

# The Wooing of Alphonse.

"As you will," answered M. Bernier, drawing in his wrists and elbows and expanding his palms, with a shrug of the shoulders—"as you will. For my part, I am happy to serve you."

"Then, if you will take breakfast with me at twelve o'clock on Saturday, I will give you all particulars to satisfy Madame Mesnilot."

"So soon, Alphonse?"

"Ah, Jules, do not suggest a later day! Will your convenience permit you call upon Madame Mesnilot on Saturday?"

M. Bernier had by no means recovered from the shock of hearing that M. Georges Thevinet was unacquainted with his son's intentions; but on reflection, he decided that Alphonse was the best judge of his own affairs, and that no responsibility would fall upon himself by accepting the post of ambassador. He therefore replied that it would give him pleasure to breakfast with his friend at mid-day on Saturday, and that he would call upon Madame Mesnilot afterwards.

M. Alphonse embraced him with fervour, paid for their refreshment, and left the cafe to walk homewards.

M. Jules Bernier was a man of his word, and punctually at noon on the appointed day he arrived at M. Thevinet's house carefully arrayed in evening dress in readiness to pay his formal call on Madame Mesnilot immediately after breakfast.

Little passed between the friends during the meal, though they were alone together. M. Bernier was busy with his knife and fork, and though Alphonse ate sparingly, his thoughts kept him silent. No qualms of doubt as to the precipitancy of the step he was about to take—by deputy—oppressed him. His faith in his father's affection and generosity was too deeply rooted to be disturbed by his ungiven consent. But at times he was conscious of a mad yearning to follow the bold unseemly custom he had been told was prevalent among the people of Great Britain, to go in person to Mademoiselle Adrienne's mother, and fling himself on his knees at her feet, implore her to give him her daughter's hand. But of course such an extraordinary proceeding was quite out of the question. Conventional usage, born of modesty, dictated that the principal should sit quietly at home, while a trusted family friend conveyed the weighty petition to the beloved object's mother. Alphonse had never heard that there are cases on record in which a young Englishman has taken upon him to address the girl of his choice herself without ever consulting the parents on either side at all; and if he had, he would not have believed it, even of Britons. The idea of doing such a thing never crossed his mind.

"You have, I hope, made a good breakfast?" he said to M. Jules as his friend drew the napkin from his collar with a sigh of content.

"Excellent; I thank you," replied M. Bernier. "With your permission, I will light a cigarette, and you can inform me regarding your pecuniary position that I may explain it to Madame Mesnilot."

Keeping carefully in mind that he had taken his father's consent for granted, Alphonse instructed his friend to say that his allowance when he married would be twelve thousand francs per annum, and that he expected to inherit not less than half a million of francs at his parent's death. He had nothing else to say, except that a life's devotion would be Mademoiselle Adrienne's, and he should be glad to learn whether her dot was not to be one hundred and fifty thousand francs, and the furnished house on the Boulevard Cauchoise.

M. Jules Bernier elevated his expressive eyebrows as he heard this. "One hundred and fifty thousand francs, and that beautiful house—furnished, parbleu!—on the Boulevard, is much to expect Alphonse, my friend," he said.

"Nevertheless, you will say that, if you please," replied Alphonse. It was a matter of business; and Alphonse was no child.

"As you wish," answered M. Bernier with a shrug, as he rose from his chair and adjusted his cravat at the mirror. "It is now half-past one o'clock. I will go to Madame Mesnilot's, and return direct to you here, at perhaps three o'clock."

"I will await you in the salon," said Alphonse with dignity, and he followed his friend to the door.

We need not dwell upon the suspense of M. Alphonse Thevinet, or upon the eagerness with which he received his ambassador when he reappeared two hours later.

"You were long gone," he said breathlessly. "But do not delay; tell me Madame Mesnilot's reply."

"Her reply," answered M. Bernier, with the smile of one who loves to bring good news, "is, yes. She assured me that Mademoiselle would be overwhelmed with gratitude for her good fortune, and that her dot would not be less than one hundred thousand francs."

"And the furnished house?" queried Alphonse.

"Madame said nothing of the house," answered M. Bernier. "M. Bernier had done this kind of office before, and knew better than to drive bargains at the first interview."

A cloud gathered upon the brow of Alphonse. He had persuaded himself that M. and Madame Mesnilot would have promised all he chose to ask, and

he had demanded thus much, that he might make assurance doubly sure when he came to request his father's permission to marry Mademoiselle Adrienne. He was disappointed.

"A hundred thousand is a small dot for Monsieur Mesnilot to give his only daughter," he said.

"I would counsel you to let that side of the matter remain for settlement between Monsieur your father and the parents of Mademoiselle," replied M. Bernier. "When does Monsieur Thevinet return to Rouen?"

Alphonse could not tell for certain. He was traveling in the country near Bordeaux, and had no fixed address at present; but he expected him to return at the end of the month.

"Well, I will offer you my congratulations, and take my leave for today," said M. Bernier. "It has given me great pleasure to have had the honor of conveying your message to Madame Mesnilot."

Alphonse hastened to express his gratitude for the service his friend had done him, and the indebtedness, he said with sincerity, was all on his side. Without Jules, he had been quite at a loss to address Madame Mesnilot; thanks could not repay M. Bernier for what he had that day performed. He kissed Jules upon both cheeks as he bade him adieu, and having seen him depart, threw himself into a chair to dream of Mademoiselle Adrienne.

Two weeks later, M. Georges Thevinet returned home from his travels, and was received with effusion by his son.

"I have news for thee, Alphonse," said the old gentleman as they entered the salon arm-in-arm.

"And I for thee, also," replied his son. "But first of all, give me yours."

M. Georges Thevinet beamed upon Alphonse with paternal pride as he answered in impressive tones: "I have found for my son a wife. I promised my friend Monsieur Laguerre that you shall espouse his daughter Mademoiselle Clarisse."

"Mademoiselle Clarisse?" exclaimed Alphonse. "Sir, she is forty."

"She is but thirty-eight," replied his father in correction.

"She has a squint," said the son.

"She has Seven Hundred and Fifty Thousand Francs," said the father, fixing upon Alphonse a look in which affection and cupidity were happily blended.

"It matters nothing," cried Alphonse; "for I love another."

"Eh! What's that?" inquired old M. Thevinet, who was a little hard of hearing.

"But two weeks since, I received Madame Mesnilot's sanction to marry Mademoiselle Adrienne."

"Then you must write and apologise for your mistake. I have already told you that you are affianced to Mademoiselle Clarisse Laguerre," replied M. Thevinet, firmly.

"Never," cried Alphonse, with a gesture of despair.

"But you are. I absolutely refuse to sanction your marriage to any one else. Mademoiselle Mesnilot will not receive one-third, mark me, boy!—not one-third of the dot with which Monsieur Laguerre will endow his daughter."

"I care nothing for the dot," cried Alphonse, wildly.

"The boy is mad," muttered M. Thevinet, senior.

"I will marry no one but Adrienne, A-dri-enne." And at this point the feelings of Alphonse overcame him and he sobbed.

Coercion, diplomacy, and persuasion, were tried by M. Thevinet in turn with barren results; and finally there ensued a quarrel so violent that Alphonse packed up his portmanteau and left the house.

"To think of the boy's contracting a matrimonial engagement without a word to me!" said M. Thevinet to himself as he retired that night. "What on earth can have got into his head? What is the world coming to?"

"To think of my father giving away my hand like that!" said Alphonse as he strode down the Boulevard. "I might as well be a Turkish slave at once!"

Fortunately Alphonse had plenty of money in his pocket, and he had soon induced himself in pleasant lodgings in the Boulevard Jeanne d'Arc. "It is indeed lucky," he said to himself as he unpacked his clothes, "that I am over twenty-five years of age. Were I but a few years younger, the course I must pursue, repugnant, as it is to my filial feelings, would be closed to me."

Alphonse had already decided to take such steps as would render his marriage without his father's consent a legal union, though he shrank from the process, and chafed at the delay it would entail. Had he been under the age of twenty-five, his father's refusal would have bound him hopelessly according to law. The process-verbal is a legal weapon denied young men below that age. But Alphonse, as we have already remarked, was twenty-eight, and he knew the power the law conferred upon him.

"I wish I had been an Englishman," he said to M. Jules Bernier one evening a week later at the cafe.

"Why so?" asked M. Bernier.

"Could I not then marry Adrienne at once without my father's consent?" asked Alphonse.

"Certainly, you might," replied M. Bernier. "But were you an Englishman you would have other things to consider, my friend. The lady might decline to marry you; and Monsieur your father might exercise the brutal privilege of an Englishman, and 'cut you off with a shilling. No, no, Alphonse, be thankful that you are a citizen of the Republic."

He might be furnished with a pen; and having received it, wrote down M. Thevinet's answer with great care upon the document. "I have the honour to bid you respectfully adieu, Monsieur," he said as he rolled up the paper and put it under his arm. "It will be my duty to call upon you once more in a month's time."

"I fear you will have the trouble of calling also a third time," said M. Thevinet, forcing himself to be calm. "Is it not so?"

The polite official shrugged his shoulders in deprecation. "If Monsieur did not give his valued consent the second time the process-verbal was presented," he said, "doubtless it would be the wish of M. Alphonse to have it presented two months hence for the third time."

"And then?" inquired M. Thevinet, who knew all about it, but was anxious for fuel to feed his wrath.

"Why, then, if Monsieur withheld his permission on being asked a third time, M. Alphonse would be legally able to marry without." The polite official made a profound bow and hastily withdrew. M. Thevinet's anger had mastered him, and he appeared about to vent it upon his visitor.

Had M. Thevinet been an Englishman with an Englishman's power over his own property, he would most inevitably have sent for his solicitor and altered his will that day. But he could not; a French parent's estate is, irrespective of his wishes, divided by the law amongst his children, or heirs, at his demise; so M. Thevinet could not enjoy that remote satisfaction. However, he did the next best thing. He wrote to Alphonse and told him that until he returned to his room, penitent and prepared to marry Mademoiselle Laguerre, he should give him only the barest pittance upon which to exist. "If you think," wrote the indignant father, "that Monsieur and Madame Mesnilot will accept a penniless suitor for their daughter, the legal steps you have taken to set the necessity for obtaining my consent aside, will have served their end. But I doubt whether in your new position you will receive the welcome which you will receive in your representative M. Bernier. I should advise you to think this over at your leisure."

When Alphonse received this letter he recognized the weakness of his case, and proposed a compromise. If his father would not call upon him to marry Mademoiselle Laguerre for three years, he on his part would renounce his intention of marrying Mademoiselle Mesnilot. Would M. Thevinet receive his sorrowing son upon these terms?

The language in which the old gentleman indulged when his son's answer reached him was dreadful to hear. He would agree to no conditions whatever, and Alphonse might take his choice—Mademoiselle Clarisse, or poverty in solitude until the end of his father's lifetime. He wrote at once directing his son to choose, reminding him that this was the sole favour he had ever asked in return for all he had done for him. It was a powerful and pathetic letter; the heart of Alphonse was touched by it, and he gave way. After a bitter struggle with self he made up his mind to obey his father; he sent his sheriff-officer his fee, and directed him to serve the process-verbal again; he packed his portmanteau, and went home in a cab.

How old M. Thevinet called upon Madame Mesnilot, and explained that M. Jules Bernier's visit had been paid under a misapprehension; and how Madame Mesnilot said she was sorry, but that it didn't matter, because she had not mentioned the subject to Adrienne yet, it boots not to tell. We have only to conclude the history of the wooing of Alphonse by the bare statement that his father took him down to Bordeaux a month afterwards; stood over him while he agreed to the promesse de mariage which Monsieur le Notaire had prepared, and saw him espouse Mademoiselle Clarisse Laguerre at the bureau of Monsieur le Maire. Mademoiselle Clarisse promised to be a model wife in all respects, and everybody is contented and happy.

(The end.)

## IN SEARCH OF AN EDEN.

Where Eve Predominated but Found it not — A Disappointed Shipload.

The party of 100 men who sailed recently from San Francisco, on the brigantine Percy Edwards, for some Adamless Eden in the south seas, where pretty native women yearned for spouses, and where there was no harder work than picking up coconuts, have come to grief in the Fiji Islands. A letter from one of the colonists says that all their dreams were illusions. No island could be found that were not pre-empted by England and Germany, and most of the good land was already in the hands of large corporations, which have fenced their possessions with barbed wire and put up warnings against trespassers. Forty of the colonists decided to abandon their dreams of a coral island Eden, and they secured land near Suva, Fiji, and will plant it with bananas, which are a paying crop. Sixty of the adventurers decided to work the brigantine to Auckland, New Zealand. Most of the colonists on the vessel are single men, who became weary of regular work and hoped to find some south sea paradise where life would be ample and food easy to get. One hundred dollars was the price of a share in the colony, and the round trip.

## WOMAN'S WAY.

Sapemith—Some wise old chap said that a woman will forgive anything but the fact that you do not covet her. Dooceed clewah weamak, don't you know. Grimshaw—Yes; but he should've added that when she discovers that you do covet her she has no further use for you.

THEY MAY BE GRATEFUL ALSO. What makes you speak of Miss Wiseley because among her best friends are the men whom she has refused to marry.

## TOO INTELLIGENT.

Do you say that you received a college education? I asked the court of the would-be juror. Challenged for cause, promptly interrupted the counsel for the prisoner. Yes your honor.

## AFRAID OF MADNESS.

A Horror Often Entertained By People With Healthy Minds.

"You would be astonished," says a well known physician, "if you only knew the number of perfectly sane and mentally robust people who live in mortal terror of some day going mad."

"One evening last week a man came in here, with a desperate sort of look on his face, and asked me to make an examination of his head. 'I believe I have always been sane enough so far,' he said, 'and there is no trace of madness anywhere in the family. But I am constantly haunted by a fear of going out of my mind one of these days, and for five years I simply have not dared to marry the girl I am engaged to on this account. You must tell me the worst now; I can't stand the suspense any longer.' He was, of course, absolutely sane."

"Another case is that of a lady patient of mine. For years her life was rendered perfectly wretched by a so-called 'presentation' that she would suddenly lose her sense and go mad. She suffered a good bit from nervous depression, but otherwise was as right as you or I. A long sea trip finally cured her completely, and she has never been troubled by a return of her old horrible anxiety."

"A servant maid came to me about three years ago, and told me that she had left no less than four good situations in as many months because she thought she was going mad, and she was afraid of her mistress finding her out."

"The fact is that a person who imagines himself to be going insane never becomes so. I have never met a case in my life where a madman had any sensible warning of his malady before hand."

## A FRISKY COW.

The other day a well-known business man of Point St. Charles, Montreal, sold his cow, which he had kept in stable all winter and spring to a local dealer. The man who was sent for it contented himself with driving it along instead of leading it with rope around the neck, as it became so frisky and developed extraordinary jumping powers. Finally, after leaving its driver a mile behind it jumped a fence into a yard where a woman was washing. Its sudden appearance so terrified the woman that she fainted, and is still confined to her bed in a dangerous condition from shock.

At Sweden, Me., it has taken fifteen years to solve the mystery of the disappearance of a pig which, alone of its litter, could not be found when the others were driven from an ell of John Egan's house into which they had strayed. A small boy said that the pig had gone up the chimney. He was laughed at. When the chimney was cut into to get at a fire one day recently the bones there told the tale of the pig's strange disappearance.



## Fifty Years Ago.

This is the stamp that the letter bore which carried the story far and wide. Of certain cure for the loathsome sore that bubbled up from the tainted tide of the blood below. And 'twas Ayer's name And his sarsaparilla, that all now know, That was just beginning its fight of fame With its cures of 50 years ago.

## Ayer's Sarsaparilla

is the original sarsaparilla. It has behind it a record for cures unequalled by any blood purifying compound. It is the only sarsaparilla honored by a medal at the World's Fair of 1893. Others imitate the remedy; they can't imitate the record:

50 Years of Cures.



To the Madden Yeast Co., London, Ont. Gentlemen—We get quicker and better results from using Mrs. Madden's Yeast than any other we have used, and highly recommend it. DEAR SIR, I have used the yeast for some time and find it to be the best I have ever used. THE MADDEN YEAST CO., London.

## The D. & L. Emulsion

Is invaluable. If you are run down, as it is a food as well as a medicine.

The D. & L. Emulsion Will build you up if your general health is impaired.

The D. & L. Emulsion is the best and most palatable preparation of Cod Liver Oil, agreeing with the most delicate stomachs.

The D. & L. Emulsion is prescribed by the leading physicians of Canada.

The D. & L. Emulsion is a marvelous flesh producer and will give you an appetite.

50c. & \$1 per Bottle. Be sure you get the genuine. DAVIS & LAWRENCE CO., LTD. The Genuine Emulsion.



CURES COLIC, CHOLERA, CHOLERA-MORBUS, DIARRHOEA, DYSENTERY, And all SUMMER COMPLAINTS of Children or Adults. Beware of Imitations. PRICE, 35c.

## Webster's International Dictionary

The One Great Standard Authority. So writes Hon. D. J. Brewer, Justice U. S. Supreme Court.

Send a Postal for Specimen Pages, etc. Successor of the "Unabridged." Standard of the English Language.

Warnly Commended by State Superintendents of Schools, and other Educators almost without number.

THE BEST FOR EVERYBODY BECAUSE It is easy to find the word wanted. It is easy to ascertain the pronunciation. It is easy to trace the growth of a word. It is easy to learn what a word means.

WEBSTER THE STANDARD. The Toronto Globe says: "The International is rapidly becoming recognized as the most reliable standard dictionary published. In addition to fulfilling the primary function of a dictionary, the International contains a vast amount of general information of great value—Jan. 31, 1896."

G. & C. MERRIAM Co., Publishers, Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.

## Durham Tannery.

### Robe Tanning.

Horse Hides Cow Hides, Dog

SKINS, Etc., Tanned Suitable for ROBES and COATS by the new process, which for Finish and Softness can't be beat.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED —

### THOS. SMITH.

N. B.—To ensure a first-class job the hides must be salted as soon as taken

### EDGE PROPERTY

FOR SALE IN THE TOWN OF DURHAM.

County of Grey, including a valuable W Power, Brick dwelling, and many eligible building lots, will be sold in one or more lots. Also lot No. 60, Con. 2, W. G. R., Township of Bentinck, 100 acres, adjoining Town plot, Durham. Mortgages taken for part purchase money. Apply to JAMES EDGE, Edge Hill, P.O. Oct. 2nd.

### A. GORDON

Dealers in Watches, Clocks, Jewelry and Spectacles, Silver and Flat Ware of all descriptions. Repairing a specialty. Upper Town, Durham.

The "Chronicle" is the only age Local Newspaper in Western Ontario.