

LITERATURE, &c.

The British Magazines.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

THE GAMBLER.

'A MOMENT' later and the train would have gone without me,' said I, as, almost breathless with running, I placed myself in corner of a first-class carriage on the rails from Versailles to Paris. Three persons and a little dog were my companions. Soon I began to scrutinize them; and then, as is my custom when travelling, to amuse myself with fancying some tale or adventure of which they formed the *dramatis personæ*. Near me sat a pale-looking young man, carelessly but elegantly dressed, and so intently reading, that even my hurried entrance into the carriage scarcely caused him to lift his eyes from his book. In one corner sat an elderly gentleman, seemingly in that happy state which is between sleeping and waking; his cheeks were wrinkled, his hair gray and scant, and his thick and bushy eyebrows almost concealed his deep set eyes, which from time to time were turned upon the young man engaged in reading. 'Pshaw,' thought I, 'this is probably an uncle accompanying his thoughtless nephew to the town.'—And then I turned my attention to a young lady who occupied another corner of the carriage. She, too, was pale, and more interesting than handsome. Her dress, though simple, was perfect, and evidently the production of some first-rate artist.

Her whole style proclaimed her at once to belong to the higher order of society. Her eyes were large, and blue, and intellectual; her lips smiling; and a small and delicately-formed hand grasped a smelling-bottle, which she frequently used. Opposite to her lay a small English dog of uncommon beauty, between whom and his mistress frequent looks of affectionate recognition were exchanged. She seemed sickly, and to breathe with difficulty, frequently placing her hand upon her heart, on which occasions I observed she wore a rich and costly bracelet. Such were my travelling companions. The supposed uncle now slept, now cast vacant looks around him; the thoughtless nephew read on; the lady often sighed; the little dog snored; and I indulged in all the luxury of a day-dream, fancying many a strange history connected with those around me. It was evident, as I thought, that they were strangers to each other; and then the lady travelling alone in a first-class carriage, her simple yet highly-finished dress, the gemmed bracelet, her reserved looks, and retiring manners led me into a wide field of supposition, too quickly interrupted by our arrival at our destination.—The train stopped; the pale gentleman continued his reading; the lady again sighed, and placed her hand upon her heart; the old gentleman kept his seat; none seemed inclined to make the first move; so, slightly bowing to my companions, I left the carriage, and soon found myself in possession of a room at my hotel.

Dinner over, I went to the theatre; and from thence, by the persuasion of a friend, to a private gambling-house; and great was my surprise to find in the ostensible proprietor of the table the same old gentleman I had met in the railway carriage, and to whom I had assigned the character of a morose old uncle. Very few people were present, and play had not yet begun; and the *croupiers*, or groom porters as they are called in England, were seated on their high stools, on either side of the table, in that stolid indifference which, whether natural or assumed, seems always to mark such men. The old gentleman was seated at one end of the table, nervously grasping in his hand a massive snuff-box, while his eyes seemed restlessly to wander between the heaps of gold before him and the door, which, soon opening, gave entrance to another of my travelling companions—the young man, the fancied nephew. Although very few people were present, play soon began. It was *rouge et noir*. Every sound was hushed, except the voices of the dealers calling the result of the games, and the rattling of the gold as it was 'raked' from one to another.

I never play myself; and since I knew no one among the few gamblers present but my two travelling companions, my attention was altogether engrossed by their proceedings. Indeed the large sums which were lost by the young man, the roulette after roulette that he placed upon the table, only to be swept from before him, his pale cheek reddened by excitement, and his frequent and deep drawn sighs, most painfully interested me; and then his continual losses, the run of luck that was evidently against him, and the cessation of all other play but his deeply engrossed me. About one o'clock in the morning he left the room, and I had every reason to suppose, without a Napoleon in his possession. I immediately followed, and, much excited, with my friend repaired to sup in a neighboring coffee-house.

'You seem much excited with what we have seen,' said my friend; 'and since you cannot conceal the interest you take in play, and the evident taste you have for it, I admire you the more that no inducement can tempt you to participate in the game.'

'I will never play myself,' said I; 'though I confess that play deeply interests me, especially such high play as we have just seen.—Besides which, I was doubly interested, since both the keeper of the Bank, and the young man who has lost so much, were my silent companions on the railway from Versailles last evening; and more, those whom we have seen

such keen adversaries in the fight for fortune I absolutely supposed uncle and nephew.'

'The young man you allude to,' replied my friend, 'is a colonel in the Russian service, Count Z—, celebrated for his great losses.—You know what enormous fortunes the greater part of the Russian nobility are possessed of, but still, from what I hear, I fancy that this poor man has not much remaining. He has just come from Naples, where I am afraid to name the sum they say he left behind him. He is an incorrigible gambler, and strange to say, his almost invariable bad luck has not taught him wisdom. Who the banker is I do not know; I never saw him here before, though I heard he is a Spaniard, who has just joined the concern with a very considerable capital. But here comes Monsieur Clement, the supposed proprietor of the rooms: let me introduce you; he will tell you of the unknown.'

The usual compliments being exchanged, M. Clement took a seat at our table; and then I heard that the supposed Spaniard was an expatriated Polish officer, and as it was said, of high birth, although he was only known as Captain Carlo. He lived very simply, and in great retirement and it was only the day before that he had, to the astonishment of everybody proposed to take the Bank into his own hands. His evident command of money, and the terms he offered, were such as had induced the proprietors to comply with his seemingly strange proposal. It was very late, or rather at an early hour in the morning, that we separated; and I do not know how often I turned in my bed before I could compose myself to sleep.—My chamber, too, was small; the night oppressive; and my neighbor in the adjoining room, from whom I was separated but by a slight connecting door, apparently even more restless than myself. He paced his room incessantly, and occasionally I heard the sigh or moan of mental or bodily distress. I suppose it was the wine I had drank, the excitement I had undergone, and an unwillingness to interfere in that which in noway concerned me, which prevented me from pulling my bell and summoning a servant to my neighbor's assistance. At last, however, I fell asleep; and, as may be supposed, awoke late in the day, stupid and unrefreshed; and even when I left my room and repaired to the street—and, let me add, it was my first visit to Paris—a something seemed to hang over me; a dread of impending evil, that deprived the novel scenes around me of all their charms, and sent me back to my hotel to a quiet and lonely dinner in my room; and that finished, I was again alone with my wine, a slight desert, and my wandering thoughts. I fell asleep. When I awoke, it was night. A candle shone through a crevice of the door leading to the adjoining room, and the conversation of a man and woman greatly excited my curiosity. I will not attempt to palliate the offence of listening to it: I could not help myself, nor even move or make a noise, so that my neighbors could understand that they might be overheard. The man's voice was at first soft and intreating, the woman was evidently crying, and the little she said was in short and broken sentences, and so interrupted by convulsive sobs, that I could not follow them. I gleaned, however, enough to know that she was resisting and refusing a request the man was making her: at length, however, hysteric sighs were the only replies; and then his voice had lost its softness and persuasive tones; it became harsh, and loud, and imperative, and I plainly heard him.

'Well, madam,' said he, 'you shall repent this obstinacy, and your determination to plunge me into hopeless ruin; and not only me but yourself also. Something tells me I shall be fortunate to-night. If you will not give me your diamonds, you will deprive me of the only opportunity of regaining all my bad-luck has cost me.'

'Say rather what your folly, your madness has cost you,' said the lady. 'It is all that you now have left to us. These poor diamonds will scarcely suffice to take us home, and enable us to escape from this city of vice, and a ruin that every hour states us more plainly in the face. I entreat you, by all you ever held sacred, be contented with the dreadful lessons you have received: renounce this fearful infatuation: return to a wife who, in spite of all the ruin you have brought upon her, still loves you still adores you, and would still go hand in hand with you to retrieve our lost fortunes.'

'Madam,' cried the man with a voice choking with passion, 'all I ask are your jewels: keep your your remonstrances, your reproaches to yourself. I am your husband, and I have the right to dispose of all your possessions as I may think fit to do.'

'Have you not sufficiently stripped me of my possessions, of my poor banished father's lands,' replied the lady, 'that you would deprive me of this poor bracelet that contains my dear mother's portrait, to possess yourself of the jewels which surround it? No,' continued she, after a moment's pause, interrupted by convulsive sobs—'no, I will defend this poor remnant of my fortune with my life. My mother's portrait shall never leave my arm; and I will preserve its diamonds to save me yet a while from the want and misery I see approaching.'

A demon's laugh, which still rings in my ears as I write the words, was the man's reply. The door was suddenly opened, and so violently shut, that the light was extinguished. I heard the wretched woman fall upon her knees, listened to her few, short, wild and supplicating prayers, and all was still.

At eleven o'clock I was again in Monsieur Clement's gambling-room.

Captain Carlo was seated with clasped hands at the table anxiously, as I thought,

watching the door. The Russian colonel was not there. He soon, however, arrived. His face was flushed, and he seemed intoxicated. He seated himself, and fixed his eyes intently staring at the gold which lay in heaps before him. Captain Carlo seemed to regard him with the most intense interest; but he saw nothing but the play and the gold upon the table.

'Make your game: the game is made,' said the croupier; and as he was about to deal the cards, the colonel cried, I may rather say shrieked, in a voice of wildness, 'A hundred Napoleons upon the red.'

The dealer paused, and seeing that the colonel placed no money on the table, coolly said, 'Pardon me, sir: you must stake the money.'

The colonel seemed horrorstruck: he became deadly pale, then fearfully red; and after a momentary struggle for utterance, he thundered out, 'Dare you speak so to me, sir?' And then in a lowered tone of voice, he said, as he left the room, 'After the large sum I lost to you yesterday, I did suppose, as I had not my purse about me, that you would have refused me so paltry a credit.' There was something in the whole manner of the man, and the tone of his voice, that seemed, as it were, to paralyse the appetite for play of the few who were present. One by one they left the room; and by some undefinable attraction I soon found myself the only stranger who had remained. Captain Carlo was apparently anxious and distracted, and one or two casual remarks I made to him were vaguely answered. Evidently his thoughts were elsewhere. No new-comers had arrived: I did not play; the croupiers were about to put up the implements of their trade, and I to take my hat, when the door was suddenly thrown open and the colonel entered. How shall I describe his appearance? His face was distorted, and very pale; his lips vivid; his hair disordered, and wildly hanging about his head; his right hand was in his breast; he trembled violently, and his glassy eyes wandered vacantly. He appeared to make an effort to rally and to recover himself, and calling for champagne, drank glass after glass nearly as rapidly as the servant poured it from the bottle. The draught appeared to sober him; and the croupier, as if to test his intention, made a show of recommending his avocations.

'Cut the cards if you please,' said he. 'Red again!' immediately shouted the colonel, as he withdrew his hand from his breast, and placed upon the table a magnificent bracelet, of apparently great value. 'It is worth a hundred thousand francs,' continued he.—'Ah! where now is your courage? You who an hour since refused me the miserable sum of one hundred Napoleons! What are you afraid of or can you not cover my stake?'

Captain Carlo quietly, and without a word, opened a small box before him, and taking from it notes to the amount of a hundred thousand francs, placed them beside the bracelet. The game proceeded. 'Black wins!' cried the croupier. The colonel had again lost, and the rich bracelet was the property of the bank. The blood ran cold in my veins as I recognised the jewel. My head swam round, and I was obliged to cling to the table for support. I had nearly fainted with excitement and surprise; and I still felt as in a stupor, when the voice of Captain Carlo recalled me to myself.

'Colonel,' said he, 'I know you have not provided yourself with money; but if, in the meantime, you will accept the contents of this pocket book, to-morrow we can arrange our account.'

But why prolong the painful scene? The offer—how strange and unaccountable did it appear to me—was greedily grasped at, and the game recommenced; I need not tell with what vicissitudes. Suffice it to say, that all was again lost.

'Now I will play you double or quits,' said the colonel in a paroxysm of utter desperation.

'No,' replied the captain, 'I will play no more: the sum you all ready owe me is more than you are able to repay. Yet stay: I will play you for ten times the sum if your wife will be your security.'

At these words the unfortunate Russian uttered a cry more frantic, I think, than ere was heard from the walls of a madman's den. I can never forget it. He fell backwards on a chair; his hair stood on end; his forehead was bathed in cold perspiration; his vigorous frame trembled like an aspen; he seemed to stagger as he rose from the chair; but clasping the heavy table before with his two hands, he pushed it from him with almost superhuman force and violence, and rushed from the room.

I was far too excited myself to observe the effect of this sad scene upon Captain Carlo; but he arose from his seat, and not perceiving that I was behind him, I heard him to my great astonishment, say in a voice of profound emotion, 'My poor, poor Julie; still he loves her: all is not yet lost; her honor is yet sacred to him; he may yet be saved.' He turned and saw me, and trembling, he continued: 'I have observed, sir, your interest in this unhappy man, and now bear witness that all good is not yet dead in his heart. Love for his wife still remains, for he would not involve her name in a gambler's deeds. No, no! he is not yet lost. Happiness and wealth are still in store for him. This night and my proceedings have cured him of his love of play. Know, sir, that his man is the husband of my only child, from whom and from my country I have been long banished, and obliged to keep my very existence a profound secret from my nearest relatives. I escaped with wealth which, by prudence and personal privation, has greatly accumulated. It is only lately that the pardon of my generous Sovereign has recalled me to

my country and my home, and only then I heard of my poor daughter's fate and her husband's infatuation. None could tell me where I could find them, for none knew where they were. I, however, fell upon their traces, and heard enough to convince me that I need not interfere with any prospect of success till all was lost. His lands have long been sold; but I was rich, and could restore all when the proper moment came. Knowing that he was coming to Paris I hastened to assume the character of the proprietor of these rooms, in the hope that, by allowing him to play for unlimited sums I might hasten the happy moment when I should know he had staked his all, and lost it, and I might proclaim myself and regain my children. This bracelet, Sir, contains the portrait of my adored wife, who gave it to my poor child. She would never have parted with it but in the last extremity. See what love will do! She has sacrificed her last remaining treasure, and he has refused to compromise her in name in his nefarious transactions. 'Oh, cried the old man, the warm tears running from his eyes—'oh that it was to-morrow, that I could embrace my child, and pardon and restore her husband!'

Shocked with these fearful revelations, I hurried the poor old man at once to the hotel.

'I know where they are,' said I, 'let us lose no time in going to them.'

'Is Colonel the Count Z— at home?' hastily demanded Captain Carlo of the Porter at the hotel door.

'No, Sir,' was the reply.

'Has he been long absent?'

'He was here soon after eleven, and then again went out.'

'Let us go up stairs,' said I.

Impatience hastened the steps of the father: scarcely could I follow him with the light. He knocked at the door; all was still: again he knocked, and the only reply was a suppressed and mournful howl of a little dog; and now he applied his hand to the lock and opened the door. All was dark. He took the candle from my hand and went in; and I, irresistibly compelled, followed him. Oh horror of horrors, what a scene met my eyes! Dead upon the bed and deluged in blood, from a deep wound in her beautiful arm, lay the only child of the poor old man!

In a few days afterwards, the wretched gambler, the cause of so much wo, was the inmate of an asylum for lunatics; his case adding another to the many instances of mental ruin from the ill-regulated and unjustifiable passion for gain!

From Simbert's Clans of Scotland.

THE BATTLE OF THE INCH OF PERTH.

The very strength of Clan Chattan seems to have led to fatal dissensions among its early members. The person of Kingussie lived in the twelfth century, and disputes betwixt the branches of Macpherson and Mackintosh, appear to have originated not long afterwards. Moreover there is good reason to suppose that the clan Cameron was primarily connected with the Chattan Stock. These steps were too powerful, individually, not to be distracted in time by mutual jealousies, to which the conflicting claims as to the chieftainship lent but too much force. In the time of Robert the Third, their quarrels had become a nuisance to the entire country, until the regent Duke of Albany persuaded the king, to permit a settlement of their feuds by a public and pitched battle on the Inch of Perth. The memorable contest in question, which took place in 1396, is usually said to have lain betwixt the Clan Chattan and the Clan Kay, and Clan Kay has for the most part been interpreted into Mackay. But there are many reasons for believing that the combatants were none other than the discordant sections of the Clans Chattan—the Mackintoshes, Macphersons, and (at least in part) the Camerons. Besides the singular fact that these three sects alone have preserved any private traditions of the engagement, a still more striking circumstance is, that the disputes of those concerned obviously hinged almost entirely on a question of precedence. There were no mutual charges of rapine and slaying advanced, nor any redress sought on such grounds. The losers were simply to succumb and veil their bonnets to the victors in the time coming. This cannot be explained in any one rational way, save by holding the disputants to have been the rival sections of Clan Chattan. Besides, when the contest had actually taken place, and a few years had passed away, we find the united Clans Chattan and Cameron acting in full concert. According to John Major, at the skirmish betwixt James the first and Alexander of the Isles, in Lochabar A. D. 1426. Unitedly they left the insurgent ranks, and so gave to King James the victory. Major very especially notes that Chattans and Camerons came of the same stock, and followed 'one head of their race as chief.' So that the conflict as the Inch of Perth had produced at least temporary fruits. Of the submission of the Mackays, on the other hand, to the Clan Chattan in any way, or at any time, history tells us nothing; and indeed being planted in the far north of Sutherlandshire, with many miles of country and various other tribes between them, the Mackays and the Clan Chattan were most unlikely to be at feud so bitterly. The sole fighters on the Perth Inch, we therefore hold, must have been the contending sept of the Clan Chattan. It can scarcely be doubted that the Camerons took part in the Inch contest and on the side of the Macphersons.