

jeers were continuing, it was my pleasure to look at poor Magny and see how *he* bore them. The poor devil was trembling lest I should break out under the Princess's sarcasm and tell all; but my revenge was, when the Princess attacked me, to say something bitter to *him*,—to pass it on, as boys do at school. And *that* was the thing which used to make her Highness feel. She would wince just as much when I attacked Magny as if I had been saying anything rude to herself. And, though she hated me, she used to beg my pardon in private; and though her pride would often get the better of her, yet her prudence obliged this magnificent princess to humble herself to the poor penniless Irish boy.

As soon as Magny had formally withdrawn from the Countess Ida, the Princess took the young lady into favour again, and pretended to be very fond of her. To do them justice, I don't know which of the two disliked me most,—the Princess, who was all eagerness, and fire, and coquetry; or the Countess, who was all state and splendour. The latter, especially, pretended to be disgusted by me: and yet, after all, I have pleased her better; was once one of the handsomest men in Europe, and would defy any heyduc of the Court to measure a chest or a leg with me: but I did not care for any of her silly prejudices, and determined to win her and wear her in spite of herself. Was it on account of her personal charms or qualities? No. She was quite white, thin, short-sighted, tall, and awkward, and my taste is quite the contrary; and as for her mind, no wonder that a poor creature who had a hankering after a wretched ragged ensign could never appreciate *me*. It was her estate I made love to; as for herself, it would be a reflection on my taste as a man of fashion to own that I liked her.

CHAPTER XI.

In which the Luck goes against Barry.

MY hopes of obtaining the hand of one of the richest heiresses in Germany were now, as far as all human probability went, and as far as my own merits and prudence could secure my fortune, pretty certain of completion. I was admitted whenever I presented myself at the Princess's apartments, and had as

frequent opportunities as I desired of seeing the Countess Ida there. I cannot say that she received me with any particular favour; the silly young creature's affections were, as I have said, engaged ignobly elsewhere; and, however captivating my own person and manners may have been, it was not to be expected that she should all of a sudden forget her lover for the sake of the young Irish gentleman who was paying his addresses to her. But such little rebuffs as I got were far from discouraging me. I had very powerful friends, who were to aid me in my undertaking; and knew that, sooner or later, the victory must be mine. In fact, I only waited my time to press my suit. Who could tell the dreadful stroke of fortune which was impending over my illustrious protectress, and which was to involve me partially in her ruin?

All things seemed for a while quite prosperous to my wishes; and in spite of the Countess Ida's disinclination, it was much easier to bring her to her senses than, perhaps, may be supposed in a silly constitutional country like England, where people are not brought up with those wholesome sentiments of obedience to Royalty which were customary in Europe at the time when I was a young man.

I have stated how, through Magny, I had the Princess, as it were, at my feet. Her Highness had only to press the match upon the old Duke, over whom her influence was unbounded, and to secure the goodwill of the Countess of Liliengarten, (which was the romantic title of his Highness'smorganatic spouse), and the easy old man would give an order for the marriage: which his ward would perforce obey. Madame de Liliengarten was, too, from her position, extremely anxious to oblige the Princess Olivia; who might be called upon any day to occupy the throne. The old Duke was tottering, apoplectic, and exceedingly fond of good living. When he was gone, his relict would find the patronage of the Duchess Olivia most necessary to her. Hence there was a close mutual understanding between the two ladies; and the world said that the Hereditary Princess was already indebted to the favourite for help on various occasions. Her Highness had obtained, through the Countess, several large grants of money for the payment of her multifarious debts; and she was now good enough to exert her gracious influence over Madame de Liliengarten in order to obtain for me the object so near my heart.

It is not to be supposed that my end was to be obtained without continual unwillingness and refusals on Magny's part; but I pushed my point resolutely, and had means in my hands of overcoming the stubbornness of that feeble young gentleman. Also, I may say, without vanity, that if the high and mighty Princess detested me, the Countess (though she was of extremely low origin, it is said) had better taste and admired me. She often did us the honour to go partners with us in one of our faro-banks, and declared that I was the handsomest man in the duchy. All I was required to prove was my nobility, and I got at Vienna such a pedigree as would satisfy the most greedy in that way. In fact, what had a man descended from the Barrys and the Bradys to fear before any *von* in Germany? By way of making assurance doubly sure, I promised Madame de Lilien-garten ten thousand louis on the day of my marriage, and she knew that as a play-man I had never failed in my word: and I vow, that had I paid fifty per cent. for it, I would have got the money.

Thus by my talents, honesty, and acuteness, I had, considering I was a poor patronless outcast, raised for myself very powerful protectors. Even his Highness the Duke Victor was favourably inclined to me; for, his favourite charger falling ill of the staggers, I gave him a ball such as my uncle Brady used to administer, and cured the horse; after which his Highness was pleased to notice me frequently. He invited me to his hunting and shooting parties, where I showed myself to be a good sportsman; and once or twice he condescended to talk to me about my prospects in life, lamenting that I had taken to gambling, and that I had not adopted a more regular means of advancement. "Sir," said I, "if you will allow me to speak frankly to your Highness, play with me is only a means to an end. Where should I have been without it? A private still in King Frederick's grenadiers. I come of a race which gave princes to my country; but persecutions have deprived them of their vast possessions. My uncle's adherence to his ancient faith drove him from our country. I too resolved to seek advancement in the military service; but the insolence and ill-treatment which I received at the hands of the English were not bearable by a high-born gentleman, and I fled their service. It was only to fall into another bondage to all appearance still more hopeless; when my good star sent a preserver to me in my uncle, and my spirit

and gallantry enabled me to take advantage of the means of escape afforded me. Since then we have lived, I do not disguise it, by play; but who can say I have done him a wrong? Yet, if I could find myself in an honourable post, and with an assured maintenance, I would never, except for amusement, such as every gentleman must have, touch a card again. I beseech your Highness to inquire of your resident at Berlin if I did not on every occasion act as a gallant soldier. I feel that I have talents of a higher order, and should be proud to have occasion to exert them; if, as I do not doubt, my fortune shall bring them into play."

The candour of this statement struck his Highness greatly, and impressed him in my favour, and he was pleased to say that he believed me, and would be glad to stand my friend.

Having thus the two Dukes, the Duchess, and the reigning favourite enlisted on my side, the chances certainly were that I should carry off the great prize; and I ought, according to all common calculations, to have been a Prince of the Empire at this present writing, but that my ill luck pursued me in a matter in which I was not the least to blame,—the unhappy Duchess's attachment to the weak, silly, cowardly Frenchman. The display of this love was painful to witness, as its end was frightful to think of. The Princess made no disguise of it. If Magny spoke a word to a lady of her household, she would be jealous, and attack with all the fury of her tongue the unlucky offender. She would send him a half-dozen of notes in the day: at his arrival to join her circle or the courts which she held, she would brighten up, so that all might perceive. It was a wonder that her husband had not long ere this been made aware of her faithlessness; but the Prince Victor was himself of so high and stern a nature that he could not believe in her stooping so far from her rank as to forget her virtue: and I have heard say, that when hints were given to him of the evident partiality which the Princess showed for the equerry, his answer was a stern command never more to be troubled on the subject. "The Princess is light-minded," he said; "she was brought up at a frivolous Court; but her folly goes not beyond coquetry: crime is impossible; she has her birth, and my name, and her children, to defend her." And he would ride off to his military inspections and be absent for weeks, or retire to his suite of apartments, and remain closeted there whole days; only appearing to make a bow

at her Highness's *levee*, or to give her his hand at the Court galas, where ceremony required that he should appear. He was a man of vulgar tastes, and I have seen him in the private garden, with his great ungainly figure, running races, or playing at ball with his little son and daughter, whom he would find a dozen pretexts daily for visiting. The serene children were brought to their mother every morning at her toilette; but she received them very indifferently: except on one occasion, when the young Duke Ludwig got his little uniform as colonel of hussars, being presented with a regiment by his godfather the Emperor Leopold. Then, for a day or two, the Duchess Olivia was charmed with the little boy; but she grew tired of him speedily, as a child does of a toy. I remember one day, in the morning circle, some of the Princess's rouge came off on the arm of her son's little white military jacket; on which she slapped the poor child's face, and sent him sobbing away. Oh, the woes that have been worked by women in this world! the misery into which men have lightly stepped with smiling faces; often not even with the excuse of passion, but from mere foppery, vanity, and bravado! Men play with these dreadful two-edged tools, as if no harm could come to them. I, who have seen more of life than most men, if I had a son, would go on my knees to him and beg him to avoid woman, who is worse than poison. Once intrigue, and your whole life is endangered: you never know when the evil may fall upon you; and the woe of whole families, and the ruin of innocent people perfectly dear to you, may be caused by a moment of your folly.

When I saw how entirely lost the unlucky Monsieur de Magny seemed to be, in spite of all the claims I had against him, I urged him to fly. He had rooms in the palace, in the garrets over the Princess's quarters (the building was a huge one, and accommodated almost a city of noble retainers of the family); but the infatuated young fool would not budge, although he had not even the excuse of love for staying. "How she squints," he would say of the Princess, "and how crooked she is! She thinks no one can perceive her deformity. She writes me verses out of Gresset or Crébillon, and fancies I believe them to be original. Bah! they are no more her own than her hair is!" It was in this way that the wretched lad was dancing over the ruin that was yawning under him. I do believe that his chief pleasure in making love to the Princess was, that he might write about his

victories to his friends of the *petites maisons* at Paris, where he longed to be considered as a wit and a *vainqueur de dames*.

Seeing the young man's recklessness, and the danger of his position, I became very anxious that *my* little scheme should be brought to a satisfactory end, and pressed him warmly on the matter.

My solicitations with him were, I need not say, from the nature of the connection between us, generally pretty successful; and, in fact, the poor fellow could *refuse me nothing*: as I used often laughingly to say to him, very little to his liking. But I used more than threats, or the legitimate influence I had over him. I used delicacy and generosity; as a proof of which, I may mention that I promised to give back to the Princess the family emerald, which I mentioned in the last chapter that I had won from her unprincipled admirer at play.

This was done by my uncle's consent, and was one of the usual acts of prudence and foresight which distinguish that clever man. "Press the matter now, Redmond my boy," he would urge. "This affair between her Highness and Magny must end ill for both of them, and that soon; and where will be your chance to win the Countess then? Now is your time! win her and wear her before the month is over, and we will give up the punting business, and go live like noblemen at our castle in Swabia. Get rid of that emerald, too," he added: "should an accident happen, it will be an ugly deposit found in our hand." This it was that made me agree to forego the possession of the trinket; which, I must confess, I was loth to part with. It was lucky for us both that I did: as you shall presently hear.

Meanwhile, then, I urged Magny: I myself spoke strongly to the Countess of Liliengarten, who promised formally to back my claim with his Highness the reigning Duke; and Monsieur de Magny was instructed to induce the Princess Olivia to make a similar application to the old sovereign in my behalf. It was done. The two ladies urged the Prince; his Highness (at a supper of oysters and champagne) was brought to consent, and her Highness the Hereditary Princess did me the honour of notifying personally to the Countess Ida that it was the Prince's will that she should marry the young Irish nobleman, the Chevalier Redmond de Balibari. The notification was made in my presence; and though the young Countess said "Never!" and fell down in a swoon at her lady's feet, I was, you may be

sure, entirely unconcerned at this little display of mawkish sensibility, and felt, indeed, now that my prize was secure.

That evening I gave the Chevalier de Magny the emerald, which he promised to restore to the Princess; and now the only difficulty in my way lay with the Hereditary Prince, of whom his father, his wife, and the favourite, were alike afraid. He might not be disposed to allow the richest heiress in his duchy to be carried off by a noble, though not a wealthy foreigner. Time was necessary in order to break the matter to Prince Victor. The Princess must find him at some moment of good-humour. He had days of infatuation still, when he could refuse his wife nothing; and our plan was to wait for one of these, or for any other chance which might occur.

But it was destined that the Princess should never see her husband at her feet, as often as he had been. Fate was preparing a terrible ending to her follies, and my own hope. In spite of his solemn promises to me, Magny never restored the emerald to the Princess Olivia.

He had heard, in casual intercourse with me, that my uncle and I had been beholden to Mr. Moses Löwe, the banker of Heidelberg, who had given us a good price for our valuables; and the infatuated young man took a pretext to go thither, and offered the jewel for pawn. Moses Löwe recognised the emerald at once, gave Magny the sum the latter demanded, which the Chevalier lost presently at play: never, you may be sure, acquainting us with the means by which he had made himself master of so much capital. We, for our parts, supposed that he had been supplied by his usual banker, the Princess: and many rouleaux of his gold pieces found their way into our treasury, when at the Court galas, at our own lodgings, or at the apartments of Madame de Liliengarten (who on these occasions did us the honour to go halves with us) we held our bank of faro.

Thus Magny's money was very soon gone. But though the Jew held his jewel, of thrice the value no doubt of the sums he had lent upon it, that was not all the profit which he intended to have from his unhappy creditor; over whom he began speedily to exercise his authority. His Hebrew connections at X—, money-brokers, bankers, horse-dealers, about the Court there, must have told their Heidelberg brother what Magny's relations with the Princess were; and the rascal determined to take ad-

vantage of these, and to press to the utmost both victims. My uncle and I were, meanwhile, swimming upon the high tide of fortune, prospering with our cards, and with the still greater matrimonial game which we were playing; and we were quite unaware of the mine under our feet.

Before a month was passed, the Jew began to pester Magny. He presented himself at X—, and asked for further interest—hush-money; otherwise he must sell the emerald. Magny got money for him; the Princess again befriended her dastardly lover. The success of the first demand only rendered the second more exorbitant. I know not how much money was extorted and paid on this unlucky emerald: but it was the cause of the ruin of us all.

One night we were keeping our table as usual at the Countess of Liliengarten's, and Magny being in cash somehow, kept drawing out rouleau after rouleau, and playing with his common ill success. In the middle of the play a note was brought in to him, which he read, and turned very pale on perusing; but the luck was against him, and looking up rather anxiously at the clock, he waited for a few more turns of the cards, when having, I suppose, lost his last rouleau, he got up with a wild oath that scared some of the polite company assembled, and left the room. A great trampling of horses was heard without; but we were too much engaged with our business to heed the noise, and continued our play.

Presently some one came into the play-room and said to the Countess, "Here is a strange story! A Jew has been murdered in the Kaiserwald. Magny was arrested when he went out of the room." All the party broke up on hearing this strange news, and we shut up our bank for the night. Magny had been sitting by me during the play (my uncle dealt and I paid and took the money), and, looking under the chair, there was a crumpled paper, which I took up and read. It was that which had been delivered to him, and ran thus:—

"If you have done it, take the orderly's horse who brings this. It is the best of my stable. There are a hundred louis in each holster, and the pistols are loaded. Either course lies open to you; you know what I mean. In a quarter of an hour I shall know our fate—whether I am to be dishonoured and survive you, whether you are guilty and a coward, or whether you are still worthy of the name of "M."

This was in the handwriting of the old General de Magny;

and my uncle and I, as we walked home at night, having made and divided with the Countess Liliengarten no inconsiderable profits that night, felt our triumphs greatly dashed by the perusal of the letter. "Has Magny," we asked, "robbed the Jew, or has his intrigue been discovered?" In either case, my claims on the Countess Ida were likely to meet with serious drawbacks; and I began to feel that my "great card" was played and perhaps lost.

Well, it *was* lost: though I say, to this day, it was well and gallantly played. After supper (which we never for fear of consequences took during play) I became so agitated in my mind as to what was occurring that I determined to sally out about midnight into the town, and inquire what was the real motive of Magny's apprehension. A sentry was at the door, and signified to me that I and my uncle were under arrest.

We were left in our quarters for six weeks, so closely watched that escape was impossible, had we desired it; but, as innocent men, we had nothing to fear. Our course of life was open to all, and we desired and courted inquiry. Great and tragical events happened during those six weeks; of which, though we heard the outline, as all Europe did, when we were released from our captivity, we were yet far from understanding all the particulars, which were not much known to me for many years after. Here they are, as they were told me by the lady, who of all the world perhaps was most likely to know them. But the narrative had best form the contents of another chapter.



CHAPTER XII.

Contains the Tragical History of the Princess of X—.

MORE than twenty years after the events described in the past chapters, I was walking with my Lady Lyndon in the Rotunda at Ranelagh. It was in the year 1790; the emigration from France had already commenced, the old counts and marquises were thronging to our shores: not starving and miserable, as one saw them a few years afterwards, but unmolested as yet, and bringing with them some token of their national splendour. I was walking with Lady Lyndon, who, proverbially jealous and always anxious to annoy me, spied out a foreign lady who was

evidently remarking me, and of course asked who was the hideous fat Dutchwoman who was leering at me so? I knew her not in the least. I felt I had seen the lady's face somewhere (it was now, as my wife said, enormously fat and bloated); but I did not recognise in the bearer of that face one who had been among the most beautiful women in Germany in her day.

It was no other than Madame de Liliengarten, the mistress, or as some said themorganatic wife, of the old Duke of X—, Duke Victor's father. She had left X— a few months after the elder Duke's demise, had gone to Paris, as I heard, where some unprincipled adventurer had married her for her money; but, however, had always retained her quasi-royal title, and pretended, amidst the great laughter of the Parisians who frequented her house, to the honours and ceremonial of a sovereign's widow. She had a throne erected in her state-room, and was styled by her servants and those who wished to pay court to her, or borrow money from her, "Altesse." Report said she drank rather copiously—certainly her face bore every mark of that habit, and had lost the rosy, frank, good-humoured beauty which had charmed the sovereign who had ennobled her.

Although she did not address me in the circle at Ranelagh, I was at this period as well known as the Prince of Wales, and she had no difficulty in finding my house in Berkeley Square; whither a note was next morning despatched to me. "An old friend of Monsieur de Balibari," it stated (in extremely bad French), "is anxious to see the Chevalier again and to talk over old happy times. Rosina de Liliengarten (can it be that Redmond Balibari has forgotten her?) will be at her house in Leicester Fields all the morning, looking for one who would never have passed her by *twenty years ago*."

Rosina de Liliengarten it was indeed—such a full-blown Rosina I have seldom seen. I found her in a decent first-floor in Leicester Fields (the poor soul fell much lower afterwards) drinking tea, which had somehow a very strong smell of brandy in it; and after salutations, which would be more tedious to recount than they were to perform, and after further straggling conversation, she gave me briefly the following narrative of the events in X—, which I may well entitle the "Princess's Tragedy."

"You remember Monsieur de Geldern, the Police Minister.