# A PARISIAN MARRIAGE,

—OR—

## THE MARCHIONESS' MOTHER.

BY EDMOND ABOUT.

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**Continued From Feb. 22.--Part III.**

The next three days were days of waiting and suspense. Lucille was expecting Gaston, just as if he could have received her letter already. Mme. Benoit was waiting for her noble debtors to return her visits. Mother and daughter remained at home, but not together; one at the window watching the carriage entrance; the other in the garden peering into the future. Mme. Benoit relied on her splendor to make friends for her; she would take delight in showing the sumptuous apartments. "We shall be unfortunate," she mused, "if no one offers us a cup of tea; people cheerfully offer things to those who can return them." The parlor, decked with flowers, looked as if prepared for a fete; its mistress was in full dress from morning till night, like Russian officers who never take off their uniforms. Jacquet, in new livery, was serving apprenticeship as a lackey and walking up and down under the portico. Sympathizing hearts will be grieved to learn that all this expense was vain; no one called on Mme Benoit. These ladies and gentlemen had made it a rule to pay neither in money nor politeness, and to return her nothing, not even calls.

She was sadly musing behind her curtains, where a coupe sounded cheerily on the graveled court yard. The widow felt her heart bound. It was the first time that any carriage but her own had left its impress before her door. The coupe stopped; a gentleman, still young, alighted. It was not a debtor; it was a hundred times better; it was the Count de Preux himself! He disappeared under the portico; and Mme. Benoit cast her eye over the parlor, glanced approvingly at her toilet, and prepared a little speech, though she had wit enough to improvise one. The count delayed. She cursed Jacquet, who, doubtless, was detaining him in the ante-chamber. Why didn't the door open? She would have run to meet her noble visitor had she not been afraid of spoiling everything by unseemly haste. Finally the door opened; Jacquet appeared.

"Show him in!" said the breathless widow.

"Show who in, madame?"

"The count!"

"Ah! he's a count is he? Well, there he is in the court."

Mme. Benoit hurried to the window in time to see Count de Preux enter his carriage, without turning his head, and give a direction to his coachman. "Run after him," said she to Jacquet. "What did he say?"

"Madame, he's a very nice man, not a bit stuck up. He is probably from the country, because he asked whether the marquis was in. I said he wasn't, that's all."

"You blockhead, you didn't tell him madame was at home!"

"Yes, madame, I did, but he didn't seem to hear me."

"You ought to have told him again."

"I hadn't time. He asked me at once when monsieur would come home. I guess he wanted to speak to the marquis."

"Well, what did you tell him?"

"*Ma foi!* I told him we didn't exactly know how to take monsieur; that he didn't seem to want to come back; then, as he wasn't a bit proud nor airish, I up and told him what a good joke madame and mademoiselle played on the marquis."

"You blockhead, get out of here; you are discharged! How much is coming to you?"

"I don't know, madame."

"How much do you earn a month?"

"Nine francs, madame, but don't send me away! I didn't do anything! I wont do so any more!" and a flow of tears.

"How long since you were paid?"

"Two months, madame. But what's to become of me if you drive me away?"

"Come here; here are eighteen francs, and here are twenty more I give you that you may have time to find another place. Now go!"

Jacquet took the money, counted it to see that the amount was correct, then fell on his knees, exclaiming: "Forgive me, madame, I'm not bad! I never harmed anybody in my life!"

"Master Jacquet, learn that stupidity is the worst of vices."

"Why is that, madame," sobbed Jacquet.

"Because it is the only one that is never overcome."

She pushed him out, shut the door in his face, and threw herself into an arm chair. Jacquet left the house, carrying his possessions and muttering, in a disconsolate tone: "Sixty-two and eight makes seventy, and ten makes eighty, and twenty makes one hundred. But I've killed the goose, and she'll lay no more golden eggs."

At dinner Lucille heard of Jacquet's disgrace, but dared not ask the cause. Mother and daughter sat at the table, one sad, the other morose, and ate dinner without a word, when a letter was brought for Mme. d'Outreville. "From Gaston!" she exclaimed. Alas! no; it was from Mme. Celine Jordy, nee Melier. Lucille read aloud:

"My dear friend: I write to you both to our hamlet and to Paris, for since your marriage you have so forgotten me, that I do not know what has become of you. As for me, I am happy, happy, happy! There, you have my whole history in three words. If you want fuller details, come and get them, or tell me where you are hiding yourself. Robert is the best of men, except Monsieur Gaston d'Outreville, whom I have never seen, but whom I shall know when you show him to me. Now, when can I embrace you? I have a thousand secrets that I can tell to no one but you; have you not been my only confidante? I am anxious to see whether you will know me without my having to write my name on my hat. You, too, you must have changed. We were such children, you only two weeks ago, and I but three weeks ago! Come tomorrow to Passy if you are in Paris; as soon as you can if you are not at Arlange. I hope we are not going to play the marchionesses, but that we will see each other ofter, without even standing on ceremony. I long to show you my house, the most delightful plebeian home in the world. You can then humble me with a view of your palace; but I must see it. It is my will. This is a command that no one ever thinks of disobeying at Passy, Rue des Tilleuls, No. 16. Good-bye. I embrace you without knowing where you are. Year CELINE."

"Dear Celine! I shall spend the day with her to-morrow. You will not want me, will you, mamma?"

"No, I am going to call on a friend."

"Who, mamma?"

"You don't know her, the Countess de Malesy? It was thirteen years since Mme. Benoit had seen this venerable friend, on whom she hung her last hope. She found her little changed. The countess had grown deaf from hearing the cries of her creditors; but it was an accommodating deafness, that did not prevent her hearing when she wanted to. But her eye was bright, her appetite excellent, and she recognized her creditor and received her with touching familiarity. "Good morning, my dear, good morning!" she said. "I never closed my door against you. You have too much good sense to come here to ask for money?"

"Oh! madame la countess! I have never made you any interested visits."

"You are like your father, my dear! Oh! Lopinot was a noble fellow."

"You overwhelm him, madame la countess."

"Can you imagine how people can come to collect bills from such a poor woman as I? It is not a year since I married my daughter to the Marquis de Croix-Mangars! It is a good match, but it cost me my head and eyes!" (Mlle. Malesy had not received a centime of dowry.)

"As for me, madame, I have just married my daughter to the Marquis d'Outreville."

"What's that! What did you say is that gentleman's name?"

Mme. Benoit made a trumpet with her hands and cried: "The Marquis d'Outreville!"

"Yes, yes, I hear; but which Outreville? There are real Outrevilles and false Outrevilles; and there are not many good ones left."

"This is one of the good ones."

"Are you sure? Is he rich?"

"He has nothing."

"All the better for you! The bad ones are rich in deviltry; they bought the land and chateau and picked the name out of the street. What kind of a nose has he?"

"Who?"

"Your son-in-law."

"An aquiline nose."

"I congratulate you. The false Outrevilles are apes; they have pug noses."

"This one was in the polytechnic school."

"Oh! I know him; eccentric, but good fellow. But, come, you are a sensible woman, tell me how he ever came to commit such a blunder."

It was Mme. Benoit's turn to play deaf. The countess continued: "I mean the blunder of marrying your daughter. Is she very rich?"

"She had an income of one hundred thousand livres for a dowry. We of the *bourgeoisie* retain the custom of giving dowries to our daughters. Take that!"

"No matter; I thought he had better sense. Understand, my dear, I would not say this if he were here, but *entre nous*—What is it Rosine?"

"Madame," said the chambermaid, "it is the *Bon Saint Louis* clerk."

"I am not in! Those tradesmen of the *Bon Saint Louis* are intolerable! Ah! my dear, what a good man your father was! I was about to remark that the marquis will be blamed by everybody. No one will reproach him to his face; he can drag his wife where he pleases; but a true d'Outreville should never have made a miss—What now Rosine?"

"Madame, it is Mons. Majou."

"I'm out for the day; I have started for the country. Did you ever see such a wine merchant? Creditors now-a-days are worse than beggars; ah! my dear, what a grand man your father was! Your daughter, at least, is handsome.

"Madame, I shall have the honor of presenting her to you some afternoon. My son-in-law is on our estate just now."

"That's right, bring her some morning. I'm always at home until noon— Again, Rosine! are we having a procession to-day?"

"Madame, it is Mons. Bouniol."

"Tell him they are applying leeches to me."

"Madame, he says he has been here five times this week, and that if you refuse to see him he wont come any more."

"Well, show him in; I'll tell him his fate. You will excuse me, my dear. Oh! your father was a great man."

Mme. Benoit, as she entered her carriage, muttered: "Rail on! impertinent old woman! You have debts. I have money; I hold you! If it costs me 500 louis, you shall introduce me into your daughter's salon."

Lucille had long been with her friend in one of the finest homes in the Rue des Tilleuls. The garden full of flowers looked like a gigantic bouquet. Blackbirds with golden bills sang and flew from tree to tree. The house seemed to smile at the happy splendor. Everything that climbs and blooms, climbed and bloomed along its walls. The sight of all this awakened in the marchioness sweet recollections of Arlange; at that moment she would gladly have exchanged her proud mansion in the Rue Saint Dominique and that narrow garden in which the flowers seemed crowded, the heavy shade of the house and thick foliage of the chestnut trees, for this beautiful and cosy home.

Celine was a little blonde, plump and round, with a dimpled chin and turned up nose, and every moment displayed two rows of little sharp, white teeth; laughing for no other reason than the happiness of being alive, weeping without cause, changing her countenance twenty times an hour, and always pretty. Lucille resembled Mme. Jordy in nothing, and if friendship thrives by contrasts their intimacy might have been eternal. The young marchioness was a head taller than her friend, without her stoutness. The forest queen of Arlange wore a white crepe hat and pink taffeta dress; the little fat bourgeoise was dressed in a straw hat and flowing robe. "How kind it was in you to come!" she said. The reader will excuse me from giving the kisses that interrupted their words. "I was dreaming about you. How long have you been in Paris, dear?"

"Since the day after my marriage."

"Two weeks lost to me! Why, this is horrible!"

"If I had known where to find you," murmured the little marchioness. "I wanted to see you ever so much."

"And I wanted to see you. Now look me in the face! Do I look like a woman? Would I still be taken for a girl?"

"True; there is something more settled about you; a certain air of gravity——"

"Not another word, or I will kill myself laughing, and you, let me see! You are still the same. Good morning, mademoiselle."

"Your servant, madame."

"Madame! O, what a pretty word! If you are very good at the *dejeuner*, I will call you madame at desert. Do you remember the time when we used to play lady?"

"It isn't so long ago that I have forgotten it."

"Come, mademoiselle, I'm going to show you my garden, but you musn't touch the flowers!" And as she spoke she gathered the choicest she could find and made them into a beautiful bouquet.

"I compliment you on your beautiful garden," cried Lucille.

"I forbid you saying *my* beautiful garden. Everybody sees it, everybody comes to it; it belongs to everybody. *My* beautiful garden is there behind that wall. But two persons are allowed to walk in it; Robert and I; you shall be the third. Do you see that green gate? Let's see who'll get there first!" She started at full speed, Lucille followed and passed her. On reaching the gate Mme. Jordy took a key from her pocket and opened it.

"This," said she, "is our private garden. Those lindens bloom only for us. We walk here every morning before it is time to go to work, for we are early birds; I've kept my good Arlange habits. As for Robert, I don't know how he manages, for, no matter how early I wake, I find him leaning on his elbow watching me as I sleep. Here the former proprietor of the place built a large, damp grotto, paved with shells, with an Apollo in plaster in the center, and frogs all around it. Robert had it nearly all demolished, and let in light and air. He bought these running vines, hung those baskets, and fixed this pretty table and these chairs. He has admirable taste; he is an architect, an upholsterer, gardener, and everything else! Sit down on this moss. Stop, I forgot your new dress. As for me, this is what I wear in the morning. With this you can sit wherever you please. Come, let's go."

"No, not yet. It's so nice here under the trees."

"We'll come back again for lunch. Come and see our home. Then I'll show you my husband; he's at the factory now. Here is our room. He selected the hangings for me just as he would a dress; blue, on account of my blonde hair. You, my brunette with dark eyes, I suppose your chamber is hung with rose-colored satin."

"I think so," replied Lucille.

"What! You think so. You answer like an English woman."

In a moment the door opened, and Mons. Jordy bounded in, throwing his hat on a bench. The presence of Lucille restrained him, and he made a respectful bow. His wife threw her arms around his neck and then, pointing to the marchioness, said:

"Robert, this is Lucille."

This was all the introduction. Mons. Jordy paid Lucille a little compliment, which showed that she was neither a stranger nor one in whom he felt no interest. He sat down and his wife placed herself close to him. "Is he not a fine fellow," she said. "But where do you come from? You must have been running. You are all in perspiration." and she passed her handkerchief over the face of the young man, who vainly sought to restrain her. Mons. Jordy had seen more of the world than Celine had; but it was useless for him to look at her in a manner he wished to appear severe. The little Arlange girl boldly placed her hand over his eyes and kissed his closed lids. "Don't scold," she said. "Lucille is only two weeks married, which means that she is just as foolish as we." The clock struck 12; it was time for lunch. They went into the garden and seated themselves joyously under those beautiful lindens. No servant waited on them. The two friends sipped a mild and delicious wine which M. Jordy brought from an adjacent brook where he had placed it to cool. Robert had no difficulty in pleasing the marchioness; he had education and wit, was unaffected, good-hearted and of the stuff that good friends are made of. Besides, people fancy cheerful faces; only selfish people dislike those who are happy. Celine, who was anxious to show off her husband's attainments, insisted on his singing after lunch. He selected one of Beranger's prettiest songs. The birds on the trees overhead, aroused from their siesta, added a merry accompaniment. Lucille sang without having to be coaxed, and her song was not an aria from Italian opera. They joked together like good people; they chatted about everything except their neighbors and the latest play, their merry laugh was unrestrained, and no one noticed that there was a shade of nervousness in the marchioness' gayety.

"Why is not Monsieur d'Outreville here?" asked Celine, "two can make love together very nicely, but with four there is competition!"

At 2 o'clock M. Jordy started for business and the friends resumed their talks. Celine chatted unceasingly, without noticing that she was carrying on a monologue. Women are wonderfully adapted for microscopic work; they excel in detailing their joys and their sorrows. Lucille, full of her own thoughts, listened, learned, guessed, and sometimes failed to understand. Dinner time was drawing near, Celine was still talking and Lucille still listening. She was going on with a description of her joys, present and prospective, when she looked up and perceived that Lucille was in tears.

"You weep!" cried Celine. "Have I pained you?"

"Ah! Celine, I am indeed to be pitied. Think of it. Mamma dragged me away on the night of my marriage and I have not seen my husband since."

"On that night? Mercy! But this is treachery! Why did you not tell me that before? Here I've been rattling away like a madcap and you've never said a word. I should never forgive you if you were not so unhappy."

Lucille told her story.

"And you have not written to your husband?"

"Yes, I have written to him."

"When?"

"Four days ago."

"Well, my pet, don't cry; he will be here to-night."

At dinner the table was elegant; the dining room bright and cheerful; the setting sun shone through the blinds; wine glistened in the glasses; and Mons. Jordy, from time to time, caressed his wife's pretty cheek; but Celine maintained the gravity of a Roman matron, and forgot herself so far on one occasion as to say "you" instead of "thou" to her husband. Lucille departed at 10 o'clock. Celine and her husband accompanied her to her carriage. On seeing the coachman Celine was seized with a sudden inspiration. "Pierre," said she in a tone of indifference, "has monsieur le marquis arrived?"

"Yes, madame."

The marchioness threw herself into her friend's arms with a low cry.

"What's the matter?" asked Robert.

"Nothing," replied Celine.

On receiving Lucille's letter Gaston did what every man would have done in his place; he kissed the signature over and over again and immediately set out for Paris. Fortune, which plays with us much as a little girl plays with her doll, arranged it that he entered the door of the d'Outreville mansion one Tuesday evening, two weeks after his marriage. He succeeded in convincing himself that the first fortnight of June had been a horrid dream from which he had just awakened by the side of his wife. This time his mind was made up; he was armed with courage against the despotism of his mother-in-law, and vowed to himself to defend his rights to the last. He had hardly opened the door when Julie ran to Mme. Benoit, crying, "Madame! madame! the marquis has arrived!"

The widow, who was not aware that her daughter had written to Arlange, imagined that she had gained a victory. She replied with ill concealed satisfaction: "Well, you needn't make such a fuss about it; I was expecting him."

"I didn't know that, madame; after what occurred two weeks ago, I thought, perhaps, madame would like to be notified of his arrival. Madame is in, then, to the marquis?"

"Of course I am! Hurry up! What are you meddling with?"

"Pardon, madame, but they are unloading monsieur's trunk. Is he going to stop here?"

"Where do you expect him to stop? Go and take his baggage."

"Pardon, madame, but where shall I put it?"

"How stupid you are, to be sure! Where else but in the marchioness' apartments? Is not a husband's place where his wife is?"

Gaston arrived, covered with dust, and his first look was for the absent Lucille. Mme. Benoit answered that look: "You seek Lucille? She is dining with a friend; but it is growing late and you will see her within an hour. So you are here at last? Come and embrace me. I forgive you."

"Why, my good mother, you rob me of the very words I was going to utter. Let this kiss wipe out all past offenses."

"If I have done any wrong you drove me to it by that incomprehensible mania which you have at last overcome. To want to live in the country at your age! Confess that it was a piece of folly and thank her who helped you out of it. Are you not better off here than anywhere else? And can one live like a Christian outside of Paris?"

"Pardon, madame, but I did not come to Paris to stay."

"Pray, then, what did you come for?"

"I came to get my wife and to make an indispensable visit."

"You expect to take my daughter back to Arlange?"

"As soon as possible."

"She will accompany you to that kennel?"

"I think it her duty to do so."

"Would you command her to do so by law and have her accompanied by two gen-d'armes?"

"By no means, madame; I should give her up if I had to enforce my claim, but I am sure Lucille would follow me through love."

"Love for you or for Arlange?"

"For both; for the forge and for the smith."

"You are sure of this?"

"Nothing more certain."

"We shall see about that. Now, pray, sir, is there any harm in asking the nature of that indispensable visit which shares with my daughter the honor of your coming to Paris?"

"Don't deceive yourself; it is a visit in which you cannot accompany me."

"To some privileged mortal, perhaps?"

"The minister of the interior."

"The minister! What are you thinking about?"

"I will tell you."

"You are going to set me at sixes and sevens with the Right?"

"We never get into trouble with those who know us. Had you questioned me on my political opinions, I should have told you that I am not a man to brook opposition. Besides, it seems to me that we landed proprietors have little cause for complaint, since everything is done in our interest."

"There, you have said it. 'We landed proprietors!' One would think you had been one all your life."

"Why not, madame? We have been so from father to son for the last 900 years. Do you know many landholders older than that?"

"If we go on at this rate, we shall never come to an understanding. Listen. You are pleased to solicit a country constituency; be it so. Yet the forge has moved along all right, notwithstanding the fact that I have never had a seat in the counseil general. You propose to offer yourself as ministerial candidate; I think you would have done better to solicit the votes of our friends, who are numerous, wealthy and influential. But I will pass over that. See how accommodating I am! I have gained a victory over you; I have compelled you to come to Paris; on my own ground. * * * * * *"

"In my own house."

"Very true. Oh! you are a born land holder; you have taken root very quickly. But, for all that, you are here because I forced you to come; that's one point gained for me; but I do not intend to follow up my advantage. Are you ready to make peace?"

"With heart and soul—if you are reasonable."

"Lo, I mean to be. You are devoted to Arlange, you want to return to it, and you don't want to be separated from your wife; nothing more natural. I shall restore Lucille to you so that you may take her back to your forge."

"This is all I ask. Let us sign the treaty of peace."

"Stop a moment! For my part, I love Paris as much as you do the forge, and the Faubourg as dearly as you do Lucille. If I cannot get into the great world I'm a dead woman. While you are here, introduce your wife and her mother to some eight or ten families of your acquaintance, and give us just one little peep into that earthly paradise from which I have always been excluded because of my ——."

"Original sin! What you ask would cost me a great deal and avail you nothing. I have an old and abiding hatred for the *faubourg*, which prevents my ever entering it again. Perhaps you imagine you have a sufficient claim upon me to ask me to overcome my repugnance and sacrifice my self-respect. But can you ask me to risk Lucille's future? I have in store for her, far from Paris, a happiness which is modest, unobtrusive, tranquil and of sweet uniformity. We have, if God wills it, thirty or forty years to live together within a narrow and delightful horizon. This happiness fills us the measure of our ambition; she has told me so. What assurance have I that familiarity in a life in which everything is appearance and vanity will not turn the head? That her eyes dazzled by the lustre of the chandeliers will be able to content themselves with the lamp that is to light us at night? That her ears turned to rude noise of the world will care to hear the voice of our forests or mine? She is still the Lucille of old; she has a mortal horror of Paris ——"

"What do you know about that?"

"I am sure of it; but I am not sure that in six months she will be of the same mind. It takes but one ball to change a woman's heart, and a ten minutes' waltz can cause a greater commotion than an earthquake."

"You think so? Very well. Lucille is yours, do with her as you like, but, as for me, that is my ultimatum, and if you do not accede I break all contracts. What would prevent your introducing me, I do not say to the entire Faubourg, but to five or six families of your acquaintance?"

"Without my wife? Believe me, my dear Mme. Benoit, there would be about as much sense in doing that as if we were to tie millstones about our necks and cast ourselves into the river. All the aristocracy knows you as well as it knew your father, and you are the by-word of the Faubourg; the baron has told me so and his testimony is incontrovertible. It is reported that you have spent two or three millions sailing through the upper classes in tow of a marquise. If I were to present you to-day they would to-morrow count up the number of calls we had made and calculate to a centime the amount each one brought me in. What do you say to this? If you are young enough to play such a game I am not enough of a philosopher to be your partner. I set out to-morrow with my wife for Arlange; I offer you like a good son-in-law a seat in our carriage, and that's all that common sense will permit me to do."

Mme. Benoit was strongly tempted to wring that good son-in-law's nose, but she concealed her displeasure. "My good fellow," said she, "you have spent thirty hours in a postchaise and you are tired and sleepy. You will be more accommodating when you have rested. Wait for me while I go to look after your convenience. I'll be back in a moment."

She left the room smiling, and ran like a tempest into her daughter's room. I cannot tell whether she opened the door or broke through it, so violent was her entrance. She rudely seized Julie by the arm as she was in the act of unfolding a pillow-case, and cried, "Miscreant, what are you doing?"

"I am doing what you ordered, madame."

"Stupid girl, you have misunderstood me. Stop that, and carry out this baggage. Whoever heard of such a thing? A man's baggage in my daughter's apartment!"

"Pardon, madame, but ——"

"There are no buts in the case, out with all this."

"What shall I do with it, madame?"

"Anything you like; put it in the street! No; stop; put it in my room!"

"madame gives up her room? Where shall I make madame's bed?"

"Here, on the divan, in the marquise's room. Why do you stare so? Is not a mother's place by the side of her daughter?"

She left the astonished chambermaid to her reflections and went down stairs again, muttering to herself in a low tone: "The marquis has come to defy me, has he? He wont make much by it. I shall go in society in spite of him. Madame de Malesy will help me. We shall show this bewitched smith that we can get along without him. But I must not let him beguile my daughter! He would carry her to Arlange, and then—farewell to Faubourg."

At this moment Pierre knocked at the door and Lucille, wild with joy, sprang lightly from the carriage. Mme. Benoit reached the parlor before her; she dreaded nothing more than this meeting, and it was important for her to be on hand to prevent the first outburst of two young hearts. Lucille expected to fall into the arms of her husband; it was her mother who received her: "So here you are, my little dear!" said she with volubility and unusual tenderness; "How long you staid. I was beginning to feel uneasy, my dear one! There is in this world but one unselfish affection; the love of a mother for her daughter. How did you enjoy yourself? Say, Gaston, don't you think she has changed since you saw her last? Your conduct worried her so much. She requires careful attention; violent emotions are fatal to her; the very sight of you makes the blood come and go from her cheeks. And you, my dear marquis, now I look at you, closely, I hardly recognize you. You say that the air of Arlange agrees with you. No one to look at you would think so. You are no longer the bright Marquis d'Outreville I met two months ago. Of course, due allowance must be made for the long journey you have made. Happily, a good night's rest will revive you. There is a good bed at your service in my room, which I have given up to you."

"But, madame———" timidly ventured Gaston.

"No objections. It is a mother's happiness to sacrifice herself for her children. Besides, I shall sleep comfortably in a cot beside Lucille. So, pleasant dreams to you; say good-night to your wife, and kiss her hand. You don't seem over pleased to see her!"

Neither Gaston nor Lucille was deceived by these words, but they fell victims to them. Impudence succeeds with young people, because they feel a degree a shame in refuting a falsehood.

Mme. Benoit had laid a plan which could never have succeeded but for the influence she exercised over her daughter and but for Gaston's proud timidity. For a week she succeeded in keeping them apart. What it cost that woman in turbulence to cover her daughter and of impudence to restrain her son-in-law is beyond conception. Every day she devised some new pretext for dragging her daughter after her over the city and leaving the marquis at home. She chained her daughter to her and never trusted her out of sight except when Gaston was out. To have seen her zeal and perseverance one would have imagined her one of those jealous mothers who cannot reconcile herself to share her daughter with a husband. Her first impulse was to punish her son-in-law. She imagined that Gaston would weary and, of his own accord, offer to lead her into that society she so longed for. But the marquis bore his widowhood with resignation. He wrote to Lucille and received her replies by stealth. He was planning an escape with her. Thanks to Mme. Benoit these two young people, united by law and by religion, amused themselves with the stratagems of school children. Their love without losing strength or serenity acquired the piquant charms of clandestine passions. The daily ceremony of hand-kissing, presided over by the mother-in-law, concealed the interchange of correspondence, which Mme. Benoit was far from suspecting. Wearied, at last, with waiting for her son-in-law's conversion, she returned to her cherished purpose and fixed her eyes upon Mme. de Malesy. She learned at her dressmaker's that the Marquis de Croix-Mangars was about to give a fete in his garden on the anniversary of his marriage. All the nobility in Paris was expected, for the ball was to be on the 22d of June, and an opportunity to dance under a tent is not to be lost. By a lucky chance Gaston had obtained an audience with the minister of the interior for the 21st at 11 a. m. The widow availed herself of her son-in-law's absence, to leave Lucille at home and hurried to the old countess. "Madame," she shouted in her ear, "you owe me 18,000 francs or thereabouts."

"What do you say?" asked the countess, who was hard of hearing in that ear.

"I did not come to ask you for money, nor to upbraid you."

"That's right."

"I care so little for money that I not only give up all claims to that sum, but I am ready to make further sacrifices, if necessary, to gain my object. I must be admitted into the Faubourg with the marquise, my daughter, and that without delay. Mme. de Croix-Mangers gives a ball to-morrow; you are her mother, she can refuse you nothing; would it be abusing the claims I have upon your kindness to ask you to get me two invitations?"

The countess' bright little eyes became round like the nail heads in her arm chair. She smiled.

"Alas! my friend," said she, wiping away a tear, "my influence has been greatly overestimated. My daughter is—my daughter, I grant you, but she is under the control of a husband. Do you know Croix-Mangars?"

"If I knew him I would not have to——"

"Just so. Well, my good woman, I have only to ask anything of him to be refused. I am the most unfortunate woman in Paris. My creditors are leagued against me, although I have never done them harm. My son-in-law is a man. He ought to protect me. What happened day before yesterday? I simply asked him for a little money to pay Bon Saint Louis, which has greatly degenerated since your good father's time. He answered that his fete would be a magnificent affair, and that his purse was exhausted. I don't know which way to turn. Have you the heart to talk of a ball and of pleasure to a woman in such desperate straits? I shall be seized; my furniture sold—excuse me, you see that I am hardly in a fit state to receive visitors; but I shall always be glad to see you; you remind me so much of poor Lopinot. Ah! if he were only alive! Come again one of these days, and if I am still good for anything I shall try to serve you."

At the first tear the countess shed, Mme. Benoit's handkerchief was resolutely brought out. She said to herself: "Since we must weep, let us weep. And, after all, tears don't cost us any more than they do her." Then she added, aloud: "Come, my dear countess, take courage! There is nothing in this to grieve a heart like yours. You must owe a great deal to this wicked Saint Louis?"

"Alas! my dear, 1,500 francs."

"That's a mere trifle."

"It's a great misfortune to be the Countess de Malesy; to be the mother of the Marquise de Croix-Mangars; to be most prominent in the Faubourg, and have access for self and friends to every parlor in it, and with all this, not to be able to pay 1,500 francs! I grieve you, don't I? Well, good-bye, my dear; my grief is redoubled at seeing your tears; leave me alone with my troubles."

"Will you permit me to go to Bon Saint Louis? I will engage to settle the matter."

"By no means!—or rather, do go. Those people are your successors; you can get along with them better than I can. Besides, they belong to your caste; tradespeople never harm one another. You are a lucky set. You can get for a hundred francs what would cost us a thousand. Go to Bon Saint Louis. I'll wager you can buy my debt without loosening your purse strings—and then it will be to you that I shall owe these 1,500 francs!"

"Enough said, madame la countesse; and as one good turn deserves another—"

"Yes; I shall do you all the good turns er my power. But, after all, I would rathse you would not make peace for me with thoni shop-keepers. What would I gain by it? It would soon leak out that they are paid, and I would have all the others after me. No, my poor friend, I owe from one end of Paris to the other."

"How much about?"

"Ah! yes, how much! I can hardly tell myself. My memory is failing. But I have some bills here. Let us see; there's the baker of the Rue de Poitiers who charges five hundred francs for half a dozen spring chickens he sent me, and a few cakes I nibbled in his store. What extortioners these people are!"

"I'll soon settle him."

"Yes, tell him he ought to be ashamed of himself, and that I don't want to hear any more about him."

"Make yourself easy."

"Now, here's Maitre Majou who wants the price of a case of ordinary Bordeaux."

"That's nothing; give me that piece of paper."

"A thousand francs!"

"The deuce! your ordinaire is not to be sneezed at."

"Now, there's the bill of an honest man; I am sure you'll have no trouble with him. It's the upholsterer who renovated my furniture. He wants a thousand francs, but if he were approached in the right direction, I am sure he would be willing to compromise on a nominal sum."

"I shall sound him, my dear countess." She took the four bills and folded them. "And now, that you feel more at ease, will you not try the effect of your eloquence upon the Marquis de Croix-Mangars!"

"Yes, my dear, I will. But my mind is not as free from care as you imagine. I have not told you all my troubles." She opened the drawer of her work table and took out a portfolio full of papers. "You are going to learn many other troubles."

"Very fine," thought Mme. Benoit. "Here's four thousand francs, quite a price for a passport to the interior of the Faubourg. The old lady is in the humor, but if I don't draw the line she'll want me to buy her the Louvre and the Tuilleries." The widow laid the bills she had just folded on the table, saying: "Alas, madame, I greatly fear you are right, and that your troubles are beyond remedy!"

"By no means!" quickly replied the countess. "I am sure of extricating myself. You have given me courage, and I feel rejuvenated. I shall be at my daughter's in an hour; the time it takes to change my dress! I shall have an invitation in the name of the Marquis d'Outreville. You will not require two; you go in with your daughter; I want to avoid the name of Benoit, which would spoil everything. While I am busy with your affairs, hasten to your tradespeople with those bills. Come back here at 3 o'clock precisely and we shall exchange our powers, like two ambassadors."

"Monsieur de Croix-Mangars scowled when his mother-in-law came in. The countess was so terribly impecunious that the sight of her was as unwelcome as that of a tax collector. But, as soon as it was known that she was not after money, she was regarded with more favor. The marquis smilingly handed her a satin-finished card, the value of which he was far from imagining. It was the fourth time that year that he had paid her debts. Mme. Benoit, as happy as a mariner who has reached the longed-for port, hurried to her notary, then to the creditors and paid them without a word. At 3 o'clock Mme. Malesy had her receipts, and the delighted widow hurried home with her precious invitation. She would not trust it in her pocket; she carried it in her hand; she contemplated it and smiled upon it. "At last!" she exclaimed, "these are my naturalization papers. I am a citizen of the Faubourg; provided I don't fall sick between now and to-morrow!"

She now remembered that Lucille had been alone since 11 o'clock, and that the marquis had had time to see her alone. This thought, which would have distracted her the day before, gave be littier uneasiness now. Her present joy reconciled her with everybody; an intoxicated person has no enemies. On alighting from her carriage she noticed a former victim of her anger, the simple Jacquet. "Come here, my man," she said to him. "Don't be afraid; you are forgiven. Do you want to return to my service?"

"Thank you very much, madame, but the marquis was kind enough to get me a place."

"The marquis! You are lucky."

"Yes, madame, and I get thirty francs a month."

"I congratulate you. Is that all you have to tell me?"

"No, madame, I came to bring you two letters."

"Give them to me."

"One moment, madame, they are in the lining of my hat. Here they are!"

One of these letters was from Gaston, the other from Lucille. Gaston's was as follows:

"My charming mother: In the hope that your maternal affection will wean you from that Paris you love too much I take your daughter to Arlange. Come and join us soon."

"Who gave you this?" asked Mme. Benoit of Jacquet. But Jacquet had fled like the bird before the storm. She quickly opened her daughter's letter and found three pages of excuses, ending with these words, "A wife's place is with her husband."

The widow after reading these letters thought nothing of her daughter's desertion, nor her son-in-law's treachery, nor the isolation in which she found herself, nor the rupture of the bonds which bound her to her family. Her mind reverted to the fact that she had bought an invitation, that that invitation was in the name of d'Outreville, that it was of no earthly use to Mme. Benoit, and that they would dance without her at the Croix-Mangers fete.

The Marquis d'Outreville, confident of his rights and Lucille's affection, had no fear of being pursued by his mother-in-law. Their journey to Arlange was one of unalloyed pleasure. Lucille was as much of a marchioness as it was possible for a woman to be. She was recognized as such at every place they stopped along a journey which she had made with her mother only a few weeks before in twenty-four hours, which it took her now three weeks to make, and which appeared to her, by far, the shorter of the two. Their arrival at Arlange was a fete day for all the good people of the vicinity. She was adored by all her vassals, who never tired of telling her how lonesome they had been without her. Gaston divided his time between his forges and his bride. Celine and her husband came to spend their first vacation with them, and were as happy as it was possible for mortals to be.

Mme. Benoit, of all our friends, was the only one who found no means of happiness. She became a misanthrope and hated everyone. She no longer visited her creditors or Mme. de Melesy. Baron Soubresac was the only exception. She did not care particularly about him, but when one feels abandoned by the world the friendship of a baron is not to be despised. She received him kindly, and gradually his visits became quite frequent. Some months after the departure of Lucille, as Mme. Benoit was at table with the baron, after partaking of her unstinted hospitality, he turned to her suddenly and said: "My good friend, I am no longer good for anything, but, such as I am, it is still in my power to give you what you have been wanting all your life. Will you become a baroness? I do not offer you a husband, but a name. At your age and with your attractions you deserve more, but I can only offer what I have. Something tells me that I shall not trouble you long, and that my old age will soon draw to a close. Indeed, I think we shall do well to act promptly if you are willing to become Mme. de Subresac. I have many acquaintances in the Faubourg; I am pretty well thought of, and I have just about time enough left me to present you to my friends. After my death they will continue to receive you for my sake. This done, nothing will prevent you, if you are so inclined, from choosing a man who will be your husband in reality and not in name. Consider my proposition, take a week to think the matter over; I am still good for eight days. Write to your children, perhaps the fear of this marriage will induce them to yield to your wishes. As for me, I shall die easier having had the consolation of contributing to your happiness."

Mme. Benoit was little prepared for such overtures as these, but, being a business woman, an hour after the baron's departure her mind was made up. She reasoned thus: "I made a vow that I would never marry again; but I had, before that, made a vow to enter the Faubourg. I am certain this time not to be beaten by my husband! I shall marry the baron; I shall alter my will, disinherit the marquise. Now to business!"

Next morning she sent her answer to the baron, and began preparing for her wedding. Never was a love-sick maiden more in earnest, for, it must be remembered, that Mme. Benoit was about to marry the Faubourg and not the man. A slight indisposition on the part of the baron warned her to lose no time. She took wings and bestirred herself more energetically than she had when preparing for her daughter's marriage. Whilst the baron was confined to his room, the affianced bride hurried from the *mairie* to the notary, and thence to the clergyman. She still found time to see her beloved patient and to talk with the doctor. The ceremony was arranged for the 15th of October. On the 14th the baron, who had been feeling better, complained of a heaviness in the head; the doctor suggested bleeding, but Mme. Benoit dissuaded him. The bleeding was postponed, the patient felt better and the lovers dined pleasantly together. The day appointed for the wedding was all that could be desired of an autumn day. The weather was delightful and everything was most auspicious. At 10 o'clock in the morning Mme. Benoit entered her celebrated carriage, which had just been finished, and on which the arms of Soubresac were emblazoned in place of those of d'Outreville, and which she eyed with an air of more that satisfaction. Contrary to general usage the bride went for the groom; she soon reached his apartments, bounded up the stairs to the fourth story, with the joy of an expectant bride, and on reaching his door was confronted by two servants with tearful eyes; the baron had died suddenly only a few minutes before! The poor bride experienced all the sorrow that filled the heart of Calypso when she heard of the departure of Ulynes. She wanted to see all that remained of the baron; she felt his cold hands, sat beside his bed, and gazed with despairing but tearless eyes upon the dead, and thought sadly of her vanished hopes.

Mme. Benoit paid the funeral expenses and provided for the future care of the baron's servants. "It is my duty," she said to herself, "to pay his debts, for am I not his widow in the eyes of God?" She resolved to go in mourning for him. She followed his remains to the cemetery. The whole Faubourg attended the funeral. Whilst contemplating the long line of carriages that followed her own, she at last found relief in tears. "Alas! what an unfortunate woman I am! all these people would have danced at my parties!"

* * * * * *

Some time after these unfortunate events Mme. Benoit received a letter from Lucille, who, after complaining of her mother's long neglect and unforgiving spirit, again pressed her to return to Arlange, and as an extra inducement added that there was a little stranger waiting to give her a hearty welcome.

"Oui-da," exclaimed Mme. Benoit, "what if this stranger were a little girl!"

She turned to a large mirror over the mantle piece and continued: "I am now 42 years of age; in sixteen years my grandchild will be ready to go into society. Her parents will never leave Arlange; who, then, will conduct her into the Faubourg, if it is not I. The dear little thing! How I love her already! I shall then be only 58 years old. That's still young enough! To Arlange, then."

Mme. Benoit was not long in reaching Arlange, where she found the little stranger to be a bouncing baby boy!

* * * * * *

Gabrielle Auguste Elaine Benoit died like Moses on Mount Nebo, without having set foot onthe promised land.

[THE END.]

## FINANCIAL FANCIES.

The breath of Winter may be cold, but it is not half so cold as the glance of the man you strike for the loan of half a dollar.—Oil City Blizzard.

"Suppose we have no sugar?" suggests an English magazine. Well, then, we don't see how you could successfully run a political campaign.—Lowell Citizen.

We never know how dear a friend was to us until he has skipped and taken the $20 we loaned him along with him to remind him of our existence.—Fall River Herald.

Down in Georgia the other day a dog's skull was found containing two $20 gold pieces and some small pieces of silver. This isn't by any means the first time that a man's money has gone to the dogs.—Boston Transcript.

Policeman to lottery agent—"I see you." Lottery agent to policeman—"I will see you." The former grins pleasantly and passes on, and the latter winks to himself as he rolls a cigaret and counts up the number of tickets sold.—San Francisco News Letter.

In the February number of the English Illustrated Magazine Mr. Jones completes his extremely excellent article The Dramatic Outlook. So sincere and intelligent a view of the subject has not been published for a very long while.


GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

# EPPS'S COCOA.

BREAKFAST.

"By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected Cocoa, Mr. Epps has provided our breakfast tables with a delicately flavored beverage which may save us many heavy doctor's bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency of disease. Hundreds of subtle maladies are floating around us ready to attack wherever there is a weak point. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame." —Civil Service Gazette.

Made simply with boiling water or milk. Sold in tins only (½ lb and lb) by Grocers, labeled thus: JAMES EPPS & CO., Homœopathic Chemists LONDON, ENGLAND


SEALED PROPOSALS.

# Sealed Proposals.

CITY COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE, CITY HALL, CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA, February 9th, 1885.

Sealed proposals will be received at the office of the City Comptroller of the City of Saint Paul, State of Minnesota, until 3 o'clock, p. m.,

ON THURSDAY,

The Fifth Day of March, 1885,

FOR

# $100,000

Five (5) Per Cent

# BONDS

OF THE

City of Saint Paul

AND

County of Ramsey.

(Coupons Attached.)

Maturing in Thirty Years,

All issued under and by virtue of an act of the legislature of the state of Minnesota, approved February 26th, A. D. 1883, for the erection of a new

Court House and City Hall,

VIZ:

$50,000 City of Saint Paul Bonds.
$50,000 County of Ramsey Bonds.

All bearing interest at the rate of five (5) per cent. per annum, payable semi-annually at the financial agencies of the city of Saint Paul and Ramsey County in the city of New York, dated January first, 1885, maturing January first, 1915, (30 years.)

These bonds will be issued in denominations of

One Thousand Dollars Each,

And delivered to the successful purchaser in the city of Saint Paul.

No bid will be entertained for less than par and accrued interest, as provided by law.

Bids will be entertained for all the bonds *as a whole or for any part thereof.*

The "Commissioners of the Interest and Sinking Fund" reserving the right to reject any or all bids.

C. D. O'BRIEN, Mayor.
ROBERT A. SMITH, President of Common Council.
W. D. CORNISH, Chairman Com. Ways and Means.
GEORGE REIS, City Treasurer.
JOHN W. ROCHE, City Comptroller.
"Commissioners of the Interest and Sinking Fund."

Mark bids "Sealed proposals for Court House and City Hall Bonds," and address

JOHN W. ROCHE,
City Comptroller,
41-64 Saint Paul, Minnesota.

NORTHWESTERN

# Mutual Life Insurance Co.

—OF—

MILWAUKEE, WIS.

President.......................H. L. Palmer
Secretary.......................J. W. Skinner

ASSETS DEC. 31, 1884.

| | |
|---|---|
| Loans on real estate | $17,376,080 54 |
| Premium notes and loans | 1,266,687 91 |
| Value of real estate owned | 1,059,664 01 |
| Market value of bonds and stocks owned | 862,109 98 |
| Cash on hand and in bank | 1,293,164 56 |
| Accrued interests and rents | 305,454 70 |
| Net deferred and outstanding premiums | 334,611 14 |
| Total admitted assets | $22,497,772 84 |

LIABILITIES.

| | |
|---|---|
| Net present value of outstanding policies, American experience table of mortality with 4½ per cent interest | $17,249,527 00 |
| Total gross policy claims | 270,019 56 |
| All other liabilities | 111,567 59 |
| Total liabilities | $17,631,114 15 |
| Surplus over liabilities | $4,866,658 69 |

INCOME IN 1884.

| | |
|---|---|
| Total premium income | $3,376,776 07 |
| From interest and dividends | 1,236,152 05 |
| From rents and all other sources | 42,953 53 |
| Total income | $4,655,881 65 |

EXPENDITURES IN 1884.

| | |
|---|---|
| Losses and matured endowments | $1,474,667 72 |
| Dividends and other disbursements to policy holders | 1,011,301 02 |
| Total payments to policy holders | $2,485,96 874 |
| Management expenses | 753,741 55 |
| Total disbursements | $3,239,710 29 |

BUSINESS IN MINNESOTA IN 1884.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| In force at end of 1883 | 3178 | $4,873,478 0 |
| Issued during 1884 | 274 | 495,568 0 |
| In force December 31, 1884 | 3235 | 5,007,115 00 |
| Total premium receipts | | 98,397 35 |
| Losses paid in 1884 | | $51,598 55 |
| Losses incurred in 1884 | | 51,301 38 |

STATE OF MINNESOTA. DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE. ST. PAUL, February 21, 1885.

I, A. R. McGILL, Insurance Commissioner of the State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company above named, has complied with the laws of this State relating to insurance, and is now fully empowered through its authorized agents to transact its appropriate business of life insurance, in this State for the year ending January 31, 1886.

A. R. McGILL, Insurance Commissioner.

MYRON BROWN, General Agent,
58-65 St. Paul, Minn.


BABY

"Horlick's Food for Infants has saved many lives," writes B. R. Tooker, M.D., Chicago, Ill. Sold by all druggists. Price 40 and 75 cents. Sent by mail for amount in stamps. Book sent free. Horlick's Food Co., Racine, Wis.