

THE WANDERING JEW.

BY EUGENE SUE.

CHAPTER LXIII. [CONTINUED.]
THE CHAMPS-ELYSEES.

"Then, Adrienne and I will be left alone at the play, uncle!"

"Your husband will go with you, I suppose."
"True, dear uncle; but do not quite leave us, because of that."

"Be sure I shall not; for I am curious as you are to see these terrible animals, and the famous Morok, the incomparable lion-tamer."

A few minutes after, Mdlle. de Cardoville's carriage had left the Champs-Elysees, carrying with it the little girl, and directing its course towards the Rue d'Anjou. As the brilliant equipage disappeared from the scene, the crowd, of which we before had spoken, greatly increased about one of the large trees in the Champs-Elysees, and expressions of pity were heard here and there among the groups. A loungee approached a young man on the skirts of the crowd, and said to him:

"What is the matter, sir?"
"I hear it is a poor young girl, a hunchback, that has fallen from exhaustion."

"A hunchback! is that all? The re will always be enough hunchbacks," said the loungee, brutally, with a coarse laugh.

"Hunchback or not, if she dies of hunger," answered the young man, scarcely able to restrain his indignation, "it will be no less sad—and there is really nothing to laugh at, sir."

"Die of hunger! pooh!" said the loungee, shrugging his shoulders. "It is only lazy scoundrels, that will not work, who die of hunger. And it serves them right."

"I wager, sir, there is one death you will never die of," cried the young man, incensed at the cruel insolence of the loungee.

"What do you mean?" answered the other, haughtily.

"I mean, sir, that your heart is not likely to kill you."

"Sir!" cried the loungee in an angry tone.
"Well! what sir?" replied the young man, looking full in his face.

"Nothing," said the loungee, turning abruptly on his heel, and grumbling as he sauntered toward an orange-colored cabriolet, on which was emblazoned an enormous coat of arms, surmounted by a baron's crest. A servant in green livery, ridiculously laced with gold, was standing beside the horse, and did not perceive his master.

"Are you catching flies, fool?" said the latter, pushing him with his cane.

The servant turned round in confusion.
"Sir," said he.

"Will you never learn to call me Monsieur le Baron, rascal?" cried his master in a rage. "Open the door directly!"

The loungee was Baron Tripeaud, the manufacturing baron, the stock-jobber. The poor hunchback was Mother Bunch, who had, indeed, fallen with hunger and fatigue, whilst on her way to Mdlle. de Cardoville's. The unfortunate creature had found courage to brave the shame of the ridicule she so much feared, by returning to that house from which she was a voluntary exile; but this time, it was not for herself, but for her sister Cephyse—the Bacchanal Queen, who had returned to Paris the previous day, and whom Mother Bunch now sought, through the means of Adrienne, to rescue from a most dreadful fate.

Two hours after these different scenes, an enormous crowd pressed round the doors of the Porte-Saint-Martin, to witness the exercises of Morok, who was about to perform a mock combat with the famous black panther of Java, named Death. Adrienne, accompanied by Lord and Lady de Morinval, now stepped from a carriage at the entrance of the theatre. They were to be joined in the course of the evening by M. de Montbron, whom they had dropped, in passing, at his club.

CHAPTER LXIV.
BEHIND THE SCENES.

The large theatre of the Port-Saint-Martin was crowded by an impatient multitude. All Paris had hurried with eager and burning curiosity to Morok's exhibition. It is quite unnecessary to say that the lion-tamer had completely abandoned his small taste in religious baubles, which he had so successfully carried on at the White Falcon Inn at Leipsic. There were, moreover, numerous tokens by which the surprising effects of Morok's sudden conversion had been blazoned in the most extraordinary pictures: the antiquated baubles in which he had formerly dealt would have found no sale in Paris. Morok had nearly finished dressing himself, in one of the actor's rooms, which had been lent to him. Over a coat

of mail, with cuishes and brassards, he wore an ample pair of red trousers, fastened round his ankles by broad rings of gilt brass. His long caftan of black cloth, embroidered with scarlet and gold, was bound round his waist and wrist by other large rings of gilt metal. This sombre costume imparted to him an aspect still more ferocious. His thick and red-haired beard fell in large quantities down to his chest, and a long piece of white muslin was folded round his red head. A devout missionary in Germany and an actor in Paris, Morok knew as well as his employers, the Jesuits, how to accommodate himself to circumstances.

Seated in one corner of the room, and contemplating with a sort of stupid admiration, was Jacques Rennepont, better known as "Sleepinbuff" (from the likelihood that he would end his days in rags, or his present antipathy to great care in dress). Since the day Hardy's factory had been destroyed by fire, Jacques had not quitted Morok, passing the nights in excesses, which had no baneful effects on the iron constitution of the lion-tamer. On the other's features on the contrary, a great alteration was perceptible; his hollow cheeks marble pallor, his eyes, by turns dull and heavy, or gleaming with lurid fire, betrayed the ravages of debauchery, his parched lips were almost constantly curled by a bitter and sardonic smile. His spirit, once gay and sanguine, still struggled against the besetting influence of habitual intoxication. Unfitted for labor, no longer able to forego gross pleasures, Jacques sought to drown in wine the few virtuous impulses which he still possessed, and had sunk so low as to accept without shame the large dole of sensual gratification proffered him by Morok, who paid all the expenses of their orgies, but never gave him money, in order that he might be completely dependent on him. After gazing at Morok for some time in amazement, Jacques said to him, in a familiar tone: "Well, yours is a famous trade; you may boast that, at this moment, there are not two men like you in the whole world. That's flattering. It's a pity you don't stick to this fine trade."

"What do you mean?"
"Why, how is the conspiracy going on, in whose honor you make me keep it up all day and all night?"

"It is working, but the time is not yet come; that is why I wish to have you always at hand, till the great day. Do you complain?"

"Hang it, no!" said Jacques. "What could I do? Burnt up with brandy as I am, if I wanted to work, I've no longer the strength to do so. I have not, like you, a head of marble, and a body of iron; but as for fuddling myself with gunpowder, instead of anything else, that'll do for me: I'm only fit for that work, now—and then, it will drive away thought."

"Of what kind?"
"You know that when I do think, I think only of one thing," said Jacques, gloomily.

"The Bacchanal Queen?—still?" said Morok, in a disdainful tone.

"Still! rather: when I shall think of her no longer, I shall be dead—or stupefied. Fiend!"

"You were never better or more intelligent, you fool!" replied Morok, fastening his turban. The conversation was here interrupted. Morok's aide entered hastily.

The gigantic form of this Hercules had increased in width. He was habited like Alcides; his enormous limbs, furrowed with veins as thick as whipcord, were covered with a close-fitting flesh-colored garment, to which a pair of red drawers formed a strong contrast.

"Why do you rush in like a storm, Goliath?" said Morok.

"There's a pretty storm in the house; they are beginning to get impatient, and are calling out like madmen. But if that were all!"

"Well, what else?"
"Death will not be able to play this evening," Morok turned quickly round. He seemed uneasy.

"Why so?" he exclaimed.
"I have just seen her; she's crouching at the bottom of her cage; her ears lie so close to her head, she looks as if they had been cut off. You know what that means."

"Is that all?" said Morok, turning to the glass to complete his head-dress.

"It's quite enough; she's in one of her tearing fits. Since that night, in Germany, when she ripped up that old hack of a white horse, I've not seen her look so savage! her eyes shine like burning candles."

"Then she must have her fine collar on," said Morok, quietly.

"Her fine collar?"
"Yes; her spring collar."

"And I must be lady's-maid," said the giant.

"A nice toilet to attend to!"
"Hold your tongue!"
"That's not all——" continued Goliath, hesitating.

"What more?"
"I might as well tell you at once."
"Will you speak?"
"Well! he is here!"
"Who, you stupid brute?"
"The Englishman!"

"Morok started; his arms fell powerless by his side. Jacques was struck with the lion-tamer's paleness and troubled countenance.

"The Englishman!—you have seen him?" cried Morok, addressing Goliath. "You are quite sure."

"Quite sure. I was looking through the peep-hole in the curtain; I saw him in one of the stage-boxes—he wishes to see things close; he's easy to recognise, with his pointed forehead, big nose and goggle eyes."

Morok shuddered again; usually fierce and un-moved, he appeared to be more and more agitated and alarmed that Jacques said to him: "Who is this Englishman?"

"He has followed me from Strasburg, where he fell in with me," said Morok, with visible dejection. "He traveled with his own horses, by short stages, as I did; stopping where I stopped, so as never to miss one of my exhibitions. But two days before I arrived at Paris, he left me—I thought I was rid of him," said Morok with a sigh.

"Rid of him!—how you talk!" replied Jacques, surprised; "such a good customer, such an admirer!"

"Aye!" said Morok, becoming more and more agitated; "this wretch has wagered an enormous sum, that I will be devoured in his presence, during one of my performances; he hopes to win his wager—that is why he follows me about."

Sleepinbuff found the John Bull's idea so amusingly eccentric, that, for the first time since a very long period, he burst into a peal of hearty laughter. Morok, pale with rage, rushed toward him with so menacing an air, that Goliath was obliged to interpose.

"Come, come," said Jacques, "don't be angry; if it is serious, I will not laugh any more."

Morok was appeased, and said to Sleepinbuff in a hoarse voice: "Do you think me a coward?"

"No, by heaven!"
"Well! and yet this Englishman, with his grotesque face, frightens me more than my tiger or my panther!"

"You say so, and I believe it," replied Jacques; "but I cannot understand why the presence of this man should alarm you."

"But, consider, you dull knave!" cried Morok, "that, obliged to watch incessantly, the least movement of the ferocious beast, whom I keep in subjection by my action and my looks, there is something terrible in knowing that two eyes are there—always there—fixed—waiting till the least absence of mind shall expose me to be torn in pieces by the animals."

"Now, I understand," said Jacques, shuddering in his turn. "It is terrible."

"Yes; for once there, though I may not see this cursed Englishman, I fancy I have his two round eyes, fixed and wide open, always before me. My tiger Cain once nearly mutilated my arm, when my attention was drawn away by this Englishman, whom the devil take! Blood and thunder!" cried Morok; "this man will be fatal to me." And Morok paced the room in great agitation.

"Besides, Death lays her ears close to her skull," said Goliath, brutally. "If you persist—mind, I tell you—the Englishman will win his wages this evening."

"Go away, you brute!—don't vex my head with your confounded predictions," cried Morok; "go and prepare Death's collar."

"Well, every one to his taste; you wish the panther to taste you," said the giant, stalking heavily away, after this joke.

"But if you feel these fears," said Jacques, "why do you not say that the panther is ill?"

Morok shrugged his shoulders, and replied with a sort of feverish ferocity: "Have you ever heard of the fierce pleasure of the gamester, who stakes his honor, his life, upon a card? Well! I too—in these daily exhibitions where my life is at stake—find a wild, fierce pleasure in braving death, before a crowded assembly, shuddering and terrified at my audacity. Yes, even in the fear with which this Englishman inspires me, I find, in spite of myself, a terrible excitement, which I abhor, and which yet subjugates me."

At this moment, the stage-manager entered the room, and interrupted the beast-tamer. "May we give the signal, M. Morok?" said the stage-manager. "The overture will not last above ten minutes."

"I am ready," said Morok.

"The police-inspector has just now given orders, that the double chain of the panther, and the iron ring riveted to the floor of the stage, at the end of the cavern in the foreground, shall be again examined; and everything has been reported quite secure."

"Yes—secure—except for me," murmured the beast-tamer.

"So, M. Morok, the signal may be given?"
"The signal may be given," replied Morok. And the manager went out.

CHAPTER LXV.
UP WITH THE CURTAIN.

The usual bell sounded with solemnity behind the scenes; the overture began, and, to say the truth, but little attention was paid to it. The interior of the theatre offered a very animated view. With the exception of two stage-boxes even with the dress-circle, one to the left, the other to the right of the audience, every seat was occupied. A great number of very fashionable ladies, attracted, as is always the case, by the strange wildness of the spectacle, filled the boxes. The stalls were crowded by most of the young men who, in the morning, had walked their horses on the Champs-Elysees. The observations which passed from one stall to another will give some idea of their conversation.

"Oh! gentlemen—I am not mistaken—no—it is she!"

"Who then?"
"Mdlle. de Cardoville! She is coming into the stage-box with Morinval and his wife. It is a complete resuscitation; this morning on the Champs Elysees; in the evening here."

"Faith you are right! It is Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"Good heaven! how lovely she is!"
"Lend me your eye-glass."

"Well, what do you think of her?"
"Exquisite—dazzling!"

"And in addition to her beauty, an inexhaustible flow of wit, three hundred thousand francs a year, high birth, eighteen years of age, and—free as air."

"Do you notice, gentlemen, how all the women are eye-glassing Mdlle. de Cardoville!"
"She makes a sensation."

"She is right to show herself; they gave her out as mad."

"Oh! gentlemen, what a capital phiz!"
"Where—where?"

"There—in the omnibus-box beneath Mdlle. de Cardoville's."

"It's a Nuremberg nutcracker"
"An ourang-outang!"
"Did you ever see such round, staring eyes?"
"And the nose!"
"And the forehead!"
"It's a caricature."
"Order, order! the curtain rises."

And, in fact the curtain rose. Some explanation is necessary for the clear understanding of what follows. In the lower stage-box, to the left of the audience, were several persons, who had been referred to by the young men in the stalls. The omnibus-box was occupied by the Englishman, the eccentric and portentous better, whose presence inspired Morok with so much dread.

Above the dark box of the Englishman, affording a graceful contrast, were seated the Morinvals and Mdlle. de Cardoville. The latter was placed nearest the stage. Her head was uncovered, and she wore a dress of sky-blue China crape, ornamented at the bosom with a brooch of the finest Oriental pearls—nothing more; yet Adrienne, thus attired, was charming. She held in her hand an enormous bouquet, composed of the rarest flowers of India; the stephanotis and the gardenia mingled the dead white of their blossoms with the purple hibiscus and Java amaryllis.

"Madame de Morinval, seated on the opposite side of the box, was dressed with equal taste and simplicity; Morinval, a fair and very handsome young man, of elegant appearance, was behind the two ladies. M. de Montbron was expected to arrive every moment. The reader will please to recollect that the stage-box to the right of the audience, opposite Adrienne's had remained till then quite empty. Yet something calculated to excite curiosity was taking place in the opposite stage-box. The door of this box opened. Farinhea entered and placed two chairs at the front of the box, then went out quickly. His apparition caused surprise and curiosity in the theatre, which was still more excited when a youth of rare beauty, also dressed Oriental fashion, in whose sash was stuck a long dagger, glittering with precious stones, stepped into the box. This young man was Prince Djalma. For an instant he remained standing at the door, then, stepping forward with a majestic and tranquil air, the prince seated himself negligently on one of the chairs, and turning his head in a few moments towards the entrance, appeared surprised at not seeing some person whom he doubtless expected. This person appeared at length; the box-keeper had been assisting her to take off her cloak. She was a charming, fair-haired girl, attired with more show than taste, but in such a manner as to set off the prettiest, sprightliest, most wilful little face in the world. It was Rose-Pompon. She carried a large bouquet of Roses.

Adrienne had not observed the new-comers, and Djalma had not recognized Mdlle. de Cardoville.

To be Continued.