

"Then why did you not ask the Baroness Richter?"

"I did not wish to marry the baroness, and I do not know that the baroness wished to marry me."

"Caspar, you talk like a fool."

"Nevertheless I am a gentleman, and my ancestors have been honorable men. I cannot offer myself and my poverty to any woman in whose country a man without the means of supporting himself is demeaned by taking a rich wife."

"Well," concluded the baron, "since you won't marry the American because you are poor and will not marry one of your own countrywomen who is rich I don't see what you are going to do."

"I am going to America to lose myself among the 90,000,000 people there are there."

"How will you make a living?"

"By doing anything I can find to do."

"What, a count work?"

"I shall drop my title. I shall be Caspar Gotwald."

"Count, you are mad. Drop this nonsense. Marry the Baroness Richter. True, she is forty and homely, but she has a fortune that will enable you to maintain the position to which you were born. But if you prefer one of the others with blood of lighter hue, there is Fraulein Adelaide."

"Do not compel me to say that I do not want any of these women. My mind is made up. Within a month I shall have been forgotten in Berlin."

The Rathbone family of Chicago were preparing for Christmas. It happened that some persons who had entertained them in London were on their way to India via America and the Pacific and had stopped over in Chicago, their sojourn there happening to fall on Christmas. Mrs. Rathbone felt it not only obligatory upon her but a pleasure to return the civilities she had received and invited her English friends to a Christmas dinner.

Mrs. Rathbone's servants balked at the work of preparing and serving a

dinner involving invited guests on Christmas, and the lady concluded to have one sent in from a restaurant. A few minutes before it was served she sent her daughter into the dining room to see that all had been provided as ordered. One of the waiters was about to place a dish upon the table and, at seeing Miss Rathbone, started and dropped it on the floor.

The eyes of the waiter and those of Miss Rathbone met. The man turned red as a peony; the girl preserved her equanimity. But for a few moments, which seemed to both a brief eternity, neither spoke.

It would be difficult to imagine a more embarrassing meeting than occurred between Winifred Rathbone and this man, who was none other than Count Caspar Gotwald, whom she had met several years before in the court social circle at Berlin. But Winifred was equal to the occasion.

"Remove it," she said with the utmost coolness.

The waiter retired to the kitchen to get the wherewithal for the removal of the wreckage, but returned in a few moments, apparently having recovered his equanimity. He gave no other indication after the dropping of the dish that he recognized Winifred, and she gave no sign that she recognized him.

"We must know the names of our waiters," she said to him. "What shall I call you?"

"Caspar."

"Very well, Caspar. You may remain after the dinner is over and the dishes are put away. I would like to speak with you."

There was something in her tone, be it sympathy or more than sympathy, that enabled this scion of a noble house

to do his duty as a servant in the house of the girl he had met and loved in a far different situation with composure. When Mrs. Rathbone entered the dining room with her guests both Winifred and the count fixed an anxious eye upon her, dreading lest she recognize the nobleman in the waiter. However, she was too preoccupied with her duties as hostess to notice him. Once during the dinner Winifred saw her mother looking at the waiter with a puzzled expression, but it was plain that she failed to place him.

Winifred treated the count as a servant, though her directions were spoken rather as requests. When the dinner was finished she arose with the others, but remained in the dining room and when there alone with the count said to him:

"Come tomorrow at 3."

There was no change from the tone in which she had spoken to him before. He bowed without speaking and was retiring from the room when she added:

"You will come, will you not?"

Their eyes met. Winifred saw that without some insistence she would not see him again and put a pleading in her look.

"Yes, fraulein," he said at last, "I will come."

Fraulein is the word by which he had been used to address her in Berlin.

The next day when Count Caspar Gotwald made his toilet before calling on Winifred Rathbone he took out a suit of clothes that he had not worn since he reached America. They were not in the latest fashion, but were in the height of fashion at the time they were purchased.

"Count," Winifred said to him when he appeared, "father did not recognize you, and mother only fancied she had seen some one very like you. Will you tell me what happened to effect this outward change in you?"

He told her what she did not know

before—that he had inherited an estate which had been exhausted by his ancestors and that he was enjoying a respite before going out into the world to accept what fate would provide for him. Winifred, who knew that he had been beset by women in high life in Berlin, some of whom were rich, asked him why he had not married a fortune, as was customary in his country.

"Because, fraulein," he replied, "I loved one who would inherit great wealth, in whose country honorable men who are impoverished would not offer marriage under such circumstances."

A brief silence followed these words, which was broken by the young lady.

"So you took it upon yourself," she said, "to decide for her?"

"I could do nothing else," was the reply, "without demeaning myself."

"Was not an injustice to her demeaning yourself?" she asked.

He made no reply. The two stood regarding each other for a moment; then Winifred put out her hands.

From this point the romance of this story must remain untold. There is a lady in Chicago who is entitled to be called countess, but she does not claim the title. Her husband is the manager of her estate and has represented the United States in a prominent diplomatic position abroad. In this family when Christmas comes much is made of it. Why, the children sometimes wonder, for on that day their father and mother seem to have a secret between them which is all their own. Indeed, it is their own, for no one but themselves knows that the pretty Miss Rathbone, who could have married almost any of the eligible young men of her set, gave herself to a man with a napkin on his arm.

On Christmas day, when the dinner is served, the turkey carved and the children's plates have been filled, then the father, pouring a glass of wine for the mother and one for himself, holds

his glass aloft and looks at his wife. Smiling, she looks at him and says:

"Kellner" (waiter).

And the father gives a toast to "that eventful Christmas."

#### Thackeray's Appetite.

Thackeray, telling of a dinner he enjoyed at Antwerp, said it consisted "of green pea soup, boiled salmon, mussels, crimped skate, roast meat patties, melon, carp stewed with mushrooms and onions, roast turkey, cauliflower, fillets of venison, stewed calf's ear, roast veal, roast lamb, stewed cherries, Gruyere cheese and about twenty-four cakes of different kinds. Except five, thirteen and fourteen I ate all, with three rolls of bread and a score of potatoes."

Those twenty potatoes remind the reader of the dreadful disillusion of Charlotte Bronte when she came to London and sat opposite her literary lion at dinner. "Oh, Mr. Thackeray!" she cried in shocked surprise as she watched him eat. She had never imagined a hero who ate potatoes by the score.

#### Fire in a Cotton Bale.

Kerosene oil has been used successfully to extinguish fire in baled cotton. A cotton bale is subjected to a very heavy pressure. Water will penetrate it but an inch or so, whereas kerosene will go clear to the center. A fire in a cotton bale does not blaze, but simply smolders and eats its way into the bale. At the comparatively low temperature at which cotton burns, and where there is no flame, kerosene does not ignite, but smothers or extinguishes the slow, creeping fire. After the fire is extinguished the bands are removed from the bale and burned portions of the cotton stripped off. It is said that the use of kerosene has practically no detrimental effect on the cotton, and after it has been spread out and aired for a few days all odor of the oil disappears.—Argonaut.

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