

HOPE

YOUNG Hope, in rainbow hues arrayed,
Ran laughing up to me,
And in his crystal glass displayed
My golden yet-to-be.

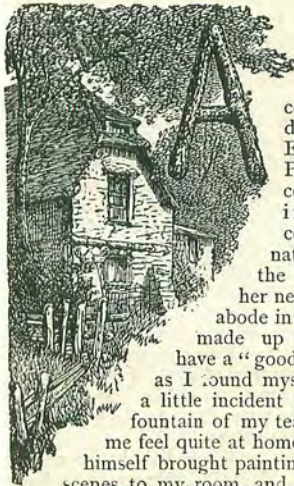
I stretched my arms the prize to clasp,
But ah! 'twas all in vain,
For when I thought it in my grasp
He snatched it back again.

With fancies fair he lured me still
Through all the livelong day;
Then, when he teased me to his fill,
The rogue, he ran away.

He vanished with a parting jeer,
And nevermore was seen;
He left me broken-hearted here
To mourn the might-have-been.

IN A FRENCH NOBLEMAN'S FAMILY.

By THE GOVERNESS.



YOUNG girl who leaves home and friends and country, as I did when I left England for Paris to become governess in a French count's family, naturally spends the first night in her new and strange abode in tears. I had made up my mind to have a "good cry" as soon as I found myself alone, but a little incident dried up the fountain of my tears and made me feel quite at home. The count himself brought paintings of English scenes to my room, and with his own hand hung the walls with those that I selected.

Besides the count and countess the family consisted of three girls, aged from thirteen to nine, a baby boy, and the countess's pet dog. I put the dog amongst the family because it seemed to me to rank in the countess's estimation before her children. It slept in a basket kennel on a cushion of down in her bedroom, and had a silk cushion to recline on in her boudoir and another silk cushion for the carriage. It had cream for breakfast, and during the day a stewed pigeon or a mutton chop with the fat all cut off, or some other delicacy would be sent up for it in a silver plate, which was placed on a clean napkin on the floor!

The servants at the Paris establishment, and I speak of it only, comprised the chef and three assistants, four valets-de-chambre, two nurses, and the countess's maid. There were also the first and second coachmen and four stablemen. It's a curious thing that in Paris coachmen and stablemen are generally Scotch or English, just as waiters are so often foreigners here.

Among the servants, it will be noted, there are no housemaids; their place in a French family is taken by the valets-de-chambre. One of these did nothing but polish the floors and clean the plate.

The most interesting functionary, however, was the chef—especially this one, for he afterwards became chef to a marquis and then to the King of Italy.

I formed a kind of link between the family and the kitchen, conveyed messages, for instance, between the heads of each. It amused me and at first dismayed me to see the chef, who was the pink of cleanliness and order, trying his sauces. When they were on the fire, he would stir his finger in them and taste them by licking the finger. A spoon would contaminate their delicate flavours. Again, he always put the finishing touches to his dishes in secret, so that his assistants should not discover his processes. He was always anxious to know the effect of any particular dish on the count, and would ask me eagerly whether the count seemed pleased with such and such. He really enjoyed the pleasures of eating by deputy rather than directly, I believe.

One night he was terribly upset. He had managed to get some green peas at a time when it was next to impossible to get them, and he meant to surprise his master with them. He expended on them all the care and knowledge of his art, and put them on the dresser for the waiter to take up. On this same dresser the waiter would put the dishes brought from the table, and these dishes used then to be taken by one of the chef's assistants to be cleaned. The chef asked the waiter if the peas had made any sensation. They were the *pièce de résistance* of the whole dinner that night, and on them his mind had been bent all day.

"Peas?" inquired the waiter. "There were no peas!"

"What! No peas!" the poor fellow screamed in agony. "Oh, come, you are joking?"

But the waiter wasn't joking. Poor chef! When he learnt the fate of those peas which he did the next minute, he was like a man possessed. The assistant who removed the used dishes had taken them, and thinking they had been returned from the table had eaten them!

The chef flew at him, cuffed him, kicked him, and screamed at him, "Go out! Go out!" and then sank exhausted on a chair.

That night as I put my head in at the kitchen door to bid him "good-night," he was sitting disconsolately, and all he could say to me was—

"Oh! to think of it; that all my labour should go into the inside of that man!" I told the countess next day and she roared with laughter.

My chief business, of course, was with the

children, who were forbidden to speak French at home, and it was my duty to see this rule carried out and to speak with them in English. Their day began at seven in the morning when they rose, and after bath went to prayers in the chapel. After prayers they made their own beds, which had meanwhile been turned down to air, and at eight they breakfasted on farinaceous food and fruit and milk—only on Sundays were they allowed a little coffee and never any tea. At nine I took them to the church. At half-past twelve I dined with them, and then they would sometimes see their mother, who would sit down with us and take a light luncheon.

I have said that sometimes only did the countess join her children at their dinner. The times she didn't were when she was going out in the evening. Then she would remain in bed to preserve herself until she began her toilet. This with the assistance of her maid was a matter of three or four hours' hard labour. The making-up of her face alone took two hours! Then when she was all ready and on the point of going, the children would be sent for to come and see her. This gave them great pleasure, though they weren't allowed to touch her. They would look admiringly at her, gleefully clap their hands, and exclaim, "Oh, how beautiful you look, mamma! Oh! I should like to kiss you!" or something of that kind. Then they would stand aside and see her sail forth. I remember the youngest girl crying very bitterly because she couldn't kiss her mother on one of these occasions or even take her diamond gleaming hands. Her gloves by the way would be cut so as to permit of her rings being seen.

Another little excitement was permitted the children on occasions of dinner-parties. They would go to the dining-room only to dessert, and then with the guests into the salon for half-an-hour.

It was a good house for servants, and amongst them the utmost harmony prevailed. I never heard an order given to any one, and the only time the chef would be interfered with would be when he had a grand dinner-party to provide for. Then he would be summoned to a consultation with the count and countess. Everyone had plenty of excellent food. My wages were fifty francs a month, and I received in addition many presents. Indeed I had to lay scarcely anything out on myself, and at the end of two years found I had saved thirty pounds odd.