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THE WEB OF LIFE.

We stand on the wheel of life and spin. And draw the life threads to and fro. As the dark and light go blending in, As the daylight comes and the daylight goes.

MARQUISE AND HEADSMAN.

The year was 1779, the month was August, the hour the meridian. Madame la Marquise de Lameriere was returning to Paris from her country seat.

Madame replaced her hat and fast her puffs, the lackey flicked the dust from their shoulders, the maid surreptitiously interviewed the rouge box.

The innkeeper bowed to the ground. If Madame had only been an hour earlier! There was a beautiful room which should have been placed at the disposal of Madame...

"I have had the honor, madame," said the young man, with some embarrassment, "to hear your remarks. I leave immediately after dinner."

"We will dine together, if you please, monsieur. A solitary meal is apt to be an indigestible one. I am the Marquise de Lameriere."

"Madame, wait till you hear the revenge. Since Sanson—his name is Sanson, you know—could not wear blue, he took to green. The court objected to his wearing velvet, he, therefore, wore cloth."

"I have seen enough already, monsieur, to prove to me that you have an aptitude for the art of ordering dinner. But victuals are the least part of a meal, I assure you."

"I cannot imagine," said she, "that there will be a lack of any sort." The gentleman in green decided that the Marquise must be under 25. Had she been older her face could not have been so absolutely joyous.

"You have not been stupid," said she, with three dimples in full play. "You have been curious."

"Great heavens!" cried Madame when she saw it. "Is the headman here? Does he think I am Herodias? Is he serving me the head of John the Baptist on a charger?"

"What is right, monsieur, it has been a case of the headman." "It must you perceive, Madame la Marquise, that a headman is a valuable member of society."

"So, indeed, they say, madame. Indeed, they even go so far as to say that some of the nobles who were insignificant of stature grew envious of him, and it is certainly true that Parliament prohibited him from wearing the color of the court."

"Monsieur, you should not call an executioner a Frenchman!" "Madame, wait till you hear the revenge. Since Sanson—his name is Sanson, you know—could not wear blue, he took to green."

"There is no denying that your costume is an elegant one, monsieur, and yet I think I shall hereafter look with apprehension on others of its kind, lest I encounter him who makes a living out of murder."

"I have no doubt, madame," said her companion, gravely, "that he dines on maiden's hearts." Madame looked up. It was evident from his tone that he was bored.

journalism. I can criticize the drama, and I know the history of France by heart. "I shall be afraid to speak before you," protested the gentleman, rather flattered by her coquetry.

"Another arrival," murmured Madame, with some vexation. "I shall hasten my departure, said the young man. "Let me make apologies for its abruptness. I am very grateful to you, Marquise," he continued in a low voice...

"Tontel," cried the Marquise, "is it you?" It was hard to get her face back to its usual expression, and she put up her painted fan to hide it.

"Mon Dieu," cried the Marquise impatiently, "what ails you?" A post-chaise rattled into the yard. The handsome officer took his seat, he doffed his green hat to Madame with melancholy stateliness and was driven away.

"Speak, Tontel," said the Marquise, stamping her pointed shoes. "May I ask you, Marquise, if you knew the occupation of the man who has just left you?"

"For the love of Heaven, bring me water! A basin of water, Nicole! Quick. Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" The maid rushed in breathlessly and Madame, as she bathed and rebathed her dimpled hands, sobbed: "I'll have him hanged!"

Madame la Marquise Lameriere sat in Parliament. She had petitioned that one Charles Henri Sanson, commonly known as Monsieur de Paris, executioner of Paris, be sentenced to beg her pardon with a rope around his neck for the insult he had been guilty of in dining with her and meeting her on terms of equality, and that for the safety of the public the executioner should thenceforth wear a distinctive sign so that all would know him.

About the Marquise sat a sympathizing company of friends from the court, among them Col. Tontel, who had encountered her at the inn. Charles Henri Sanson had not been able to procure an advocate. No barrister cared to appear as counsel for the executioner.

be wrapped in thought. When he lifted his eyes it was to fix them on the face of the Marquise—a face which was paler than when he had seen it first. When the time came for his defense he arose with a severe air and addressed the court with much hauteur.

"I am aware that all public offices are not equally honorable; they are creditable in proportion to their usefulness to society. According to this principle, sirs, mine stands first! What would the State do if my office were suppressed for a single day?"

"My office is considered dishonorable because I slay men. Ask a soldier what his profession is; he will tell you that, like me, he is a slayer of men. Yet his company is never shunned and no one thinks he is disgraced by eating in his company."

"Then, too, each solitary soldier, each officer, contributes in but a small degree to the tranquility of the State, the glory of preserving public tranquility is divided among so many thousand men that each individual has only a small share of the privilege."

"You mean"—screamed the lady, holding up her hands as if blood were dripping off her fingers—"I mean that yesterday was a busy day with him."

"Do not believe, gentlemen, that in defending the unjustly attacked prerogative of my office I claim any personal merit. I know that an office, however brilliant, is always distinct from the individual who holds it. As I lay no claim to the glory of my functions, it would be unjust to cast upon me the opprobrium which the thoughtless have seen fit to attach to them, and to call me infamous because it is alleged that my office deserves the epithet. Permit me to add that I have the honor to be the fourth of my family to whom the office of public executioner of Paris has descended from father to son, and if hereditary nobility were attached to it, as it should be, I might stand on even ground with Madame la Marquise."

"You laugh, gentlemen, at the word 'hereditary.' I cannot find anything extraordinary or preposterous in it. Military officers, which have the same functions as mine and which, as I have observed, are inferior to it, enjoy the same advantages. Yours, gentlemen—allow me to say so—yours, which only contribute to the public weal in an indirect way, have the same privilege. Why is the concession denied to my office? None among you, gentlemen, can, individually, insure public happiness effectually, none can pronounce a sentence except in conjunction with all the other members of the body. Thus you never act

otherwise than as members, whereas I at once procure peace and I act as chief. "Now every chief is respectable and, to whatever category he may belong, he should enjoy the privilege of nobility. The general prosecutor, who is the chief of his department, has it, so does the chief clerk of the court. Why should I be deprived of it by an unrighteous exception?"

"I will press no further the sovereign reasons suggested by the justice of my case. I merely point them out, as you may see. Men of my profession can act better than they can speak can handle the sword better than they can an address. I believe, nevertheless, that I have said enough to urge confidently that Madame la Marquise should be nonsuited. I therefore ask, not that the alleged infamy of my office be removed, for no infamy is attached to it, but that it be declared not only that I am a member of the Sovereign Court, but that I am the head of my department, that my office has particularly resemblance to the profession of arms, that in consequence I have a right to the prerogative of gown and sword; and I further ask that in virtue of this two-fold title nobility be conferred upon me as well as upon my posterity, and I am confident that you cannot but grant my request. I ask no favor, but I expect everything of your equity."

The court retired to confer, and decided that the case should be indefinitely postponed. When the Marquise de Lameriere left, she returned once to look at Charles Henri Sanson. He bowed low. Madame first cast on him a look of withering scorn, and then, oddly enough, she returned the salutation.

It was the reign of the guillotine—that fatal and reliable instrument which Louis XVI himself perfected. Poor Louis would have made an excellent locksmith! It was that delicious carnival of anarchy when all the passions went en masque; when tyranny wore the guise of humanity and humanity arrayed itself in terrorism, and conspiracy, patriotism, grief and laughter went arm in arm wearing the red cap of liberty. Death was made joyful. The very execrations of the mob were sinister witticisms.

"Hab," said Ducos, the youngest of the condemned Girondists, as he climbed the scaffold, "what a pity they did not decree the unity and indivisibility of our persons!" So they laughed and died—for liberty! King and queen, peasant and beggar, Camille Desmoulins and Corday and Danton, the little mantuamaker, the old mender of roads, the much tried baker! They died by the thousand.

"It seems," cried Charles Henri Sanson, "as if they had made a revolution only to give me work." "They are disgracing the guillotine," complained his assistants with grotesque pride. There was a time when Citizen Fouquier-Tinville ordered that Sanson should have fourteen of these assistants.

At last the supremacy of the executioner was acknowledged. The cracked bell upon the panels of his carriage was the only coat-of-arms left in France. But the vehicles on which the attention of Paris was centered were the carts that rolled from the prison to the place de la Revolution.

"Not many to day," said a citoyenne, discontentedly, as these carts lumbered by her. "No," said her companion, "Sanson won't earn his wages." The crowd about the scaffold seemed to be interested however. They were apparently anticipating some especially well seasoned dish in their diet of tragedy. When the carts stopped, the executioner assisted a lady to alight. It was the Marquise de Lameriere. "I will wait upon you first, Marquise," he said, uncovering his head. "You are very kind, monsieur l'exécutionner, but there is a poor youth here whom I would save from the unpleasant sight." "It is against orders, madame." "The revolution gives ladies the precedence, does it? Thank it, in my name. But I am sure you will not refuse the last request of a lady. Kindly execute this trembling youth first." The executioner bowed. The lady

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returned it with as much grace as she shown fourteen years before.

"Then she turned to the youth by her 'Courage! courage!' she whispered. The youth flung his arms around her neck. 'What do I die for?' he sobbed.

"The assistants took him away. They forced him down to the weigh plank. The executioner approached the Marquise. She accepted his hand and ascended the steps of the scaffold with vivacity.

"You no longer wear green, I see, monsieur," said she, archly. "Madame," said Sanson, "say you forgive me for what I am about to do. 'Monsieur,' replied the lady, 'you affronted me once. You are doing me a favor now. I shall join a brilliant company, for all who were worthy to live are now dead.' "Have you any request to make?"

"I have one—a foolish one. Be good enough to discharge your assistant for a moment. I should like to feel that I had been executed by a gentleman." "It shall be as you say. Farewell!" "Farewell, monsieur!" By the way, how well that pig's head looked in the parsley! She kept on laughing till she was bound. "Say a prayer," whispered Sanson. "I have prayed. I have no fear. It is the fashion to die now, Sanson, and I have always followed the fashion."

"How many to-day?" queried the wife of Charles Henri Sanson that night. "Only five," said he, "the day has been quiet." AT A STAMFORD HOTEL.—Guest—Bill of fare, waiter. Waiter—Bill of what? Guest—Bill of fare. Waiter—Wait'll yer git yer fare, an' yer'll be blamed sure to git a bill of it. What yer want? Guest—What have you? Waiter—Baked clams, clam fritters, stewed clams, fricasseed clams, roast clams, clam patties, chopped clams, clam hash and clams. Guest—Give me some plain clams. Waiter—Now yer're talkin'. Peckerrands in a bucket, Jimmy.—Judge.

CHRISTMAS AFTER CASES.—Grandson—"So grandfather is dead?" Granddaughter—"Yes, and what do you think? Father says he's been insane these many years." Grandson—"That's a lie. Grandfather was as sane as I am." Granddaughter—"But he has left all his money to the church." Grandson—"Father is right. Yes, now I think of it, the old gentleman was peculiar. Why he has been an imbecile for years—mad as a March hare"—Boston Courier.

SENSATIONAL READING.—"Quinty, I came over to see if you couldn't loan me something to read." "What do you want?" "Oh, something sensational, if you have it." "Here are several late copies of the Congressional Record." "Just what I want! Thanks."—Lincoln Journal.

FREE MEDICAL ADVICE.—"Now, Doctor," he said, as he joined the medical gentleman in the street, "in the case of a man who can't sleep at night what would you advise?" "I would advise him to sleep in the day time."—Life.

Wife (at Niagara Fall)—"How grand and awe-inspiring it all is, John!" Husband (drawing a long breath)—"Yes, but don't talk, my dear I want to listen to the roaring of the waters."—Tid-Bite.

WHY CHARITY FAIRS CONTINUE TO FLOURISH.—"When I look at the congregation," said a clergyman recently, "I ask where are the poor? But when I count the offertory in the vestry I ask where are the rich?"—Fort Worth Gazette.

Ayer's Sarsaparilla operates radically upon the blood, thoroughly cleansing and invigorating it. As a safe and absolute cure for the various disorders caused by constitutional taint or infection, this remedy has no equal. Take it this month.

Bertie—Pa, why is Volapuk called the universal language? Pa—Oh, don't bother me with such questions. How do you suppose I'd know? Bertie—Why, pa, ain't you a Universalist?—Judge.

If a delinquent and a half should come up and pay a dollar and a half in year and a half an editor and a half would then stand some chance of getting a meal and a half occasionally.—Smithville (Ga.) News.

A CHOICE STOCK.—Mr. Riverside Rives (in Harlem cigar store)—"What do you get for your choice cigars." Cigar merchant—Well, sir, we have them all the way from 2 cents up—Puck.