

LOVE IN A COITAGE.

They may talk of love in a cottage,
And bowers of trellised vine—
Of uatures bewitchingly simple,
And milkmaids half divine;
They may talk of the pleasure of sleeping
In the shades of a spreading tree,
And a walk in the fields at morning,
By the side of a footstep free!

But give me a fly attraction
By the light of a chandelier—
With music to play in the pauses,
And nobody very near;
Or a seat on a silken sofa,
With a glass of pure old wine,
And mamma too blind to discover
The small white hand in mine.

Your love in a cottage is hungry,
Your vine is a nest for flies—
Your milkmaid shocks the Graces,
And simplicity talks of pies!
You lie down to your shady slumber
And wake with a bug in your ear,
And your daisy that walks in the morning
Is shod like a mountaineer.

True love is at home on a carpet,
And mightily likes his case—
And true love has an eye for a dinner,
And starves beneath shady trees.

His wing is the fan of a lady,
His foot's an invisible thing,
And his arrow is tipped with a jewel,
And shot from a silver string.

A FRENCH DIAMOND ROBBERY.

It was in the palmiest days of the Second Empire. The triumphs of the Crimea were not yet forgotten; the laurels won at Magenta were still verdant and fresh; Sedan, with all its bitter humiliation and disastrous train of tragic consequences, loomed in the misty future, undreamt of amid the almost fabulous luxury and incredible frivolity which paved the way for the final terrible fiasco.

It was an evening in mid-Winter. The Parisian season was at its height, and a brilliant audience had assembled at the Theatre Francais to witness the performance of Jules Sandeau's delightful play, "Mlle. de la Seigliere," in which the role of *Destournelles* was filled by the great Regnier and that of *Helene* by Madeleine Brohan, then in the zenith of her fame, radiant with youth, beauty and those fascinations, the outcome of innate talent and refinement, which rendered this gifted lady one of the most charming and perfect actresses of modern days.

The Empress was present, graceful and beautiful; the Emperor at her side, wrapped in his favorite air of gloomy abstraction, which, like Lord Burlington's celebrated nod, was supposed to mean so much, yet which, viewed by the impartial light of subsequent veracious history, seems to have signified so very little. Several officers in glittering uniforms were in attendance, sparkling with decorations showered upon them by a grateful sovereign; and among these gallant warriors, conspicuous by reason of the sombreness of his attire, was a solitary, humble, black-coated civilian, in ordinary evening dress, with the inevitable speck of red at his buttonhole.

In a box almost immediately opposite that occupied by their imperial Majesties was a young and exceedingly handsome Russian lady, the Countess Ivanoff, concerning whose manifold graces and fascinations the great world of Paris elected to interest itself considerably at this period.

The beauty and the wit of this fair Northern enchantress were the theme of every masculine tongue, and her magnificent diamonds the envy and admiration of all feminine beholders.

The Countess was accompanied by her husband, a fine man of distinguished prepossessing appearance, who looked an embodied refutation of the celebrated Napoleonic aphorism, as though no amount of "scratching" could ever unearth the Cossack element underneath his refined, polished exterior.

The curtain fell on the first act. The Emperor and Empress withdrew during the *entr'acte*. Many humbler mortals followed their example; among them Count Ivanoff, apparently in no wise disturbed by the fact that the golden youth in the stalls were bringing upon the dazzling charms of his beautiful wife, with a brazen persistence which few chivalrous Brits like to flatter ourselves is the monopoly of foreigners.

The Countess leaned back in her luxuriant *fauteuil*, fanning herself dreamily, serenely indifferent to the interest she was exciting. In the dim light of her curtain-shaded box, the glitter of her splendid diamonds seemed to form a sort of luminous halo around her graceful head; a myriad starry brilliants gleamed among the masses of her gold-brown hair, and two priceless stones, popularly reported to be worth that unknown quantity, a king's ransom, flashed and twinkled like twin planets in her little shell tinted ears.

The Count had not been gone five minutes when there was a gentle knock at the door, and in answer to the Countess' "Entrez," the *ouvreuse* appeared and said deferentially:

"Pardon, Madame la Comtesse; a gentleman charged with a message from Her Majesty the Empress waits in the corridor, and desires to know if madame will have the goodness to receive him."

"Certainly! Enter, I beg of you, monsieur," replied the Countess, in a low, suave voice, which was not the least of her many attractions, bowing graciously as she recognized the distinguished civilian she had already noticed in close proximity to the Emperor in the imperial box.

The visitor advanced a few steps, and still standing in deep shadow, said with grave dignity:

"I trust my intrusion may be pardoned. I am desir'd by Her Majesty to ask a favor of Mme. la Comtesse, and, at the same time, to beg that she will have the goodness to excuse a somewhat unusual request."

"The obligation will be mine if I can fulfil even the least of Her Majesty's wishes," answered the Countess, graciously.

"The case is this," explained the gentleman, in a tone of well-bred ease. "An argument has arisen concerning the size of the diamond's in your earrings and those of the Countess W. The Empress begs that you will intrust one of your pendants to her care for a few moments, as the only satisfactory method of disposing of the vexed question. I will myself return it the instant Her Majesty gives it back into my keeping."

"With the greatest pleasure," agreed the Countess, with amiably alacrity, detaching the precious jewel forthwith, and depositing it, without misgiving, in the outstretched palm of the imperial messenger; for, indeed, diamonds were almost as plentiful in the existence of this fortunate lady as in the pages of "Lothair," and she attached no more importance to them than did the jewel-laden heroines of our late great and lamented Premier.

The Countess bestowed a smile and a gracious bow upon Her Majesty's distinguished ambassador, who responded by a profoundly respectable inclination as he made his exit. Once safely outside the box, the aristocratic features of this high-bred imperial emissary suddenly lost their serene expression of dignified gravity and relaxed into a triumphant, Mephistophelian grin.

Shortly afterwards Count Ivanoff returned. "I have been talking to D—," he remarked, as I sat myself. "Clever fellow, D—! I am not surprised at the Emperor's partiality for him; he must find him so useful when he is in want of an idea."

"Who is D—?" inquired the Countess with languid interest.

"That is rather a difficult question," replied the Count, smiling; "there are several editions of his biography—all different, probably none of them true. He is successful, which is the chief point; moreover, he is entertaining, and, at any rate, looks and speaks like a gentleman, which in these evil days is something—even much. Tenez, he has just entered the Emperor's box—the man in the black coat."

"Is that Monsieur D—?" exclaimed the Countess, waking up to a mild interest in the subject; "if so, he has here while you were away. He came on the part of the Empress, and carried off one of my earrings, which Her Majesty wished to compare with one of the Countess W's."

"D—! Impossible! I was talking to him the whole time I was absent, and he only left me at the top of the staircase two seconds before I returned."

"Nevertheless, *mon ami*, he has been here, and has taken my earring. See! it is gone."

"Effectively," agreed the Count, with a grim smile; "but D— has not taken it. It is to the last degree unlikely that the Empress would make such a request. Depend upon it, you have been the victim of a thief, got up as an accurate copy of the distinguished-looking D—."

"Impossible!" cried the Countess, in her turn. "The affair is absolutely as I tell you. It was Monsieur D—, the veritable Monsieur D—I see opposite, who came into this box and took away my diamonds. Only wait a little, and he will bring it back intact."

"To wait a little is to lessen the chances of its recovery. In any case, I will go and inquire of D—, if I can get at him, whether he has been seized with a sudden attack of kleptomania, because the idea of the Empress having sent him roaming about the theatre, borrowing a lady's jewels, I regard as preposterous. Ah, these Parisian *floosies*! You do not know what scientific geniuses they are in their way."

With this the Count departed, and the second act was nearly at an end before he returned.

In the meantime the Countess perceived that she was an object of interest to the occupants of the imperial box, and notably to the "double" of her late aristocratic-looking visitor, who, she could still solemnly declare, had stood before her in the flesh.

"I was right," whispered the Count, re-entering and bending over his wife's chair; "D— knows nothing of your earring, and, needless to say, the Empress never sent him or any one else upon such an errand. I have put the matter into the hands of the police, and they will do all that is possible to recover it."

"Really! How very droll!" remarked the Countess, with calm nonchalance—for she belonged to that order of impassive statuesque women who remain mistress of themselves though any quantity of "china fall;" "I will take out the other earring, or people may fancy I am trying to set the fashion of wearing an odd one;" and she handed the fellow to the purloined jewel to her husband.

The play came to an end, as even

that most excellent feast of reason, a good French play well acted, must do, sooner or later, in company with all things mundane.

The Countess was duly commiserated by sympathizing friends, who one and all declared, behind her back, that they would never have been guilty of the imbecility of trusting so valuable a possession to the tender mercies of however fascinating a stranger; but nothing more was heard of the stolen jewel until the following day at noon, when Count Ivanoff received a note from D— to the effect that, as he could not help considering himself partly responsible for the loss of the diamond which had disappeared through the agency of his counterpart, he had taken an early opportunity of interviewing the Chief of the Police, who assured him he had good reason to believe the thief had already been traced as far as Brussels.

Early in the afternoon the Countess was about to start for her early drive in the Bois. The frozen snow lay deep upon the ground, and her sledge, with its two jet-black Russian horses jingling their bells merrily in the frosty air, stood waiting in the courtyard while the Countess donned her furs.

A servant entering announced that an office of police in plain clothes asked permission to speak with Madame la Comtesse concerning the lost diamond.

"But certainly," agreed madame graciously; "let the officer be shown into the boudoir."

Into the boudoir presently came the Countess, stately, beautiful, fur-clad, buttoning her little gloves. Near the door stood a short wiry-looking man, with keen black eyes, closely-cropped hair, and compact, erect, military figure. The small man clicked his heels together and bowed profoundly in the presence of so much high-born loveliness, while he said with the utmost respect, at the same time laying a letter upon the table.

"I am sent by order of the Chef de Police to inform Mme. la Comtesse that the stolen diamond has been satisfactorily traced, but there is unfortunately some little difficulty connected with its identification. I am charged, therefore, to beg that Mme. la Comtesse will have the goodness to intrust the fellow earring to the police for a short period, in order that it may be compared with the one found in the possession of the suspected thief. Madame will find that the letter I bring corroborates my statement."

The Countess glanced hastily through the letter, and ringing the bell desired that her maid might be told to bring the remaining earring immediately; this was done, and the dapper little man, bowing deferentially, departed with the precious duplicate safely in his possession.

The Countess descended to her sledge and drove to the club, to call for her husband *en route* for the Bois. Crossing the Place de la Concorde, she related to him the latest incident in the story of the diamond earring.

"You never were induced to give up the other?" cried Count Ivanoff incredulously.

"But I tell you, *mon ami*, an officer of police came himself to fetch it, bringing a letter from his superior vouching for the truth of his statement."

"If the Prefect himself had come, I don't think I should have been cajoled into letting him have it after last night's experience," laughed her husband. "However, for the second time of asking, we will go and inquire."

"The coachman turned and drove as directed to the Bureau of Police, at which the Count had lodged his complaint the night before. After a somewhat protracted delay the Count rejoined his wife with a semi-grim look of amusement upon his handsome hirsute face.

"The police know nothing of your detective or his epistolary efforts," he said, drawing the fur rug up to his chin as the impatient horses sped away merrily over the frozen snow; "it was the wrong man that he got hold of at Brussels. Your second earring has been netted by another member of the light-fingered fraternity, and upon my honor I think he is the more accomplished artist of the two."

And from that unlucky day to this the Countess Ivanoff's celebrated diamond earrings knew her pretty ears no more.

Careless Use of Matches.

A table, in the interest of the insurance companies, has been prepared, presenting the annual loss in the United States resulting from the careless use of matches. A record of 133 noteworthy fires caused in this way during the year ending with June, 1885, showed a property loss of \$411,540 and an insurance loss of 211,685. These sums were believed to represent only about three-fifths of the actual loss by match fires, which was estimated at fully \$700,000 annually. At \$700,000 the loss from matches alone is greater than the annual loss by fire of twenty-one States and Territories, and is about equal to the fire losses of Mississippi or North Carolina, or of Oregon. If the comparison be made in another way, it will be found to be equal to the aggregate fire loss of eight States and Territories.

"Are you going to the funeral this afternoon, Mrs. Flip?" asked one lady of another on Broadway. "Well, yes, if my husband don't bring home matrimonial tickets," replied the latter.

Atlantic-Pacific.

The total length of the Panama Canal is seventy-four kilometres, from the Atlantic to its mouth in the Pacific, at the islands Naos and Flamenco. It is divided into twelve sections, the most important of which are those of Colon, Gorgona, Obispo, Emperado, Culebra and Paraiso. These united sections employ daily thirty steam excavators, forty locomotives and 800 tip wagons. There are 90,000,000 cubic feet to be excavated. The grand cutting, about two-thirds of which has already been excavated, is the cutting between Obispo and Paraiso. The force employed upon the work is upward of ten thousand men, and the excavation up to the 15th of October amounted to more than 2,500,000 cubic metres. During these latter months of the bad season the excavations have amounted to about 350,000 metres per month. This figure will be quintupled during the fine season which commences in December, and next year mostly all the necessary machinery will be at work, and the excavations will amount to 4,000,000 metres per month. The working force will be augmented, and will form a total of 15,000 men. At Colon the port works are nearly complete. The Terre Plein, with the breaker, destined to lessen the effect of the heavy seas at the entrance of the canal, is finished. An entire town has appeared there with a collection of workshops, warehouses and connecting railways for the reception and distribution of the material. The earth for the Terre Plein was taken from Monkey Hill, where a great cutting has been specially opened with the object of filling up the lagoons at the bottom of the Bay of Colon to improve the sanitary condition. The first of the 120-horse power machines between Colon and Gatun, a distance of nine kilometers is in full blast and is able to excavate the enormous quantity of 6,000 metres per diem, to be paid at the rate of one franc per fifty cubic metres. The Pacific opening between the mouth of the Rio Grande and Paraiso is contracted for by the Franco-American Trading Company. The first machine of the American system will commence in a few days and will be supplemented by others, which will be necessary to finish this part of the canal in two years as a maximum from Gatun to Bahia Soldado. On the Atlantic side the company are working two machines, furnishing a minimum of 4,000 cubic metres per diem.

The Mystery of Turtle Soup.

When the time of a turtle comes he is conveyed to the kitchen. A chain is fastened round his two hind fins, and he is drawn up from the ground by the block which is attached to one of the kitchen pillars. Sawdust is sprinkled thickly below, and when a large order is received the floor is blood-stained as Blue Beard's chamber. The manager politely offered to show me the whole process—from execution to copper. Suppose the turtle dangling in mid-air. The butcher sharpens his knife, and in a half-a-dozen seconds has severed the head from the body, the blood dyeing the fresh sawdust a crimson hue. The head is thrown on to the table, and was jumping about like a frog long after the rest of him was in the pot. The fins are then cut off, scalded in order to remove the scale, cut up, and boiled separately, as they do not require so long to cook as the other parts of the body. With steady aim and unerring eye the butcher runs his knife round the outer rim of the turtle's belly, and by this means separates the shell. The entrails—and a turtle seems to consist chiefly of entrails and shells—are then taken out. The pigs at Messrs. Painter's farm in Essex have all the offal sent to them, and the turtle-flesh is said to be the finest in the county. The back, the shell of which is often half an inch in thickness, is then taken off. Both back and belly shells are then scalded with steaming hot water, and the scale peels off readily enough after a few minutes' soaking, leaving a framework of bone. What is known as the calipee is the white portion of the flesh which comes from the belly; the calipash is black in color, and is taken from the back. Only about a quart of the famous green fat is found in a dozen turtles. It is only present at certain seasons of the year, and is found in the turtle's flank. This will of course, account for the long price which is asked for the delicacy by the dealers. The back and belly are then chopped up in criss-cross fashion and placed in one of the stew-pans, where they boil gently for about three hours. Besides this, what is known as the chicken meat, resembling veal in color, is also added. We have now the fins boiling separately in one pan, and the back and belly simmering in another. Both are taken off the fire, steamed, and both are placed in the same stewpot. Marjoram, thyme, parsley, and sometimes onions, are added to this stock, which is now allowed to boil for some seven hours more. The liquid is then strained off, filtered, clarified, and put into shallow pans to cool. The green fat is of course dealt with separately and is sold alone. The chicken meat is allowed to get cold and it then can be stamped into dainty cutlets. The fins are also served in a separate dish. This is the process of manufacture. No evidence of conger eels or of any foreign body is to be found. The invalid soup is the abso-

lutely pure, and differs from the other only in the absence of herbs or any salt.

In view of the controversy which is now going on (it may be as well to point out that Sir Henry Thompson's contention is that conger eel forms the best stock for the soup, and he by no means accuses the purveyors of selling an adulterated article), we have given this short description of our visit which may prove interesting. The turtles used by Messrs. Painter come from the West Indian Islands by the mail steamers, being collected and forwarded to London by their agents at Southampton. The turtle is of course found off the coast of America, Africa, and India but the voyage from the West Indies proves long enough. They are placed down below when on board ship, getting now and then an occasional bath and a little food. On arrival in England they are covered with straw, and placed in the ordinary railway van, in which they travel comfortably enough. The voyage is not always accomplished so pleasantly. A correspondent who has lately arrived from the West Indies says he had forty-six turtles as fellow-passengers on the steamer. He adds a new feature to the controversy:—"Frequently," he writes, "turtles die on the voyage, and when not too far from the destination of the steamer their throats are cut. They are then left to hang in a cool place until the vessel is about to enter the port, when some blood from the last killed pig or sheep is daubed on the neck to give the appearance of recent killing, when half price is paid for the meat." This statement is perhaps a slight exaggeration. "Judging," he adds, from "the prices realized for turtle when I was in Liverpool—6d. and 9d. a pound on the landing alive, or half the price when dead—I should imagine that purveyors could afford to indulge their patrons with the real stuff." The price which Messrs. Painter charge at present is 1s. 2d. per pound for live turtle. For the green fat two guineas a quart is charged, for thick turtle 21s., invalid's soup 2d., and for clear turtle 25s. The high prices may be accounted for by the small proportion of meat which is found on the turtles when compared with its weight, 60 per cent. being the average amount of waste. Then turtle vary much in the quantity of meat they supply. For instance, a turtle weighing 300 pounds would not be as valuable as one weighing 120 pounds. As a turtle gets older a process of ossification sets in, and what in a turtle of 60 pounds would be calipash and calipee, in a turtle of 300 pounds would have become bone. It is a curious fact worth noticing that the import of dried turtle is increasing largely every year. It is not easy to ascertain the exact quantity, as it does not appear in the Blue books, being probably included under the head "Dried Fish." All the soup made for this is of course composed of meat, or of some ordinary fish, but probably most usually of beef and veal, these being generally recommended by the Italian warehousemen who sell it. One Florida manufacturer tins 200,000 pounds yearly, employing ten or twelve vessels in the pursuit of the reptile.

After Forty Years.

In January last Howard Blackmore and Thomas Welch got astray from a Gloucester fishing schooner on Burgeo Bank, southwest of Newfoundland. They were subjected to terrible sufferings, and Welch died. Blackburn held his hands around the oars until they froze in a curved position, and thus was able to row nearly two days, until he came to the habitation of Francis Litchman, at Little River. Litchman took care of him until he was able to return home and tell the story, which was published in Gloucester. It attracted the attention of Mr. William Litchman, of Marblehead. He was a native of Little River, which place he left when a boy, with his father, walking through the woods to the coast, living on game and sleeping in camps of boughs. In the spring his father shipped for a fishing trip on the schooner *Mechanic*, of Marblehead, leaving the boy with a Mr. Bennett. On returning from the trip Mr. Litchman took his son on board the schooner, and they came to Marblehead, where William entered the employ of Jonathan B. Mason.

His father went to Gloucester and remained there until 1838, when he disappeared. William married at manhood, and changed the spelling of his name to Litchman. For many years he supposed that he had no relatives, until 1874, on the death of Mr. Mason, his former employer, a letter was discovered among his effects from Mr. Litchman, his father, written in 1842, and dated at his home, in Franklin, La., inquiring for his son. The father now being dead, Mr. Litchman supposed again that he had no relatives except his wife and children, one of whom is the Hon. Charles H. Litchman, the eloquent labor advocate, who now holds a position with the Railroad Commission by appointment of Governor Butler. On writing to Francis Litchman, at Little River, N. F., an answer was sent which has just been received, showing most conclusively that he and William are brothers.

—The new hospital at Austin, Texas, will cost \$10,000.

Pistols that Kill.

A Chicago dealer in guns and fire-arms told a reporter that the sale of the serviceable kind of pistols—that will "kill a man every time"—is continually increasing. The "bull dog" revolver, such as Garfield was shot with, is the most popular. Just after Garfield's assassination a Pittsburg dealer was obliged to send all his clerks and salesmen into this department, and even then could not meet the demands of his customers. The American manufacturers, moreover, were unable to supply the abnormal demand for these weapons, and the English sources of production were soon exhausted.

The awful destructiveness of the "bull dog" was its chief recommendation to public favor at that time. Men wanted some weapon to practically protect themselves from such wild deluded beings as Guitau had proven himself. The danger from such a source was considerable, and a genuine practical remedy was believed to be found in this devastating instrument. In selling a revolver or pistol to any one the dealer is required to record the purchaser's name, age, residence, and the purpose for which the weapon is bought. No one under 21 years of age is allowed to buy any weapon of defense without a written permission from the parents or guardian of the purchaser addressed to the dealer or "to whom it may concern."

The average age of the purchasers of revolvers is between 23 and 25 years. These are mostly young men. Very few women in Chicago either purchase or use revolvers, although many husbands declare that they wish the weapons for their wives to practice with and learn to use with some degree of skill. In case of burglaries they hope that "their better halves" may find it possible to protect themselves. The reasons which many people give the gunsmiths and dealers for investing in fire-arms are very amusing. One man wants to "shoot a dog;" another expects to "take a pop" at an army of felime marauders that make night hideous by their dismal howls beneath his latted window, and the sand-bagged individual (who wears one eye in a sling and has so lumpy a forehead that no hat can conceal its lofty baldness), with a firm conviction that no sand-bagger will cross his path alive in the future. This man wants and inquires for something that will shoot a big ball and he must have it.

The costly revolvers with carved pearl handles and silver-plated engraved barrels are sold mostly to the theatrical profession and the cowboy class of humanity. The prices of this class of weapons run as high as \$50, \$80 and \$100. It is a remarkable fact that they are usually worn by men who wear the broad sombrero or Buffalo Bill style of head-gear, flannel shirt and cow-hide boots. The high price is seldom objected to by these men, since the article is, perhaps, the most valued one in their wardrobe.

France and China.

The French forces in China recently captured the principal outposts of Sontay, embracing five strongly fortified villages. Sontay, the place which has been assailed by the French, is the most inland town in the delta of the Red river, on which stream it is situated at a distance of about 40 miles northwest of Ha-noi, the headquarters of the French. The town stands on the right bank of the river, the citadel being about half a mile from the stream. The intervening space is occupied by a number of villages containing altogether about 18,000 inhabitants. It is some of these villages, doubtless that have already fallen into the hands of the French. A road which starts from the river passes through these villages. Pursuing this highway, the invaders first encounter the ramparts of earthworks. Then the road turns, curving around the fortress until it passes the north gate of the citadel. The wall of earthworks is separated from the regular ramparts by a bank or causeway about 1,400 feet wide, on which other hamlets have been built. Between the encircling road and the citadel were eight barracks, where the Annamite troops were garrisoned.

The citadel of Sontay, which the French have not yet captured, has the form of a quadrilateral, each one of its sides being about 2,000 feet long. It is built of bricks and masonry, with bastions in the middle of each side. It is fortress on the Comornagne plan, and was erected towards the close of the last century by French engineers. It has four gates corresponding to the four points of the compass, the principal ones being the south gate, looking to the Red river, and the north gate, facing the interior of the country. In the centre of the citadel is a pagoda, at the left is the house of the governor-general, at the right that of the mandarin who dispenses justice, and at each angle is a military post. Between these are the administrative bureaux, the prison, and the rice magazines. The most populous of the villages surrounding the citadel are those situated between it and the river, already referred to.

"That prisoner has a very smooth countenance," said the judge to the sheriff. "Yes," said the sheriff "he was ironed just before he was brought in."