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TOWANDA:

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SAING AND DOING.

FROM THE FRENCH OF EMILE SOUVENIR.

The post house of Oberhauberg had just been shown into commotion, by the arrival of a traveling carriage from Savene on its way to Straburg. Master Topfer, the innkeeper, was running here and there, giving orders to his servants and postillions; while the carriage, detached from the horses, and standing before the great door of the house, was surrounded with children and loafers, who were exchanging their remarks.

Among the last was a man with a sharp eye, a prominent nose, and an abrupt manner of speaking, which formed a singular contrast with the Germanic idiom of the other spectators. Master Barbanou was, in fact, born in the south; chance alone had led him to Oberhauberg, where he had set up opposite the post house, a wig maker's shop, whose blue shutters bore the double inscription of "Barber and shaving done at all prices." "Shave after the Marseilles fashion."

Mingled in the group of curious bystanders about Master Topfer's door, the barber took part in the general conversation in a sort of German, of which we can give a sufficiently clear idea by saying that it was Alsatian spoken by a Provençal.

"Have you seen the traveler, Master Barbanou?" asked an old woman who carried on her arm one of those baskets, filled with threads, pins, and tapes, which indicate the side walk merchant.

"Without any doubt, Mother Hartmann," replied the barber. "He is a great man, who seems to have more stomach than brains."

It may be remarked that Master Barbanou had a use for epigrams, and passed at Oberhauberg for a singularly bright person.

Those who heard the joke about the new arrival, responded to it by a loud laugh, in which Mother Hartmann at first joined; when, shaking her head with a qualified air—

"But money is better than mind, neighbor," said she, looking at the barber; "for with mind one may go aloof, while money lets you roll in a carriage."

"Hold your tongue, Barbanou; he is a baron," interrupted a fresh and lively voice.

Barbanou perceived Master Topfer's godchild, who just made her appearance on the door step of her inn.

"A baron!" repeated he, "who told you that, Nicette?"

"The great lacquey who attends him. He decares that the baron must not be served in the common dining room but that everything must be carried into the great balcony parlor."

The ladies looked up; the parlor of which Nicette spoke was exactly above them, and the window was open; but the curtain was down, so that they could not see any thing.

"Then you have laid the table for him there?" asked Mother Hartmann, looking up toward the balcony parlor.

"No!" said the young girl; "the baron did not choose to have our china nor our glass; he always carries with him a silver service, and I saw him take it from a large mahogany box."

A murmur of surprise and admiration arose in the crowd. The Provençal alone shrugged his shoulders.

"That is to say that the baron can neither eat nor drink like other Christians," replied he ironically. "He must have a room to himself, and silver dishes. The great king Solomon was right when he said, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'"

"Come, Barbanou, you are speaking all of your neighbor again!" interrupted Nicette, smiling.

"Neighbor!" repeated the barber; "is a baron my neighbor! Let me alone; I know him, your peasant. He is just like all the great lords who come this way. Did you hear how he called his tale who had dropped to speak to Master Topfer, 'I want you, German, I want you,' as if the poor fellow had not a right to talk a moment. This baron must be a real tyrant."

"Ah! what are you talking about Barbanou?" cried Nicette; "God grant that it is not true what you are saying. Do you know why he is going into the Duchy of Baden?"

"Not at all."

"His servant tells me," said the young girl, lowering her voice, "that he is going to be married."

"To be married?"

should do more honor to the choice of Providence. That remains to be proved, Master Barbanou," remarked the old man; "but I know you are a character about as goodly."

"When one has no principles," cried the Provençal, with animation, "he is carried away by every wind that blows, like a kite. But I know what I want, and what is right, Mother Hartmann, I have my philosophy. If I were to be made rich the next moment, I should not change any more than the steeple of our church; you would see me always just, always as disinterested and as good as I am now."

Distrust of himself was not, as will be perceived, the fault of Barbanou; all the morality and good sense which he took from his neighbor, he placed in his own account with scrupulous exactness. As well pleased with his own person as he was discontented with other people, he would have been disposed to have reproached the Creator for having made man in his own image, instead of having made him in the image of Barbanou. Once launched upon this stream, he fell into an unmeasured improvisation. He explained at length all the great and useful things he should accomplish, if chance should suddenly send him one of those American uncles who are no longer met with, even on the stage. He passed in review all the virtues he should bring to light, all the merits he should exhibit, and he was about to bestow upon himself an apotheosis, when the traveler who had occasioned this conversation appeared at the door of the inn. He was a man about the age of forty; somewhat corpulent, a little bald, and whose heavy features would have revealed his German origin, if his Alsatian accent had left the least doubt in this regard. Meantime intelligence sparkled in the depths of his clear blue eyes; and prejudice alone could have dictated to the Provençal barber the harsh judgment he had formed of him. The baron addressed the group round the door with a paternal salute; and said with a smile—

"A pretty place, gentlemen—a pretty place and a fine day."

The persons to whom he addressed himself, contented themselves with returning his salutation without speaking. The German did not seem to be discouraged at this silence.

"I hope," said he, still smiling, "that the country is good, and that you all live happily here."

"People live happily when they have happiness within themselves," replied Barbanou, sentimentally. The baron made a sign of assent.

"What you say, sir, is very sensible," replied he with a respectful tone; "and I hope this remark is the fruit of your own experience. He who so well understands happiness ought of necessity to possess it."

"We do what we can," said Barbanou; who was beginning to be softened by the baron's civility. "We must have philosophy if we have nothing else."

"Do you have to complain of your interest?" asked the stranger, with interest.

The Provençal shrugged his shoulders.

"I never complain, Mr. Baron," said he gravely; "since those who sow complaints reap only discouragement. I can't help it, I have people, I dress false fronts, and for the rest I wait for good fortune."

"It will come," said the baron; "be sure it will come. Chance has not imitated your government; it has maintained its lottery, and a good number may always be hoped for."

"Hold! speaking of numbers, we have two," cried Nicette; "what if we should gain the castle?"

"A castle!" repeated the stranger; his attention excited.

"With the land and forests," finished Barbanou; "a traveling agent from Frankfurt came along here three months ago to sell the tickets, and Nicette persuaded me to take one."

"It does not surely refer to the domain of Rovembourg?"

"I know nothing about it. I have not looked at my numbers since; but I must have them here."

The barber looked in an old pocket book, and drew out a prospectus and a ticket.

"That is the very thing," said he, after having cast his eyes on the prospectus. "Domain of Rovembourg, situated two miles from Badewiller, at the entrance of the Black Forest. The fortunate number will be drawn the 20th of July."

"It has been drawn," said the stranger, quietly.

"And do you know it?"

"It is 66."

Barbanou turned his eyes upon his ticket, uttered a cry, and grew pale; "66," stammered he, "did you say 66?"

"Without doubt!"

ly turning into a great lord. He seized the people with his hand, threw his head back, and talked of his plans with a superb composure. He did not yet know whether he should go to inhabit his castle of Rovembourg; and he had always been very partial to Oberhauberg; as a Frenchman, he belonged to France.

He added some allusion to his project of marriage with Nicette; who listened in amazement, and received the congratulations of her companions. Meantime the notary had hastened to point out to Barbanou the steps he ought to take. The first, in his opinion, was to set out for Rovembourg, where in a few days all the parties interested were to assemble. It was there only that the new proprietor could enter into possession of his estate.

Barbanou acceded to his counsel, and declared that he would set out immediately. The wise merchant recommended his carriage, and the vine-dresser his horse; but Barbanou thanked them with a regal smile; in his new position he could not travel like a peasant. His arrival at Rovembourg must agree with his title. For his part he was above such vanities; but he must submit to establish ed prejudices, respect custom, and not cause scandal. Consequently Master Topfer must furnish his post chaise and his finest horses. The barber, moreover, persuaded Topfer to accompany him with Nicette and the notary, who was to arrange the details of his taking possession. In this way he should present himself at Rovembourg in a proper manner. The god-daughter of the innkeeper made no objection to the arrangement; she did not enquire whether the Provençal hitched her to his care from love or pride, and whether she was to be there a joyful associate or only an ornament. Without suspicion, and as simple beings always are, she was grateful to Barbanou for his remembrance of her, and left her affection to him in created.

As we have said, the introduction of the barber was at first moderate. It was necessary to get his mind accustomed to the change which had taken place; he could scarcely believe it himself. His new position seemed to him like a dream, which, while it had the appearance of reality, left him in a confused state of doubt. But as the post-chaise went forward, certain took possession more and more of the mind of Barbanou, and he felt his intoxication. At each relay his manners became more aristocratic; his ideas, at first restrained within just limits, escaped in puffs of egotism of pride, of which Nicette took no notice, and the notary allowed to pass, out of respect for his new client. The fame of what had enriched Barbanou spread as they went along; positions transmitted it to positions; and all along the road the people said—

"Here is the proprietor of the domain of Rovembourg," just as they said in the time of Puss in Boots; "here is the equipage of the Marquis of Carabas."

Every one of these cries was like a puff of wind which inflated the heart of Barbanou. Having become an object of curiosity and admiration, he felt himself like a prince travelling incognito. From time to time he leaned from the window of the carriage to show himself to these brave people who were running to see him; he bowed his head to them; he threw majestically handfuls of coins to the poor; and if he had not been in a hurry, he would have offered them his hand to kiss.

At the last inn at which they stopped he found fault with the service; the linen was coarse; the china was cracked; the covers tarnished; he declared that in future, when he halted at a castle, he would like the baron, take all of his own silver travelling service. The service appeared equally ungrateful of him, and the host was compelled to bring him some bottles which had been put aside for great occasions.

Finally the Castle of Rovembourg appeared in the horizon, with its avenues of pines, above which were seen the pointed roofs of its towers. Barbanou had the horses put to a walk that he might better enjoy the view. Nicette shouted with admiration at the sight of the meadows, embellished with flowers; the notary praised in a low tone the fields and the forests; and Master Topfer employed the sight of some houses which were gaily lit up about the pasture. Barbanou alone kept silent. At sight of the towers of Rovembourg, a new idea seized him: He wondered if any title was attached to his domain, and if he might not perhaps be called Count or Duke of Rovembourg. The right to this title now seemed to be entirely necessary to his position; without Master Barbanou would always have the air of a citizen grown rich; fortune was void in itself, but it must seem independent to using it well.

The barber was deep in these reflections when they reached the gate of the castle. Nicette proceeded to descend, but Barbanou chose to enter his new dwelling like a master. He would wait till the porter, who was absent, came to open the iron gate before the post-chaise, which penetrated the court of honor, the horses on full trot, and the whips cracking merrily. Barbanou had leaped from the porter that the man of business from Frankfurt would not arrive till the next day but one, but that the news of the former proprietor, Madame de Randoz, was at the castle.

The latter soon appeared at the top of the steps, where she received the Provençal with all the grace of a woman of fashion, and all the cordiality of a citizen. Madame de Randoz was a widow of five and twenty years, more agreeable than pretty, but of elegant manners and charming conversation. She welcomed Master Barbanou with his companions with a familiarity, and introduced them into a rich salon furnished in the style of Louis XV. The barber found the baron, who had preceded him by a few hours, and whom the young widow presented to him as an old friend. Barbanou was served to which Barbanou and the notary were the case of a proprietor who sees himself in his own. Madame de Randoz proposed afterwards to visit the domain, and ordered the horses put to

the carriage, in which she seated herself with the Provençal, Nicette and the baron.

Barbanou could not contain himself; his joy and pride overflowed to delirium. Seated on the soft cushions of the carriage, he looked down with pity on the peasants who passed him in the road on foot. He no longer thought of returning their salutation; these persons had henceforth nothing in common with him; they were men of another species, good for nothing but to be set at work.

He showed himself but half satisfied with the estate. He spoke of improvements, embellishments and finished by declaring he would make Rovembourg a real princely residence. Madame de Randoz gaily assented; the baron in a more reserved manner. Barbanou did not doubt but he was jealous, and promised himself that he would never indulge so base a sentiment. Consequently he continued to put on lordly airs, complaining of the roads, the bad state of the fences, and the negligence of the forest keepers.

Nicette always interposed to make excuses; but Barbanou, who, imagining that a systematic dissatisfaction gave him a grand air, interrupted her, and ordered her to be silent; and the poor girl submitted without saying a word.

On their return to the castle, matter became still worse. The former barber found the furniture mean, and the attendance inefficient. He developed, with easy nonchalance, the changes he meant to bring about. He knew how a great house should be furnished. He had formerly seen that of the Prince de Croix, to whom in fact he was distantly related. Nicette, who had never before heard him speak of this grand relation, opened her eyes wide but dared not say anything, for she was beginning to stand in awe of Barbanou.

Conversation of this kind occupied the evening. When the moment for retiring had come, the barber was conducted to the best sleeping chamber in the house, where a bed raised upon a dias, awaited him. The walls were hung with portraits of different epochs, representing the ancient lords. Barbanou saluted them with an almost respectful emotion. He was beginning, in fact, to believe himself a legitimate descendant of the house of Rovembourg. It was very late before he got to sleep; and he saw himself, in his dreams, at the court of the Grand Duke of Baden, his breast covered with crosses and honors.

When he awoke, the day was considerably advanced. He arose in haste, but recollected that a man like him could not dress himself alone. He rang for the valet de chambre, who arrived immediately, and began his toilet according to all the rules of fashion. Barbanou, who did not wish to appear ignorant of them, patiently suffered himself to be dressed—only when it came to the hair, the recollection of his art got the better of his dignity; and, seizing the comb from the hands of the Tuscan valet, he gave him a practical lesson on the disposition of taces, and of the toupet.

Finally, when he was completely dressed, he descended to the garden, where he perceived Madame de Randoz. She was returning from a morning walk in the meadow. The young widow wore a elegant negligé, and on her head a broad-brimmed straw hat, which shaded her neck and shoulders; her feet were wet with dew, and her hands full of field-flowers, she was humming up the avenue, humming an old Swabian melody. Her walk had given brilliancy to her complexion, and the gaiety of the morning seemed to breathe out in her whole being.

Barbanou ran to salute her, and kissed her hands, as he had seen people do at the theatre. The pretty widow accepted his arm without ceremony and told of her excursion to the borders of the forest. Though she had almost always lived in some of the large German cities, Madame de Randoz was very fond of the country, and especially of Rovembourg, where she was brought up. She could hardly console herself that her uncle, before he died, concluded to put up in a lottery a property which, till then, had always been in her family. The two hundred thousand florins which had accrued from this speculation, and were added to her inheritances, seemed to her very far from a sufficient remuneration. She would willingly give twenty thousand florins of her own fortune to be able to take possession of Rovembourg and its dependencies. Barbanou took this as an indirect proposition made to himself; but he had already acquired so much of the taste of master of the castle, that he was not willing to exchange the honors of it for a sum of money. He replied, with a smile to Madame de Randoz, that though it had changed proprietors, the castle of Rovembourg was nevertheless, still entirely at her disposal, and that she must use it as freely as she had done in past times.

The widow made a sign of graceful impatience. "Come, you refuse to comprehend me," said she, smiling; "you are willing that I should be satisfied to receive you here."

"What difference does it make, provided you are at home?" said the Provençal.

"At home?" said Madame de Randoz, gaily; "you would be caught if I took you at your word."

"How so?"

"Because a strange woman for a visitor always disturbs young house-keepers," and then observing Barbanou's surprise she added "it is perhaps still a secret; but Madame de Randoz is the first to betray it."

"It is still but a plan,"

"Which nothing now prevents you from accomplishing."

"The baron bowed, blessing with joy. It was the first time he had had the Mr. affixed to his

name, Madame de Randoz appeared to him now resplendent in beauty.

"However that may be," she resumed, "I am disappointed, without hope of ever returning to dear Rovembourg. And yet, God knows what I would have done to keep it. I own to you, for example that I would have purchased this castle at the price of all my future expectations. What do you say, Mr. Barbanou?"

The Provençal's vanity was again dazzled, and he could only stammer out a few broken words. "Yes," resumed the widow, as if she would reply to her interlocutor—"at the price of my future expectations. You saw the baron de Robach, who arrived a little before you?"

Barbanou replied in the affirmative. "Well, he is an old friend of our family, who was always very much troubled by my marriage with M. de Randoz. Since my widowhood he has offered me his hand several times; but I was pleased with my liberty, and was alarmed at a new union, and have always refused. Finally, when the castle of Rovembourg was put into a lottery, he witnessed my trouble, and proposed to me, laughing, to marry him if he won the castle. I promised him I would, and he took fifty thousand florins value in tickets. Up to the time of drawing, I was afraid that he would gain it; and to-day I am in despair that Rovembourg has passed into other hands. Now that I am about to quit this beautiful estate, I find that I should not have paid too dearly for it with the gift of my hand."

A thought passed like an arrow through the mind of Barbanou. He looked at Madame de Randoz, who was playing with a bouquet of wild flowers—she seemed charming. He remembered, at the same time, that she possessed a fortune double in value to the domain of Rovembourg, and that she belonged to one of the most noble families in the Duchy.

All these ideas assailed him at once, and threw him into a stupor. The widow gave an interpretation to his silence.

"You think me very foolish, I dare say," said she. "Not in the least," said Barbanou, making an effort to gain courage. "I find only that your confidence is dangerous."

"Why so?"

"Because it may place singular temptations in the way of the present proprietor of Rovembourg castle."

"What do you mean, M. de Barbanou? I do not understand you," said Madame de Randoz, with an embarrassment which protested against this affirmation.

"I mean," said the barber, emboldened, "that an agreement made entirely by chance with the baron might hold more surely with the person who has gained the castle."

"With you?"

"Since Rovembourg has so many charms for Madame de Randoz," replied the Provençal, warmly, "she might resign herself, perhaps, in order to remain here, to accept the new proprietor."

This speech was for our Provençal the signal for an explosion.

"The baron!" cried he; "and how long, how long have you waited for the baron's orders to bring me my breakfast? Who is master here? To whom does Rovembourg belong?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied the valet abruptly. "Ah, you don't know!" repeated Barbanou, asperated; "well then, I will teach you to know. Go away, immediately; and I warn you never to show yourself before me again."

The man was about to reply, but the baron, who was just coming in, made a sign, and ordered the valet to be silent. "You treat this poor fellow somewhat roughly, Mr. Barbanou," said the baron closing the door after him.

"I treat him as I please, Mr. Robach," replied the Provençal, angrily; "and I have reason to be astonished that others besides myself give orders here."

"In the first place I would observe to you," replied the baron politely, "that as testamentary executor of the former proprietor of Rovembourg, it was my business to order affairs at the castle on the arrival of the new owner."

"And I," replied the barber, "I will observe to you, that you conclude from that."

"I conclude that every man ought to be master in his own house."

The baron bowed. "Inconceivable," said he. "It remains to be seen at whose house we are."

"At whose house?" repeated Barbanou, astonished. "M. de Robach ought not to be ignorant, since he informed me of the winning number."

"I remember it perfectly."

"And you undoubtedly have not forgotten that the number was 66; and here it is, Mr. Baron."

"Your pardon," said he, "but I believe Mr. Barbanou is mistaken."