

THE COLUMBIA SPY.

SAMUEL WRIGHT, Editor and Proprietor.

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Selections.

Head of My Profession.

I was born in the city of Bath, in the beginning of the present century. My earliest recollections of the hot water capital are recollections of an era of prosperity, which, though then approaching its decline, was yet vigorous and beautiful. At the period of my childhood, Bath was the winter focus of fashion, and to fashion and fashionable people it was devoted more thoroughly, perhaps, than any other city or town in the realm. Nothing that could by any possibility offend the visitors was allowed to exist; while every attraction, whatever its moral aspect, which had charms to lure them thither, was unreservedly displayed. I distinctly remember that while gaming-houses and worse places were encouraged, it was a high crime and misdemeanor for a littleurchin to trundle a hoop on the pavement, lest he should damage the farthingale of some lady of quality; and school boys were lodged off to prison in the town hall for playing at "cherry" in Orange Grove, to the supposed disturbance of the rheumatic tables. I those days there were no hireable cabs, carriages or omnibuses; and the only available locomotives were the sedan chairs, for which there were regular stands at various places throughout the city, the principal ones being near the Pump-room, and in front of the Assembly-rooms. The chairman was a peculiar race, long since passed away—stout, brawny, broad shouldered fellows, clad in light-blue frock surtouts, plush breeches, white stockings, and shoes with broad shining buckles. Originally, they had worn cocked hats; but these, in my boyhood, began to give place to the customary cylinder, and disappeared altogether in the first years of my apprenticeship. These chairmen were the tyrants of the foot-pavements, along which they ambled at a six-mile-an-hour pace, ruthlessly sweeping into the kennel all who were not sufficiently active in getting out of their way. The walls of the old Abbey at that day bristled with chimneys and chimney-pots; close files of shops, chiefly occupied by small traders, clung like barnacles all round the surface of the ancient structure, save at the grand western entrance flanking the Pump-room; and a thriving trade was done in them, because here was no nucleus of the fashionable throng. Orange Grove then was a grove, crowded with ancient elms fungous with age. The parades, North and South, were the Corso of worn-out rouses and courtly convalescents, who promenaded them in wheel-chairs within the shadow of the new Assembly rooms, and at an easy distance from the restoring waters. Dull, dreamy, and voiceless in the summer time, no sooner were the chills of autumn felt, than Bath was rapidly converted into a huge caravansary. Strange faces and new equipments flocked in by hundreds daily. Everybody then began to lodgings, from the hucksters in the by-streets, to the speculators in the Circus and the Royal Crescent, and the price of apartments rose suddenly from shillings to pounds. Ten guineas a week was nothing for a tradesman's upper floors, which became the habit of the landed gentry, whose retinue of servants had to take post in the tradesman's kitchen, along with his family, and to stow themselves at night in cupboard, closet, or garret, wherever a shake-down could be extorted.

All those vices were fashionable, winked at by the sober citizens, who made a profit out of them, walked the streets at noonday, if not without notice, without rebuke. Scenes which were common to all eyes at Bath during the era of the Napoleonic wars, could not now be described in these columns, because the present generation of readers would not tolerate the description. Among the least obvious of the vices which fashion had made popular was that of gambling; the gentry gaming in their houses nightly, without prearranging the Sunday; gaming establishments flourished in all parts of the town; some select, and accessible to the subscribers; others common to all who could assume the appearance of a gentleman. Of all the modes of gambling perhaps billiards was the most esteemed. The game had been pronounced healthful by a distinguished member of the faculty, and a rage sprang up for it, which prevailed for years. What the nobility and gentry delighted in, the middle classes and lower classes would of course feel a longing for; and as a result, there were billiard establishments open to all ranks, from the subscription tables at the Upper Rooms, where the members played for thousands, down to the

rickety board of Old Spraggs in Union Passage, where the balls trundled over a field of green baize into pockets as wide as a church door, and the apprentice boys of the town gambled for two twopences. At ten years of age my uncle sent me to school at Old Carpenter's in George street, one of the most vigorous floggers of the day, who aware of his strength of arm, would considerably allow a culprit to endure an extra jacket, or even two, if he could borrow them, before submitting to punishment. Here I made the acquaintance of Ned B., who soon became my bosom friend, and through him it was that I became a billiard player. Ned's father was the proprietor of a large billiard establishment in Milson street, where, in several rooms built over the garden in the rear of the house, billiards were played during the season at all hours of day and night. One or other of these tables were generally unoccupied, and at Ned's command. Here he taught me the game, for which I immediately conceived a passion, and practised it without intermission at every possible opportunity. It is a fact that in my eleventh year I sometimes played for seven hours a day, without absenting myself from school, without fatigue, and without surfeit. Ned's father had no objection to our practice, as it was his object to make a finished player out of his son. The boy, however, was near-sighted, and I soon outstripped him in knowledge of the game. Sometimes Mr. B. would watch our play, and give instruction, which I was too apt in receiving. This state of things continued until I was fourteen years of age, by which time I could beat, and had beaten, every amateur player that frequented the rooms—not unfrequently to the considerable profit of the proprietor, who was always ready to back my play.

At sixteen, my uncle bound me as out-door apprentice to Mr. C. in George street. I had now but a little time in the evening for billiards. At first I did not care for this, thinking I had had enough of it; but after an interval of a few months the old passion for the game returned stronger than ever. I had recourse to my old school-fellow once more; but now there was an objection to my appearance at the subscription-rooms, his father not wishing his subscribers to identify me as Mr. C.'s apprentice. In consequence, it was only by stealth and on rare occasions that we could resume our play. In this dilemma, I was driven to the cheaper tables free to the public. There was one in the Borough Walls, open to all the world, and which, being opposite to the Blue School, and near the theatre, was much frequented during theatrical hours by the servants of the gentry occupying the boxes. I soon discovered that this place was the very sink of vice and blackguardism; that there by a gang of gambling Jews, who plundered the unwary at dice and hazard; that, in a word, besides being a billiard room, it was a perfect gambling-hell—and yet I could not keep away. The best players I had yet seen frequented this table, and among them were some of the most consummate blackguards in existence. It was but rarely, however, that I met my match amongst them, and as I improved constantly, in process of time I could beat them all.

I should have been speedily and irredeemably ruined by the infamous society of this place had it not been that, at about the age of sixteen I conceived a violent passion for music, and began learning the piano, and studying counterpoint under a little humpbacked professor of the name of Albin, who taught me at a shilling a lesson. But for the music, I should certainly have thrown up my trade and turned gambler long ere I was out of my time. As it was, the music and the billiards divided my leisure between them; now one now the other being in the ascendant. Perhaps the music would ultimately have weaned me from the billiard table—for I rapidly acquired considerable skill, and could rattle off sets of quadrilles tastily enough in my second year—but about this time the science of billiards began to be talked of, and the practice of the game to assume some new phases. Every mouth was full of the praises of Jack Carr, who had invented the side twist, and made other discoveries tending to the demonstration of phenomena hitherto unrecognized in the motion of globular bodies. All the billiard world went mad on the new discoveries, and it was not likely that I should be unaffected by the current mania. Ned B. first indoctrinated me in the new invention, and it was at his father's house I first saw Carr at play. I found him an adept at every artifice in the game, and astonishingly skillful in the use of his own invention, to which, nevertheless, I was not disposed to accord the value he claimed for it. I noticed that he was often beaten by players whom I had beaten frequently myself, and I noticed, too, that when thus beaten, it was invariably through reliance on his newly invented stroke. There was no difficulty in the use of this invention, even to a stranger, as the player who once understood the new principle could master it easily in a few hours' practice. In fact, what I then suspected has since been abundantly proved: the side-twist is of little real use to a good player, as it adds but little to his real strength, and is not at all comparable to

the capacity of making a good winning hazard—a faculty, by the way, which Carr did not possess in any extraordinary degree. About the same time, some one else, paraphrasing Carr's invention, discovered the top-twist, by which a still more eccentric motion is imparted to a ball. Both these discoveries, however, are rather curiosities of the players' art, than valuable additions to it, and as such they should be regarded; though there are, doubtless, certain situations in which they may be used with advantage. I was not long in mastering both these *tours de force*, and could call them into action when requisite.

One night, while I was playing a match with a footman in the Borough Walls' den, a young Irishman entered the room and stood looking on. He was buttoned to the chin in a seedy coat, and trod in a pair of new hob-nailed high-tops. The room was crowded; and some of the insolent wags of the place began exercising their wit at the expense of the new comer. He bore it good humoredly enough, answering only with a ready joke and a rather smart retort, until one of the blackguards, presuming on his quietness, shouldered acute, and, walking backwards, brought the bat-end in his face. The next moment the aggressor was sprawling on the floor, and the Irish boy in a fighting attitude, ready for whosoever should present himself. The fallen man rose and rushed to the encounter, but in two minutes had had enough of it, leaving the Irishman triumphant.

The visitor showed the best possible temper, apologised to the company for the interruption his presence had occasioned, and begged that the play might be resumed; and in a few minutes, such order as was usual was restored. It appeared afterwards that Pat Meagher—so was the stranger called—had been a marker in Dublin; that he had landed at Liverpool without a penny a fortnight before, and had tramped down to Bath, supporting himself with his cue on the route. He soon proved himself an admirable player, beating me at our first encounter, though I was able to return the compliment after becoming acquainted with his tactics. He had the peculiar faculty of bringing his ball to a dead stop, after striking another, at whatever distance—a feat often of much value, and which I never saw accomplished so surely by any other man. He played but a few nights at the den, for he had the sense to see that if he became notorious there, his chance among the upper circles was lost. A few months after his arrival, I saw him, habited like an officer in dress, playing with a Right Honourable at B.'s subscription tables. Here he gained a certain notoriety, and an inconsiderable cash. It being an understood thing that he would play any amateur for any amount, B., without my knowledge, matched me against him for a contest of twenty-one games. I could not refuse to play the match; and it came off on Christmas-eve, in the presence of over a hundred spectators. At the end of the nineteenth game I was the winner of eleven, and of a large amount of money which changed hands on the occasion, though I neither had nor coveted any of it.

I fell into disgrace at home by playing this match. The rumor of my exploit was bruited abroad, and reached the ears of my uncle, who was violently angry, as also was, or pretended to be, my master; and they talked of punishing me by imprisonment for playing at unlawful games, in violation of the terms of my indenture. I was compelled to give a solemn promise not to enter a billiard room during the remainder of my apprenticeship, which had still a year to run. I kept my promise faithfully, consoling myself with my pinpoints, on which I strung away until midnight. When my term drew to a close, my uncle, who feared I should turn gambler if I remained in Bath, wrote to his brother in Dover, who, carrying on the same business to which I had served my time, consented to receive me as an assistant. I was unwilling to see the world; and accepted the situation offered.

I went down by the Dover coach in April 1821 to my new appointment. I found my relative an agreeable old fellow, already prejudiced in my favor, from a liking he had conceived for me in my childhood, during a visit to Bath, and not at all disposed to restrict my pleasures. He hired a pianoforte from Bachelors', borrowed piles of music, and was never weary of my performances, which he enjoyed to perfection under a cloud of tobacco smoke. Dover was at that time all life and gayety. The Duke of Clarence's sons by Mrs. Jordan ruled the roast at the garriçon, and led the fashion in the town and neighborhood. Routes, balls, fetes, and dancing-parties followed each other nightly. Quadrilles were the rage, and, as a consequence, I soon became sought after as a pianist, and had engagements four or five deep constantly on hand. I was paid handsomely for my services, and ate ices, quaffed champagne, and revelled in gastronomic luxuries. I relished my new position amazingly; I saw the best company, had the honor of playing to the blood royal, and, what I relished more, to the beautiful daughters of Supervisor W., the sight of whose bewitching faces sometimes set my fingers blundering, and my brain a wool-gathering.

As the summer drew on, this kind of occupation relaxed, and then ceased altogether and my way of life settled down into a

rather dull routine. The summer passed and the autumn too, and November came in with its fogs and storms. I found a new pleasure in the roar of the huge breakers, and dash of the sounding surge on the pebbly beach, under the castle cliff, which was then a dreary weird-looking spot, very unlike what it is now. It was my habit to walk out of an evening, through the darkness, and take post on the old stakes of the jetty, to enjoy in solitude the din, whirl, uproar, and fury of the tempest. One evening about seven o'clock, as I was passing the end of Snargate streets towards the castle cliff, I heard a gentle creaking sound, which thrilled through me from head to toe like an electric shock—it was the soft repitating kiss of billiard balls. Here was a discovery! I had not known that there was a table in the town. I felt my right hand grasping the cue; and the fingers of my left forming a bridge; as if by some magnetic influence. I looked round in all directions for the entrance. A dim lamp hung over a side-passage, and a few paces down there was an open door and a staircase, lighted by the merest blink from above. I stole softly up the stairs, and came at the first landing on a door with a glass panel, but partly curtained within; I peeped in, and saw two officers at play at a small table, and a company of gentlemen seated round. I had been at work all day, and had my apron rolled round my waist. I knew it would not do to enter in such a garb. I ran home and washed, induced my best suit, and in twenty minutes had returned and entered the room. No one noticed my intrusion, so I took a seat and watched the game. One of the players I recognized as a garrison officer who had often danced to my music, and it is possible that he recognized me. He won the game, and his adversary declined to play any more, on the plea that he had no chance with him. The victor then challenged the room; and as no one accepted the challenge, I rose and offered to play him myself. He eyed me from head to foot rather superciliously, and with a kind of haughty condescension, rolling the balls as he spoke, told me to lead off. Annoyed at his pomposity, I allowed him but a single stroke, and then carelessly made the game off the balls. He was pleased to attribute this first result to accident, but the accident recurred again and again, to the mirth of the company, and his intense mortification. To give him some chance of winning, I proposed that he should take five of the pockets to my one; he accepted my offer, but still did not win a game, and finally left off without a momentary advantage. This affair created quite a sensation in the room; and I was asked to favor them with my company on the morrow evening, when perhaps I might meet with a worthier antagonist. I consented, and presented myself on the morrow accordingly. The room was full, and several of the new comers were anxious to measure their strength against me. My pride was roused, and I showed them all that they had no chance in the contest. I had refused to play for money from the first and it was this that puzzled them, while it secured for me their respect. When they requested that I would come again, I declined, on the ground that the table was not worth playing at—which was true, the pockets being twice the proper size, and the area not quite half the usual dimensions. I derided the idea of practising the science of billiards on such a toy, and refused to have anything more to do with it. Having said thus much, and made my bow to the company, I took my leave with an air of wonderful independence.

It was about nine o'clock in late November as I left the house and proceeded in the teeth of the wind towards the old jetty, where the monster breakers were bursting in thundering peals on the masses of huge pebbles round and big as cannon balls, whose tremendous rattling, as they were dashed to and fro, gave out a sound like the clapping of millions of giant palms, and which wrought most powerfully and agreeably on my imagination. I had seated myself on a fragment of a beam, and was peering through the darkness at the heavy circling masses of water, when I felt a hand on my shoulder. I started to my feet; there stood a dim figure before me, motioning in show—for no voice could be heard—and beckoning me away. I rose, nodded acquiescence, and followed, as he led on toward a shed under the cliff, where a light was burning. When under the lee of the building, and sheltered from the loud roaring of the billows, he turned short round, and presented a figure which I have good reason to remember until my dying day. He was a man of about fifty-five years of age, not more than about five feet in height, with a prodigious hunch on his shoulders, yet standing as upright as a dart. A long pale visage; a nose like an eagle's beak; a pair of deep sunk gray eyes; an ample brow; prominent chin, and thin, bloodless lips, such was the aspect he turned suddenly towards me, with the not very courteous inquiry: "I say, young fellow, who the devil are you?"

"Really," said I, "I may return the inquiry with interest, and with more show of reason. What is your business with me?"

"You need not take offence; there is none intended I assure you—quite the contrary. Here is my card, and I am to be found at the 'Ship.'"

I took the card, held it to the light, and read the words, "Louis Crannel."

"Your name is strange to me," I said: "I have still to learn your business with me."

"I wish to know who you are, and what is your profession," he replied. "My motive for that is not mere curiosity. If you desire concealment, of course I say no more but it strikes me you do not."

"You are right," I said: "I have no motive for concealment" and I told him my name, address and daily employment.

He affected the utmost astonishment—"Do you mean to tell me," he asked, as if utterly incredulous, "that you are such an infatuated ass as to work at a trade for about thirty shillings a week, and yet play such a game at billiards as I have seen you play?"

"Pshaw!" said I; "billiards are an amusement only; I could not make a living by billiards."

"The deuce you could not! Hark ye, young man, you have the means of independence in your hand, and you don't know it. Now, listen to me. With such skill at billiards as you have, and such knowledge of the world as I could teach you, you might gain any amount of wealth you choose."

"Or, which is just as probable, might lose what little I have."

"Not at all. If you are afraid of that, I will make you an offer. You shall quit your trade, and place yourself under my charge. I will take you all over Europe; you shall make the grand tour at my expense; I will defray all charges of traveling, living, and clothing; you shall visit all the capitals, shall have your own valet, and live like a lord; and I will give you a clear three hundred a year for yourself."

"In return for which," said I, "I am to play where you choose, to win when you choose, and to lose when you choose."

"Just so," said he.

"Thank you; I will have nothing to do with it."

"You will be sorry for it, my lad; and if you are such an idiot as to go grinding at a boggy trade for a few shillings a week, when you might realize an independence in a few years, you deserve to suffer."

"Good night!" I replied, and strode away home as fast as I could. I had shaken off the tempter for a time, and felt in quite a virtuous glow as I walked homewards through the dull streets and the drizzling rain which began to fall. Next day, however, as I stood at my work in the dreary cobwebby shop, the vision which Mr. Crannel's words had conjured up to my imagination returned with double force, and in brilliant contrast to the surrounding circumstances. My avocation for the first time grew distasteful, and I longed for the hour of release. When it came, I sallied out to the sea-shore, at the old spot; and dreamed away an hour there to the murmur of the subsiding gale. I caught myself once or twice looking round to see if Mr. Crannel would make his appearance again. He did not come, and I suppose I walked home that night with a feeling of disappointment.

On the following day, Crannel came into the shop while I was left in charge during the temporary absence of my uncle, and bought a few trifling articles, the selection of which occupied him half an hour. He now renewed his offer, and begged me to think of it calmly at my leisure, informing me at the same time that he should remain at the "Ship" for another week, and should be happy to see me at any moment.

I told him that there was no probability that I should change my determination; but he must have seen that my resolution was not so firm as it had been at our first encounter; and it is likely that he already felt certain that I should swallow the bait. After this, he waylaid me every night in my walks, and thus, in repeated interviews, from which I had not the resolution to refrain, at length won me over to his purpose. I accepted his proposition in terms with which the reader is already acquainted, and we drew up a duplicate agreement at his hotel, which was mutually signed, and of which each of us retained a copy. The agreement bound me to him for three years though it only covenanted that I should render him my services whenever called upon, for the salary named—no reference being made to the nature of the services.

I had to make up a tale to satisfy my old uncle, who was most unwilling to let me go; but he was appeased at last, and gave me his blessing at parting. It was the second week in December when I stepped on board the steamboat with Crannel, and sailed for Calais. I had never been to sea before; the passage proved tempestuous, and the boat nearly foundered midway. I was miserably sick, and longed to go at once to the bottom. Crannel watched and waited on me with almost a woman's tenderness—got me to bed as soon as we touched the shore, and could not have manifested more care and kindness had I been, as people thought I was, his only son."

A night's repose restored me; and the next morning an "artist" made his appearance, who took my measure, and in a few days sent in such a magnificent wardrobe, made in the recent Parisian fashion, as qualified me, in appearance, at least, for any society in Europe. Meanwhile Crannel made me aware of the particulars of his plan. I was to assume the character of an English country gentleman of fortune

on his travels. I was to be passionately fond of billiards, and about as clever with the cue as country gentlemen generally are—playing a wild game, in a reckless, cautionless way, but, for obvious reasons, playing only for moderate stakes. It would be his part to drop in occasionally during the play, when he would make his own bets, either in my favor or against me, as he chose, and I was to win or lose according to signals agreed upon between us. In order to avoid suspicion, I was to conceal my real strength, even when it was most required, and to win, when to win was most imperative, as if by accident rather than design. With regard to the connection between us, it was agreed that we should not appear too intimate, or, on the other hand, too distant and reserved; we were to be casual acquaintances, on good terms with each other, and sometimes winning each other's money at a quiet morning game.

All these *provisoes* were agreed, and I spent a couple of days in preparing myself at a French table—the *contingents* of the being very different from those to which I had been accustomed—in order to familiarise myself with their peculiarities; and then we started by separate conveyances, I and my valet leading the way, for Brussels.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Chapter of Wit.

The author of the "Tin Trumpet" thus discourses on wit—and illustrates the subject:

Wit consists in discovering likenesses—judgement in detecting differences. Wit is like a ghost, much more often talked of than seen. To be genuine, it should have a base of truth and applicability, otherwise it degenerates into mere flippancy; as, for instance, when Swift says: "A very little wit is valued in a woman, as we are pleased with a few words spoken plain by a parrot;" or when Voltaire remarks, that "Ideas are like beads; woman and young men have none." This is a random facetiousness, if it deserves that term, which is equally despicable for its falsehood and its facility.

Where shall we discover that rarer species of wit, which, like the rine, bears the more clusters of sweet grapes the oftener it is pruned; or, like the seven-mouthed Nile, springs the faster from the head, the more copiously it flows from the mouth?

The sensations excited by wit are destroyed, or at least impaired, if it excite the stronger emotions, or even if it be connected with purposes of utility and improvement. We may laugh where it is bitter, as the Sardinians did when they had tasted of their venomous herbs, but this is the risibility of the muscles allied to convulsions rather than to intellectual pleasure.

Leigh Hunt devotes forty pages of one of his books—and fails to elucidate the mystery at last. Johnson defines wit as "the faculty of associating dissimilar images in an unusual manner." Sidney Smith, in his "Lectures on Moral Philosophy," shows the fallacy of this definition, gives a better, and branches the startling doctrine that wit, so far from being necessarily a natural gift, might be studied as successfully as mathematics. It is a question if Sheridan was witty when staggering along, half tipsy, he was eyed by a policeman, and exclaimed, confidentially, "My name is Wiberforce—I am a religious man—don't expose me."

Talleyrand, when asked by a lady famous for her beauty and stupidity, how she should rid herself of some of her troublesome admirers, replied:

"You have only to open your mouth, madam."

This if witty, was also ill-natured.

Lord Chatham rebuked a dishonest Chancellor of the Exchequer by finishing a quotation the latter had commenced. The debate turned upon some grant of money for the encouragement of art, which was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who finished his speech against Lord Chatham's motion by saying, "Why was not this eminent sold and the money given to the poor?" Chatham rose and said, "Why did not the noble lord complete the quotation, the application being so striking? As he has shrunk from it, I will finish the verse for him—'This Judas said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and carried the bag.'"

It was coarse wit when Lord Byron, who was gnawing with agony from a severe attack of cholera, and exclaiming, "Lord help me I am dying," was told by Prelawney, "not to make such an infernal fuss about dying."

Luttrell tells a story of Sir F. Gould, who had a habit of adding the phrase "on the contrary" to everything he said; a gentleman saying to him, "So I hear, Gould, you eat three eggs every morning for breakfast?" "No," on the contrary—"What the devil," said Luttrell, "does the contrary of eating three eggs mean?" "Laying them, of course," said Sheridan. This was ready wit.

Rowland Hill compared a sinner to an oyster, which opened its shell, all mouth to take water; just as the sinner, with his mouth at full stretch, took in the tide of iniquity. "Heavenly grace," he said was "like a rump of beef—eat and come again—no more fare, my dear brethren."

Lydia White, an English magazine writer, was an invalid, and fancied herself continually at death's door, and used to invite people to see her die. A friend, who had gone several times by special invitation, and came away disappointed, at last refused to attend, pleading that he "could not afford

to waste so much time on a mortuary uncertainty."

Scotchmen are notoriously unable to appreciate a joke. Sydney Smith, who knows them well, says: "It requires a surgical operation to get a joke into a Scotch understanding. Their only idea of wit or *real*, as they call it, is laughing immoderately at stated intervals."

Some of the Irish judges of olden times were equally dull. One, in giving his dictum on a certain will case, said he "thought it very clear that the *testator* intended to keep a *life interest* in the estate himself." To it Curran frankly replied: "Very true, my lord, very true; testators generally do secure life interests to themselves, but in this case I think your worship takes the *will* for the *dead*."

HOW HE "DIED" FOR LOVE.—An amusing story is told, as an episode in a story in a late foreign review, about a military young gentleman who died for love. The affair occurred in Paris. The hero was named De Marsay. He was violently enamoured of a very pretty woman whom he met by chance in the street, and discovered afterwards to be the wife of a "dyer" in the Rue de Marais. Whether she was disposed to favor his addresses or acted in concert with her husband to punish him, is not very easy to say; the result would incline to the latter supposition. At all events she gave him a rendezvous, at which they were surprised by the dyer himself—a fellow strong as Hercules, and of an ungovernable temper. He rushed wildly on De Marsay, who defended himself for some time with his rapier; a false thrust however, broke the weapon at the hilt, and the dyer springing forward caught poor Gustave round the body and actually carried him off over his head, and plunged him neck and heels into an enormous tank filled with dye-stuff! How he escaped drowning—how he issued from the house and ever reached his home—he never was able to tell. It is more than probable the consequences of the calamity absorbed and obliterated all else; for when he awoke next day he discovered that he was totally changed—his skin, from head to foot, being dyed a deep blue! It was in vain he washed and washed, boiled himself in hot baths, or essayed a hundred cleansing remedies; nothing availed in the least—in fact many thought that he came out only bluer than before. The most learned of the faculty were consulted, the most distinguished chemists—all in vain. At last a dyer was sent for, who in an instant recognized the peculiar tint, and said, "Ah, there is but one man in Paris has the secret of this color, and he lives in the Rue de Marais."

Here was a terrible blow to all his hopes; and in the discouragement it inflicted three long months were passed. De Marsay growing thin and wretched from fretting, and by his despondency occasioning his friends the deepest solicitude. At length one of his relatives resolved on a bold step. He went direct to the Rue de Marais, and demanded to speak to the dyer. It is not very easy to say how he opened a negotiation of such delicacy; that he did so with consummate tact and skill there can be no doubt, for he so worked on the dyer's compassion by the picture of the poor young fellow, utterly ruined in his career, unable to face the world—to meet the regiment—even to appear before the enemy, being blue!—that the dyer at last confessed his pity, but at the same time cried out, "What can I do? There is no getting it off again!"

"No getting it off again! do you really tell me that?" exclaimed the wretched negotiator.

"Impossible! that's the patent," said the other, with an ill-dissembled pride. "I have spent seven years in the invention. I only hit upon it last October. Its grand merit is that it resists all attempts to efface it."

"And do you tell me," cries the friend in terror, "that this poor fellow must go down to his grave in that odious—well, I mean no offence—in that ugly tint?"

"There is but one thing in my power, sir," "Well, what is it, in the name of mercy?" "Out with it, and name your price."

"I can make him a very charming green!—un beau vert, monsieur!"

AN AMOROUS AERONAUT.—A late French journal relates the following story, which it will be seen is French all over, besides being immensely funny:

While Mons. Godard was filling an immense balloon in the *Champ de Mars*, he amused the spectators by sending up a small figure of a man, the perfect semblance of M. Thiers without the spectacles. The little man being filled with gas rose majestically into the air, and was soon lost to view among the clouds. His adventures, which became known the next day, were curious. Thanks to a strong and favoring gale which impelled him on his course, the little balloon man arrived the same afternoon in the sight of a fine country house in the neighborhood of Bièvre. It was near the hour of dinner, and the lady of the mansion, who naturally thought herself perfectly safe, was occupied in the mysteries of her toilet. It was a warm day, and she opened one of the windows which looked out upon the park, and was safe from any prying eyes. While tranquilly engaged, by the assistance of a corset-lacing, in reducing her waist to a size and shape that would reflect credit on her husband's taste, she was suddenly startled by a strange noise, and immediately the casement was thrown open, and our little balloon-man