Columbus Journal

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COLUMBUS, - - NEBRASKA.

Limit of the Inventor.

A machine to shuffle cards is announced in a list of recent inventions. It is claimed that the new mechanism will in an instant "change the position of nine out of every ten cards in a pack." Convenient accessories to sport, like this and the pitching machine which some ball-nines use in practice continue to appear from time to time, but inventors seem to have given up the notion of inventing machines capable of actually playing a game. How long is it since the last "automatic chess player" was fabricated? asks the Troy Times. Men and women who impersonate automata are popular vaudeville features, but few persons pretend to take them seriously. But the famous automatic chess-player, in the form of a Turkish figure seated before a box which purported to contain machinery, imposed upon as many learned persons as the Cardiff giant. Poe turned his talent to the elucidation of the mystery, propounding the thesis that if it were possible to build a machine capable of playing any game of chess, it was possible to make it win every time, while this pretended mechanism frequently lost to good players. It is possibly no harder to conduct a public deception now, but it certainly requires different methods.

Excellent Form of Mental Diet.

I notice some one—I think it was a cotton broker, of all people—making a plea for bound magazines. In this day of numerous and cheap magazines we no longer bind them—at least not to the extent that our forefathers did. We have more reading; and we are—like the true human beings that we are—wasteful with it. Yet we lose a great deal in not binding our good magazines. It is not that we will want to read them again ourselves so much—though that will occur—but a few bound volumes of a magazine are a God-send to the man or woman who is laid aside by illness, and must spend a few days or weeks within doors. The varied richness of such a volume—provided a good magazine be chosen—supplies a style of mental fodder which is not to be rivaled by any book, says National Herald. One may be too mind-weary to face the beginning of a long novel; but the bound "year" of a magazine offers a tit-bit of poetry here, a few flashes of humor there, then a short story or so; and finally we are led on to try the serial that is running through all the numbers. It is the ideal dainty mental luncheon for the invalid.

Those familiar with the results of American exploration have known for a few years that there are three natural bridges in southeastern Utah as much larger than the natural bridge in Virginia as Pike's peak is than Mount Washington. It is only within a short time, however, that much accurate information about these Utah wonders has been accessible. In 1905 an expedition of Salt Lake City men visited them in company with an artist and a surveyor. Pictures of the bridges have lately been published. The Augusta bridge, with a span of 320 feet and a height of 265 feet, is the largest, and so far as known there is none larger in the world. The Caroline bridge has a greater span, 350 feet, but is smaller in other ways; and the third, the Edwin bridge, although not so high as the bridge in Virginia, has a span several times as large. As one has to travel a hundred miles over a barren country to reach these marvels of nature, the summer tourist will not visit them very frequently.

Many writers on esthetics and art have dwelt upon the close relation between religion and poetry. Some of the great poets have been creators of religious thoughts, and others the mediums of making religion appear beautiful. It is interesting that the first organization to take formal notice of Whittier's centenary, which falls on December 17 next, is the American Missionary association. It will invite the Congregational churches to unite in the celebration. Whittier was a missionary himself, fighting the good fight for justice and liberty. And in his early manhood a poet who expressed minority opinions as vigorously as he did was in danger of mob violence. There is no finer image in our literature than that of the calm, gentle Quaker blazing into passionate devotion to freedom and ringing pleas for right.

Three volumes of Queen Victoria's correspondence between 1837 and 1861 will be published next fall, but in all probability they won't attract as much popular attention as was bestowed upon the confessions of Marie Bashkirtseff or Mary McLane.

The management of a railroad in Nebraska has issued an order that all the conductors on the line must be clean shaven. Naturally, this order will be denounced as a bare-faced outrage.

Somebody has unearthed an account of a crank newspaper that was published in Spain and printed on thin sheets of dough, so that it could be eaten after the information it contained had been absorbed. Though the enterprise was a freaky one, there was more than food for thought in it.

The Massachusetts statesman who says that everybody ought to take a month's rest does not provide for the unfortunate people who cannot be gar-

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

So far as it lay in my power, I would perform my self-imposed task in a direct and businesslike method. As to this method, a dozen extravagant courses of action occurred to me at once. Of the dozen I selected two as possible.

"Every English gentleman comes of a race of warriors," the mysterious woman of the reading room had said to me last night. Miss Brett, being an Englishwoman, had the blood of soldiers in her veins. The physical courage of the battlefield, then, must appeal to her. If, for instance, I should enlist in the Foreign Legion, there was the Legion of Honor to be won. The little ribbon would tell its eloquent story.

But Willoughby's life had been lost amid the dread silence of the white snows. I looked long and earnestly where the sun touched the mountain-top with a rosy light out of the morning mists. The mountains seemed to beckon, to wait for me.

I had shuddered—I still shuddered, as I thought of their awful gloom and loneliness. And yet they seemed to beckon—to wait for me. I had been helpless and weak. They had conquered me. Well, I must return to conquer them. Their very immensity need not appal me. Man's glory is to subdue the vast forces of nature—to make them his own.

I thought of the Hospice of St. Bernard. There for centuries men had even laid down their lives to save the perishing. Well, why should I not be one of the little band for the time being? Why should I not become a novitiate in the order? A few months of arduous training, and I should be ready for the battle.

If I went to the monastery and told the good father superior of the sacred vow I had made, would he laugh at me for a madman, or would he understand and help me to fulfill it?

I began the day, therefore, vaguely hopeful. I no longer permitted myself to be troubled at the whispers of servants and guests. I even courted the society of my fellowmen. I paid my two francs admission to the kursaal, and listened with real enjoyment to its excellent orchestra.

My coat was lightly brushed. There was a faint but exquisite perfume. I glanced, as did a dozen others, at the woman who was passing.

The small, but superbly poised figure, gowned with a marvelous simplicity, paused by my side a fraction of a second. It was my acquaintance of the reading room again, and she had murmured a good morning. A dozen had noted the greeting and envied me.

I did not return it. She continued her way daintily, punishing me for my rudeness by smiling across at me mockingly as she seated herself at my right. There was something of a childish, almost fairy malice in the illusive smile.

The intermission came. All the world pushed back their chairs, and made their way through glazed doors at the rear, whence an electric bell rang persistently. The motley crowd of officers, tourists, and such of the society of Lucerne as was at the kursaal passed through the glazed doors to play the petits chevaux—a rather harmless form of dissipation, a gambling toy that permits one to lose at the most a five-franc piece.

I mingled with the crowd about the green-baize table on which the little metal horses were whirling around an imaginary race course. A croupier changed a 50-franc note for me. I tossed a coin on one of the numbers; and lost. I staked another coin, this time against the field. Again I lost. I staked all my five-franc pieces but two.

While I weighed them thoughtfully in my palm, my arm was touched lightly. It was my adventuress of the reading room once more. She lifted her eyebrows in whimsical concern at my ill luck.

"Even these little horses, you see, madam, know that I am to be shunned," I said in a low voice.

"My friend," she smiled, vivaciously, "they are simply frightened at your black face. They are sensitive, the little horses. But if you coax—we shall see. Allons, we will be prudent, a little shining franc on number 27. Now, if my brave horses only know that it is I who am asking them to win for us, we shall win."

"Ne rien va plus," croaked an official in a dingy dress suit and crumpled shirt bosom. He spun the mechanism briskly between two bony fingers and thumb. The tiny jockeys in blue, buff, green, and red sped swiftly around the course. Presently they straggled one behind the other, and came to a pause. The croupier stretched out his rake, and drew in our two shining francs with the other winnings of the bank.

I turned to her sternly. "You see!" I cried in tragic dismay.

"Pouf! A little patience, monsieur. It is the jockeys who are sulky. I have forgotten to blow them a kiss. Quick, a five-franc piece, the maximum, on the field. This time we shall certainly win."

Three times in succession we won—now at even odds, now with the odds in our favor. But again the electric bell rang. She shrugged her shoulders, and made a moue of regret.

"Alas! At the hour of our triumph the voice of art clamora."

We returned to the concert room.

"Is it not strange," she murmured after a pause in the music, "that one longs so much for what is just beyond one's reach, while other fruit, as sweet, may be plucked for the asking?"

"You speak in riddles, madam," I said, coldly. Frankly, I had not placed her exactly as that sort of a woman.

"Riddles?" She lifted her eyebrows, hesitating. "I mean, Mr. Haddon, that I should be so glad if we might be friends."

I was unconvinced. "You are too generous," I said, ironically. "Does your interest in mankind embrace all the world?"

"But you have been unfortunate," she said, softly. "Are you angry that I should be sorry for you?"

"I am perplexed, at least."

"If you are only perplexed, I shall not despair." She smiled at me gayly across the table, her elbows supporting the clasped hands that framed her exquisite beauty. "Come, are we to be friends?"

"I remember," I said, coldly, "when I was at college, a story of Socrates that pointed an obvious moral. Would you like to hear it?"

She made a mock grimace. "Oh, Socrates, monsieur, and a philosopher! And a philosopher henpecked by his wife Xantippe! Am I one to do with a henpecked philosopher? Regard me seriously, monsieur, and tell me. But if you insist—your story; I shall listen patiently."

"The henpecked philosopher, then," I began somewhat grimly, "tells us that when Hercules had attained manhood he set out on a journey to see the world, and presently came to a parting of two ways. He hesitated as to which way he should choose. While he hesitated there appeared two maidens, each of whom protested that she would lead him the way that he should go. One of these maidens was clad chastely in

"Dead!"

somber but not unpleasing raiment. 'If, Hercules, you will go my way, you will find it rough and tiresome. There are brambles to impede your progress; there are sharp stones that will cut your sandals. It will always be hazardous, but it will lead to happiness.'"

"Ah, happiness!" sighed the woman opposite me. "She promised much."

"The other maiden was extremely beautiful and her raiment was of silvery tissue. 'My way,' she said, softly, taking Hercules gently by the arm, 'is strewn with flowers. It leads, broad and gently sloping, over soft turf, and there is music to gladden the hours. My way leads to pleasure.' The name of the first maiden was Virtue; the name of the other, madam—"

I paused; I was indeed very bold. I looked at my vis-a-vis with some trepidation. I need have felt none. She broke into light laughter, her hands clasped, her eyes sparkling. She leaned demurely toward me; her bright eyes mocked me.

"The name of the other maiden was Vice," she cried in a hollow, lugubrious voice. "My dear gentleman, you are too delicious. Mon Dieu, I should be furious with you! You are telling me quite brutally that your cold Englishwoman—she is Virtue; and I, the very wicked one—I am naughty Vice." And again she laughed deliciously.

"Pardon me, it is you who are applying the moral," I protested awkwardly.

"Then if it is applied not correctly, let us have the true application," she beseeched.

"That must follow the explanation of your extraordinary interest in me."

"Hum!" She leaned back critically. "Shall I say it is because you are handsome?"

"Not if you are honest," I chuckled.

"Or good?"

"Why not say brave?" I demanded, bitterly.

"Or that you remind me of a dear friend?"

"Say of your late lamented grandmother."

"Or," she flashed, "that it is because you can be of use to me?"

Shortly. "I am to be of use to you, madame and how?"

"Gently, monsieur! First of all, are we to be friends?"

"And again gladly," I returned with caution. "Your name, if you are serious."

A rosy-faced page pushed his way toward us, salver in hand. It was at our table he paused. On the salver was a telegram.

"For me!" cried my companion eagerly.

The boy nodded, but before he could hand the telegram to her, I had seized it myself. I made a gesture, signifying that I asked her consent to read the name addressed on the envelope. She smiled, but reluctantly, I thought.

"Madame Sophie de Varnier," I read aloud, before I passed the telegram to her.

She tore the envelope open with a jeweled cross that hung from her chatelaine. As she read the message, she became frightfully pale; she swayed in her seat. It was not grief so much as utter despair that prostrated her.

"Dead!" She repeated the word in French more than once in a dazed voice. "Dead, but it is incredible!"

The seconds passed. I did not speak; I regarded her with concern. A beautiful woman is always dangerous, but a beautiful woman in trouble is doubly so. The friendship she had lightly begged of me a moment ago, I was tempted to offer seriously now. She had piqued and fascinated me. Now her unhappiness touched my heart.

But suddenly I doubted. Was it a clever ruse, this advent of the telegram so aply timed? Was she a consummate actress, confident of her dupe? No; the agony the message had caused her was undoubtedly genuine. When she looked at me, it was with eyes heavy with despair. When at last she spoke, her eyes burned fiercely, her voice was harsh with anger. The words she uttered were certainly not addressed to me. They were spoken rather in spite of my presence than because of it.

"Look! I stake all in one throw! I lose all—in a moment. I hold in my clenched hands the liberty and happiness of 10,000 women and children. And then a cursed fate strikes from my grasp this priceless happiness. My poor people, my poor people! Again I fail you; I betray you!"

She stared at me with eyes that did not see. Her small hands pressed her temples convulsively.

"Perhaps, madam, it is fate also who has sent me to you now, to help you."

"Perhaps," she said, heavily, scarcely listening.

Then suddenly an expression, quite merciless, distorted her features. Her pupils dilated in her fierce excitement. She studied my face critically, coldly deliberate. There was something portentous, almost ominous, in this cool stare. It disconcerted me; it made me already regret my proffer of friendship. She smiled; but the smile was Medusa-like.

"Yes, I believe it. Fate has sent you to me. And you—are you willing to follow where Fate leads?"

"Why not?" I demanded with more curiosity than sincerity, I confess.

"Ah, you are courageous enough for that? Monsieur, you are a bold man."

"Surely not so bold as you, madam, in asking courage of a man who has been disgraced for cowardice." It was difficult to keep the sneer out of my voice.

"I know to whom I speak, my dear monsieur. The task I would set you demands not the brute courage of the fool, but the devotion of a crusader. It is a sacred cause; its servants are not easily found."

"I am flattered that I fulfill the requirements so admirably," I returned cynically. "But you will find it difficult to convince me that my extraordinary courage and devotion to a good cause make my services invaluable. Why should you choose me from a score of men to help you?"

"You are right. Above all things we must be frank with each other. You are at the Schweitzerhof? Au revoir, you will hear from me soon."

I bowed over the hand she held languidly toward me. I was embarked on an adventure. Where would it lead me?

CHAPTER VIII.

Prince Ferdinand and His Ambitions.

I returned to my hotel soberly enough. I had told my little allegory lightly. Now I asked myself if I should not apply it seriously to myself. Only this morning I had mapped out for myself a clear path to be followed. And already was a siren beckoning? Already was I enchanted?

I was intensely irritated that I should have allowed myself to be interested by this Sophie de Varnier. For the past hour I had been playing dangerously near the fire. It had not yet burned me; but could I honestly say that it had not warmed, intoxicated, allured? Very well, I must be careful not to compromise myself in the future.

Two women had met me at the parting of the ways.

One of them had set me a task, holding herself proudly aloof, promising nothing. If this task were actually accomplished, the reward was to be the deed itself.

And now another woman had come—radiant, glittering, a subtle perfume lulling the senses. Her wild beauty, her charm, had been frankly displayed to enthrall me. She had promised a definite adventure. As to the reward it seemed to me too brazenly obvious.

I flicked the ash angrily from my cigarette. And was I really tempted? Hardly, I resolved savagely. And yet I was not fool enough to be blind to the fact that the situation was not without its danger.

My shoulder was tapped. I was seated in the vestibule of my hotel. I looked up, startled. A well-groomed man in the early thirties towered over me, an American I saw at once. The round, jocund face was vaguely familiar.

"Yes," exclaimed a burly voice, "it is really old Haddon."

I grasped the hand he held toward me with emotion. Here was a friend, an American, and I needed a friend badly just now.

I had not seen Locke since we were at college together. We had never been intimate, but the big-hearted Robinson Locke had been a character among his classmates.

At first I hesitated to his cordial greetings; I was afraid he had not heard my story. But presently he plunged into the episode that had made me notorious for a day. Then I knew he had come to stand by me.

"It is a brutal lie, of course," he stormed indignantly, 'but even if it were true—" He clapped my shoulder.

"It is true—at least in a measure."

"Rot!" he exclaimed with cheerful skepticism, lowering his person into the yielding expanse of an armchair by my side. "Tell me about it."

"Unless you insist, I prefer not to," I said quietly, beckoning a waiter. "It was just a horrible accident. Frankly, to have saved his life was impossible. But I might have died with him. I didn't. There you have my disgrace in a nutshell."

He looked somewhat glum at this cold-blooded explanation and stirred uneasily in his chair. I watched him, not without grim amusement. He pulled at his cigar, searching my face keenly.

"Rot!" he cried again, and this time with conviction. "If you feel any disgrace, it is your own fault, Haddon. If you were the coward they say you are, you wouldn't sit there smiling at me. You would rave and swear by all the gods that you were innocent. I don't want to hear your story. But I want you to know that you have one friend from home to stick up for you, and to believe in you."

I was too moved to speak.

"That's all right, then," he said with gruff gentleness. "It must be hell to be over here alone and everybody kicking you."

"Oh, that was to be expected, of course! But last night I had an experience that I wouldn't go through again if I could help it."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Pope and Cardinal Vaughan

On the occasion of the great Marian congress in Rome, the pope summoned Father Bernard Vaughan to represent the English speaking peoples. The Italians were amazed to find him so un-English, as they thought, in his dramatic style. The story goes (says a writer in the New Oxford weekly paper, "Varsity Life Illustrated") that one day the pope, in the presence of one of his cardinals mimicked the preacher's style, whereupon Rampolla exclaimed: "And he is an Englishman!" "No," replied the pope, "he was born on the top of Mount Vesuvius, and we sent him to England to cool."

Eat Sand for Dyspepsia.

West Chester, Pa.—A number of people in this place who are suffering with stomach trouble have taken to "the sand cure," and are taking it twice daily. The sand comes from Mississippi and is packed in bags containing a couple of quarts. It is taken in doses of a spoonful, and as often as the patient has an attack of the trouble. "When any animal has an attack of stomach trouble," argues a patient, "it goes at once to the ground for some clay or sand for a cure, and why should not a man?"

Alcohol From Grapes.

The little grapes grown in Greece which are sold under the trade name of Zante "currants" in this country, are often used in the kingdom where they are produced to make alcohol for cooking and heating houses.

Brilliancy and Cleverness.

The difference between brilliancy and cleverness is that a clever man may seem to be brilliant when he isn't.

What reason could not avoid has often been cured by delay.—Seneca.

Any woman can spoil a dinner so as for that her husband will never use it again.

No, Cordelia, a man doesn't necessarily have paint in his eyes when he is color blind.

History Will Be Costly.

So far the British official history of the Boer war has cost $125,000, and only one volume has appeared.

It may not be possible for a young man to measure life; but it is possible to say, I am resolved to put life to its noblest and best use.

The people of Colorado are so confident that publicity pays large dividends that they are going to spend a fund in advertising the state's resources.

Obeying His Command.

Benham—Did you have any company while I was away?

Mrs. Benham—Nobody to speak of.

Benham—Wasn't your mother here?

Mrs. Benham—Yes, but you won't let me speak to her.

Siamese Object to Walking.

The Siamese, above all nations in the world, hate to walk; no such mode of progression is tolerated by a Siamese if he or she can by any means ride. A Venetian gondolier will walk sometimes; even a Hollander will ride on his rough cart; but a Bangkok man—not if he can help it. His family boat for him.—Windsor Magazine.

Much "Havana" Tobacco.

During the last year there were exported from Cuba the enormous number of 256,738,029 "Havana" cigars. Only about 30 per cent came to the United States, the total American purchases amounting to 79,483,125 cigars, while England took 92,459,687. Germany buys from 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 and France 10,000,000 to 12,000,000.

Shoemaker's Last.

The following is taken from a handbill issued by a provincial bootmaker: "The shoemaker is a man of great learning. He is a doctor as well as a surgeon, for he not only heels but performs many cutting operations. He is a fishmonger, for he sells soles and heels. He is a schoolmaster, for he gives good understanding. He is a good speaker, for he always works the thread of his argument, waxes warm to his subject, and holds all to the last."