Guy Lorrequer of the 10th, whom I had not met with for six years before. My first impulse was not to make myself known to him. Our mutual position with regard to Lady Jane was so much a mystery, as regarded myself, that I feared the result of any meeting, until I was sufficiently aware of how matters stood, and whether we were to meet as friends and relations, or rivals, and consequently enemies.

Before I had time to take my resolution, Guy had recognised me, and seizing me by the hand with both his, called, "Harry, my old friend, how are you? how long have you been here, and never to call on me? Why man, what is the meaning of this?" Before I had time to say that I was only a few hours in Paris, he again interrupted me by saying: "And how comes it that you are not in mourning? You must surely have heard it."



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“Heard what?” I cried, nearly hoarse from agitation. “Our poor old friend, Sir Guy, didn’t you know, is dead.” Only those who have felt how strong the ties of kindred are, as they decrease in number, can tell how this news fell upon my heart. All my poor uncle’s kindnesses came one by one full upon my memory; his affectionate letters of advice; his well-meant chidings, too, even dearer to me than his praise and approval, completely unmanned me; and I stood speechless and powerless before my cousin as he continued to detail to me the rapid progress of Sir Guy’s malady, and attack of gout in the head, which carried him off in three days. Letters had been sent to me in different places, but none reached; and at the very moment the clerk of my uncle’s lawyer was in pursuit of me through the highlands, where some mistaken information had induced him to follow me.

“You are, therefore,” continued Guy, “unaware that our uncle has dealt so fairly by you, and indeed by both of us; I have got the Somersetshire estates, which go with the baronetcy; but the Cumberland property is all yours; and I heartily wish you joy of having nearly eight thousand per annum, and one of the sweetest villas that ever man fancied on Derwentwater. But come along here,” continued he, and he led me through the crowded corridor and up the wide stair. “I have much to tell you, and we can be perfectly alone here; no one will trouble themselves with us.” Unconscious of all around me, I followed Guy along the gilded and glittering lobby, which led to the Salon, and it was only as the servant in rich livery came forward to take my hat and cane that I remembered where I was. Then the full sense of all I had been listening to rushed upon me, and the unfitness, and indeed the indecency of the place for such communications as we were engaged in, came most forcibly before me. Sir Guy, it is true, had always preferred my cousin to me; he it was who was always destined to succeed both to his title and his estates, and his wildness and extravagance had ever met with a milder rebuke and weaker chastisement than my follies and my misfortunes. Yet still he was my last remaining relative; the only one I possessed in all the world to whom in any difficulty or trial I had to look up; and I felt, in the very midst of my newly acquired wealth and riches, poorer and more alone than ever I had done in my lifetime. I followed Guy to a small and dimly lighted cabinet off the great salon, where, having seated ourselves, he proceeded to detail to me the various events which a few short weeks had accomplished. Of himself he spoke but little, and never once alluded to the Callonbys at all; indeed all I could learn was that he had left the army, and purposed remaining for the winter at Paris, where he appeared to have entered into all its gaiety and dissipation at once.

“Of course,” said he, “you will give up ‘sodgering’ now; at the best it is but poor sport after five and twenty, and is perfectly unendurable when a man has the means of pushing himself in the gay world; and now, Harry, let us mix a little among the mob here; for Messieurs les Banquiers don’t hold people in estimation who come here only for the ‘chapons au riz.’ and the champagne glacee, as we should seem to do were we to stay here much longer.”



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Such was the whirl of my thoughts, and so great the confusion in my ideas from all I had just heard, that I felt myself implicitly following every direction of my cousin with a child-like obedience, of the full extent of which I became only conscious when I found myself seated at the table of the Salon, between my cousin Guy and an old, hard-visaged, pale-countenanced man, who he told me in a whisper was Vilelle the Minister.

What a study for the man who would watch the passions and emotions of his fellow-men, would the table of a rouge et noir gambling-house present—the skill and dexterity which games of other kinds require, being here wanting, leave the player free to the full abandonment of the passion. The interest is not a gradually increasing or vacillating one, as fortune and knowledge of the game favour; the result is uninfluenced by any thing of his doing; with the last turned card of the croupier is he rich or ruined; and thus in the very abstraction of the anxiety is this the most painfully exciting of all gambling whatever; the very rattle of the dice-box to the hazard player is a relief; and the thought that he is in some way instrumental in his good or bad fortune gives a turn to his thoughts. There is something so like the inevitable character of fate associated with the result of a chance, which you can in no way affect or avert, that I have, notwithstanding a strong bias for play, ever dreaded and avoided the rouge et noir table; hitherto prudential motives had their share in the resolve; a small loss at play becomes a matter of importance to a sub in a marching regiment; and therefore I was firm in my determination to avoid the gambling-table. Now my fortunes were altered; and as I looked at the heap of shining louis d'or, which Guy pushed before me in exchange for a billet de banque of large amount, I felt the full importance of my altered position, mingling with the old and long practised prejudices which years had been accumulating to fix. There is besides some wonderful fascination to most men in the very aspect of high play: to pit your fortune against that of another—to see whether or not your luck shall not exceed some others—are feelings that have a place in most bosoms, and are certainly, if not naturally existing, most easily generated in the bustle and excitement of the gambling-house. The splendour of the decorations; the rich profusion of gilded ornaments; the large and gorgeously framed mirrors; the sparkling lustres; mingling their effect with the perfumed air of the apartment, filled with orange trees and other aromatic shrubs; the dress of the company, among whom were many ladies in costumes not inferior to those of a court; the glitter of diamonds; the sparkle of stars and decorations, rendered more magical by knowing that the wearers were names in history. There, with his round but ample shoulder, and large massive head, covered with long snow-white hair, stands Talleyrand, the maker and unmaker of kings, watching with a look



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of ill-concealed anxiety the progress of his game. Here is Soutt, with his dogged look and beetled brow; there stands Balzac the author, his gains here are less derived from the betting than the bettors; he is evidently making his own of some of them, while in the seeming bon hommie of his careless manners and easy abandon, they scruple not to trust him with anecdotes and traits, that from the crucible of his fiery imagination come forth, like the purified gold from the furnace. And there, look at that old and weather-beaten man, with grey eyebrows, and moustaches, who throws from the breast-pocket of his frock ever and anon, a handful of gold pieces upon the table; he evidently neither knows nor cares for the amount, for the banker himself is obliged to count over the stake for him—that is Blucher, the never-wanting attendant at the Salon; he has been an immense loser, but plays on with the same stern perseverance with which he would pour his bold cavalry through a ravine torn by artillery; he stands by the still waning chance with a courage that never falters.

One strong feature of the levelling character of a taste for play has never ceased to impress me most forcibly—not only do the individual peculiarities of the man give way before the all-absorbing passion—but stranger still, the very boldest traits of nationality even fade and disappear before it; and man seems, under the high-pressure power of this greatest of all stimulants, resolved into a most abstract state.

Among all the traits which distinguish Frenchmen from natives of every country, none is more prominent than a kind of never-failing elasticity of temperament, which seems almost to defy all the power of misfortune to depress. Let what will happen, the Frenchman seems to possess some strong resource within himself, in his ardent temperament, upon which he can draw at will; and whether on the day after a defeat, the moment of being deceived in his strongest hopes of returned affection—the overthrow of some long-cherished wish—it matters not—he never gives way entirely; but see him at the gaming-table—watch the intense, the aching anxiety with which his eye follows every card as it falls from the hand of the croupier—behold the look of cold despair that tracks his stake as the banker rakes it in among his gains—and you will at once perceive that here, at least, his wonted powers fail him. No jest escapes the lips of one, that would badinet upon the steps of the guillotine. The mocker who would jeer at the torments of revolution, stands like a coward quailing before the impassive eye and pale cheek of a croupier. While I continued to occupy myself by observing the different groups about me, I had been almost mechanically following the game, placing at each deal some gold upon the table; the result however had interested me so slightly, that it was only by remarking the attention my game had excited in others, that my own was drawn towards it. I then perceived that I had permitted my winnings to accumulate upon the board, and that in the very deal then commencing, I had a stake of nearly five hundred pounds upon the deal.



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“Faites votre jeu, le jeu est fait,” said the croupier, “trente deux.”

“You have lost, by Jove,” said Guy, in a low whisper, in which I could detect some trait of agitation.

“Trente et une,” added the croupier. “Rouge perd, et couleur.”

There was a regular buz of wonder through the room at my extraordinary luck, for thus, with every chance against me, I had won again.

As the croupier placed the billets de banque upon the table, I overheard the muttered commendations of an old veteran behind me, upon the coolness and judgment of my play; so much for fortune, thought I, my judgment consists in a perfect ignorance of the chances, and my coolness is merely a thorough indifference to success; whether it was now that the flattery had its effect upon me, or that the passion for play, so long dormant, had suddenly seized hold upon me, I know not, but my attention became from that moment rivetted upon the game, and I played every deal. Guy, who had been from the first betting with the indifferent success which I have so often observed to attend upon the calculations of old and experienced gamblers, now gave up, and employed himself merely in watching my game.

“Harry,” said he at last, “I am completely puzzled as to whether you are merely throwing down your louis at hazard, or are not the deepest player I have ever met with.”

“You shall see,” said I, as I stooped over towards the banker, and whispered, “how far is the betting permitted?”

“Fifteen thousand francs,” said the croupier, with a look of surprise.

“Then be it,” said I; “quinze mille francs, rouge.”

In a moment the rouge won, and the second deal I repeated the bet, and so continuing on with the like success; when I was preparing my rouleau for the fifth, the banquier rose, and saying—

“Messieurs, la banque est fermee pour ce soir,” proceeded to lock his casket, and close the table.

“You are satisfied now,” said Guy, rising, “you see you have broke the banque, and a very pretty incident to commence with your first introduction to a campaign in Paris.”

Having changed my gold for notes, I stuffed them, with an air of well-affected carelessness, into my pocket, and strolled through the Salon, where I had now become an object of considerably more interest than all the marshals and ministers about me.



“Now, Hal,” said Guy, “I’ll just order our supper in the cabinet, and join you in a moment.”

As I remained for some minutes awaiting Guy’s return, my attention was drawn towards a crowd, in a smaller salon, among whom the usual silent decorum of the play-table seemed held in but small respect, for every instant some burst of hearty laughter, or some open expression of joy or anger burst forth, by which I immediately perceived that they were the votaries of the roulette table, a game at which the strict propriety and etiquette ever maintained at



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rouge et noir, are never exacted. As I pressed nearer, to discover the cause of the mirth, which every moment seemed to augment, guess my surprise to perceive among the foremost rank of the players, my acquaintance, Mr. O'Leary, whom I at that moment believed to be solacing himself with his meershaum at Meurice. My astonishment at how he obtained admission to the Salon was even less than my fear of his recognising me. At no time is it agreeable to find that the man who is regarded as the buffo of a party turns out to be your friend, but still less is this so, when the individual claiming acquaintance with you presents any striking absurdity in his dress or manner, strongly at contrast with the persons and things about him; and thus it now happened—Mr. O'Leary's external man, as we met him on the Calais road, with its various accompaniments of blouse-cap, spectacles, and tobacco-pipe, were nothing very outre or remarkable, but when the same figure presented itself among the elegans of the Parisian world, redolent of eau de Portugal, and superb in the glories of brocade waistcoats and velvet coats, the thing was too absurd, and I longed to steal away before any chance should present itself of a recognition. This, however, was impossible, as the crowd from the other table were all gathered round us, and I was obliged to stand fast, and trust that the excitement of the game, in which he appeared to be thoroughly occupied, might keep his eye fixed on another quarter; I now observed that the same scene in which I had so lately been occupied at the rouge et noir table, was enacting here, under rather different circumstances. Mr. O'Leary was the only player, as I had just been—not, however, because his success absorbed all the interest of the bystanders, but that, unfortunately, his constant want of it elicited some strong expression of discontent and mistrust from him, which excited the loud laughter of the others; but of which, from his great anxiety in his game, he seemed totally unconscious.

“Faites votre jeu, Messieurs,” said the croupier.

“Wait a bit till I change this,” said Mr. O'Leary, producing an English sovereign; the action interpreted his wishes, and the money was converted into coupons de jeu.

I now discovered one great cause of the mirth of the bystanders, at least the English portion of them. Mr. O'Leary, when placing his money upon the table, observed the singular practice of announcing aloud the amount of his bet, which, for his own information, he not only reduced to English but also Irish currency; thus the stillness of the room was every instant broken by a strong Irish accent pronouncing something of this sort—“five francs,” “four and a penny”—“ten francs,” “eight and three ha'pence.” The amusement thus caused was increased by the excitement his losses threw him into. He now ceased to play for several times, when at last, he made an offering of his usual stake.



“Perd,” said the croupier, raking in the piece with a contemptuous air at the smallness of the bet, and in no way pleased that the interest Mr. O’Leary excited should prevent the other players from betting.



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“Perd,” said O’Leary, “again. Divil another song you sing than ‘perd,’ and I’m not quite clear you’re not cheating all the while—only, God help you if you are!”

As he so said, the head of a huge black-thorn stick was half protruded across the table, causing renewed mirth; for, among other regulations, every cane, however trifling, is always demanded at the door; and thus a new subject of astonishment arose as to how he had succeeded in carrying it with him into the salon.

“Here’s at you again,” said O’Leary, regardless of the laughter, and covering three or four numbers with his jetons.

Round went the ball once more, and once more he lost.

“Look now, divil a lie in it, he makes them go wherever he pleases. I’ll take a turn now at the tables; fair play’s a jewel—and we’ll see how you’ll get on.”

So saying, he proceeded to insinuate himself into the chair of the croupier, whom he proposed to supersede by no very gentle means. This was of course resisted, and as the loud mirth of the bystanders grew more and more boisterous, the cries of “a la porte, a la porte,” from the friends of the bank, rung through the crowd.

“Go it, Pat—go it, Pat,” said Guy, over my shoulder, who seemed to take a prodigious interest in the proceedings.

At this unexpected recognition of his nativity, for Mr. O’Leary never suspected he could be discovered by his accent; he looked across the table, and caught my eye at once.

“Oh, I’m safe now! stand by me, Mr. Lorrequer, and we’ll clear the room.”

So saying, and without any further provocation, he upset the croupier, chair and all, with one sudden jerk upon the floor, and giving a tremendous kick to the cassette, sent all the five-franc pieces flying over him; he then jumped upon the table, and brandishing his black-thorn through the ormolu lustre, scattered the wax-lights on all sides, accompanying the exploit by a yell that would have called up all Connemara at midnight, if it had only been heard there; in an instant, the gens d’armes, always sufficiently near to be called in if required, came pouring into the room, and supposing the whole affair had been a preconcerted thing to obtain possession of the money in the bank, commenced capturing different members of the company who appeared, by enjoying the confusion, to be favouring and assisting it. My cousin Guy was one of the first so treated—a proceeding to which he responded by an appeal rather in favour with most Englishmen, and at once knocked down the gen d’arme; this was the signal for a general engagement, and accordingly, before an explanation could possibly be attempted, a most terrific combat ensued. The Frenchmen in the room siding with the gen d’armerie, and making common cause against the English; who, although greatly

inferior in number, possessed considerable advantage, from long habit in street-rows and boxing encounters. As for myself, I had the good fortune to be pitted against



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a very porsy and unwieldy Frenchman, who sacre'd to admiration, but never put in a single blow at me; while, therefore, I amused myself practising what old Cribb called "the one, two," upon his fat carcass, I had abundant time and opportunity to watch all that was doing about me, and truly a more ludicrous affair I never beheld. Imagine about fifteen or sixteen young Englishmen, most of them powerful, athletic fellows, driving an indiscriminate mob of about five times their number before them, who, with courage enough to resist, were yet so totally ignorant of the boxing art, that they retreated, pell-mell, before the battering phalanx of their sturdy opponents—the most ludicrous figure of all being Mr. O'Leary himself, who, standing upon the table, laid about him with a brass lustre that he had unstrung, and did considerable mischief with this novel instrument of warfare, crying out the entire time, "murder every mother's son of them," "give them another taste of Waterloo." Just as he had uttered the last patriotic sentiment, he received a slight admonition from behind, by the point of a gen d'arme's sword, which made him leap from the table with the alacrity of a harlequin, and come plump down among the thickest of the fray. My attention was now directed elsewhere, for above all the din and "tapage" of the encounter I could plainly hear the row-dow-dow of the drums, and the measured tread of troops approaching, and at once guessed that a reinforcement of the gen d'armerie were coming up. Behind me there was a large window, with a heavy scarlet curtain before it; my resolution was at once taken, I floored my antagonist, whom I had till now treated with the most merciful forbearance, and immediately sprung behind the curtain. A second's consideration showed that in the search that must ensue this would afford no refuge, so I at once opened the sash, and endeavoured to ascertain at what height I was above the ground beneath me; the night was so dark that I could see nothing, but judging from the leaves and twigs that reached to the window, that it was a garden beneath, and auguring from the perfumed smell of the shrubs, that they could not be tall trees, I resolved to leap, a resolve I had little time to come to, for the step of the soldiers was already heard upon the stair. Fixing my hat then down upon my brows, and buttoning my coat tightly, I let myself down from the window-stool by my hands, and fell upon my legs in the soft earth of the garden, safe and unhurt. From the increased clamour and din overhead, I could learn the affray was at its height, and had little difficulty in detecting the sonorous accent and wild threats of my friend Mr. O'Leary, high above all the other sounds around him. I did not wait long, however, to enjoy them; but at once set about securing my escape from my present bondage. In this I had little difficulty, for I was directed by a light to a small door, which, as I approached, found that it led into the den of the Concierge, and also communicated by



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another door with the street. I opened it, therefore, at once, and was in the act of opening the second, when I felt myself seized by the collar by a strong hand; and on turning round saw the sturdy figure of the Concierge himself, with a drawn bayonet within a few inches of my throat, "Tenez, mon ami," said I quietly, and placing half a dozen louis, some of my recent spoils, in his hand, at once satisfied him that, even if I were a robber, I was at least one that understood and respected the conveniences of society. He at once relinquished his hold and dropped his weapon, and pulling off his cap with one hand, to draw the cord which opened the Porte Cochere with the other, bowed me politely to the street. I had scarcely had time to insinuate myself into the dense mass of people whom the noise and confusion within had assembled around the house, when the double door of the building opened, and a file of gens d'armes came forth, leading between them my friend Mr. O'Leary and some others of the rioters—among whom I rejoiced to find my cousin did not figure. If I were to judge from his disordered habiliments and scarred visage, Mr. O'Leary's resistance to the constituted authorities must have been a vigorous one, and the drollery of his appearance was certainly not decreased by his having lost the entire brim of his hat—the covering of his head bearing, under these distressing circumstances, a strong resemblance to a saucepan.

As I could not at that moment contribute in any way to his rescue, I determined on the following day to be present at his examination, and render him all the assistance in my power. Meanwhile, I returned to Meurice, thinking of every adventure of the evening much more than of my own changed condition and altered fortunes.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Paris.

The first thing which met my eye, when waking in the morning, after the affair at the salon, was the rouleau of billets de banque which I had won at play; and it took several minutes before I could persuade myself that the entire recollection of the evening had any more solid foundation than a heated brain and fevered imagination. The sudden spring, from being a subaltern in the ___th, with a few hundreds per annum—"pour tout potage," to becoming the veritable proprietor of several thousands, with a handsome house in Cumberland, was a consideration which I could scarcely admit into my mind—so fearful was I, that the very first occurrence of the day should dispel the illusion, and throw me back into the dull reality which I was hoping to escape from.

There is no adage more true than the old Latin one—"that what we wish, we readily believe;" so, I had little difficulty in convincing myself that all was as I desired—although, certainly, my confused memory of the past evening contributed little to that conviction. It



was, then, amid a very whirl of anticipated pleasures, and new schemes for enjoying life, that I sat down to a breakfast, at which, that I might lose no time in commencing my race, I had ordered the most recherche viands which even French cookery can accomplish for the occasion.



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My plans were soon decided upon. I resolved to remain only long enough in Paris to provide myself with a comfortable travelling carriage—secure a good courier—and start for Baden; when I trusted that my pretensions, whatever favour they might have been once received with, would certainly now, at least, be listened to with more prospect of being successful.

I opened the Galignani's paper of the day, to direct me in my search, and had scarcely read a few lines before a paragraph caught my eye, which not a little amused me; it was headed—Serious riot at the Salon des Etrangers, and attempt to rob the Bank:—

“Last evening, among the persons who presented themselves at the table of this fashionable resort, were certain individuals, who, by their names and dress bespoke any thing rather than the rank and condition of those who usually resort there, and whose admission is still unexplained, notwithstanding the efforts of the police to unravel the mystery. The proprietors of the bank did not fail to remark these persons; but scrupled, from fear of disturbing the propriety of the salon, to take the necessary steps for their exclusion—reserving their attention to the adoption of precautions against such intrusion in future—unfortunately, as it turned out eventually, for, towards eleven o'clock, one of these individuals, having lost a considerable sum at play, proceeded in a very violent and outrageous manner to denounce the bank, and went so far as to accuse the croupier of cheating. This language having failed to excite the disturbance it was evidently intended to promote, was soon followed up by a most dreadful personal attack upon the banquier, in which he was thrown from his seat, and the cassette, containing several thousand francs in gold and notes, immediately laid hold of. The confusion now became considerable, and it was apparent, that the whole had been a pre-concerted scheme. Several persons, leaping upon the table, attempted to extinguish the great lustre of the salon, in which bold attempt, they were most spiritedly resisted by some of the other players and the gens-d'arme, who had by this time arrived in force. The riot was quelled after a prolonged and desperate resistance, and the rioters, with the exception of two, were captured, and conveyed to prison, where they await the result of a judicial investigation—of which we shall not fail to lay the particulars before our readers.

“Since our going to press, we have learned that one of the ringleaders in this vile scheme is a noted English escroc—a swindler, who was already arrest at C_____ for travelling with a false passport; but who contrives, by some collusion with another of the gang, to evade the local authorities. If this be the case, we trust he will speedily be detected and brought to punishment.”

Whatever amusement I had found in reading the commencing portion of this ridiculous misstatement, the allusion in the latter part by no means afforded me equal pleasure; and I saw, in one rapid glance, how much annoyance, and how many delays and impediments—a charge even of this ridiculous nature, might give rise to in my present

circumstances. My passport, however, will settle all—thought I—as I thrust my hand towards my pocket, in which I had placed it along with some letters.



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Guess my misery, to discover that the whole of the pocket had been cut away, probably in the hope of obtaining the billets de banque I had won at play, but which I had changed from that pocket to a breast one on leaving the table. This at once led me to suspect that there might be some truth in the suspicion of the newspaper writer of a pre-concerted scheme, and at once explained to me what had much puzzled me before—the extreme rapidity with which the elements of discord were propagated, for the whole affair was the work of a few seconds. While I continued to meditate on these matters, the waiter entered with a small note in an envelope, which a commissioner had just left at the hotel for me, and went away, saying there was no answer. I opened it hastily, and read:—

“Dear H.—The confounded affair of last night has induced me to leave this for a few days; besides that I have obtained a most excellent reason for absenting myself in the presence of a black eye, which will prevent my appearance in public for a week to come. As you are a stranger here, you need not fear being detected. With all its desagremens, I can’t help laughing at the adventure, and I am heartily glad to have had the opportunity of displaying old Jackson’s science upon those wretched gens-d’arme.

“Your, truly,
“G.L.”

This, certainly, thought I, improves my position. Here is my cousin Guy—the only one to whom, in any doubt or difficulty here, I could refer—here he is—flown, without letting me know where to address him or find him out. I rung my bell hastily, and having written a line on my card, requesting Lord Kilkee to come to me as soon as he could, despatched it to the Rue de la Paix. The messenger soon returned with an answer, that Lord Kilkee had been obliged to leave Paris late the evening before, having received some important letters from Baden. My anxiety now became greater. I did not know but that the moment I ventured to leave the hotel I should be recognised by some of the witnesses of the evening’s fray; and all thoughts of succouring poor O’Leary were completely forgotten in my fear for the annoyances the whole of this ridiculous affair might involve me in. Without any decision as to my future steps, I dressed myself, and proceeded to pay my respects to Mrs. Bingham and her daughter, who were in the same hotel, and whom I had not seen since our arrival.

As I entered the drawing-room, I was surprised to find Miss Bingham alone. She appeared to have been weeping—at least the efforts she made to appear easy and in good spirits contrasted a good deal with the expression of her features as I came in. To my inquiries for Mrs. Bingham, I received for answer that the friends Mrs. Bingham had expected having left a few days before for Baden, she had resolved on following them, and had now merely driven out to make a few purchases before her departure, which was to take place in the morning.



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There is something so sad in the thought of being deserted and left by one's friends under any circumstances, that I cannot express how much this intelligence affected me. It seemed, too, like the last stroke of bad news filling up the full measure, that I was to be suddenly deprived of the society of the very few friends about me, just as I stood most in need of them.

Whether or not Miss Bingham noticed my embarrassment, I cannot say; but certainly she seemed not displeased, and there was in the half-encouraging tone of her manner something which led me to suspect that she was not dissatisfied with the impression her news seemed to produce upon me.

Without at all alluding to my own improved fortune, or to the events of the preceding night, I began to talk over the coming journey, and expressed my sincere regret that, having lost my passport under circumstances which might create some delay in retrieving it, I could not join their party as I should otherwise have done.

Miss Bingham heard this speech with rather more emotion than so simple a declaration was calculated to produce; and, while she threw down her eyes beneath their long dark lashes, and coloured slightly, asked—

“And did you really wish to come with us?”

“Undoubtedly,” said I.

“And is there no other objection than the passport?”

“None whatever,” said I, warming as I spoke, for the interest she appeared to take in me completely upset all my calculations, besides that I had never seen her looking so handsome, and that, as the French wisely remark, “vaut toujours quelque chose.”

“Oh, then, pray come with us, which you can do, for mamma has just got her passport for her nephew along with her own; and as we really don't want him, nor he us, we shall both be better pleased to be free of each other, and you can easily afterwards have your own forwarded to Baden by post.”

“Ah, but,” said I, “how shall I be certain, if I take so flattering an offer, that you will forgive me for filling up the place of the dear cousin; for, if I conjecture aright, it is ‘Le Cher Edouard’ that purposes to be your companion.”

“Yes, you have guessed quite correctly; but you must not tax me with inconsistency, but really I have grown quite tired of my poor cousin, since I saw him last night.”

“And you used to admire him prodigiously.”

“Well, well, that is all true, but I do so no longer.”



“Eh! perche,” said I, looking cunningly in her eye.

“For reasons that Mr. Lorrequer shall never know if he has to ask them,” said the poor girl, covering her eyes with her hands, and sobbing bitterly.

What I thought, said, or did upon this occasion, with all my most sincere desire to make a “clean breast of it in these confessions,” I know not; but this I do know, that two hours after, I found myself still sitting upon the sofa beside Miss Bingham, whom I had been calling Emily all the while, and talking more of personal matters and my own circumstances than is ever safe or prudent for a young man to do with any lady under the age of his mother.



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All that I can now remember of this interview, is the fact of having arranged my departure in the manner proposed by Miss Bingham—a proposition to which I acceded with an affectation of satisfaction that I fear went very far to deceive my fair friend. Not that the pleasure I felt in the prospect was altogether feigned; but certainly the habit of being led away by the whim and temper of the moment had so much become part of my nature, that I had long since despaired of ever guarding myself against the propensity I had acquired, of following every lead which any one might throw out for me. And thus, as poor Harry Lorrequer was ever the first man to get into a row at the suggestion of a friend, so he only waited the least possible pressing on any occasion, to involve himself in any scrape or misfortune that presented itself, provided there was only some one good enough to advise him to do so.

As I entered my own room, to make preparations for my departure, I could not help thinking over all the events thus crowded into the space of a few hours. My sudden possession of wealth—my prospects at Callonby still undecided—my scrape at the Salon—my late interview with Miss Bingham, in which I had only stopped short of a proposal to marry, were almost sufficient to occupy any reasonable mind; and so I was beginning to suspect, when the waiter informed me that the Commissaire of Police was in waiting below, and wished to speak to me. Affecting some surprise at the request which I at once perceived the object of, I desired him to be introduced. I was quite correct in my guess. The information of my being concerned in the affair at the Salon had been communicated to the authorities, and the Commissaire had orders to obtain bail for my appearance at the Tribunal de Justice, on that day week, or commit me at once to prison. The Commissaire politely gave me till evening to procure the required bail, satisfying himself that he could adopt measures to prevent my escape, and took his leave. He had scarcely gone when Mr. Edward Bingham was announced—the reason for this visit I could not so easily divine; but I had little time allowed for my conjectures, as the same instant a very smart, dapper little gentleman presented himself, dressed in all the extravagance of French mode. His hair, which was permitted to curl upon his shoulders, was divided along the middle of the head; his moustaches were slightly upturned and carefully waxed, and his small chin-tuft or Henri-quatre most gracefully pointed; he wore three most happily contrasting coloured waistcoats, and spurs of glittering brass. His visit was of scarcely five minutes' duration; but was evidently the opening of a breaching battery by the Bingham family in all form—the object of which I could at least guess at.



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My embarrassments were not destined to end here; for scarcely had I returned Mr. Bingham's eighth salutation at the head of the staircase, when another individual presented himself before me. This figure was in every respect the opposite of my last visitor. Although framed perfectly upon the late Parisian school of dandyism, his, however, was the "ecole militaire." Le Capitaine Eugene de Joncourt, for so he introduced himself, was a portly personage, of about five-and-thirty or forty years of age, with that mixture of bon hommie and ferocity in his features which the soldiers of Napoleon's army either affected or possessed naturally. His features, which were handsome, and the expression of which was pleasing, were, as it seemed, perverted, by the warlike turn of a most terrific pair of whiskers and moustaches, from their naturally good-humoured bent; and the practised frown and quick turn of his dark eye were evidently only the acquired advantages of his military career; a handsome mouth, with singularly regular and good teeth, took much away from the farouche look of the upper part of his face; and contributed, with the aid of a most pleasing voice, to impress you in his favour; his dress was a blue braided frock, decorated with the cordon of the legion; but neither these, nor the clink of his long cavalry spurs, were necessary to convince you that the man was a soldier; besides that, there was that mixture of urbanity and aplomb in his manner which showed him to be perfectly accustomed to the usages of the best society.

"May I beg to know," said he, as he seated himself slowly, "if this card contains your name and address," handing me at the same moment one of my visiting cards. I immediately replied in the affirmative.

"You are then in the English service?"

"Yes."

"Then, may I entreat your pardon for the trouble of these questions, and explain the reason of my visit. I am the friend of Le Baron D'Haulpenne, with whom you had the altercation last night in the Salon, and in whose name I have come to request the address of a friend on your part."

Ho, ho, thought I, the Baron is then the stout gentleman that I pummelled so unmercifully near the window; but how came he by my card; and besides, in a row of that kind, I am not aware how far the matter can be conceived to go farther, than what happens at the moment. These were the thoughts of a second of time, and before I could reply any thing, the captain resumed.

"You seem to have forgotten the circumstance, and so indeed should I like to do; but unfortunately D'Haulpenne says that you struck him with your walking-cane, so you know, under such a state of things, there is but one course."

"But gently," added I, "I had no cane whatever the last evening."



“Oh! I beg pardon,” interrupted he; “but my friend is most positive in his account, and describes the altercation as having continued from the Salon to the street, when you struck him, and at the same time threw him your card. Two of our officers were also present; and although, as it appears from your present forgetfulness, that the thing took place in the heat and excitement of the moment, still—”



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“But still,” said I, catching up his last words, “I never did strike the gentleman as you describe—never had any altercation in the street—and—”

“Is that your address?” said the Frenchman, with a slight bow.

“Yes, certainly it is.”

“Why then,” said he, with a slight curl of his upper lip—half smile, half derision—

“Oh! make yourself perfectly easy,” I replied. “If any one has by an accident made use of my name, it shall not suffer by such a mistake. I shall be quite at your service, the moment I can find out a friend to refer you to.”

I had much difficulty to utter these few words with a suitable degree of temper, so stung was I by the insolent demeanour of the Frenchman, whose coolness and urbanity seemed only to increase every moment.

“Then I have the honour to salute you,” said he, rising with great mildness in his voice; “and shall take the liberty to leave my card for the information of your friend.”

So saying, he placed his card upon the table—“Le Capitaine Eugene de Joncourt, Cuirassiers de la Garde.”

“I need not press upon Monsieur the value of despatch.”

“I shall not lose a moment,” said I, as he clattered down the stairs of the hotel, with that perfect swaggering nonchalance which a Frenchman is always an adept in; and I returned to my room, to meditate upon my numerous embarrassments, and think over the difficulties which every moment was contributing to increase the number of.

“The indictment has certainly many counts,” thought I.

Imprimis—A half-implied, but fully comprehended promise to marry a young lady, with whom, I confess, I only intend to journey this life—as far as Baden.

Secondly, a charge of swindling—for such the imputation goes to—at the Salon.

Thirdly, another unaccountable delay in joining the Callonbys, with whom I am every hour in the risque of being “compromis;” and lastly, a duel in perspective with some confounded Frenchman, who is at this very moment practising at a pistol gallery.

Such were the heads of my reflections, and such the agreeable impressions my visit to Paris was destined to open with; how they were to be followed up I reserve for another chapter.



EBOOK EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A crowd is a mob, if composed even of bishops
Involuntary satisfaction at some apparent obstacle to my path
Levelling character of a taste for play
Never able to restrain myself from a propensity to make love
Strong opinions against tobacco within doors
We pass a considerable portion of our lives in a mimic warfare
What we wish, we readily believe
Whenever he was sober his poverty disgusted him