WHAT HAPPENED TO-MORROW

BY MAARTEN MAARTENS.

IT may be presumed that everybody in the world has been to Baden Baden. Judging by the crowds one seems reasonable.

And every one who has been to Baden Baden remembers the Grand Hotel Aurelie. Not that every one who can recall it has been inside it; it is not at all that sort of place.

As luxurious as most modern millionaire caravansaries and a great deal more quiet and refined than the average, it stands just a little aloof from the weary whirligig of music and minerals in its own framework of wide foliage and soft lawns. The great Italian front of galleries and terraces, of loggias and balconies—some 400 feet of glare, glitter and glass—looks away, in serene scorn of common bustle and vulgar noises, across its trim particolored flower gardens, to the rattle and babble of the half hidden public park. Signboards bid the ordinary wayfarer halt. The Oosbach runs between him and immoderate expenditure. It says: There are other places—very good places—lower down, but this is the Hotel Aurelie.

Two men and a woman were standing under the chestnuts of the public avenue by one of the private bridges, gazing at the dignified splendor of the semisilent palace. "A palace open to any one who can pay for the use of it," said one of the men.

"That," replied the other, "is the principle of palaces."

"But it used not to be so. There used to be a time when more was required than money only. It is our time which has vulgarized the palace into a public place at a pound or two a day."

"It is our time which has vulgarized everything, destroying all social distinctions except those between money and no money. So much the better for us and all such who think as we. Travel has done it more than anything else. As printing produced the reformation, so steam has prepared the revolution. There are no levelers," his hand swept along the wide line of stucco, "like these proudly reserved palaces open to all who can pay."

"They wouldn't let us in," said the quieter of the two men. His glance fell unobtrusively across his own figure and his companion's—a couple of better class mechanics they looked, and a factory girl. It was the woman, as usual, who vulgarized them most, with her fringe and her cheap feathers and her chain.

"Oh, wouldn't they, indeed? You just try them."

"It wouldn't be an amusing try," said the younger man with a thoughtful smile. His was undoubtedly the more attractive appearance, with his pale countenance and reflective eyes, in his decent suit of Sunday black.

The bright young woman clapped her hands. "Oh, do, Gus!" she cried to the large man—red and pushy—and she squeezed his arm. "Oh, what fun it'll be! Let's go and have lunch there, once in a way, right among the swells!"

The large man, Gus, stared down at her with good natured jocoseness. "Have you any idea what it would cost?" he said.

"Only once in a way! Even if it cost 10 francs."

"I haven't got 10 francs," replied Gus.

"Ten francs? Thirty," said the quiet young man. They cried out at him. "More," he said.

"I should like it above all things," insisted the girl, pouting. "Why did you put it in my head? It was very unkind of you, Gus, to put it in my head."

"'Twasn't I, it was Heinrich," answered Gus, in swift escape from a lovers' quarrel.

"So it was. You are always saying tiresome things. Heinrich"— the girl tossed her head—"spoiling what little pleasure I can get!"

The quiet Heinrich looked regretful and ashamed. "I wish I hadn't come," continued the ill natured girl, pitilessly enjoying the milder man's discomfiture. "I told Gus when he insisted on bringing you that you would be sure to spoil my day. I don't want to talk socialism with Gus, and you and he always talk socialism. I don't believe either of you think of anything else." The petulant tears were in her voice as she looked away toward the spacious gardens and the few fashionable figures scattered over them here and there. "And now you've put this idea into my head; I might have known you would. Let's go back to Mannheim, Gus. He's spoilt my day."

They all stood there, in a miserable group, Heinrich considering how once again, as on some former occasion, he had proved the "unwelcome third." The girl, enjoying her success, began to sob.

As they stood thus two ladies came slowly by. They were probably sisters, one a little older than the other, both between 25 and 30, both unmarried. They were dressed in some stiff white material—summer morning frocks; they looked cool and handsome, above all, collected, comfortable, high born. A Skye terrier waddled beside them, as high born and far more luxurious and pampered looking than they.

These ladies passed without seeing the trippers beside the water, and as they turned to cross the bridge the man, Heinrich, quietly stretched out his hand and, almost mechanically, drew from a jacket pocket, whence it protruded, a little white morocco purse. The ladies swept on, talking briskly; the man held the purse in the palm of his hand.

"Well, why not?" he said, as his two companions stared in dumb amazement. "Pray, why shouldn't we practice what we preach? All property is theft, isn't it? Well, then, theft must be property." His voice shook, betraying his momentary nervousness, but he steadied it. "I have as much right," he said, "to this money I now hold in my hand as the woman who was carrying it before. More, for she didn't need it, and I do."

"That's true enough," assented Gus.

"Of course it's true," the other ran on swiftly. "Isn't it the very essence of our teaching, that we talk about, at the meetings, night after night? Does any one mean to say that those—ladies there"—he pointed to the receeding figures—"have a right to the money in their pockets? Have they ever earned anything, done anything, in their lives?"

The girl laughed joyfully. "They mean to say it, but we mean to disprove it," replied Gus.

"A couple of rich Americans, I suppose," said Heinrich, "like most of them." He looked down at the little purse. "No, not Americans," he said.

"How do you know?" demanded the girl, Louisa, with interest.

Heinrich pointed to the gold monogram surmounted by a coronet. "There are no nobles in America," he said.

"Perhaps they're American millionaire's daughters," suggested Gus, "that have bought a noble over here."

"I hope they are," said the girl vindictively. "Yes, that wouldn't be bad," answered Heinrich. "At any rate we've got their money." The three had walked away into the "Anlagen." He repeated the words with much deliberation, "We've got the money."

"I wonder how much it is," said the girl, tentatively.

"Enough, you may be sure," he replied.

"How do you mean—enough?" questioned Gus.

"Enough for our luncheon." Heinrich jerked his head in the direction of the Hotel Aurelie.

"And to buy me some smart clothes," said the girl.

"No." Heinrich stopped dead. "Look here." He slowly unfastened the clasp. "I take out enough to pay for our meal over yonder, as Louisa says I'm spoiling her day. We've a right to that meal with the swells; so be it." He extracted a couple of gold pieces. "Forty marks must do. As for the rest"—— He flung the white purse away along the pathway; it struck into a corner by the bridge.

"What nonsense! Why, any thief'll find it!" cried the girl. "There was heaps in it. I saw paper"—— She ran forward. He caught her arm. "Let it lie," he said, sternly. "If a thief finds it—let it—let it be another thief." He laughed. Gus joined in with him uncomfortably. "Why, all property is theft!" repeated Heinrich. "What's the way to get into this place? Come along!"

The two ladies had not needed to look for the entry—they were staying in the hotel. The skye terrier (christened and called Sherry) knew also that at this hour of the day you made straight for the long glass gallery, lunched, the hour being half-past one, a la carte.

The two ladies, as the closed crown would have told Heinrich, had he not been utterly ignorant of such matters, were princesses. They were the Princesses Ulrica and Adelgunde Stein-Hohenfels-Ideburg-Stein-Stein. The wit of the family had once suggested, some seventy years ago, that the members might write themselves 3—x—Stein, like an algebraic formula. This joke had given unlimited satisfaction and scope to a large circle of aristocratic acquaintances ever since.

The party which the two princesses joined was a numerous and noisy one. It was presided over by their uncle, the old Furst Steyn, bristly, military and white mustachioed, and that Transparency's Transparent spouse, whom he had long ago bullied into a dignified and not unwilling repose. There were a couple of young officer cousins, a fast French marquise, "gone" on motor boats, a pair of English twins and even one or two children. The English twins were the Ladies Geraldine and Frances Wheatley, Lord Radborough's unmarried and unmarriagable daughters (the middle aged ones, the plain ones, that people called "The Pugs"). They were at Baden with their horrible old father because he, unlike everybody else, still drank the waters. As his one occupation was being read to, night and day, by his gasping servant—he said, not unduly, that his daughters could not read—the ladies had their time to themselves. "We could read to our father all right," they said—and this again on their part was not an untrue statement of the case—" if he would choose his books differently. But not"—a pretty blush here on their middle aged cheeks—"not the French memoirs he reads all day with Antoine." They themselves had received a good education and were able to take part in all the amusements of the hour. For the last three years they had devoted their entire existence to bridge.

They played it all day at Baden with their maid, and would have been obliged to desist after beggaring her had the woman not educed a method of cheating which enabled her to hold her own. The only child of interest in the party was the hereditary little Prince (3 x) Stein, the old man's grandson, a chubby boy of ten, at present entirely engrossed in chasing round his plate the balls of his consomme profiteles, but a little person who will be very important some day, when they have to marry him, as they must, to a rich girl with quarterings, so that an American won't do.

At a table next to this noisy and brilliant company sat one man, glowering and morose, with a placid girl of thirteen. This was Rottick, the great American tallow millionaire. His lunch was being rendered to him, as frequently, gall and bitterness by the empty cackle and giggle of the lieutenants. Whenever the fairhaired child of thirteen glanced in their direction he frowned. His two eldest daughters had already married themselves to coroneted scoundrels. He had sworn, with a violence which betrayed his impotence, that this last and youngest, the favorite, should espouse none but a commoner. So he sat and watched the young sprigs of inanity as a vulture tears, men tell, when wounded, at its own breast.

The princely party had strayed into an unwonted quagmire of philosophy and was floundering with loud splashes considerably out of its depth. One of "The Pugs," Lady Geraldine, had quoted—or rather attempted—Longfellow, and stuck:

"Life is—life is—oh, he says life is something, you know," she said.

One of the lieutenants leaped to her assistance, cock sure. "Life is hard—" he began, and stuck likewise. "Yes it is." "No it can't be!" "It doesn't go with the rhyme." "The rhythm, you mean." "Life is hard and life is fleeting." A babble of voices. The little boy went on stolidly chasing the slippery balls round his plate. "Life is"—

"Father, mayn't I tell them?" burst out in a shrill whisper the millionaire's child.

"Hold your tongue. Don't look at them, Daisy." His voice was quite unexpectedly harsh. "Go on with your lunch."

"Life is eating!" said in a sudden inspiration the oldest of the lieutenants, already a little mottled and bald. There were shrieks of laughter. They dropped to the silence of exhaustion.

"Life is real; life is earnest," said, speaking for the first time in a low voice, the younger of the two princesses, Adelgunde. It was she whose purse had been taken, but as yet she remained happily unaware of the fact.

"How clever you are, my dear," remarked Lady Frances in the tone in which one woman makes that remark to another woman.

"And how could life not be real?" demanded, with a great air of shrewdness, the clever cousin. "When it isn't real, then you're dead. What nonsense these poets talk!"

"If you were to marry somebody—or—or, I mean, if you were to be in love with somebody whose name was Ernest," began the Princess Ulrica with slow thought, "then you could say 'life is Ernest,' couldn't you? I wonder if anybody ever worked that out before?" This sentiment met with great approval from those who did not require to have it explained to them. The old Furstin shook her gentle head.

"You young folks," she said, "you think love is everything."

"What odd people!" exclaimed a couple of voices. All gazed in the direction of the doors. The bright restaurant, with its glitter of flowers and napery, was full of gay visitors; only one table still stood open, left so by the head waiter's deference, next to "Hone Herreschaften"—a whisper—"Seine Durchlaucht," the reigning, even in Germany that makes all the difference—Furst Steyn. Not that he was really a "reigning" anything in the political sense. He was merely the head of his mediatized house (see Almanach de Gotha, IIme, Partie). "What queer people!" said all of them except the old Furstin, indifferent to "queerness" outside the above mentioned almanac.

And, indeed, our three socialists, insignificant out of doors, looked more than odd—they looked objectionable—in the midst of this expensively collected assembly as they moved up the narrow gangway, surrounded by a buzz of startled waiters. The young men, had they been properly garbed, might have been waiters themselves, but the young woman, neither grand monde nor demimonde, did not fit into the place at all. "I fear there is no room. All the tables are engaged," explained the deprecatory maitre d'hotel.

"And yonder one?" said Heinrich, pointing.

"That table will be—will be taken presently," said the head waiter.

"We have come here to lunch, and we must lunch!" declared Heinrich, in a masterful manner. "Put three chairs to that table at once, and count on five marks for yourself!" He was breezing it out; on his naturally pale cheeks the color came and went. The head waiter, not indifferent to five shillings, but still more anxious, perhaps, to avoid a scandal and to get these people out of everybody's line of sight, went round to render a few words into the thick red ear of His Transparency. "What? How? Ha! Common people? What the devil do I care if people are common or not?" Louise, unconscious of either honor or interest, sat facing, a little disconcerted by the atmosphere, the amused amazement of the great ladies. The little boy, with a fish bone tickling his throat, lifted his long child stare to her apple red face and thought her exceedingly beautiful.

"Give us the day's dinner. What's the price?" commanded Heinrich, fingering the two gold pieces in his waistcoat pocket. But it was explained to him that in this restaurant there were no unsubjective menus and hardly such vulgar things as mentionable prices. He had to select with great awkardness French dishes, of which the meaning was unknown to him. Scarlet with confusion and anger, he had to appeal to the smiling waiter. The young men behind him listened with discreet laughter. No, you couldn't order two egg dishes, then hors-d'oeuvres and a sweet.

"You know about these things; it's your trade. Get us what we need and look sharp!" Heinrich flung the list away from him; his scorn for these minions of luxury—sons of the people—exceeded his contempt of the "aristos" themselves. The command, enforced by an order for champagne—"German, mind you!"—found ready acceptance. The other tables returned to their conversations. Lousia's unforgettable festival was soon in full course of development. She enjoyed it with decency, shrilly happy and only offensive against her will. It was Gus who—his mouth full of Russian trout mayonnaise—began blathering about senseless sensualists and the needs of the people. "Stow that!" said Heinrich fiercely, and dug him in the podgy sides.

Gus was willing in every sense to stow. Heinrich ate sparingly. It may be doubted whether he was enjoying himself. In fact, it may be affirmed that he was not. He had done the thing on a vexed impulse, driven to it in the sudden temptation by Louisa's gibes. From his theoretic standpoint, although he had never before taken a halfpenny to which he was not entitled, there could be no great harm in what he had done. His views of the rich were the ignorant imaginings of his class. Their many and superfluous possessions were stolen from the needs of the poor. The well filled white purse with the gold coronet was no more the rightfully acquired monopoly of that peach blossom girl when it stuck in her loose jacket pocket than when it lay on the public road. But he had not counted on sitting down to his "commandeered" luncheon face to face with the peach blossom girl's open forehead and kindly eyes. The others were barely noticing him and his pals except with a scornful amusement not easy to endure, but the girl opposite seemed to study them covertly in sympathetic interest. A nice girl she looked, one among his own kindred he would have picked out as probably a good sort; a pity that she should thus live in her ignorance, useless, harmful, battening upon the brains and the life blood of human beings better—for a wonder he hesitated—of human beings as good as herself.

She had said something. It evoked an outburst of protest. "But, my dear princess!"—the scream from Lady Frances carried across to the neighboring table the amazing word which, despite their anarchical sentiments, struck the working class trio, mentally, all of a heap. A princess, to their thought, was the daughter of a sovereign, dwelling in a palace and dining on a throne. But the next moment their newspaper fed faculties righted themselves. A princess was an ordinary woman, no better—Heinrich's eyes met, in full, those of the delicate faced girl opposite him—not much better than a Mannheim factory girl. The blue eyes opposite said plainly, "You must have come in here by mistake. How uncomfortable you must be! I feel so sorry for you!" And, in fact, it was some such remark that had occasioned the latest outcry. In contrast with one of the cousins Adelgunde had maintained that "the girl looked vulgar, of course, but not immodest." The others exclaimed:

"Adelgunde is always so romantic," said the old Furst, making codfish eyes over his souffle. It may be noted that "romantic," in lofty circles, is used to denote two exactly opposite attitudes of mind. You are "romantic" when so utterly selfish as to ignore, on your own behalf, all the feelings of your family, for instance, by eloping with the groom; you are also "romantic" when so altruistic as to feel some sympathy, however slight, for sufferers outside your hereditary horizon. Within the horizon, it need hardly be pointed out, are all immediate dependents, their bodies and, nowadays, their spirits forming one of the most interesting developments of your social task. But the Furst was old fashioned. "Adelgunde," he spluttered, "is always so romantic! Zum Donnerwetter; She knows the names of the kitchen maids!"

And here might this episode end—in which case it had ne'er found a recorder—but that, what with the heat and the excitement, the tension of his strange dead and the unwonted proximity, the unwholesome, rich food and noisy, heavily perfumed atmosphere—what with all these many stifling influences—but not with the wine, for he had barely drunk a glass of it—what must the poor drudge and dreamer Heinrich feel suddenly surging in his ears and the veins of his head but that curious, suffocating roar as of rushing waters which at red hot public meetings once or twice before, when he had spoken well and was being applauded, he had heard, terror struck, as he sank back trying to recover himself in vain.

He was sinking back now; the room was going round; people were beginning to notice; some one had started up; the room was gone!

"I know what to do, if you will let me do it," said the Princess Adelgunde, as the waiters and his own frightened companions fussed helplessly round the unconscious man. The head waiter could have torn his hair but that he was accustomed to restrain his emotions, and, moreover, quite bald.

"Nonsense, Adelgunde, come here!" cried the scarlet Furst.

"My dear child, if he is not drunk it is just a fainting fit," pleaded, with courteous authority, the old princess.

"It is neither, aunt. Look at his forehead—but you don't know. The man must have immediate technical assistance or he will die." She spoke quite unemotionally, as you might speak of seeing to the fire.

The English ladies squeaked. One of the lieutenants said, sotto voce, "Let him." The Furst grunted. "This comes of your ridiculous Esmarch lectures, of which I always disapproved." Adelgunde turned quickly. "Am I 15," she said, "or 25?"

"My dear, you know best."

"And am I, or am I not, a Lady of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem?"

To this last there was really no answer but acquiescence. She felt as much, as, triumphantly and imperiously, she addressed the head waiter: "Take this man at once," she said, "to a bedroom on the ground floor—he may not be carried upstairs—and send instantly for a doctor."

"Transparency," replied the waiter sullenly, "there are no bedrooms on the ground floor except the garden suite, occupied by yourselves."

She turned to her uncle—to the "reigning" Prince of Steyn-Hohenfels-Ideburg-Steyn-Steyn, and she said, unmoved, as if such askings were in nature: "May he be laid on your bed for a moment? He is almost certain to die unless something is done at once."

"My bed! Oh, by all means," shouted the prince. "Why not? Oh, of course. By George, it's as good as a play!"

"He looks horribly ill," said, from her seat, the quiet old princess.

"Carry him at once," Adelgunde had already said it, "into No. 5." A tablecloth was spread over the hotel bed; the unconscious figure was laid upon it. The young princess' maid, indignantly called away from the loud couriers' table, stood, with a brow of thunder, in expectant attendance. The room was cleared, The man's friends, altogether scared and unavailable, were directed to wait outside. And the whole place was scoured for a doctor.

Meanwhile the Princess Adelgunde, having deftly loosened tie and collar (after the maid's preliminary bungle)—such a poor, little three penny tie and paper shirt front—the Princess Adelgunde was methodically rubbing the person's temples and directing her servant how to foment the wrists with hot water and a "reigning" sponge.

Baden-Baden contains 150 physicians. It would cntain 300, but that the "cure" committee, curiously so self-styled, has had to petition a grand ducal government, pointing out that defunct visitors pay a heavy final doctors' bill, but no further "kurtaxe." Not one of the 150 was findable, for the moment, a proof, perhaps, that there ought to be more.

Meanwhile the Princess Adelgunde methodically rubbed, with firm, downward stroke, the person's congested temples. The maid sniffed inwardly—her noiseless nostrils sniffed—the room was shaded, cool and quiet. All about lay the hundred appurtenances of a luxuriously splendid old fop of today.

On these appurtenances the patient, after ten minutes of anxious labor, opened feebly wondering eyes. His glance rested on a great purple dispatch box. It was some time before he realized what he was looking at, then he fancied it must be full of gold. And, frritably, the eyes traveled away from it to the countenance bending over him. Their looked changed suddenly from wonder to perplexity, to vexation and to something like awe.

"You will be better now," said the Princess Adelgunde, ceasing her rubbing. "Have you had such an attack before?"

"Yes, once or twice," he muttered, half striving to rise.

"Lie quiet a little longer. The blood is beginning to flow back again. You should see a doctor."

"Doctors are for the rich," he said, not too graciously. Then the thought smote him that this doctor has assisted the poor.

He was obliged to lie still for a few minutes longer, but at the end of that period he sat up on the bed. The princess moved to the door.

"Stop!" he cried, shrill in his shaky voice. "For the love of God give me one moment—one moment—alone!"

She hesitated, resolved not to do so—preposterous! She looked at his face. "Wait outside in the passage," she said to her maid. "Your highness will be murdered," replied that damsel in French. The Princess Adelgunde smiled, yet she remained standing, when left alone, with her hand on the door knob.

"No, I am not going to rob you," said the man, thickly, as if he had caught at the maid's meaning. "I have done that already." The princess' hand went to the pocket of her little costume jacket. Had he done this while feigning to be ill? No, he had been in very real danger—she did not understand.

"I took your purse as you passed us at the entrance. My companions were clamoring to see, once in way, how the rich live. And we came here."

She had a kind, but a proud face. Until now it had expressed no emotion of any kind, neither after his recovery nor before. But as he ceased speaking he saw an unexpected sorrow come into the haughty eyes.

"I am very, very sorry," he said abjectly. He glanced at the open French window, the garden beyond. "Send," he said, "for the police. I shall wait."

"Give me back my purse." She held out her hand, speaking sternly.

"I cannot. I have thrown it away. I only took out two gold pieces. Was there much more inside? I hope not."

Her eyes grew moist. "There was more than money," she said. Then suddenly, much against her wish, she resolved, for his penitence, to tell him: "There was a lock of hair," she said simply, "of my twin brother, who died when we were 17."

He could not withdraw his eyes from hers; they chained him. And the utterance of his agony was such that she trembled where she stood, outwardly calm.

"You mustn't mind like that," she said, faintly. "I will send my maid to look for it. There is just a chance——"

He slipped, nearly fell, off the bed. "I must go at once," he cried. "But, no, hundreds pass that way; yet, possibly, an honest finder. And I am a thief!"

He stood on the floor, still half dazed. "I am a socialist," he pleaded. "But you wouldn't understand. I didn't mean to be a thief. And you are a great lady and you did all this! But before you did it, you looked at us in the eating room—so humanly; I seem to care for that most. You're a great lady and you've a human heart, and human kindness. I don't think I ever knew about that. He paused by the door. "Would your royalty," he said, "have the good condescension to tell me your gracious name?"

"I am called Adelgunde Steyn."

"For what I have done I will go to prison." He waved back her protest. "Never else," he said softly, "could I look my own soul in the face again." Then he went out through the door, leaving her standing by her uncle's tableful of gilt toilet things, shaken, sorrow smitten, very tender.

But in the doorway, on the theshold, he turned. "You have saved my life," he said. "You are a great, great princess and I am only a working man. I am thinking all the time is there nothing I can do on my part to show my gratitude—to benefit you a little—just a little? I can only think of one little thing. By trade, I am a journeyman sausage maker. Oh, royalty, never eat sausage again!"

Then he went away, without another word, and left her standing there.

"NO, I AM NOT GOING TO ROB YOU."

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"THEY MOVED UP THE NARROW GANGWAY."