

THE RIVAL.

Translated from the German: A waving white veil of fog enveloped the outlines of the mountains; the walls of the park, with the dry leaves rustling about them, looked neglected, and around the hotel veranda, from which a beautiful view can be had across the lake, the grape vines lazily shed their dark crimson leaves under the breath of the autumnal wind—one after another.

It could hardly be called cozy, this distinguished watering-place, now that most of the guests had taken leave, together with the departing summer; it certainly was no longer a fashionable place. When the management of the resort had seen fit to reduce the prices, which was equal to declaring the season ended, all the guests who laid claim to elegance or fashion had packed their trunks, like so many soldiers obeying a command.

Only a few belated migratory birds arrived now and then; some gouty old counselors and other officials, who had but just obtained a furlough, and to whom it was of greater importance to alleviate the suffering that brought them to this place than to participate in the summer festivals of fashionable society; and some family fathers blessed with an abundance of offspring, mostly the feminine sex, who really could not afford the luxuries of the watering-place except at this time of reduced prices. That was all.

And as to the visitors of the regular season?

Of the guests of the haute saison, only a few remained, those that could not possibly be persuaded to leave the charming corner of the earth in spite of the growing inclemency of the weather, and some people that found pleasure in continuing the intrigues, coquetries and love affairs once begun.

Baron von Sengen, a nobleman belonging to the latter class. He appeared to nourish a great deal of interest for the beautiful Valdin, a prima donna as celebrated as she was charming, who was making all the use that she could of her charms day to day to participate in this favorable seclusion for the toils and triumphs of the coming season.

She was a trifle weak of nerves, the fascinating Valdin—her admirers looked upon her as a very easy-going, abundant of that "temperament" which is so necessary for opera divas—and under those circumstances it was praiseworthy that she did all she could for her recreation.

It certainly was not praiseworthy, but rather heartless and blameworthy, of her that she was in the habit of killing the time, which usually hangs heavy during such recreation, in a peculiar way; she played with all the men that she brought to her, as if she were with a mouse, or a snake with the bird. It seemed to give her as much pleasure to turn the heads of men as it does to the playing child to turn the head of her doll.

Of course, Baron Sengen ought to have known that that is the habit of all prima donnas. For at least a decennium he had been what is designated by a mild expression as a man of "riper years," or of "a sedate age," and, besides, he professed a certain experience in the intercourse with feminine stage stars. Yes, he had experience in such things, but he could not tear himself away from the charm which the blonde, beautiful, blue-eyed prima donna exercised over him, and which gained strength over him from day to day while he labored to escape from the nets of this Circe. Three times he had said farewell to the beautiful she-devil by the wayside, twice as many times he returned to her, and a dozen times he had his trunks packed—and again and again he had persuaded himself, with irrefutable arguments, that it was necessary for him to remain still further at this place.

The old lady felt it within herself, with the instinct that is peculiar to such men in such circumstances, that it was impossible for him to escape from his fate; that he was subject to that very malady which usually is referred to as "the love disease," and which now made him so indeliberately happy!

No doubt he was in love! Theodore Baron von Sengen, who formerly treated feminine hearts as playthings—he was in love, completely in love!

In love! That is a state of mind which borders on the ridiculous in the case of a gentleman who finds it difficult to cover up the bald spot on his crown; and that with a singer, of whom it is to be supposed—and he has a right to suppose anything but, not even of an opera singer, until he has proofs of it. Baron Sengen was resigned to his fate.

"Very well, we shall marry!" Of course it would be a marriage in haste, the least difficulties or obstacles would be in the way of Baron Sengen when he wished to carry out such a praiseworthy resolution. He had every reason to believe that the Valdin was attached to him, because she had evidently preferred him to all the other butterflies that swarmed around her and kept a sort of jolly companionship with him. And a moderate companionship, a temporary friendship, is just the thing which a man of his age and the world expects to find in matrimony.

After thoroughly sounding his heart he finally arrived at the bold conclusion that he would do as in marriage the hand of the jolly bon comrade.

For days he had deliberated in what manner this ceremony, which he had always thought so very comical in others, should be put into execution. Dress coat and silk hat, he had decided, he almost decided to take these articles, so useful and ornamental at court and at funerals, from his wardrobe, but at the last moment he was seized with an overcome him that before a theatrical princess a somewhat more romantic manner of wooing were in place. He did not exactly mean to do the thing as the hero Lohengrin had done it; for the managers of this resort did not keep a boat drawn by swans for the use of their guests. But a walk into the propitious solitude of the autumnal forest, a sail on the lake, or something of that sort, seemed fit occasions.

As we said, he waited several days. But as the longest-for occasion for a lyric state of mind had been scared away repeatedly by the silvery laugh of the beautiful woman, he decided to alter his tactics. Nothing else would do; he went; dress coat and silk hat had to be taken out. In this dignified habitment a tea-rose bouquet in his hand, and a caress at his bosom, he went to call on the lady who had performed the feat of kindling anew the little spark under the lava of his heart, and who had overcome him that before a theatrical princess a somewhat more romantic manner of wooing were in place. He did not exactly mean to do the thing as the hero Lohengrin had done it; for the managers of this resort did not keep a boat drawn by swans for the use of their guests. But a walk into the propitious solitude of the autumnal forest, a sail on the lake, or something of that sort, seemed fit occasions.

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Baron would have felt no greater uneasiness than he did about this hero of the quill, with his enormous reddish whiskers and his sparkling eyes. According to the honest opinion of the Baron, unbiased by any self-delusion, this doctor, with his large statue, was anything but beautiful. But it is a well-known fact that critics are dangerous for male and female artists, but more than dangerous for the admirers of the latter.

As a man of the world, the baron concealed the unfavorable impression which this man of letters had made upon him, although he wished him into Beezebub's company.

"An old friend, madam; is it not?" he asked, with a certain emphasis, at their introduction. The singer confirmed this, at the same time throwing a glance at the doctor, which seemed to the jealous baron like a look of culpable familiarity.

"Baron Theodor Sengen, one of the sincerest of my admirers." "I thank you, my friend!" added the baron, with dignity. "But not less sincere in his friendship than, you doctor."

The two rivals shook hands with a cordiality such as can be found only among people that dislike each other. And again, that mysterious smile, against the merry, laughing glance of the singer.

This affair began to take a decidedly disagreeable turn. The baron could no longer stand by and see this witty chatterer, with his red beard and his malicious nature, cat-stroking after step on that battle-field before the beautiful Valdin. It was absolutely necessary for him to undertake a general attack. It is in accordance with the ordinary course of things that he who asks for the hand of a woman, first obtains possession of it.

On a rainy Sunday the doctor, tired of the idyllic quietude at the hotel, of the tediousness at the table d'hôte, and even of the company of the charming singer, chose to take a long walk to the near forest; it was the moment for the baron to accomplish a decisive result. He finished his toilet with the carefulness of a school girl who is about to make her debut at a ball. Then he examined himself closely in the mirror.

"What my beard is said with a nod toward his counterfeit, "those are nice stories that we hear about you in your old age. Yes, yes, my friend, I repeat it, in your old age; however, enterprising you look twisting your pitch-black mustache and looking at your eyes like a recruit. Others you might deceive, but you don't me. Or do you wish me to tell you to your face that this pitch-black mustache has been carefully dyed, that the noble and manly curve of your beard is accomplished with the help of mere wadding? Or you perhaps wish that I should call your attention to— But no! my dear old friend, do not look at me so sheepishly! I will not betray the secrets of your toilet; I, however, will not be deceived by you about these things. I only wish, as a friend, to call your attention to the fact that your youthful appearance begins to require some repairs, and your many beauty some assistance. You perceive those little wrinkles around the eyes? It seems to me even a short-sighted person could see them. But the fresh color of your cheeks, the blooming red of those lips? I wager, my honored sir, that this youthful bloom can be connected, in some way or another, with a paint box of full assortment. What is the bet? Ten bottles of Veuve Clouet against a mug of Pilsener? Take it or leave it, you choose to discuss you from it any longer. So! Lay your hair in a little more stylish and skillful manner. Down with the monocle; that makes you look stupid. Now try the languishing expression on your face. Now that of joyful ecstasy. Well done! I am satisfied with you, my boy. Now go to her, and do your errand well!"

Fifteen minutes after this monologue the baron was in the elegant and cosy boudoir of the singer. He took a seat opposite to her, at her side, it is difficult to say which, considering the peculiar construction of the fauteuil which are so fashionable at present.

"You are grave and silent, baron," began the singer.

"I am glad that you notice this change; it characterizes you the importance of the matter which brings me to you."

"You frighten me," answered the beautiful woman, with a roguish side-glance.

The baron remained as grave and dignified as an Indian king. He began: "Allow me to tell you of my desire in a few words, beautiful madam, I will commence by giving you the plain truth about the financial situation—"

"The hymn in marriage, which is the usual bell-like laugh that laugh which is peculiar to soprano singers of the operatic stage."

"But what are your intentions, my friend? You begin as if you wished to ask me my hand in marriage?"

"You have spoken my thoughts," he remarked hesitatingly, "in all due form."

"Stop! Perhaps my circumstances are such that I meet you my consent even to such an excellent friend as you are; I believe you to be my friend, and I begin to understand. The doctor—"

"Of course. But he will hardly give his consent."

"This time it was the baron's turn to laugh; not an innocent and merry laugh, however."

"I warrant, madam, that he will consent."

politely, "from two to nine years of age."

"The Baron loosened his neck-cloth a trifle."

"The opera singer Valdin—" "It has been my wife for a full decennary."

The duel was not fought. The Baron packed his trunks with the haste of an embezzler who is in danger of detection, and took his departure from the charming watering place that self-same night.

Lead Your Constitution a Hand.

Constitutions are much alike, and in nine-tenths of the same cause produce the effects, Vertigo, dizziness, or pain of any kind, excepting that of any injury, can come only when there is in our bodies some impurities of the blood, which we have not sufficient vitality to throw off without help. Therefore, the proper thing to do is to get immediately the necessary help. No aid is so effective as BRAXTON'S PILLS. When you feel these ill coming on take from three to ten of these pills, according to your weight, and be relieved at once. Never put off the taking of these pills until you are over it. Take the pills and do not rack the constitution.

SAPRISTI! MORBLEU!

Common Continental Oaths of a Very Mild Type Indeed.

It is curious that we are quite unable to realize the enormity of some of the commonest continental oaths, says a writer in Macmillan's Magazine. We can, of course, to a certain extent, appreciate such terms as "scurrilous" and "moribund" (euphemistic for "mort dieu"), but on the other hand, we wholly fail to appreciate the swearing value of mille tonnerres and tausend donnerwetter. Even though these latter be regarded as an invocation of the god of thunder and summer heat, we cannot see anything very dreadful or juratory in them. Amplified they become perfectly harmless, and would indeed be welcomed in the room of some of our own more opprobrious idioms. "Thunder," or even "Thunder and lightning!" we consider a very temperate exclamation; so, too, thought the author of the tragic story of the bagman's dog, which may be connected with a language in some head. Applying the Johnsonian maxim of "claret for boys, port for men, and brandy for heroes," we should certainly be inclined to class either or both of them with the claret, nay, even with the port, milder variety of claret, or some claret, a vintage happily known to the learned doctor. To our minds they convey absolutely no idea of impropriety. We might go about Donnerwettering for a month together and not feel one atom the better for it, or the worse; while our character for propriety and decent speech would not be one whit damaged, whatever might be the thought of our sanity. The German soul, however, is conscious of a distinct sense of relief after a language in some head. Applying the Johnsonian maxim of "claret for boys, port for men, and brandy for heroes," we should certainly be inclined to class either or both of them with the claret, nay, even with the port, milder variety of claret, or some claret, a vintage happily known to the learned doctor. 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