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Author: Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE SHARPER DETECTED AND EXPOSED ***

**THE SHARPER
DETECTED AND EXPOSED.**

BY
ROBERT-HOUDIN.

"Éclairez les dupes, il n'y aura plus de fripons."
MONTESQUIEU.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

Having often been requested by different magistrates, to investigate cases of sharpening, I have often been struck, while doing so, with the obstacles and embarrassments which a judge's own honesty must oppose to his elucidation of matters of sharpening and cheating at play.

How is it possible that he can penetrate the subtle web, with which the sharper surrounds his dupes,—how can he be able to detect the tricks of these rogues,—if he does not understand the manœuvres of sleight-of-hand?

By a singular reversal of the ordinary conditions of justice, the magistrate finds himself most powerless, when the rogue has committed the most daring, and artfully cunning, frauds.

A great portion of my life having been devoted to the study of sleight-of-hand, and having, as yet, only made use of my knowledge for the amusement of my fellow-creatures, I felt that the time had arrived, when I ought to give to the public, who had so honoured me with their favour, an unequivocal mark of my gratitude, by consecrating my leisure hours to their service. iv

I have therefore written this work, the moral and end of which may be summed up in this incontestable truth:

"Éclairer les dupes, il n'y aura plus de fripons."

"Enlighten the dupes, and there will be no more knaves."

There is no reason, however, because a fact is incontestable, that it will not be contested; indeed, I am of opinion that it will be, and, as a proof of what I state, I am myself going to offer an objection which might be made on this subject.

In disclosing the secrets of sharpeners, people will say, Do you not fear to create in the minds of unfortunate gamblers, a wish to try and better their fortunes, by the very means you point out to warn them?

I have been guided by an opinion, repeatedly expressed by the editors of newspapers, and the press in general; and, in answer to the objection I have made above, I beg to say, that in the explanations I have given of the tricks of sharpeners, though I have said enough to put people on their guard, I have not said enough to teach them how to execute these tricks. v

If I had not taken this precaution, what would have been the result?

It is only one individual, already half perverted, who will avail himself of the knowledge I impart, to learn to cheat, while hundreds of dupes will have been put on their guard.

If these revelations serve to awaken vicious ideas in perverted minds, what can be said of the various works on the laws of duelling, in which you can learn how to kill your neighbour according to rule?

Is it not to be feared, that the opinions contained in those books may lead to crime?

For my part, I have so good an opinion of mankind in general, that I trust the perusal of this work will only tend to their benefit, and prove their safeguard against rogues. Let each person when he sits down to play, strengthened by the hints and instructions I have given him, look with suspicion on all "Greeks" (as these sharpeners are sometimes called), and let him recollect to his profit this verse of Virgil: vi

"Timeo *Danaos* et dona ferentes."

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THE
SHARPER DETECTED AND EXPOSED.

AN ANECDOTE BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION.

A DANGEROUS PROFESSOR.

Whatever, dear reader, may be the value you attach to the knowledge of the knaveries I am about to reveal to you, you will assuredly never pay so dearly for them as I have.

You will easily understand, that the tricks and impostures exposed in this work, are not the inventions of my own brain. I have collected them, one by one, from sharpers, or have been obliged to find them out as best I could.

My researches have been both difficult and dangerous. Sharpers do not willingly part with the arts on which they depend for their livelihood; and, moreover, you are driven, by your investigations, into a society which may often expose you to serious personal risk. 2

When I was but a novice in the art of legerdemain, I often went, as I have mentioned in my "Confessions," to the house of a manufacturer of articles used for jugglery, named Père Roujol, hoping to meet there some lover of magic, or professor of the art of legerdemain.

The kind Père Roujol had taken a great fancy to me; he knew my passion for what he termed "natural philosophy rendered amusing," and took pleasure in giving me these opportunities of obtaining useful hints on the subject.

He spoke to me one day, of a man named Elias Hausheer, whom he had met at a "café."

"This man," said he to me, "appears very clever, but from a few words he let fall, it strikes me that he makes more use of his dexterity in winning at play, than for the harmless amusement of the public."

Hausheer's character was of little consequence to me; he might be the greatest blackleg in Paris; I only cared to know that he was clever, and I hoped to learn from him a good deal that would be useful.

I thanked my old friend for his information, and decided to call on M. Hausheer the following morning about ten o'clock. 3

I was at this time only known as a mechanician, and I feared that my being so, would hardly procure me an introduction to the great man.

An idea just then crossed my brain; I had recently invented a little mechanical bird, which sang and hopped about on the top of a snuff-box. I thought that perhaps this work of art, a very valuable one, by-the-bye, would serve my purpose, and I took it with me.

Feeling more confidence in the result of my visit, I directed my steps towards the Rue de l'Écu d'Or, where the great man in question resided. I say great man, not in a spirit of irony, but because, in my monomania, my imagination pictured M. Hausheer as having a large fortune, and all other advantages in keeping with his wonderful talents.

I did not know the Rue de l'Écu d'Or at all. I was much surprised, on arriving there, at its miserable and poverty-stricken appearance, but without stopping to reflect on this first disenchantment, I walked on until I came to No. 8, which was the address mentioned on the card I held in my hand.

A long, straight alley, damp and dirty, served as an entrance to the house. I entered it resolutely.

"Does M. Hausheer live here?" I asked, rapping on one of the dingy-looking panes of a sort of glass-box, over which the word "Porter," was written. 4

A man with a grey beard, cut to a peak, like a well-pointed pencil, with a bootjack in one hand, and a boot in the other, opened one of the panes, and with a strong German accent, asked me what I wanted.

"M. Hausheer," I replied.

"I don't know such a person: there are none but Germans in this house."

"Well," replied I, "if I may judge from the name I've just mentioned, the person I want ought to be a German."

I presented the card which I held in my hand.

The polisher of boots put on his spectacles, and after having read the name of his lodger, said:

"Ah! M. Hhhaousheer," aspirating, with great force, the letter H, as if to give me a lesson in pronouncing the German language. "Yes, yes, he lives on the second floor, at the end of the corridor, to the left."

Thus instructed, I mounted the staircase until I reached the second story, proceeding along a dark corridor, at the end of which I discovered a door, at which I rapped. Loud sounds and laughter were heard from within. 5

A woman, whose exact age it would be difficult to guess, so dirty and worn with age were both herself and her dress, opened the door a very little way.

Remembering the lesson of my friend with the bootjack below, I asked, "Is M. Hhhaousheer at home?"

"Come in, and go to that door," replied the woman, pointing to a glass-door at the end of the apartment.

Notwithstanding a nauseating odour which assailed my nostrils, and the wretched appearance of the whole place, I resolved on following up an adventure which promised some amusement.

The noise I had heard, proceeded from half-a-dozen children, more than half naked, and extremely dirty, who were playing and shouting.

The room was large, and they had it all to themselves, for there was no furniture in it.

Striding over one, and pushing aside another, I opened a glass-door, and found myself in a bedroom.

I will not attempt to depict this apartment, but will leave it to the imagination of my readers, who, after the description given of the preceding room, may easily imagine it was far from clean or comfortable. 6

No one was there to receive me. I ventured, however, to utter once more the name of the magician I had come to see.

Two curtains, which had once been white, were suddenly drawn aside, and in the centre appeared a gaunt-looking head, covered with a cotton nightcap, yellow from age and long usage.

"What do you want, young man?" asked this odd-looking individual, addressing me.

"To see M. Hausheer," I replied.

"I am M. Hausheer"—and my interlocutor eyed me in a way which seemed to say—"And what next?"

My illusions, so poetical a quarter of an hour before, were, you may well believe, entirely dissipated. M. Hausheer only inspired me with feelings of disgust.

I should have liked to have departed at once; but how could I do so? I must, at all events, say something before retiring.

"Sir," said I, "Père Roujol has been speaking to me about you, and of your skill in legerdemain. From what he said, I have been induced to come and talk to you, about an art in which I passionately delight; but do not disturb yourself, I will come again another time." 7

"No, no! Wait an instant—I understand, from what you say, you are come with the intention of taking some lessons from me."

I made no reply, fearing to bind myself to an engagement, of which I did not clearly see the end.

Hausheer, however, construed my silence into a consent, and thinking, doubtless, of the money he should gain, jumped straight out of bed. He was partly dressed, but, without troubling himself to put on any more clothes, he approached me.

"Let us see what you know, young man; what progress have you made in the science?" said he, offering me a pack of cards.

Far from accepting his invitation to give him a proof of my abilities, I repeated my desire to shorten my visit. But the wary professor did not intend thus to lose his prey. That I had come to take a lesson was evident, and he was determined that a lesson I should have, whether I now wished for it or not.

Still I persisted in my determination to retire.

Judging it would be wiser to persuade, than to force me, to stay, Hausheer began to exhibit, as a specimen of his skill, some tricks with cards, which he performed with marvellous dexterity.

From this moment, all the apprehension and disgust which I had previously felt, if I may so express it, completely vanished; admiration had replaced every other feeling. I was now as eager to remain, as I had before been to depart. 8

It was now my turn to astonish the professor; so I took out my celebrated snuff-box, and presenting it to him, I touched a spring, when out flew my little automaton, hopping, singing, and flapping his wings; and, when all these operations were finished, vanishing as if by enchantment.

As long as my bird was singing, my attention was riveted on it, but when it had finished, I glanced at Hausheer, to judge what effect it had produced on him. I was struck by the covetous expression that flashed from his eyes. It seemed to me that he glanced furtively from side to side in a singular manner, as if debating with himself how he could, by any possibility, gain possession of my snuff-box; his face was pale, and his hands, which he stretched towards me, were tremulous with agitation.

"How do you like it?" I asked him.

Instead of answering me, Hausheer walked across the room to a cabinet, opened it hurriedly, and took out something which he concealed under his clothes.

"It is very pretty," said he, at length, turning towards me; "but, I say, young man, you must leave it with me to show to one of my friends, who is rich, and will buy it." 9

"This box is not for sale," replied I; "it is an order, and, indeed, I ought to take it home to-day."

"Oh! that's of no consequence. I will show it to my friend, and you can take it home afterwards."

To this observation I made no reply, but wrapping the box up in paper, I was just going to put it back into my pocket, when Hausheer rushed up to me, rage sparkling in his eyes.

I confess I felt alarmed; and my alarm was not lessened, when my aggressor, backing me up into a corner of the room, exclaimed, in a voice I shall never forget, "I will have it; do you hear?"

At the same time he put his hand inside his flannel waistcoat, the poor and flimsy texture of which, permitted me to see the bony fingers of Hausheer clutch the handle of what I supposed to be a dagger.

The feeling of self-preservation restored all my energies. The danger was imminent. I prepared for a desperate struggle.

I put my snuff-box quickly into my pocket, to leave my hands at liberty, and looked stedfastly at Hausheer, to read in his eyes, if possible, what was to be his next move. 10

He hesitated for a moment, seeming at a loss to know what it would be best to do. It may be, that the dogged expression of my countenance, or perhaps the impossibility of committing a murder without detection, made him pause; or he may have wished to try once more, by persuasion, to gain his ends, before proceeding to extreme measures. The whole expression of his physiognomy underwent an instantaneous alteration; he was

evidently trying to calm himself, and his full purple lips essayed to form themselves into a smile.

"Do tell me," said he, "why you won't lend me your snuff-box?" tapping me familiarly on the shoulder at the same time.

"Devil take it, man," I replied, as calmly as my agitated feelings would allow me, "you are so quick, you don't give one time to explain oneself." To this observation he uttered some gibberish, to which I paid no attention, so much was I preoccupied with my own thoughts. Dreading a recurrence of his former violence, I was pondering on some plan to escape, and was lucky enough to hit on the following:—

"Look here," I exclaimed, forcing myself to speak in as natural a tone of voice as possible, "you are sure that you can sell this piece of mechanism for me?" 11

"Certainly," replied Hausheer; "I am quite sure of it, for my friend is very rich."

"Oh! then, if your friend is so rich, you can do me a great service, my dear sir."

"What is it?"

"I possess a snuff-box similar to this, as regards the mechanical part of it; but as the box itself is of chased gold, it is too expensive an article for me to dispose of easily. I should, therefore, be very glad if your friend would buy it."

It is well said, that, to believe oneself more clever than others, is the way to be deceived. The cunning rascal never perceived the snare I had laid for him.

"That would suit him better still," said he. "Come, let us go, and get this treasure."

"Willingly," I replied. "Finish dressing yourself, and I'll wait for you; without," I added, "you would like to accompany me in the state you now are?"

This little *plaisanterie* did not provoke a smile from Hausheer; he contented himself with offering me a chair, and proceeded to finish his toilette.

During this time I was contriving the plot for my revenge.

At length we started. 12

The Rue de l'Écu d'Or was at the back of the Hôtel de Ville. The Rue de Vendôme au Marais, where I lived, was not far off; besides, each of us had reasons of his own for hastening his steps; so we were soon there.

I rapped at my door, and, as soon as it was opened, I entered in advance of my companion, and, turning round and standing so as to prevent his entrance, I said to him, in a calm voice, mingled with irony—

"M. Hausheer, I have some business to transact in this house, which will detain me some time. I hope, therefore, you will not trouble yourself to wait for me."

"And the snuff-box with the bird?" said the German, reddening with vexation.

"Oh! you shall have that another time," I replied, in a mischievously significant tone of voice, and shut the door hastily in his face.

As Hausheer departed, I heard him utter a perfect volley of oaths and imprecations, amidst which, the words, "I have been a great blockhead," were distinctly audible.

These volleys of abuse mattered little to me; I was in my own house, and had nothing to fear. I left the rascally juggler to his anger and his regrets.

Some months afterwards, I was one day reading the "Gazette des Tribunaux," when my eye was arrested by the name of Elias Hausheer, figuring amongst a gang of sharpers of the worst kind. 13

The phrase, "I have been a great blockhead," recurred to my mind. I could now understand its true meaning. Hausheer was not a man to stick at trifles: he was a blockhead for not having possessed himself of my snuff-box at *any price*.

The recollection of it made me shudder.

The knowledge of the danger I had incurred made me more prudent for the future, but did not prevent me from following my researches, only, instead of going myself on such occasions, I now always sent a third party. I employed, as my agent, a young man whom I knew to be respectable enough, though much of his time was passed in "estaminets" and gaming-houses, and I paid handsomely for each new trick that he brought me.

At such a statement I fancy I hear my reader exclaim: "Why pay so much for learning a thing which is wrong? Is it not the act of a fool or a monomaniac?"

I acknowledge my weakness; but, dear reader, had it not been for this monomania, I should never have had the success I have enjoyed.

I always intended turning my knowledge to a good account; many circumstances have retarded the fulfilment of my intentions; but at length I have the honour of presenting the result of my labours to you, under the title of,— 14

"THE SHARPER DETECTED AND EXPOSED."

CHAPTER I.

MODERN GREEKS.

Origin of the name "Greek"—The first gambling-houses—Invention of roulette—Hunt for dupes—Opening of "*tripots*," or low gambling-houses—The Greek described—Different classes of sharpers.

Let me in the first place explain to my readers, why the compatriots of Homer and Plato have been thus honoured, or rather dishonoured, and how it comes that the word "Greek" has, in our day, become synonymous with rascal or knave.

The following are the facts:—

Towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV., a certain Chevalier of Greek origin, named Apoulos, was admitted into the Court circle, where he played with such success, and won so largely, that suspicions were aroused as to the fairness of his play.

His dexterity was astonishing; but one day he was taken "*flagrante delicto*," and condemned to the galleys for a period of twenty years.

The circumstance made a great noise at the time, and, ever since, similar rogues have been termed "Greeks." 16

Shakspeare asks, "What's in a name?" There is, however, a French proverb which tells us that, "*Souvent ce sont les noms qui décident des choses*." Many who did not object to be called "Greeks," would have loathed the name of "swindler."

The number of these light-fingered gentry was greatly increased, by the establishment in Paris of two public gambling houses, known as the Hôtel de Gèvres, and Hôtel de Soissons.

Until then, the Greeks exercised their vocation separately; most of them had no arranged method of proceeding, and their tricks were nearly all badly executed.

In fact, the art of cheating was still in its infancy.

The opening of the two hotels above mentioned, caused a complete revolution amongst the Greeks. The cleverest amongst them met, invented new manœuvres, and clubbed together to cheat their neighbours; they imagined, calculated, and invented, all sorts of tricks until then unknown.

Lansquenet, Pharo, Piquet, and Quadrille were the favourite games of that period, and being much in vogue, were golden mines of wealth to these rascals.

The game of roulette, even, which had just been introduced into the fashionable hells, and which the public believed they could play without fear, was tampered with by this fraternity. 17

One of them, who was a geometrician, had a roulette board made, in which the black divisions were larger than the white ones, so that the chance of the ball entering the latter was diminished.^A

To arrange all this, it was necessary to have an understanding with the attendants at these hells; but this was not difficult, as most of them were scamps.

The number of Greeks in Paris increased at length to such an extent, that they were at a loss for dupes.

This state of things, however, did not last long. Reckoning on the weakness of human nature, these men knew, that the number of dupes in the world is without limit, and that they will never fail you, if you only know how to profit by the weakness of the human heart. 18

They organised a band of emissaries or agents, whom they despatched in all directions, to discover and attract—1st, All strangers newly arrived in the capital; 2nd, Barristers coming out of court after having gained a suit; 3rd, Successful gamblers who had won to a large amount; 4th, Heirs to large estates; 5th, Imprudent clerks and foolish youths, who would stake their last farthing.

With such auxiliaries, the Greeks again realised immense profits; but their doings created so much scandal, that upon a representation made by the police, Louis XV. ordered both the Hôtels de Gèvres and de Soissons to be closed, and renewed the former stringent regulations against all games of chance.

Even this measure did not disconcert the Greeks; they opened low gambling-houses, and played in secret.

The police were again put on their track, and waged fearful war against them.

Constant trials, imprisonment of proprietors, and the conviction of a host of swindlers, alarmed the dupes, whose fears began to be awakened, so that they dared no longer frequent these establishments. 19

Thus followed and routed, the Greeks dispersed in all directions, rushed into the provinces and foreign countries, to return, after a time, to their former home in the capital; when the Government, in urgent want of money, established Frascati, and the rival houses in the Palais Royal. Over the doors of these institutions ought to have been inscribed "*ici on trompe de bonne foi*," or in other words, "Here they *take in* all comers."

The enormous sums lost by the public, all the chances of which had beforehand been cleverly calculated, produced an immense revenue to the State, and considerable profits to the owners of the tables.

The Government shut its eyes to these knavish proceedings, until forced to take notice of them by the clamours of the public, who would not submit to be thus openly robbed.

Roulette and other gambling games were again prohibited, and, with them, the whole gang of sharpers for whom these games had always been a centre of attraction, appeared also to vanish. I say the gang *seemed* to vanish, for, if roulette has been banished from France, the Greeks have unfortunately by no means ceased to reside there. But where are they to be found? 20

Their numerous dupes know too well. They have learnt to their cost, that these insatiable birds of prey are always to be found wherever there is money to be got.

But you will ask, "How are they to be recognised?"

There is the difficulty; for these heroes of the criminal courts are now become more clever than ever. Forced to mix in society, they know the necessity of being perfect in their unlawful occupation, in order to escape the punishment which the law has in store for them.

However difficult it is to recognise them, we will endeavour to point them out to all honest men; so that they may know them, if not by their faces, at least by some characteristic signs, but especially by a revelation of the tricks to which these men usually have recourse.

Taken collectively, the "Greeks" present no peculiarity of type. It would be difficult to sketch their features, so numerous and varied are they. I think it best, therefore, to characterise them by dividing them into three categories.

1st. The aristocratic Greek, or sharper of the fashionable world.

2nd. The Greek of the middle classes.

3rd. The Greek of the low gambling houses.

"Honour to whom honour is due;" so let us begin with the first on our list.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREEK OF FASHIONABLE LIFE.

Wonderful acuteness—Refined sleight-of-hand—Delicacy of touch.

The sharper of fashionable life is, without doubt, the most adroit and clever in his villany; he is, one may say, grand master of the art of cheating.

He is generally a man of the world, whose dress and manners leave nothing to be desired. If he does not dazzle by the brilliancy of his conversation, it is that he does not wish to eclipse others, but perhaps reserves his forces for the "*mise en scène*" of his villainies.

This "citizen of Athens" cares little to please in general society, but emulates only those qualities which may be of use to him in his profession; and whether he is thus gifted by nature, or has acquired the science by study, certain it is, that he has that delicacy of perception, exquisite tact, and above all, that marvellous talent of appreciation of character, of which I have already spoken in my work, "Confessions of a Wizard." When he is victimising his dupes, his eyes, seemingly fixed on his own cards, are casting furtive glances to see all that is passing around him. He knows, by the effect produced on his adversary's countenance, when the cards are turned up, as well as by the classification of the cards themselves, the nature of his play. 23

As a physiognomist, the Greek of fashionable life rivals the cleverest disciple of Lavater. It would be in vain to try and baffle him, by putting on a dull and stolid expression of countenance; the slightest movement of the nerves of the face, or an almost imperceptible contraction of the features, discovers to him your most hidden thoughts.

This quickness of perception is equally useful to him, in discovering if he is looked on with doubt or suspicion.

The aristocratic "Greek" is also an adept in every sort of gambling. The theories and probabilities of all games of chance, so cleverly described by Van Tenac, are the principles on which he bases his system, and which he makes use of with wonderful intelligence.

To this rare talent, the aristocratic Greek unites a profound knowledge of the most refined sleight of hand; thus, no one knows better than he, how to change one card for another, make a false cut, to abstract or add a trick, &c., &c.; and he has carried these three important principles of cheating to a marvellous perfection. 24

Blessed with excellent eyesight, he can, after a few deals, and attentively watching the cards, recognise many of them. One is perhaps the slightest shade more highly coloured than the rest. Another has on some particular part a spot or blemish, an imperfection of some kind, that the best manufacturers cannot always avoid, of which he takes advantage.

In the absence of any mark, by his extreme delicacy of touch, he will be enabled to distinguish different cards as they pass through his hands, aided by a slight indentation which he makes on them with his nail. Once able to distinguish them, he can either give them to his adversary, or appropriate them to himself, whichever he deems most favourable to his interests.

The aristocratic Greek always quits the capital during the summer months, and frequents the various watering-places. He invariably directs his steps towards that celebrated and brilliant oasis, which will surely some day bear the appellation of Villa-Benazet,^B but which at present is called Baden-Baden.

It is there, thanks to the blindness and wealth of his adversaries, that he realises enormous profits, by means of which he lives like a nabob. 25

The greatest number, however, of these fashionable sharpers, end their days in misery. Some few retire into private life; there to live an existence of fear and remorse, so well depicted by a witty moralist and member of the Academy,^C in his book entitled "Une Fortune mystérieuse."

CHAPTER III.

THE GREEK OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES.

The "*Comtois*" and "*Amazones*"—Tricks and frauds—An heir expectant—Game at bouillotte—A rich pocket-book—The bill to pay—Dupers duped.

The Greek of the middle classes, otherwise termed the nomad Greek, on account of his ubiquity, is a sort of chain or link between the aristocratic sharper, and him of the low gambling houses. This chain is of great length, and unites, by almost imperceptible gradations, the two extremes in this world of filibusters.

The nomad Greek seldom works alone, he is in league with accomplices called "comtois."

These are for the most part other Greeks, whose reputation is higher than that of their associates. But, according to circumstances, these respectable individuals take it by turns to play the role of "comtois."

These gentlemen, besides their accomplices, have female assistants called "Amazones."

These women are, for the most part, very pretty and attractive, and are equally, if not more, vicious than their lords and masters. 27

In those attractive snares to the unwary and to foreigners, known under the name of clubs, these "Amazones" perform the office of decoys.

The wiles and tricks of these women will not bear analysis, and could not be described here. Suffice it to say, that, like the simple larks which a fowler attracts and blinds by means of a revolving mirror, the imprudent and unwary visitors, fascinated by the seductions of these sirens, become an easy prey, and stupidly allow themselves to be plucked by the hunters of these prairies.

The nomad Greek cannot boast of the wit and good manners of his colleague of the fashionable world, neither has he that finesse in executing his tricks, which renders detection difficult. But he is not the less clever in the manipulation of the different means of cheating.

Cards, dice, and dominoes, are all, in his hands, most formidable instruments of his profession.

He is able to exercise his adroitness at all games, simple or complicated, be it whist or battle, tric-trac, or even "heads or tails." He knows tricks, with which he can turn each and all of these to his advantage. His dupes are as numerous as they are varied; he finds them anywhere and everywhere. He spares none; his nearest relatives, his most intimate friends, are often his first victims. 28

The following anecdote proves the perfidy of this class of sharper:—

Three Greeks, united, not by the bonds of friendship, but of rascality, went each on his way to seek for dupes.

One of them, a young Italian, nicknamed Candour, perhaps on account of his craft and cunning, informed his companions, that he had become acquainted with a young man of position, just arrived from the country.

This young provincial was rich, a gambler, and prodigal to excess,—qualities much appreciated by the three rascals.

Finding out from the Italian, that his new friend was to be at the opera that same night, they immediately arranged their plan of attack.

So good an opportunity was not to be lost, and when their plans were all settled, they separated, having arranged to meet at the opera-house.

At the appointed hour, the three Greeks met in the lobby of the theatre, and were fortunate enough to see the young capitalist soon afterwards.

The Italian, having addressed his new friend, introduced him to his two associates, giving them titles borrowed from the nobility. 29

The introduction over, the conversation became general, and so interesting, that their victim did not quit their side the whole evening.

The three Greeks were most affable in their manners towards the young man, and he, delighted with his new acquaintances, invited them all to sup with him at the celebrated restaurant of the "Maison Dorée."

The invitation, it may easily be divined, was accepted with pleasure.

The repast was worthy of the host.

No expense was spared to regale such charming companions.

To prolong the pleasure of this charming *réunion*, one of them began talking of play, and bouillotte being proposed, was received with acclamation.

Whilst they were laying out the card-table, the three Greeks again managed to have a little private conversation, and, by the advice of Candour, they agreed, that, in order to allay all suspicions in the mind of their victim, it would be better to allow him to win at first to the extent of three thousand francs (120*l.*), after which they would fleece him without remorse.

The game began well for the Greeks: the young man placed on the table a pocket-book which seemed well-filled, and took out of it a note for five hundred francs (20*l.*), which he staked. 30

Fortune, by the assistance of the three sharpers, seemed to smile on the provincial, and in a short time, he found himself possessor of the sum it had been agreed he should be allowed to gain.

"Indeed, gentlemen," exclaimed he, putting the notes he had just won into his pocket-book, "I am so overcome at such a wonderful run of luck, that I will go on playing, to give you the chance, at least, of winning back your money. I am determined I will not stake less now than a thousand francs (40*l.*)."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when, drawing his handkerchief from his pocket, the young man held it up to his nose, which began to bleed violently.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," said he, "I will be with you again in five minutes, I am very subject to these hemorrhages from the nose;" and he went out, leaving his pocket-book on the table. Candour, filled with compassionate interest, rushed after his friend; but truth compels us to state, not to give him assistance, but to bolt with him as fast as his legs could carry him.

The rich provincial was neither more nor less than a Parisian sharper, with whom Candour had concocted a scheme, to rob his accomplices of three thousand francs. 31

The hemorrhage, and the pocket-handkerchief stained with blood, were the dénouement of the comedy, the first act of which took place in the Opera-House.

Let us now return to the restaurant, to see and hear what is taking place there.

"Ah!" said Patoche (one of the rascals who remained behind) to his comrade, eyeing at the same time the pocket-book full of bank-notes lying on the table, "all proceeds beyond our hopes. Let us imagine we have gained the bank-notes from the provincial. Let's pay ourselves, and be off."

"Yes; but," said the other, "you forget, the bill must be settled before we can go."

"*Mon Dieu!* What a fool you are! We will pay the bill, and the pocket-book will reimburse us for any money we advance."

"And if we should meet the owner of it!"

"Well, what could he say to us? We were on our way to meet him, to return him the pocket-book, which he left on the table."

"True; I understand; he will owe us many thanks for so doing. It's a good idea."

The two rogues then asked for the bill, which they settled, gave the waiter a handsome fee, and hastened down-stairs. 32

As soon as they reached the bottom of the staircase, the one who had the pocket-book in his possession stopped short.

"I say, Patoche, a thought has just struck me. Go back, and tell the waiters, that we intend going to the Café Riche to continue our game. This will give us time to escape to some place of safety with our prize."

No sooner had Patoche departed up the stairs to execute his errand, than his companion vanished with the pocket-book.

Which of these two rogues was the most deceived?

The pocket-book was full of waste paper: the bank-notes had been cleverly abstracted by the pretended provincial.

This sketch will give some idea of the characters of the individuals whom I herein portray. If my readers wish for further information, they must continue the perusal of this work, and the different rogueries herein described, amongst which the nomad Greek plays some of the principal rôles; I think they will then have a clear view of the villany of these men.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GREEK OF THE TRIPOT.

His abject condition—The public-house—Pretended stupidity—Dupes fleeced—Acting the countryman—*Table d'hôte*—The pellets—A good farce—Deception—The three cards—The countryman's bet—Clever substitution—English rogues—Thimble-rig.

It may with truth be said, that the Greek of low life is a sort of vulgar imitation of the two other types that I have just been describing, and, if I may be allowed to draw the comparison, I should say, that the Greek of the low gambling-house, is, to his more favoured comrade, what a street-ballad singer is to an educated artiste.

Heaven forbid that I should fall into an ecstasy about the villainies of any sharper, let him be of whatever class he may; but I may venture to say, that, although under no circumstances should I like to be robbed, yet, if I am to be so, I should much prefer being cheated out of my money by a gentlemanlike scamp, than by a low vulgar sharper.

As regards elegance of manners and appearance, there can be no comparison between the aristocratic Greek, and him of the lowest grade. There is every reason to believe, that the former is not even aware of the existence of the latter. Men of this stamp all resemble each other more or less; most of them are miserable specimens of humanity, whom idleness and debauchery have reduced to the necessity of cheating, hoping thereby to get what honest labour had failed to obtain for them.

Their tricks are usually as coarse, as the victims on whom they practise. It is no longer sleight of hand, it is a sort of cheating, for which there is no name. Their victims being ordinarily so easy to dupe, they do not care to become more expert.

Besides, it is generally not until after finishing the fifth or sixth bottle, that the play begins.

The qualities most essential for these rascals, are to be able to drink and smoke to any extent, without being affected by it. The constant use of spirits produces this insensibility to their influence.

The third-rate sharper makes the lower public-houses and tap-rooms, outside the barriers, the scene of his exploits. His victims are drunken labourers, countrymen visiting the capital, soldiers on leave, and sometimes persons of small independent means out for a frolic.

This style of Greek has usually a colleague to assist him in his manœuvres. Their operations require the assistance of a second party, as they are performed American fashion.

I cite one out of a thousand similar instances:—

The swindler enters a public-house, which he knows is much frequented, and places himself at a table, near which another man is already seated; this man, whom he pretends not to know, is an accomplice. He calls for a bottle of wine, which he empties at once, and begins talking to his neighbour in a loud voice, so as to attract the attention of the whole company. He puts on an appearance of the greatest stupidity, and makes some foolish remarks arranged for the occasion, to which the "*comtois*" replies by making game of him, to the great amusement and satisfaction of his auditory.

Insensibly all draw near, and approach the two antagonists.

The Greek ends by getting annoyed with the joking of his neighbour, and proposes to play for the two bottles on the table.

The proposition is accepted, but the Greek plays badly, and the game is soon lost. He holds his cards so awkwardly, that it appears as if he had never had one in his hands before. His defeat was evident from the first.

His fortunate adversary, delighted with his triumph, wins everything, and quickly walks off.

The rogue who remains behind, bitterly bewails his loss, and testifies his anxiety to take his revenge on the first comer.

The dupes, led on by the hope of winning easily, are all eager to accept the challenge. They play, and win as they expected, but the rascal, far from being discouraged, takes from his pocket a handful of five-franc pieces, which he announces he is ready to stake, to try and regain what he has lost.

This declaration, together with the clink of the silver, is too great a temptation to withstand. Every one present is anxious to have his share of a booty so easy to acquire. They play again, and again win several games, and this additional loss (arranged by the Greek) gives him an opportunity of raising his stakes and offering to play double or quits.

Now begins the real game of our hero, who, without forgetting his character of the fool, brings into play the resources of a coarse sort of sleight of hand. He gains with an air of such stupid simplicity and "*gaucherie*," that no one has the slightest suspicion on the subject. Luck has turned in his favour, and, in the parlance of "*cabarets*," there is a Providence over drunkards.

The Greek, after having filled his purse at the expense of his adversaries, retires for want of combatants, and goes off to share the spoil of the day with his associate.

This scene is, in the vocabulary of Greeks, termed; "acting the countryman."

* * * * *

Were a case of sharping of this description tried before the tribunals of justice, one, or at most two culprits, would be brought forward; and yet is it not evident to every one, that, in robberies conducted American fashion, and particularly in those of the kind specified above, the duped are as guilty as the dupers? Would they not have

taken advantage of the poor foolish countryman to victimise him? The sole reason which prevented them so doing, was the fact of their having met with one, who, with all his apparent stupidity, was more than a match for themselves.

If I were writing for the "*habitués*" of Paul Niquet and the frequenters of "*Père la Rangaine*"^D I should make the Greek of the public-houses the hero of this work; but as I have every reason to believe, that most of my readers will never come in contact with this class of sharper, I shall only mention one or two of his best tricks, and then have done with him.

38

* * * * *

We will suppose our hero to be dining at one of the "*tables-d'hôte*" outside the barriers, where you get your dinner at a shilling a head. In the course of the repast, the Greek, who, by-the-bye, seems a jovial sort of fellow, offers to make all sorts of bets with those around him,—bets of that equivocal nature in which the proposer is sure to win.

The Greek, however, makes these bets less with a view of gain, than to irritate the men who lose, and from whom he hopes later in the evening to derive some benefit.

At dessert he takes three plates and some tumblers, and affects to play a juggling trick with pellets of bread crumbs.

But his performances are so ridiculously "*maladroit*," that the spectators only laugh at him.

There is no deception, for, as they say, one sees the string which makes the puppet dance.

Still the Greek goes on with wonderful assurance:—

"Gentlemen," he observes, "you see I put this little ball under a plate; well, I will make it disappear without your seeing anything;—I mean, that the most clever amongst you will see nothing."

39

But whilst the Greek is placing the pellet under the plate, he knows well enough, that by a particular motion of his hand, he has sent it rolling on the floor.

Pretending to think that it is still under the plate, he endeavours to explain what a clever trick he is about to show them, as he does not even require to approach the table to do it. Whilst giving these explanations, he affects to turn his back to the spot where the trick is to be executed.

A spectator, who has seen the pellet fall down on the ground, picks it up, and puts it openly in his pocket, at the same time addressing his neighbours in a low voice:—

"Let us play him a good trick, and bet with him, that the pellet is no longer under the plate. He'll be sure to take the bet, as he is not aware of his own awkwardness."

They agree to the proposition the more eagerly, as they are all pleased to mystify the mystifier, who, far from declining, bets a large sum, and offers, moreover, to bet it with each spectator individually who likes to accept the challenge.

Two or three people come forward, and first and foremost are those who have been already taken in. They rub their hands in glee with hopes of being revenged, and feel sure of winning, as they know that the pellet is in the pocket of one of the betters.

40

But, alas! they are all deceived. When the plate is raised, behold! The pellet is there, under it.

The juggler has won his bets.

Whilst throwing one pellet on the ground, the cunning fellow had very cleverly introduced another under the plate.

The spectator who so eagerly offered to bet was his colleague.

* * * * *

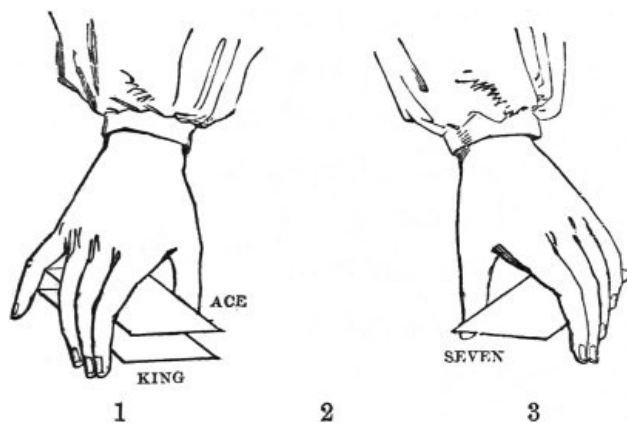
Again, here is another instance of the adroitness of these miscreants.

Some years since, on the road between the "Place de la Bastille" and the "Jardin des Plantes," or any other public thoroughfare where the Parisian cockneys were likely to be met with, a man was to be seen on his knees on the pavement, which he had appropriated to himself, to show off the following piece of deception.

He held in his hands three cards—say, the seven of hearts, the king of spades, and the ace of diamonds.

41

The two last of these cards were held in his right hand, the first-mentioned in his left, as is shown in the following engraving.



The rogue, raising his hands a little, requested them to remark the order in which the cards were placed. Then turning them over, he threw them, one after another, side by side on the pavement.

The seven of hearts is designated by the figure 1;

The king of spades by No. 2;

And the ace by No. 3.

This done, he shuffled the cards for some time, to draw off the attention of the spectators.

Addressing one of them, he asked him where the king was.

They, having seen the card in his right hand, and followed it closely with their eyes, point it out each time, and are never deceived. 42

The Greek pretended to be much annoyed at not being able to baffle the spectators.

He began again, and this time offered to make a large bet, that they would not find the card.

The people laughed, but did not venture to take his bet, when one amongst them, braver than the rest, a sort of country clown (to all appearance), stepped forward.

"That's capital," said he, with an oath, "I bet you twenty sous I guess where the king is."

The bet was accepted by the Greek who, turning over the card pointed out by the countryman, confessed he had lost, and paid the stake.

The two champions continued to bet, and the Greek invariably lost, until the peasant, satisfied with his winnings, retired. The rest of the spectators, who had stood quietly looking on, were thoroughly taken in by the countryman.

When he had retired, and the Greek continuing his offers of betting, three or four of them, taking the man for a fool, accepted the challenge.

But they, poor dupes, were ignorant that the countryman was an accomplice, and that the money he had pretended to gain, was only a lure to excite their cupidity. 43

With the fresh set of people anxious to bet, the Greek entirely changed his tactics. In throwing the cards on the ground, he, by a manœuvre, completely changed their position.

Thus, it is true, he placed the seven of hearts on No. 1, but, instead of letting fall the king of spades on No. 2, he slipped the card above (the ace of diamonds) in its place, and put the king on No. 3.

This substitution was so rapidly done, that no one perceived it, and of course, when the shuffling was all over, and the card named by the lookers on was turned up, it proved to be the ace of diamonds.

As this occurred very often, the losers determined to try and take their revenge, seldom quitting until they were all cleared out.

It sometimes happened that quarrels and even pitched battles followed this system of cheating; in which case the accomplice, who, from a distance, had watched the proceedings, interposed his powerful aid, and assisted his comrade to decamp.

This sort of gambling is now only met with in public-houses, as the police have interdicted the exhibition of it on the public thoroughfares.

* * * * *

In England they have a game similar to this, called Thimble-rig. Three thimbles are placed on a table, like the goblets used in jugglery.

A small ball is put under one of them; the thimbles are then moved about rapidly, so as to bewilder the spectators. And, as in the previous trick, the rogue has an accomplice to aid him in obtaining bets from the spectators, and, as has also been shown, he is sure to win.

But with the public it is quite another thing; the rogue himself never loses, for in pushing about the thimbles he artfully manages to make the ball pass from under the thimble, where he placed it, to another.

This is done by an act of sleight of hand.

From what I have said, it will be evident to the reader that, though the Greek of the low gambling-house is, to a certain extent, different from his brother sharpers, still he resembles them in their rogueries and cheating.

CHAPTER V.

A GREEK TAKEN IN THE FACT.

The restaurant of the *Veau qui tête*—Subscription ball—The card room—A lucky player—*Sauter la coupe*
—Mystification—The tell-tale hat—We are done.

With such a number of Greeks mixing in society, one is tempted to ask, how is it that they are so seldom brought before the tribunals of justice?

This is easy to explain. In the first place, the Greek is generally clever, cunning, artful, and circumspect; for these reasons, his manœuvres are seldom discovered.

And, supposing he were caught in the very act of cheating, if it were in a private house, they would probably be content with making him disgorge his ill-gotten gains, and ignominiously turning him out of the house.

If it were in public, the swindler always knows how to manage the affair in some way or another, or to bolt.

The following circumstance I was myself a witness of.

There was formerly (I speak of thirty years ago), on the Place du Châtelet, on the spot now occupied by the Chambre des Notaires, a very large restaurant of great repute, known as the "Veau qui tête" ("Sucking Calf").

In the centre of this vast edifice was a picture representing a pastoral subject—it was a cow suckling her calf. This very primitive allegory was meant to express, that the food supplied in that house, was of the most harmless and nutritive description.

And it was perfectly true, that, whether it was a small entertainment for one or two people, or a grand wedding dinner, the table was always well served, and there were large rooms to make merry in.

This matter *posé* (as the professors of physiology say), I will proceed with my recital.

During the Carnival of 1832, some folks of my acquaintance took it into their heads to give a subscription ball, and selected the famous saloons of the "Veau qui tête" to give it in.

The subscribers were numerous, and consequently, as often happens, the society was of a mixed character. Out of three hundred persons present, scarcely a dozen knew each other. But as there were plenty of police, people were not afraid to join in the dance.

Wherever there is a ball, there is generally a room for play. In this instance, close to the ballroom, was a saloon filled with tables for play, and gambling going on.

I was one of the players.

I am not a gambler, for I play with great caution and moderation. I never risk more than a small piece of silver at cards, and only play, until the sum I intend to venture is lost; after which I retire, if not with pleasure, at least with philosophic resignation.

On this evening, Dame Fortune was against me, and in spite of my best strategical calculations, the inconstant goddess had quickly put me *hors de combat*. The last of the ten francs I had staked had vanished.

The lightness of my purse left me in a capital physical condition to dance; but, though I had never been a great dancer, I feared, in spite of my philosophy, that my partners might perceive that I was out of sorts. I am obliged to confess, that at that period of my life, ten francs was a large sum for me to lose.

But at twenty-five years of age one is seldom a millionaire.

Therefore, instead of joining in the dance, I directed my steps to another table where they were playing, with a malicious intention of consoling myself, by looking on at the misfortunes of others. One does feel so spiteful when one is vexed.

The game was very animated, gold was glittering on the table, and all eyes, riveted on the precious metal, seemed eager with anticipated pleasure.

They were playing *écarté*.

The player, behind whom I stood, was most unfortunate; he had lost four games one after another.

I began to think that I had brought my ill-luck to my neighbour. Wishing to be strictly impartial, I resolved to make him some amends, by transporting it and myself to the side of his adversary.

The man behind whom I now placed myself, was about forty years of age. He had a frank, open countenance, and boasted a huge pair of thick "blondes moustaches." He wore a blue coat, buttoned up to the throat, which gave him a military air; this, together with his *distinguée* appearance, and easy, gentlemanlike manners, betokened a man accustomed to the best society.

He was most fortunate in his play, and after each game, invariably, whilst collecting and dealing the cards, kept alluding to his wonderful luck, as if he wished to justify himself to his opponent.

"If," said he, addressing his adversary, "you had, unluckily for me, played a diamond instead of a spade, I should have been forced to take it, and you would have made the trick."

This manner of particularising facts rather astonished me. I was at this time *au fait* at some of the tricks of the Greeks, and their way of discoursing on the game. It also struck me that I perceived him making certain passes, to which I was no stranger.

I stood for some time looking on, with the greatest attention, thinking I might be deceived in my conjectures. The game was played with the most perfect regularity. However, I allowed no movement of his to escape me.

In the end, my minute and determined investigation met with the success it deserved. A false move which he made, put me on the scent, and I now felt sure that the fortunate winner was nothing more than a Greek of the first water.

I confess with shame, that once in possession of the secret of these manœuvres, I took the greatest delight in seeing them executed.

Under the pretext of ascertaining the truth of my suspicions, I made friends with my conscience, and indulged in a spectacle truly interesting to me. 50

It was charming to observe my hero, with his elegant address, collecting the cards, sorting them, and selecting those which he thought would be of use to him. Then classing them in the most natural manner, and at length cutting them for his own benefit, before the eyes of a whole host of spectators.

Poor dupes, I pitied them.

In the end, my feelings became more worthy of me, and I returned to my better self. Laying aside my admiration, I resolved to put a stop to the continued success of the elegant sharper.

In consequence of this determination, I went up to one of our commissaries of police, named Brissard, whom I knew was intelligent and energetic. I told him what I had seen.

Brissard followed me—waited until the individual I pointed out to him rose from the table (a Greek is not imprudent enough to go on winning the whole evening), and when, after being successful eight consecutive times, he ceded his place, my friend addressed him without further circumlocution.

"Sir," said he, "I am one of the police in attendance. I have not the honour of knowing you. May I ask who introduced you here?" 51

"Oh! certainly," replied the Greek, with great assurance, a benevolent smile playing on his features. "I was introduced by my friend M——" (at the same time mentioning a well-known name), "to one of your colleagues, who gave me a most favourable reception. However, sir, if you will come with me, we will go and find my friend, who will confirm what I have stated. Stay, I think he is on this side the room."

Startled at the frankness of this reply, Brissard, thinking that I must have been mistaken, was on the point of apologising, but on a sign from me, he followed the Greek, who led the way, and appeared to be searching for his friend in every direction.

The crowd was so great we had great difficulty in following him.

All at once, the blue coat disappeared, as if by enchantment. In vain did we look for him in the room. We soon found that our man, in passing near the door, had slipped out.

"I'll catch him yet," said Brissard, running towards the cloak room, "the fugitive must be bare-headed, he has not had time to get his hat. The address of his hatter may help us."

"Madame," asked he, addressing the woman in charge of the hats and cloaks, "has a gentleman with large moustachios just been here to get his hat?" 52

"No, sir."

"That will do. Take great care of the last hat which is not claimed, and keep it for me."

He then went on to the *concierge*.

"Tell me, have you just seen any one go out?"

"Yes, sir; a tall man, with big moustachios."

"That's he; and he was bare-headed?"

"Yes; but after going a few steps, he pulled out an opera hat from under his coat, and put it on his head."

"The rascal had made his arrangements beforehand," said Brissard. "We are done."

* * * * *

If I had continued to frequent these kinds of *réunions*, I should have acquired a certain dexterity in this sort of rogue-hunting; but about this time, several circumstances occurred, which turned my thoughts from all worldly pleasures. On the other hand, it was repugnant to my feelings, even though it amused me, to spend my time in pursuits, which, though very useful, are scarcely considered honourable.

I have related the story of the Greek and his hat, because it serves as a sort of introduction to a series of facts descriptive of the art of cheating. 53

In continuing my story, we must allow for a lapse of twenty years.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GAMBLER RAYMOND.

His infallible system—His agreeable manners—A roulette player—Confidences—Revelations—In vein, and out of vein—The maturity of chances—Advice to players—Maxims—Influences—The gambler must be unmoved—Application of the system—A fortunate martingale—Mysterious meeting—Shorn of a beard—Ruin and misery—The talisman—Raymond is a Greek—Useful information.

In 1852, after a long series of performances, which I had been giving in Germany, I stopped at that charming little place, Spa, with the double intention of giving a few entertainments there, and also of getting a little rest after my fatiguing tour.

I put up at an hotel, the name of which has escaped me. It is very ungrateful of me, for it was an hotel where you received the greatest civility and attention, and the table was excellent, which is what one does not always meet with in one's travels.

The *table d'hôte* was usually very gay, as the people composing it were the *élite* of society, all in perfect health, coming there nominally to drink the waters, but in reality for amusement.

My neighbour at table was an *habitué* of the house, who had been living there, it was said, for some months. 55

He was an old man, with a long white beard, which was so thick and bushy that it nearly covered his face. The only part visible was a pair of cheeks, the roseate hue of which might cause a sigh of envy in the heart of many a coquette. One might compare them to two rosy apples lying on a bed of snow.

M. Raymond, for such was the appellation of the gentleman in question, was one of the most intelligent and amusing companions it was possible to meet with.

In conversation, he possessed the rare art of drawing others out, that is to say, having himself something interesting to relate, which often was the case, he managed, by cleverly turning the conversation, to obtain from each of the party assembled, his quota towards the general gaiety. He was, in fact, the life and soul of our gastronomic *réunions*.

M. Raymond, who was sometimes called "Voisin Raymond," or simply "Mon Voisin," seemed to be well off. The extent of his fortune was unknown, but he must have had some means, as he was one of the most constant players at the roulette-table; and to play much at this game one must be rich, Roulette is not a winning game—this is one of its greatest faults. 56

At the foreign watering-places, the passion for play is not considered a vice—it is looked on as an amusement, rather *comme il faut*; my neighbour, therefore, notwithstanding his regular attendance at the gambling-table, was still supposed to be an honourable man and a gentleman.

M. Raymond had been present at some of my *séances*, and seemed to take particular delight in them. Often had he spoken to me in such terms, as proved his thorough knowledge of the art of jugglery in general, and about tricks with cards in particular. When we were alone, he even showed me with what facility he could make a false cut, change one card for another, &c., &c. I therefore looked on him as a very clever amateur in these manœuvres. 57

Our having the same tastes, I may say the same passion, in common, contributed to add to our intimacy, and few days passed that we did not take long walks together in the neighbourhood. Our conversation turned, as may be supposed very frequently, on our favourite topic. We also spoke about "Roulette" and "Rouge-et-Noir," but on these subjects we seldom agreed, and my neighbour grew quite exasperated, when I said that I had a horror of gambling, and, that when I approached the table covered with green cloth, it seemed to me as if I were one of an assemblage of fools, or at least lunatics of the worst description. 57

"Fools and lunatics!" exclaimed M. Raymond; "you seem to be ignorant of the study necessary, of the strength of mind and talent required, to contend against bad luck. You are not aware that the art of turning lucky chances in your favour, is not a chimera, and that it requires great talent to be able to duly estimate the value of the chances."

One day, after a long discussion more than usually excited, M. Raymond, finding that he rather had the worst of the argument, thought to convince me by letting me a little into his confidence.

"Ah! Well, you say you have a horror of gambling, and will never play. Wait and see. I bet that in an hour you will be so wild about it, that I shall be obliged to restrain and guide you."

I made a gesture of denial.

"Pray listen to me;" added he; "only when you've heard what I have to tell, I must ask you to guard sacredly the secret I am about to confide to you."

"You probably share the generally received opinion, that I have a large fortune. I may say that I am rich, as my funds come from a source that is inexhaustible. At the same time, I do not mind confessing to you, that I have no other funds than my wits, or, in other words, my skill in play. I live by the profits I derive from the gambling-table. I could prove to you, that there is not a year that I do not make money at roulette, clearing at least twenty thousand francs (800*l.*). You naturally inquire how?—I am going to teach you. 58

"It has long been the custom to hold up to ridicule those, who, having little trust in fate, seek to make their fortunes by the aid of lucky combinations at play, more or less ingenious.

"Even if the result disappoint you day after day, ought you, therefore, to conclude that it is not to be obtained?"

"I have every reason for believing the contrary, and, when you have heard what I have to say, you will agree with me on the subject.

"To make these explanations more intelligible, I ought, in the first place, to establish the following aphorism: 'That all games of chance present two kinds of chances perfectly distinct: those which belong to the player, and those which are inherent in the combinations of the game.'

"The chances in favour of the player are represented by two mysterious agents, known by the names of loss and gain, or perhaps by the more characteristic ones of good and ill-luck. 59

"The chances of the game are termed probabilities.

"A probability is the relation which exists, between the number of chances favourable to a result, and the sum total of possible chances.

"Some celebrated authors have written clever works on these same probabilities, but, in consequence of their profound depth and multiplicity, these calculations are of no earthly use to the player.

"Besides, all systems of probabilities may be advantageously replaced by the following theory:—

"If chance should happen to bring every possible combination of the game, there are, notwithstanding, certain limits, where it must cease.

"Such, for example, as the fact of a number coming up ten consecutive times at roulette.

"That might happen, certainly, but it has never yet occurred. We may therefore conclude, that:—

"In a game of hazard, the oftener a number comes up, the more certain it is that it will not come up the next *coup*.

"This is the groundwork of all the theories of probabilities, and is termed 'the maturity of chances.'

"After what I have stated, it is evident, that, in order to succeed, a person must only continue to play, when he is fortunate at the commencement, and must also only risk his money, at the instant prescribed by the rules of the maturity of chances. 60

"Some sort of introduction was necessary, but I have made it as short as possible."

Here M. Raymond, wishing doubtless to give me time to reflect on what he had said, stopped short, pulled his pocket-handkerchief out of his pocket, blew his nose several times, and then continued:—

"My theory is embodied in the following precepts, under the title of

ADVICE TO PLAYERS.

"1st. In playing, give the preference to the game of roulette, as it gives you the chance of investing your money in several ways,^E and also enables you to study at the same time various chances and maturities.

"2nd. A good player must be calm, and must keep his temper. A man who gives way to passion is sure to lose.

"If, as is said to be the case, gambling produces the most delightful sensations; as all happiness in this world has its reverse of pain and suffering, it is almost certain, that the anticipated pleasure of winning is balanced by many bitterly-deceived hopes. 61

"The man who likes gambling must take the risk of losing."

"3rd. A prudent player ought, before beginning, to observe, and obtain proof if possible, whether he is in a lucky vein or not.

"If there be any doubt about it, he must abstain from playing.

"4th. There are some whom ill-luck pursues incessantly. To these I would say: *never play*.

"5th. An experienced player ought always to avoid joining in partnership, with those unlucky people who always lose. Nothing is so contagious as ill-luck. Be careful never to place your money with that of unfortunate players. On the other hand, always place your money with those whom you see are lucky.

"6th. Accustom yourself to be one of the last to place your money, so that your play may not influence others who are also holding back.

"7th. Endeavour to choose for playing, the moment when you see there are most players; the *coups* are then less rapid, and one has more time to study them.

"8th. Never think of playing, unless you have your brain quite clear. Let the voice of the *croupier* and the card on which you have marked the points, occupy your thoughts. Isolate yourself in the midst of the crowd. 62

"9th. Never try a chance until it is ripe, or has arrived at its maturity. This system will often oblige a novice to remain inactive; but practice will enable him to play every time, as he will know how to profit by *all* the chances attached to the combinations of the game.

"10th. If the calculations, founded upon your luck, or upon probabilities, are disappointed, cease playing at once, to try your luck again at a more favourable opportunity.

"Obstinacy in playing is ruin."

"11th. Never play for more than two hours; beyond that time, brain and fortune become weary of being kept too long on the rack.

"12th. To acquire the sort of impassibility I advocate, hide, in the recesses of your own heart, any and all emotions, which the fact of winning may produce, be the sum ever so considerable. Remember that your good luck ought never to make you rejoice too much, for, though Dame Fortune may shower her favours

upon you, she as often takes her revenge on the imprudent whom success intoxicates."

I had paid the greatest attention to the explanation afforded me by M. Raymond. His system appeared to me, if not infallible, at least a very ingenious one; still I could not persuade myself, that it was possible to command success. I wished, however, to show him that I had perfectly understood him. 63

"All your precepts are very clear," said I, with an appearance of conviction, "and may be summed up as follows:—

"Before risking money at play, consider whether you are in a lucky vein, and study the probabilities of the game, or, as you call it, the maturity of chances."

"Just so," rejoined M. Raymond. "This system is so sure and certain, that I have latterly applied it most successfully.

"This morning I felt that it was one of my lucky days, those days so rare in the life of a gambler.

"This feeling was so strong in me, that I felt instinctively that something good would happen to me.

"On arriving at the table, I, however, at first only made a few trifling experiments at rouge-et-noir.

"My success confirmed my impressions.

"It would not have been prudent to exhaust the vein of my good luck, so I stopped, and, taking a card, began to study the maturity of the chances before making my great *coup*. 64

"After an hour spent in making observations, I thought the favourable moment had arrived, I placed ten francs on No. 33. I lost: one must expect that; but, confident in my successful vein, even more than in the No. 33, the maturity of which had not come to its full, I martingaled four times running.^F

"At the fifth *coup*, the probabilities proved in the right. The ball stopped at my lucky number.

"My four martingales having amounted to eighty francs, the sum paid me, according to the rules of the game, was thirty-six times that amount. I received 2880 francs (about 115*l.*).

"A fool would have gone on; but I, not wishing to tempt fortune, and in order to avoid losing all my gains, quitted the table."

Clever as was the system of M. Raymond, he could not, however, imbue me with the wish of risking the smallest sum at roulette. I have always looked on this game, as a trap baited with the prospect of an easy gain.

In fact, how many men have, like M. Raymond, invented systems and theories to break the bank, who have only succeeded in ruining themselves, and any fools who would listen to them. 65

Et s'il est un joueur qui vive de son gain,
On en voit tous les jours mille mourir de faim.

A few days afterwards, I quitted Spa to return to France, and, as often happens with friends picked up in one's travels, M. Raymond and I parted, as I thought, never to meet again.

It was not, however, thus destined.

Two years afterwards I found myself at Baden-Baden, and was walking on the Lichtenthal promenade. A man I had not before observed, came, and, placing himself suddenly before me, looked at me, as much as to say: "Do you recognise me?"

This man, judging by his appearance, was not one of the aristocracy of the Baden society. He wore a brown coat, which had that peculiar shiny look, which bespeaks long service. It was buttoned up to the throat, to allow him to dispense with the luxury of a waistcoat, or at least to prevent a too minute inspection of his under garments.

His face was ornamented with a pair of large "blondes moustaches," very carefully arranged.

"How the loss of a beard changes the appearance of a man!" said a voice, which I recognised immediately to be that of M. Raymond. 66

"True," I replied, somewhat absent by a remembrance of former days crossing my brain: "It is true, you are much changed." I looked at M. Raymond; more old recollections crowded into my mind. Those thick moustachios, that military appearance, were connected with an event which had once impressed me deeply. Still I could not quite recall the facts to my mind.

"I will not longer interrupt you in your walk," said M. Raymond, moving away; feeling hurt probably at my hesitation, of which he did not know the cause—when I stopped him:

"You do not interrupt me, 'Mon Voisin,'" I said; "let us walk on together, and we will go to a less frequented part, where you will be able to relate to me, more at your ease, all that has happened to you since we parted."

"Ah! *Mon Dieu!*" replied poor Raymond with a sigh, "my tale is a simple one; you shall judge for yourself.

"A fortnight after your departure, my luck turned. Bad luck pursued me, as it had never done before. According to my principles, I waited, hoping for a better chance; but my frightful ill-luck continued for six months. I changed my *locale*, to turn my luck, but all in vain. The best-established maturities, the most wonderful chances, all became, for me, elements of ruin. 67

"At my wits' end, as well as at the end of my resources, I sold in succession, jewels, linen, and clothes, by the proceeds of which I hoped to save myself from ruin; but in vain.

"I played with caution, and studied in despair, all the chances for and against me. I made nothing but unlucky hits, and was soon reduced to utter poverty.

"Ever since then, I have led the most extraordinary existence in the world. Too proud to beg, I endured with

resignation the most cruel privations. I cannot tell how it was, that I did not die of hunger.

"You may well believe that I did not wish to be recognised, in such a pitiable position. I, the lucky gambler 'Voisin Raymond,' whom all admired for his talent and good luck.

"I could not bear the pity of my former admirers.

"I shaved off my beard, the type in some measure of my greatness, and thus transformed, I lived unknown, waiting for better days."

Proud, as M. Raymond seemed to be, I did not think he would refuse a little assistance; but fearing to wound his susceptibility, I contrived to slip a napoleon into his hand, while giving it a parting shake. 68

"I accept what you offer me, but only as a loan," said he, "remember that:—Thanks, '*au revoir!*'"

On this, "Mon Voisin" quitted me, with much precipitation.

Curious to learn what he intended to do, I followed him unseen, and saw him direct his steps to that yawning gulf, the roulette-table. I was not surprised; all gamblers are alike.

The same evening, Raymond approached me with a triumphant air.

"Well!" exclaimed he, "they are right who say that borrowed money brings luck! Here I am, again in a lucky vein; I have played prudently and for small stakes; the result is, that I have won a hundred francs. It is a return of my former good fortune. Allow me, therefore, while thanking you, to retain for a time the napoleon you lent me; I look on it as a talisman, by means of which I hope to get out of all my difficulties."

Cruel deception! The following day, the talisman and its luck fell a prey to the rake of the hard-hearted *croupier*.

"A few more francs," said Raymond, when relating this misfortune, "and I could have stood out against my unlucky vein. You must know, my system has completely changed, and I feel so confident in my new system, that, with only three hundred francs, I feel assured that I could break the bank." 69

From all this, I saw that Raymond had lost, if not his wits, at least his judgment.

"You had much better leave Baden, Raymond," I said to him, "and devote yourself to some less dangerous occupation. Were you never in any profession, which you could again take up?"

"Alas! The profession I exercised formerly, was one still more dangerous; I quitted it twenty years since, and I swore never to resume it again."

This explanation, short as it was, threw a sudden light upon the vague recollections, which the altered face of Raymond had awakened in my mind.

"Wait," said I to him, looking at him attentively. "Yes! It certainly is,—were you not some twenty years since at a ball, which was given at the *Veau qui Tête*?"

"Yes! Well, what of it?"

"Do you recollect being questioned, after an unusual run of luck at *écarte*, and how you afterwards were chased by the police?"

"I remember the circumstance," replied Raymond, with the greatest calmness, "and the more so, because, as a termination to that scene and many preceding ones, finding myself tracked and nearly discovered, I fled to Germany, abandoning my dangerous career for a more tranquil and honest life. 70

"I there took another name, and with my thick beard, which almost hid my features, few would have recognised me; of this you can judge for yourself."

This candid avowal gave me hopes of obtaining from Raymond, an account of his former life, which could not but be interesting. I hoped to find there some facts, which would be of use for the work I was writing on sharpers. I did not hesitate to ask him to oblige me, and, in the hope of inducing him to admit me into his confidence, I offered to lend him three hundred francs (£12), which he was to return, when he had made his fortune. It was *giving* them to him, under another form.

Raymond agreed to both my propositions, but begged to be allowed until the morrow, to enable him to collect his ideas a little.

CHAPTER VII

EDIFYING HISTORY OF A GREEK.

Debauchery—Scheme to get money—The usurer Robineau—The bill of exchange—A false friend—
Treason—Stay at Clichy—Initiation of a sharper—Release from prison.

Raymond kept his promise. He came to me the following day; and, after I had made my arrangements, so that no one should interrupt us, I asked him to begin his story.

"It is not my intention," said he, "to tell you the history of my life; I shall only relate to you my *début* as a Greek, and the causes which so fatally led to it. After that, I will tell you some startling incidents, of which I have been the hero, the accomplice, or the witness.

"My real name, and the place of my birth, are of little consequence. I shall not mention them, out of respect to my family, one of the members of which holds a very high position in Paris; to you, therefore, I shall be simply M. Raymond.

"At the age of twenty, I was a tolerably good-looking fellow, and came into possession of a fortune of about ten thousand francs (400*l.*) a year. Being an orphan, I had no one to control me, and led, in consequence, one of the fastest and most dissolute lives in the metropolis. 72

"In two years my patrimony was all spent, and I found myself ruined.

"As always happens in such cases, my friends turned their backs on me, and, as must also always happen, it was necessary for me to exist; but how? A serious question, for one who had never had any other profession than idleness and debauchery.

"The idea of suicide occurred to me, but whether it was cowardice, or submission to fate, that prevented me, I know not, but I continued to live on."

M. Raymond then related several piquant anecdotes, as he called them.

As a faithful historian I shall transcribe them for the benefit of my readers; but, as they will be easier to recount in the third person, I shall in future adopt that method.

Raymond was thus abandoned, as he had stated, by all his friends, with one exception. This faithful friend, named Brissac, was the same age as himself; he had been the companion of his follies, and would now share his misfortunes.

They had one purse in common,—that is to say, they starved together. 73

Brissac's active mind was never at a loss; every day brought forth some new scheme, for restoring their broken fortunes.

"I say, Raymond," exclaimed Brissac, one morning, awakening his comrade; "I've got an idea! In a few days we shall be rolling in wealth. It only requires a couple of thousand francs (£80), no more; and this is what we must do to procure that sum.

"I am acquainted with an old money-lender, named Robineau; a sly, suspicious old fellow, and such a rogue, that an escaped convict would blush before him. He shall be our banker. I don't mind confessing to you that my credit with him is quite gone, so I can ask nothing for myself; but *you* might very well beg him to lend you the sum I named."

"No doubt I can *ask* for it," said Raymond, "nothing is more easy; but to *obtain* it, is another thing. You know these usurers always require security."

"I know that. Of course, you will offer security to this honest Robineau."

"You are joking."

"No, on the contrary, I am quite serious. Listen to me; you will offer Robineau a bill of exchange, and, at the same time, tell him to make all necessary inquiries about you in your native place. As no one there yet knows that you are ruined, there is no doubt, that, after making these inquiries, and satisfying himself of your respectability, he will give you what you require. We'll find means of paying him some day or other," added Brissac, by way of quieting his conscience. 74

Everything occurred as Brissac had predicted. In consideration of a bill for two thousand five hundred francs, at one month's date, renewable only with the consent of Père Robineau, he handed over to Raymond two bank-notes of a thousand francs each.

The friends had been so long deprived of anything like pleasure, that they determined to enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. They took care, however, to be economical, so that the money lasted them for a fortnight, at the end of which time, they were worse off than before.

They again applied to Robineau, but this time he was inflexible.

"When you have paid me your original debt," said he, "I shall have more confidence in you, and will lend you a larger sum."

The dreaded moment arrived; the bill was presented, and of course was not paid. Père Robineau lost no time in adopting such stringent legal measures, that, to escape a prison, Raymond saw himself reduced to live the life of a recluse, never venturing to leave the house. 75

To crown all their miseries, Brissac, who, by some means more or less honest, always catered for the two, found himself in the same predicament as his friend.

A bill, with his signature attached, in the hands of Robineau, was almost due; but Brissac was not a man to allow himself to be caught. He resolved to free himself by an act of treacherous perfidy.

He went to the money-lender, and frankly told him he was penniless, and that therefore it would be useless to imprison him; but that, on the other hand, his friend was quite solvent; and he offered to get him a bill signed by Raymond, for a thousand francs, in exchange for his own, promising at the same time to assist him to entrap his invisible debtor.

The offer was accepted, and Brissac immediately commenced putting his infamous project into execution.

He made Raymond believe that he had found a more accommodating money-lender, who had promised to let him have a thousand francs on his bill.

No sooner does Brissac get possession of the paper, than he hastens to Père Robineau, gives it to him in exchange for his own, and returns to Raymond to carry out his scheme. 76

"All goes on well," said he to Raymond; "but there is a little formality necessary. Our new banker declines to give the money to any one but yourself. You had better come with me to satisfy him."

"Yes, but," replied Raymond, "I might be recognised, and taken by the bailiffs, on my way there."

"I foresaw this difficulty, and have a carriage at the door with the blinds drawn; so we have nothing to fear."

Unconscious of evil, Raymond starts on his way. The two friends congratulate themselves on their good fortune, and are laughing in their sleeves at the trick they are playing the bailiffs, when, suddenly, at the command of a strange voice, the carriage stops, and a man, in an authoritative tone, after desiring Brissac to get out, takes his place, and orders the coachman to drive to Clichy.

"Adieu! Raymond," cried out his perfidious friend as the carriage drove off, "adieu! Keep up your courage. Adieu!"

Whilst Voisin Raymond was telling me this, I observed, that he could not prevent a nervous clinching of his fists. 77

"I may well be enraged at this villain's infamy," said he, with his teeth set and his eyes sparkling with rage, "for it is to my stay at Clichy that I owe my entrance into the path of crime."

The prisoner was as unhappy as he would naturally be under such circumstances, but, on reflection, he found that his condition was not so bad as he had at first thought; at all events, he would, for some time to come, be sheltered from want.

His companions in misfortune seemed all of them far from despairing. Each of them appeared to bear his troubles with patience. They treated one another to dinners and fêtes, at which ladies were present. Cards were also permitted, and imaginary stakes of large amount, were played for by these insolvents.

From his first entrance, whilst most of his companions held themselves aloof from him, Raymond was attracted towards a man named Andréas, who had shown a compassionate interest in him.

This man, although he was twenty years older, became his friend and confidant; and to him Raymond related his youthful follies, his difficulties, and his misfortunes.

Andréas, on his part, also made a confidant of Raymond; one thing led to another, and at length he told him some secrets of a compromising nature. He confessed that he had the art of mastering the caprices of fortune, or, as Cardinal Mazarin said: "*Prendre au jeu ses avantages*." 78

Andréas even offered to initiate Raymond into these rascally manœuvres, and to work with him so as to gull the dupes of "Sainte Pélagie."

Raymond, who had long ago ceased to be honest, did not feel affronted at such advances being made to him; he accepted the offer of going into partnership, and worked with zeal to become an adept in his new profession.

His progress was rapid, as in prison there is little to distract the attention, and one can devote one's whole time to study.

The partners at once commenced a crusade against the purses of their fellow-prisoners, and were so successful, that, in less than a year, they had gained sufficient to recover their liberty.

One day they sent for Père Robineau to come to Clichy, saying it was for an affair of great importance.

The cunning old man knew well enough what his presence there was required for, so he took with him the necessary papers for the liberation of his debtor. Thanks to his zeal, the needful formalities were soon gone through, and Raymond found himself once more on the pavement of Paris, which has an especial charm for such of its inhabitants as have not trodden it for a twelvemonth. 79

Andréas also was set at liberty; the two associates met, and agreed never to part again.

CHAPTER VIII.

SECRET GAMBLING-HOUSES.

Greeks, both as dupers and duped—Andréas Tête d'Or—Secret inquiry—The human ostrich—The society of philosophers—Chaffard the bravo—Exploit of Tête d'Or—A Greek thrown out of window—Mystification.

When Raymond entered the prison of "Sainte Pélagie" he was an isolated being in Paris. On his exit it was different; Andréas had friends who also became the friends of Raymond, and in many of the houses in which he was received, he met with a most cordial welcome.

They soon treated him as a brother, using the friendly "thou" in addressing him, and even gave him the *soubriquet* of "The Marquis," from his fashionable appearance. Andréas was named Tête d'Or, or "Golden Head," in consequence of his fertile and inventive imagination.

Raymond was not long in discovering, that the society he now frequented, was composed of Chevaliers d'Industrie, and that the houses where he had been so well received, were nothing more than gambling-houses, where those who were imprudent enough to enter, were soon fleeced of their money. 81

As Raymond was very expert at tricks of cards, they gave him, every now and then, certain tricks to execute; and in every instance he performed his *rôle* with as much adroitness as tact.

In these houses, the trial of skill was marvellous, and it was not uncommon, to see as many dupers as duped at each table.

The tables and play were kept up by a sort of partnership; that is to say, every Greek paid his share towards the general fund.

At the end of the evening, after all the dupes had departed, the Greeks placed what they had gained on a table, and shared it equally.

Although wolves do not prey upon each other, thieves not unfrequently do: that is certain.

It often happened, that, after a game was over, at which the dupes had lost a hundred louis (£80), when they came to divide, there were only sixty forthcoming.

Every one of the players agreed that there ought to be more, but no one acknowledged to having taken the missing money.

They looked at each other, and even made a personal search (for in such company delicacy is needless), but found nothing. 82

At length they hit on an idea; they agreed to request Tête d'Or to make a secret investigation, in order to discover which was the culprit.

Andréas, flattered at being selected to fill so delicate a post, put all his zeal and intelligence in requisition, and soon detected the two delinquents, as well as the tricks they had employed to cheat the society.

It appeared, that one of these men gave orders to his servant, to come towards the end of every evening, to ask his master for a key, or for some other trifling errand. Whilst giving him the key, he also handed over to him a *rouleau* of the louis he had gained. If the winnings were considerable, the servant, at a sign from his master, returned with the key, and in giving it back received a second *rouleau*.

Another, more modest, contented himself with sticking a few louis under the table with small bits of wax, collecting them after the division of the spoils was over.

A third, a sort of human ostrich, swallowed the money, and afterwards took an emetic to recover it.

These double-faced thieves, once known, were expelled, as not being worthy to belong to an association, which boasted of being proof against all temptation. 83

It occasionally occurred, that false money was mixed up with the genuine coin. But the author of this fraud could never be discovered; so no notice was taken of the circumstance, as the false money was so good an imitation, that none of the party had any scruples about circulating it amongst their trades-people.

Andréas, at length, felt wearied of wasting his talents for the benefit of people, whom he considered much his inferiors in intellect. He required a larger field for the display of his powers; and consequently proposed to Raymond, to quit "The Lynx Society" (for so was the association named), to form, conjointly with a man called Chaffard, who was nick-named Prévôt (or the Fencing Master), a society for the cultivation of Parisian and provincial dupes.

It was called the Society of Philosophers, and the different members were employed as follows:—

Chaffard used to travel about from time to time, to discover victims; he likewise had to put himself in communication with the sharpers of the provinces, and to negotiate with them for those undertakings, in which the experience of masters in the art was necessary. 84

If Chaffard was not as clever in handling cards, as his comrades, he was in no way their inferior in cunning and rascality.

He possessed one talent in particular, which, when occasion required, was of much avail to them.

He was a first-rate bully, always ready to quarrel with a dupe, even whilst he was robbing him, so that many, to avoid being killed by this miscreant, would quietly allow themselves to be swindled out of their money. In such cases his usual language was, "Very well, sir; there is only one thing to be done—we must fight. I am at your service, &c., &c."

If, by chance, any person happened to argue a point, or expostulate with either of them, Chaffard immediately interposed, espoused his friend's quarrel, and offered to fight in his stead; for Andréas and Raymond were not courageous, and this was the reason, that they had deemed it prudent to ally themselves with a bravo.

Chaffard was, in truth, the defender and support of the association.

The character of Raymond, "The Marquis," was, on the contrary, quiet and inoffensive. His manners savoured of the best society. Intelligent and adroit, he willingly undertook to work at balls, parties, and other mixed assemblies. By degrees, he managed to get introduced into the *salons* of the rich middling classes, where he exercised his vocation with as much prudence as talent. 85

Andréas, or "Golden Head," also enjoyed a certain distinction in his line, which lay in secret gambling houses. There it was that he usually displayed his talents.

There, he not only found easy dupes, but often, thanks to the depth of his plots, and his extreme cleverness, he managed to take in sharpers themselves.

In addition to his other qualities, Andréas possessed wonderful presence of mind, of which he was extremely proud; and in proof of this he had told Raymond the following circumstance:—

At the period when he first began his dangerous career, and was not yet very expert, he was playing at one of the secret clubs frequented by all the great gamblers of Paris.

Whilst playing, he was caught in the fact of cheating, and certain cards which he was trying to introduce into the game of lansquenet, were seized. They were on the point of delivering him over into the hands of justice, when one of the players judiciously observed, that, as the assembly in which the circumstance occurred was not quite legal, his denunciation might bring about awkward results; besides the trouble and delay of producing the necessary proofs. 86

"Would it not be more simple," continued this sage counsellor, "to punish the rascal ourselves, by throwing him out of the window; and, should he reach *terra firma* in safety, after his aerial excursion, he will never think of appealing against his sentence."

All present, agreed that this would be the wisest plan, and unanimously decided, that they should proceed at once to the infliction of the punishment.

As soon as Andréas heard this sentence pronounced, he threw himself on his knees to sue for pardon, and, with clasped hands, implored the pity of his judges, pointing out to them that the first floor, on which they were, was very high from the ground, owing to there being an *entresol* between it and the ground-floor.

All his appeals, however, were in vain.

One of the players, who had lost more than any of his companions, insisted, not only that no clemency should be shown him, but that the rogue should be compelled to return the money which he had stolen.

This restitution seemed easy enough, as the green silk purse, into which Andréas had put his own money and that of his victims, was on the table beside him. 87

"I will return it, if you insist on it," cried Andréas, in a heart-broken voice, placing the purse on the table, "but, oh! do not kill me."

Their only reply was to open both the shutters and the window.

Four of the strongest of the group were selected, to launch the culprit into space.

They approached to seize him, when Andréas suddenly formed the resolution of leaping out himself, made a bound forward through the open window, and, in true gymnastic style, came down on his feet in the street below.

Stunned by his fall, he staggered at first, then hobbling away, he ended by starting off at full speed, to the astonishment of the spectators in the balcony above, who laughed loudly at this serio-comic performance.

When their hilarity was over, they bethought themselves of sharing the contents of the purse which contained all the losses they had experienced during the evening.

One amongst the party was named to arrange the affair, but, as the whole of the money was mixed up in it, together with that of the robber himself, it was agreed that it would be better to give it to the poor. 88

Wishing to know the amount the purse contained, they emptied it on the table, when what was their astonishment at finding nothing in it but counters.

Andréas, in case of accidents, always carried a second purse, filled with false money; and, even in the critical position in which he had been placed, he had sufficient presence of mind to substitute the false purse for the real one.

In relating this adventure of former days, Andréas always concluded with these words: "I took good care never to be caught again."

CHAPTER IX.

SECRET GAMBLING HOUSES—(*continued*).

School of cheating—Travelling Greeks—*Le Service*—Formidable manœuvre—Imperceptible signs—The business of the *Comtois*—The *coup de retraite*—Abundant harvest—Prodigality and debauch—Fortune takes her reprisal.

The three associates at first always worked together, and made some good hits in several of the gambling houses in the metropolis; but finding at length, that, as the number of Greeks increased, the number of victims lessened, they determined on starting a clandestine hell of their own, at the head of which they placed a very respectable lady of their acquaintance, named Madame de Haut-Castel, familiarly called "la Pompadour."

To Chaffard was deputed the task of recruiting for dupes, and drawing them away from other houses.

This establishment prospered very well for some time, but, one fine day, they perceived that their affairs were entangled.

A good number of *habitués*, who had been introduced as dupes, after having been cleaned out by the masters of the place, took their revenge on the new recruits, and fleeced them with infinite skill. 90

Andréas soon suspected, that there was no faith to be placed in the "Fencing-Master," and discovered that he, in conjunction with "la Pompadour," whose admirer and devoted slave he had become, had started a sort of class, for men who had nearly ruined themselves by gambling; to whom, for a handsome *douceur*, they taught some of their best tricks in cheating.

The two other associates were incensed at this discovery, but dared not show how exasperated they were, fearing, as they did, the sword of Chaffard; so they contented themselves with concealing their disgust, and paying him off in his own coin. They decided to quit Paris; and, giving as a reason, their wish to explore the watering and bathing places during the summer season, they left the establishment in Paris to the care of the "Fencing-Master," with full power to do what he pleased, nay even to dispose of it if he liked.

During their journey, the two rogues invented and arranged, the most cunning and dexterous tricks.

They particularly made a study of a practice well known amongst Greeks, and called "le Service," which is neither more nor less, than a series of almost imperceptible signals. 91

The following is the way their scheme was carried out.

The two confederates bend their steps towards some watering place, which is known to be frequented by gamblers.

Raymond, "The Marquis," has the principal *rôle* allotted to him. He arrives; goes to the best hotel, and passes himself off as a rich young heir-presumptive, or an eldest son.

He is careful not to call himself a Russian prince, or an Englishman, as both these characters have been so often assumed by swindlers, that that fact alone would raise suspicion. Indeed, the names of Russian princes and rich English families, are now so well-known to the Greeks, that he could not, without danger, venture to create new names and titles for either of these countries.

At the *table d'hôte* of the hotel, Raymond, by his polite, easy, and elegant manners, wins golden opinions from the persons around him. After dinner, he joins his new friends, walks out with them, and afterwards goes with them to look on at the gambling-tables.

If he plays, it is with great caution and moderation. He generally contents himself with looking on, that is to say, he watches the play of his future victims, and never attempts a *coup*, until the arrival of his associate. He is sure not to be long after him, and selects an hotel as far as possible from that of his accomplice. 92

The two scamps, when they meet, feign not to know one another; they even affect to have no tastes in common.

Andréas walks up to the gambling-table with an air of indifference, makes one or two bets, as if he did not care much whether he won or lost, and refuses to take the cards, under the pretence that he does not know how to play.

But the time arrives, when these gentlemen commence their real game.

They are seated at an *écarté*-table.

Raymond is playing. At first, to prevent suspicion, he loses several games, and resigns his hand, which, however, when the play is animated and the stakes high, he takes up again.

Andréas is betting on the opposite side, but his bets are so trifling, that it will make little difference to the pair, even should he lose.

This artful accomplice takes up a standing position, behind his victim, and opposite his friend. With his hands behind his back, he seems as if he cared very little about the game. But all the time, he is paying the greatest attention, and working his secret telegraph for the benefit of Raymond. 93

I will endeavour to explain, in a few words, this formidable system of trickery.

THE SECRET TELEGRAPH.

The number of cards required in the game of Piquet is thirty-two; now all these thirty-two cards, may, by this

system, be pointed out by twelve signals, that is to say, eight for the value of the cards, and four for the suits.

At Écarté, the number of signals is still less, as it is only requisite to designate the numbers.

But to make these signals, it is not necessary, as stated by some authors, to use any exaggerated signs, such as to cough, sneeze, blow the nose, or beat a tattoo on the table. They must have a very low estimate of the Greek, if they suppose him capable of these palpable evolutions.

No; the modern Greek would be ashamed of such childish performances. Unfortunately for the dupes, the signals he makes, can only be seen and recognised by his accomplice.

Of this, my readers will be able to judge for themselves, by the following explanatory table:—

94

If the confederate looks at—

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| 1. His associate, he means | A king. |
| 2. The cards of his adversary | A queen. |
| 3. The stakes | A knave. |
| 4. The opposite side | An ace. |

And at the same time that he tells the card, he also tells the colour, by the following signs:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. The mouth slightly open | A heart. |
| 2. The mouth shut | A diamond. |
| 3. The upper lip slightly projecting over the under | A club. |
| 4. The under lip projecting beyond the upper | A spade. |

Thus, for instance, if the Greek wishes to tell, that the adversary holds the queen, the knave, and the ace of hearts; he looks successively, at the cards of his adversary, at the stakes, and on the opposite side, holding his mouth slightly open the whole time.

From this it will be seen, that the secret telegraph may be used for all games alike, and put in requisition wherever there are spectators. In fact, nothing is more easy at piquet, than to indicate by the aid of these signals, when you are to take in cards, and when to refuse.

I have only thought it necessary, to give an example of some of the simplest and easiest signs; but I may add, that some sharpers have a large, and varied catalogue of signals, to designate different things, as circumstances require.

95

This secret telegraph is so nearly imperceptible, that it is difficult to describe, and quite impossible to detect.

The Greek, who is playing, is careful not to win always. After three or four runs of luck, he loses and leaves the table, according to the instructions conveyed by his confederate. This is called "The Retreat."

To cover any losses incurred by this move, the accomplice has taken care to double his bets, and thus to reimburse themselves for their voluntary sacrifice.

Andréas and his friend were, moreover, adepts in every kind of sleight of hand trick, which, in many instances, they rendered still more advantageous, by performing what they termed "*Coups en duplicata*."

Thus, for example, if they were together at the same bouillotte table, they pretended not to be acquainted with one another, and even looked at each other with cool indifference; thus they could, whilst playing, very well manage to cheat, without exciting suspicion.

96

Instead of each cheating to win for himself, as might be supposed, they artfully contrived that the one who had the deal, and held the cards, should have bad cards and lose, whilst his confederate had all the luck, and won.

Sometimes, whilst giving all four kings to his accomplice, the other would also manage, to hand over the four queens to one of their victims, so as to raise his hopes, and induce him to double his stakes.

The villany of these rogues, therefore, could not be suspected, as the dealer never was the winner.

* * * * *

It was at Boulogne-sur-Mer, that Andréas and Raymond fixed themselves, to carry on their criminal performances. The people there, were rich and prosperous, and the harvest was abundant; though it was rather lessened by their gains being shared with Achille Chauvignac, the swindler *par excellence* of the place, who pointed out to them where the best game lay.

I must here pause to say a few words.

Hearing so much said of the enormous profits gained by swindlers, the reader will, naturally enough, conceive, that in the end, all Greeks must of necessity become millionaires and capitalists.

97

Far from it; notwithstanding their great profits, this reprobate class never prospers; on an average, out of every hundred Greeks, 99+1 die in want. The explanation is easy.

The recruits of "modern Greece," without exception, are men whose debauchery and prodigality have brought them to ruin.

Nothing would be more difficult, than to make a sharper thrifty and economical. They are all dissolute, prodigal, and ostentatious, according to their means.

These gentlemen, far from proportioning their expenses to their incomes, think not of the future, and live in extravagant luxury. They have horses, carriages, mistresses, &c., &c., and each one endeavours to outdo all his

acquaintance in his expenditure.

It is hardly credible, but nevertheless true, that a sharper sometimes loses money at play. These men, *blasés* with the successes which they themselves have created, sometimes sigh for the excitement caused by real play. To obtain it, they rush to the roulette or rouge-et-noir table. In these two games the Greek finds retributive justice, and fortune takes a sure revenge for many former deeds of wrong.

CHAPTER X.

THE DOCTOR DUPED.

The false capitalist—The rogue is bled—More confederates arrive—A good hand—The fleecing—The doctor bled.

After quitting Boulogne, our two heroes intended to have gone into the South of France, but their plans were changed by a proposal made to them by Chauvignac.

There was a physician, living at St. Omer, who had an irresistible love of gambling, and the proposal made by Chauvignac was, that they should relieve him of some thousands of francs.

Chauvignac was to give them all the information necessary, and for this, he asked a third of the profits; only, as he was the intimate friend of the doctor, it was agreed that he must not appear in the affair.

The two performers in this drama, were not long in making their arrangements.

A few days afterwards, they arrived at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, the best in the place.

Andréas passed himself off for a rich Parisian capitalist, who, charmed by the beauty of the place, and the simple manners of the country, wished to purchase an estate in the neighbourhood. He was accompanied by a friend, who had come to give him his opinion and advice in this affair. 100

They made several excursions, visited all the places that were for sale, but ended by finding nothing on a scale grand enough to suit the would-be proprietor.

At the termination of their searches, the millionaire announced that he was going to return to the capital, and was on the point of departing, when he was suddenly taken very ill.

According to his wishes, the best medical man in the place, the friend of Chauvignac, was sent for.

On his arrival, the son of Esculapius began asking various questions, to find out what was the nature of his patient's malady.

"Ah! Sir," replied Andréas in a mournful voice, "I cannot tell you what has caused this illness, which compels me to keep my bed; all I know is, that I suffer horribly in my head. I have unhappily every reason to fear, from the symptoms, a return of a brain fever, of which I have already had several attacks."

"Calm yourself," said the doctor, "we will try and ward off the evil, this time, by bleeding you copiously." 101

"Do so, if you please," responded the rascal, "I place myself in your hands."

Andréas was accordingly bled, and soon afterwards declared he already felt better.

"I will come again, and see you to-morrow," said the doctor, on taking leave of the sham invalid.

"Oh! pray come back again to-day, for I feel I require incessant watching and care."

The doctor promised, and returned in fact some hours later.

He felt the pulse of the patient, and found it still so high, that he recommended a severe regimen, and the most absolute quiet and repose.

No sooner was the doctor gone, than Andréas proceeded to take off a ligature, which he had bound round his arm to increase the beating of his pulse, and, whilst waiting for the return of his victim, made a hearty meal.

Several days passed in this manner, during which, Raymond never quitted the bedside of his friend; he was as devoted as a Sister of Charity. It was thought advisable under such serious circumstances, to send for two other members of the family, who were introduced to the doctor as nephews of the sick man, but who were, in reality, nothing more nor less than two sharpers, who were brought from Paris to suit the purposes of the two schemers, and were paid ten francs a day for their services. 102

Their business was, to second and assist the manœuvres of their master and chief.

The severity of the attack was overcome, and Andréas appeared to be approaching convalescence.

To amuse the invalid, his two *soi-disant* nephews, and his friend, used to play at cards, at a table placed close beside his bed.

The game was animated, and the gold coins were rolling about on the floor. They were so rich in this family!

"I say, doctor," exclaimed Andréas one evening, "I think a game of cards would do me good, and go far to restore me. You have a lucky face; will you do me the kindness to hold a hand of cards at *écarté* for me? I stake ten napoleons."

The doctor, to oblige his patient, as well as to enjoy his favourite amusement, hastened to comply.

He was most fortunate in the cards he held; he won six consecutive times, and placed sixty napoleons in the hands of his patient. "I am most happy," added he, "in having so successfully performed the mission you confided to me, but whether it is your good luck, or mine, that has been the cause of it, I cannot tell." 103

"Good Heavens! Dear doctor," exclaimed Andréas, "the only way to be certain of this, is to play for yourself; I will bet on you, as I believe you to be the lucky man."

The doctor did not require to be asked twice; he played, and again had luck beyond belief. In fact, in a short time he had won a hundred napoleons (£80).

"You certainly bring me luck," said Andréas to his partner; "but I have had enough for this evening; I am tired and want repose."

"We hope that these gentlemen will forgive us for winning and walking off with their money. To-morrow, if you like, we will play again, and, with your aid, I hope we shall clear out my two nephews, which will, perhaps, cure them for their passion for play. If you succeed, doctor, the cure will be one of the best you have ever made."

It was not philanthropy, but his immense luck, and love of gambling, which made the doctor keep his appointment.

He came the next evening at the usual hour, and found the nephews already there.

To fulfil his duties as physician, he felt the pulse of his patient, and found him so much better, that without more ado, he pronounced himself ready to begin their game. 104

The table was placed, as on the previous evening, close to the bedside of the patient, to enable him to join in the amusement.

In order to plunder the poor doctor more speedily, they allowed him at first to gain a few napoleons.

This voluntary loss is in the language of sharpers called the "bait," and allows them to double their stakes without causing suspicion, enabling them to gain their ends more easily and quickly.

As soon as the stakes rose, and the play was for nothing less than bank-notes, the luck immediately turned.

The doctor, hitherto so lucky, suddenly found himself losing everything. At the end of the evening, he was a loser to the extent of thirty thousand francs (1200*l.*).

All along it is easy to perceive, there had been but one victim. The losses of Andréas had been but imaginary, and were only assumed, to prevent suspicion on the part of his victim, and would of course be returned to him by his accomplices.

Having bled the doctor as far as they could venture to do (for he was not very wealthy), and prudence also preventing their proceeding further, in case the police might put a finish to the scheme, they thought it advisable to decamp. 105

The following morning, therefore, the invalid felt himself sufficiently reinstated in health to prosecute his long delayed journey, so, paying the doctor for his attendance, he quitted the town as quickly as possible.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PASTE RING.

The amateur of precious stones—What a beautiful diamond!—A sovereign cure—Ah! if I were a rogue—A false paste ring!—The game is played—The tell-tale stamp investigation—The wanderer by night—The mysterious *tripot*—The sharper caught in a trap—Recriminations—The message—The false commissary of police—The Rue de Jerusalem—Unexpected *dénoûement*.

It was some time after this, that our two heroes arrived at Lyons, and lost no time in making inquiries regarding the various clubs in that town, and the sort of people who were members of them. Amongst others, one club was particularly mentioned, in which most of the members were gamblers.

They heard that a gentleman named Béroli belonged to it, who was a great amateur in precious stones.

Béroli had a mania for making clever bargains, as he called them, which means, that he often obtained a fine stone cheap, from those who were not such great connoisseurs as himself.

Such transactions would be called cheating, but that in these days, it is quite allowable, if not honest, for buyers and sellers to try to take each other in. Do we not daily hear a man boast of having, by some deceit, obtained an article from a merchant at cost price, whilst, on the other hand, the vendor rubs his hands at having got rid of a *loup de magasin*, as a faulty article is called. 107

In some commercial houses, it is stated, that a premium is paid to the clerk, who disposes of the *rococo* articles to some credulous customer.

Be that as it may, Béroli's mania for precious stones, put it into the head of Andréas to play him a clever trick.

He requested Raymond to get himself introduced, and work his way into the club, of which Béroli was a member, whilst he (Andréas) went to Paris, to arrange the preliminaries of an affair, of which he at present refused to mention the details, until all was in readiness for his great *coup*. A fortnight afterwards, thanks to the secret influence of Raymond, Andréas, who had returned from Paris, was proposed and elected by the club, of which his comrade was already a member. The two Greeks were not supposed to know one another, so each was able to proceed with his work unsuspected.

Raymond ransacked the pockets of some rich proprietors, whilst his comrade contented himself, every evening, with playing a few innocent games at *écarté* with Béroli, whose acquaintance he had made. 108

The very first day, the amateur observed a magnificent ring on the finger of Andréas.

"What a splendid diamond you have there," said Béroli, with an accent of envy.

"Yes, it is," replied Andréas, carelessly, continuing his play. "Diamonds are trumps. I cut, and my turn-up card is worth nothing; you have the trick."

Béroli, meanwhile, never took his eyes off the precious stone, the dazzling lustre of which seemed to fascinate him.

Each day brought forth fresh expressions of admiration for the stone, to all of which, his opponent apparently remained insensible.

One evening, Béroli was determined to force a reply of some kind or other from Andréas.

"What did you pay for that stone?" said he.

"Are you serious in asking that question, do you really wish to know?"

"Quite serious."

"Then I must explain, that, if I have not before replied to your different exclamations of admiration, it was because I thought you were joking. Now that I know the contrary, I feel bound to tell you, that that superb diamond, which has dazzled you so much, is only paste." 109

"How do you mean—paste?" said Béroli, with an air of pique. "It is you that are joking."

"No; I assure you I am in earnest."

"Oh! nonsense; let me see it closer." Saying these words, Béroli took up the hand of Andréas, fixed his eyes on the ring, and kept turning it about to make it glitter.

"You may tell others that it is false, but there is no use in telling me so. I can assure you that your stone is a real diamond.

"Very well; I am glad to hear it," rejoined Andréas, feigning the greatest indifference. "Let me see, it is your turn to play."

The two players continued their game, but Béroli appeared *distrain*, and kept constantly looking at the ring. At length he could no longer restrain himself.

"So certain am I," exclaimed he, "that the stone is of the first water, that I shall be happy to purchase it, if you will let me."

"I will not sell it to you," replied Andréas.

"Why not?"

"Because, in the first place, I do not want to rob you of your money; and in the second, it is a family relic, which I do not wish to part with. One of my uncles left it to me, and he had it from his father. It has been in our 110

family for a hundred years, and is called "the paste ring." I only wear it, because it is considered a charm against headaches, to which I am very subject."

"But if I offered you a good price?" persisted Béroli.

"If you offered me four times its value, I would not part with it."

"Suppose I offered you, not four times, but two or three hundred times, the value you set on the stone?"

Andréas cut short all further colloquy by continuing the game. "Diamonds," said he, "and I have what they call '*la fourchette*.' I mark one."

As soon as the game was ended, Béroli, who was very tenacious of his reputation as a connoisseur in precious stones, returned to the charge.

"I am so sure of what I aver," continued he, "that I shall always be ready to bargain for your ring, whenever you wish to part with it."

"Ah! if I were a rogue," replied Tête d'Or, "I should part with my paste ring to you, to prove that you must not always be guided by your own judgment."

"Stay," said Béroli, "will you lend me your ring until to-morrow. To make quite sure, I will just show it to a jeweller of my acquaintance." 111

Andréas acceded to his request with a show of indifference, and they separated.

Béroli went off at once to his friend, to show him the jewel, and ask him the value of it.

The jeweller, after examining it for some time attentively, confirmed Béroli's opinion.

"This stone is of a most beautiful water," said he, "and I should consider it cheap if I got it for twelve thousand francs (480*l.*)"

The following day, Béroli advanced to Andréas with an air of triumph.

"My dear sir," said he, "I can now state with positive certainty, that your family has been in error for the last hundred years about the value of this ring. What you call paste, is a real diamond. I will give you six thousand francs for it."

To this offer Andréas made no reply.

They sat down to play, but during the game, the indefatigable Béroli incessantly returned to the charge, offering each time a higher price for the ring, to tempt his adversary, and finally made him an offer of nine thousand francs. To all of which Andréas remained silent, contenting himself by shaking his head each time in token of negative.

It was late, and the party was on the point of breaking up, when Béroli suddenly made up his mind. 112

"Stop," he exclaimed, at the same time placing ten bank-notes, of a thousand francs each, on the table. "This is my last offer. Say yes, and the bargain is struck."

"You are resolved to cheat yourself?"

"Yes, I am," replied the amateur, in a bantering tone, looking again intently on the ring, which he had kept on his finger throughout the evening.

"Well, if you insist on it, you shall have it; only allow me to take out from a secret recess the lock of hair of my worthy uncle, who has been the means of making me get ten thousand francs. I certainly did not anticipate this great good luck. See what it is to be a connoisseur. Here; here is your ring. Thanks."

Early the following day, Béroli again went to his friend the jeweller. "I've got that splendid diamond," said he, addressing him. "Look here; see how beautiful it is! I am sure, that whenever I wish to part with it, I shall always get more than what you offered me."

"Do you think so?" responded the jeweller, taking up the ring, to look more closely at it.

"Stay; what's this?" he exclaimed. "What's this you have brought to show me? This a diamond! why, it is nothing but paste!" 113

The trick was played, and had succeeded. Under pretence of taking out his uncle's hair, Andréas had cleverly changed the diamond ring, for a paste one precisely similar, which he had had made for the express purpose.

On the following day, the ingenious and clever thief was far away, out of reach of Béroli and all chance of redress.

* * * * *

"Those who are unacquainted with the perseverance and energy of Béroli," observed Raymond, in relating this anecdote to me, "may fancy that the diamond ring is lost to him for ever. Not so."

The amateur, after having been so cruelly deceived, took an oath that he would discover, and be revenged on, his enemy.

On examining the false ring, Béroli first made sure that it bore the goldsmith's mark, proving it to be of pure gold. This was not much consolation, still, it led him to suppose, that the real diamond ring must also, of course, bear the same stamp.

If, muttered Béroli to himself, the two rings have passed through the comptroller's hands, the stones are so large, and of such value, that it is next to impossible he did not remark them. 114

This simple reflection, was the first step towards the discovery of the real gem.

Furnished with a letter of introduction from his friend, the jeweller, Béroli proceeds to Paris, goes straight to the mint, and presents the ring to the comptroller, who perfectly remembers the two rings in question, and gives the address of the jeweller who manufactured them.

From the latter Béroli learns, that his customer, Andréas, lives at No. 13, Rue Cadet.

Any one else would have handed Andréas over to the police; but caring much more to obtain possession of his ring, than to satisfy the ends of justice, Béroli thinks it more prudent to take the affair into his own hands, and manage it in his own way.

He goes to the concierge, in the Rue Cadet, and slipping a napoleon into his hand, begins by relating to him a romantic tale, well calculated to impose on the man, and make him tell all he wished to know.

Béroli says, that a daughter of a friend of his, residing in the country, has been asked in marriage by his tenant, M. Andréas, and that he has come to find out all he can about him, believing that he could not go to a better source than his friend the concierge. 115

The man, delighted at the affable manners of his interlocutor, as well as flattered at the confidence reposed in him, reveals, under the seal of secrecy, that Andréas has a mistress living with him, and that he often remains from home all night.

This is enough for Béroli; he takes leave of his obliging informant, and, that very evening, places himself as a spy at the gate of his deceiver.

At ten o'clock at night, Andréas comes out, and directs his steps towards an isolated house, at the end of the Rue Pigale.

Béroli follows him, and sees him, and about twenty other men, go into the same house.

Hidden in a doorway close by, Béroli observes all that goes on without being himself seen. He remarks, that every time the bell of the gate is rung, the door is opened by a servant with a light in his hand, who makes a close inspection of the person presenting himself, before he admits him.

The mystery attending the meeting, the absence of a concierge, &c., all lead Béroli to conclude, that this must be one of the secret gambling houses; and what confirms him still more in this opinion, is, that though there are four windows in each story, in the front of the house, not one of them is illuminated. Any one would have supposed it to be uninhabited. 116

Wishing to have a yet more convincing proof of the correctness of his surmises, he determines to wait until the meeting is over, and employs himself, whilst waiting, in concocting his plan of attack.

About four o'clock in the morning, the door again opens, and a man, after looking up and down the street in a mysterious manner, issues out.

Béroli suddenly confronts him.

"Sir," said he, quickly, so as to give him no time for reflection, "is everybody gone out of this house?"

"Why?" asks the unknown.

"Because the police are close by, and will soon surround it. I came to warn one of my friends, who was to have spent the night here."

"Thanks for the information," replies the unknown, proceeding on his way.

If, thought Béroli, this man be only one of the dupes, he would have nothing to fear, as he has quitted the gambling house; but his anxiety to be off, proves that he fears the vigilance of the police, so I feel sure he must be one of the gang.

Full of this idea, Béroli follows at a little distance, and when he sees him slacken his pace, he goes up to him, and thus addresses him:—

"I beg your pardon for having made you race in this manner, by giving you false information, but I wished to find out if you were one of us, and I have succeeded in so doing." 117

"Will you explain yourself, sir, if you please, for I do not understand what you mean."

"I can easily make you comprehend me, by simply stating that I am the colleague of Andréas."

"What has that got to do with it?"

"I wish to make a proposition to you. Would you like to gain two thousand francs without any trouble?"

"Explain yourself."

"Since you say you know Andréas——"

"I beg your pardon, I did not say that."

"Since you know him, I must inform you, that that scamp has played me a most infamous trick."

"He is quite capable of so doing," added the unknown, in a low voice.

"I wish to be revenged, and that is why I ask you to assist me."

"What is there for me to do?"

"Scarcely anything. It is only necessary for you to bring Andréas to a house, which I shall point out to you, under pretext of introducing him into a club, where he will find several victims to dupe. I'll arrange all the rest."

"I am ready," replied the unknown. "When and where is it to be?" 118

"To-morrow, at No. 22, Rue Meslay, on the second floor."

The following morning, the new associate of Béroli called on Andréas, to make the perfidious proposition to

him.

Never doubting his comrade, Andréas accepted the proposal, thinking to make an excellent *coup*, the more so, as things were going on rather badly in the Rue Pigale.

That very evening, the two Greeks proceeded to the house indicated by Béroli, in the Rue Meslay.

A servant in livery, having admitted them, opened the doors of a drawing-room brilliantly illuminated.

Andréas entered first, without apprehension, but he had no sooner done so, than his companion, following the instructions he had received from Béroli, turned round suddenly, and locked the door.

At the same moment, Béroli, and two athletic-looking men, entered from a door on the opposite side of the room.

"You, doubtless, remember me," exclaimed Béroli, in an austere and determined voice. "You must know what it is that brings me here."

"What do you mean, sir," cried Andréas, feigning the greatest indignation. "First of all, answer me. What sort of ambush is this, into which you have entrapped me? Am I in the midst of thieves, or assassins?" 119

"Do not speak so loud, sir," replied Béroli, "or you may have reason to regret it. The ambush of which you complain is only a favour to you—a step towards an amicable settlement of the business."

"What do you mean by talking to me about favours?" replied Andréas, "and what do you complain of? You offered me ten thousand francs for a ring, and I accepted your offer. Did I not give you the ring?"

"Yes, you did, but you omit to mention, that the stone you gave me was a false one."

"Ah! Mon Dieu!" coolly replied Andréas. "I am far from denying it. I repeated that to you so often, that you must recollect it. Besides, did you not, when paying me the ten thousand francs, say you knew the stone was false, but that you very much wished to possess it?"

"Do not let us play upon words, sir, but let us come to the point. You are going to give me the ring you cheated me out of."

"To avoid all discussion on the subject, I tell you, once for all, that I have never had any other ring in my possession, than the one I delivered to you." 120

"If that be the case, you will not mind copying this, and sending it to your mistress?"

"Let me see what it's about," said Andréas, taking the paper from Béroli. He read as follows:—

"MY DEAREST,—I hope to make some money in the house from which I pen these lines, but I require my diamond ring for the affair. Bring it to me yourself, to the address I enclose, and do not entrust it to any one else. The bearer of this note will give you my keys. At eleven o'clock precisely, I shall be at the door awaiting you. Take a carriage, so as to be punctual.

"ANDRÉAS.

"22, Rue Meslay."

"Nothing will induce me to write that," exclaimed Andréas.

"I will not solicit you long," said Béroli. "Will you do it, Yes or No?"

"No, a thousand times, no!"

"Baptiste, go and bring the commissary of police," said Béroli, addressing the man on his right. "Go at once, and do not return without him." 121

"A moment," supplicated Andréas, making a sign to the commissionnaire to stop. "Let us see if we cannot arrange this business; what will you take to end the affair?"

"I will have no arrangements; I require nothing, but that you should copy and sign this letter."

Seeing there was nothing for it but to agree to Béroli's proposal, Andréas began to think, how he could manage to decamp with the ring, as soon as he received it from the hands of his mistress.

So, seating himself at the table, on which all the implements for writing had been previously prepared, and under the eye of Béroli, he copied the missive word for word.

Two hours afterwards, Andréas was set at liberty, and Béroli had obtained possession of the celebrated ring.

This is how it was managed:

The *chère amie* of Andréas, on receiving his note, hastened in a carriage to the house he had indicated, taking the ring with her; but no sooner did the carriage stop at the door of No. 22, Rue Meslay, than a commissary of police, with his badge of office (the scarf), and accompanied by a sergent-de-ville, opened the door of the carriage and got in, directing the coachman to go to the prefecture of police in the Rue de Jerusalem. 122

On their way thither, the commissary explained to the fair messenger, that, having been ordered by the police to keep a watch on No. 22, Rue Meslay, he stopped a man coming out of that house, who was the bearer of a letter, and that after reading the contents of it, he had substituted one of the police for the original messenger.

"The law has seized all the property which was in that house, and I am under the painful necessity, madam," continued he, "of arresting you, as being a party concerned in a serious robbery. Allow me to take charge of this article, which otherwise you might make away with." Thus saying, the officer drew the diamond ring from the finger of the lady, though not without some resistance on her part.

The clock of the Palais de Justice was striking midnight, as the carriage drove up to the gate. The night was

pitch dark.

"We must ring up the concierge to open the gate," observed the commissary to the sergent-de-ville; at the same time they both got out, and shut the door of the carriage with assiduous care.

Two minutes had scarcely elapsed, when a loud voice exclaimed, "You cannot remain opposite this gate, coachman." 123

"I know that," replied that individual, "but I am waiting for orders. You have not told me where to drive to, Ma'am," added he, putting down one of the glasses. "Where am I to drive you to?"

"Where are you to drive me? To the Rue Cadet, where you took me up," said the fair occupant of the carriage, in a tremulous voice.

"Go along, my hearties," exclaimed the Jehu, whipping up his horses, "this is my last fare to-night."

If my readers have not already guessed as much, I will mention for their edification, that the commissary of police and his assistant, were neither more nor less than two of Béroli's friends; and that, instead of ringing up the concierge, as they had stated, favoured by the darkness of the night, they made off, as quickly as they could, carrying the precious ring, which they soon afterwards delivered into the hands of Béroli.



CHAPTER XII.

AN INFAMOUS SNARE.

A young fool—Envy and covetousness—Aphorisms—Insinuations—Confidences—Influencing the game—Honest men are sometimes rogues—Mushrooms and cheating—The Greek moralist—Example of cheating—Initiation—Maxims and manipulations—Temptation—The Belgian capitalist—The *cartes biseautées*—Easily won—An insolvent gambler—Comedy—The Greek in despair—An infamous scene—Dishonour—Ruin—The faithless trustee—Separation of the philosophers—A virtuous Greek—Golden hopes—A beard again—A demi-millionaire.

The Society of Philosophers generally made Calais the centre of their operations, for the reason that they were often summoned by Achille Chauvignac, who, as my readers may remember, had been the originator of the plot at St. Omer.

Chauvignac was especially indefatigable in such affairs, as, without running the slightest risk, he always shared largely in the profits of these transactions.

So unprincipled was he, that he continually selected his most intimate friends for his victims.

Each gambler was classed as to his means, and also, as to whether he was likely to allow himself to be plucked without remonstrance. 125

Thus, M. B— was valued at three thousand francs; M. P— at six thousand; M. C— was not worth much, being a bad player; but, at any rate, they put him down at a thousand francs.

The one who was considered the best, that is, the richest dupe, was M. F—, who was estimated at from fifteen to twenty thousand francs.

Andréas and Raymond had gone the round of all the clubs of Calais and Boulogne, but they dared not venture to St. Omer, for fear of being recognised. They sent, in their place, however, two clever sharpers, who originally came from Venice, which city was formerly supposed to be the cradle of roguery.

The Society of Philosophers would not certainly have placed the implicit confidence they did, in these two delegates, had it not been, that they were under the immediate *surveillance* of Chauvignac, who not only looked after them himself, but arranged a system of *espionnage* between the two Greeks, so that each of them was overlooked by his companion. His plan was, to address one of them privately thus:

"Do you know, I have not much confidence in your friend; I much fear he will impose on our society; just take a note of his winnings, and watch him. You shall not go unrewarded for this service." 126

He then went and said precisely the same thing to the other, so that without being aware of it, each Greek was watched by his comrade.

The harvest reaped by the society at St. Omer, was very productive, but the largest share went into the pocket of Chauvignac, who, as may be conceived, was not very particular in the just division of the money entrusted to him.

Whether it was in consequence of this affair, or from some trifling indiscretion on the part of the philosophers, the credit of Chauvignac seemed on the decline. Every one was astonished to see the money he spent,—a man who had literally nothing—and then his constant trips to Paris, without any obvious reason, and his intimacy with men whose characters were not unsullied—all these circumstances combined to make honest men rather shun his society.

Chauvignac was as clever as he was unprincipled; for the latter quality does not prevent a man from possessing talent; the best proof of which is, that a rogue is seldom a fool.

Chauvignac was sharp enough, soon to discover the discredit into which he had fallen, and knowing how prejudicial it would prove to his interests, he immediately set about thinking, how he could reestablish himself in the good graces of society. 127

Amongst the young fools who shared with him a life of dissipation, he had formed a small club, at the head of which was a young man named Olivier de X—, who was noted for his elegance and his eccentricities.

The family of this wild young fellow, was one of the oldest and most respectable in the country, and much looked-up to.

Chauvignac fixed on this young heir, as a means of regaining his place in the good opinion of his fellow-citizens.

He affected to be on terms of the greatest intimacy with him, when he met him in public places, and addressed him in a loud tone of voice, in the most familiar manner.

But, unfortunately, this apparent intimacy with Olivier, had just the contrary result to what Chauvignac had anticipated: the one lost position, but the other did not gain it.

Olivier began to be shunned, but Chauvignac fared no better. The latter, however, as soon as he perceived this, and he was not long in so doing, bethought himself of making Olivier's credit subservient to his views in another way.

The parents of Olivier were not wealthy, and could do nothing for their son, so his excessive extravagance had brought him into difficulties and debt. 128

He regarded Chauvignac with envy and admiration; he saw him living like a prince, without any creditors to annoy him.

"How is it," said he to Chauvignac one day, "that you, who have no fortune, can gratify all your tastes and fancies, whilst I, who have some small means, am obliged to be economical, besides which, I am in debt?"

This query was precisely what Chauvignac had been waiting for. He remained, for some moments, without answering his questioner, intending to give more effect to his words; then, with a diabolical smile, he thus addressed him:

"Would you like to be as happy as I am?"

"Can you ask me?"

"All depends on yourself, to be even better off than I am."

"What must I do?" eagerly demanded Olivier.

Chauvignac thought his young neophyte sufficiently prepared, to receive what he had to impart.

"Listen to me," whispered he, in a mysterious voice. "You have doubtless heard the following proverb, old as the world itself: Men are divided into two classes, Dupers and Dupes. Come, speak frankly, to which of these categories would you like to belong?" 129

"Why you see, you are so abrupt in your question. You come on one so suddenly; it requires reflection."

"Agreed," observed this second Mephistophiles, "we will make the reflections together, and will study the subject, in some individuals of that great and motley crowd, which is termed 'society.'"

The two friends were, at that moment, standing at the door of one of the largest and best cafés in the town.

It was Sunday; the weather was fine, and crowds of pedestrians were lounging up and down before them.

"Look," said Chauvignac, "do you see that thin miserable man, with his head bowed down, and his clothes hanging in rags? He is an unfortunate fellow, who has worked all his life to pay off the debts left by his father. He is old: he has hardly bread to put in his mouth. You will observe no one takes any notice of him. Now, look at that stout man, so puffed up with pride and insolence; how pleased he seems with himself, as they say, like a peacock spreading his tail. He has been a merchant, and has made his money by fraud and cheating. He afterwards set up as a banker, and lent money at an usurious interest. He is now a millionaire. See—he bows with a patronising air to all whom he meets. The first is a dupe, the second a duper." 130

"Or to speak more plainly," added Olivier, "the first is an honest man, the second a rogue."

"Be it so—I grant you that," continued the tempter, "but now I will give you another example, of which you will not be able to make the same observation."

"You, better than any one else, ought to know an intelligent, generous-hearted, and ambitious young man, who, for want of sufficient means, leads a life of privation and troubles, is overwhelmed with debt, and, if he thinks of playing to retrieve his fortunes, he is sure to lose. Near to him, at this moment, is one of his friends, who, without fixed income or expectations, possesses, nevertheless, a never ending fortune. This man always wins at play, and has not a caprice ungratified."

"The former of these is the dupe, the latter — is —"

Here Chauvignac paused, to allow Olivier to finish the phrase.

"What is it you mean?" asked he, beginning to comprehend the purport of the conversation. 131

"What I mean, is this," replied Chauvignac with a sneer—"To prove to you, that the lucky gamester, whose good fortune you envy, belongs to a society of philosophers, and that these philosophers have certain and easy methods, of turning luck in their own favour."

"But," observed Olivier, his sense of right struggling for mastery in his mind. "To cheat at play is an act of dishonesty."

"On this point, my dear sir, we do not agree; you are in error, and I will prove it to you. First of all, tell me what you call cheating at play?"

"I call winning by underhand tricks, cheating."

"Very well; if that be the case, I will soon show you that the most honest man will not scruple to cheat."

"For instance, do we not daily see men of the strictest probity, seek to turn luck in their favour by various means. One, in placing himself at the table, will sit opposite the hinges, because he believes it to be a lucky spot. Again, if he wins, he will not count his money, fearing to turn his luck. Another believes in the influence of a certain coin, which he mixes with the rest of his money—but which he will never part with. Others, again, wear amulets, made of the dried heart of a black hen, the head of a beetle, or a bit of the cord with which a malefactor has been hung." 132

"Just tell me what is the object of these mysterious influences, if it be not, as they say in the criminal courts, *"gagner subrepticement le bien d'autrui en faisant tourner à son profit les bénéfiques d'une partie."*

"In such cases, if the act is not committed, the intention is the same, and ought to be considered as if accomplished."

"Between the above-mentioned actions and ours, the only difference is, that one depends on the mind, the other on the fingers. The moral result is the same."

"Of this you may be sure, that if these honest folks do not go further, it is because they dare not. I will even say more," continued Chauvignac, carried away by his own sophistry. "Take, for instance, one of these heroes of probity, and show him a method of always winning, with a certainty of never being detected, and see if he will not follow it. Believe me, I know a great deal more than I care to tell."

"All that," said Olivier, "proves, at most, that all honest men may not be able to resist temptation; but it does 133

not go to prove, that cheating is not a crime. Besides, it is punishable by law."

"That's true," replied the cunning Chauvignac; "but again, we have no proof that the law is right. I maintain, that, far from being reprehensible, the art of turning aside ill-luck and bettering one's fortune, is a thing which ought to be encouraged."

Olivier could not help smiling.

"I am serious," added Chauvignac. "Yes! The art of winning at play is meritorious. And why? Because it is useful. If the Government had any sense, they would not only encourage cheating, but give a premium for it."

"Then I don't know what morality means."

"Only, because you have not studied pure philosophy, as I have. Hold—to make you understand it better, I will just give you an example.

"How often do we hear of deaths caused by eating mushrooms! Well, if people imagined that all mushrooms were poisonous, of course no one would venture to partake of them.

"It is the same with gambling; if people expected to lose every time they played, few would run the risk of trusting to their luck at cards, and play would become what it ought to be, a mere relaxation and amusement.

"Thus the Greeks would have done more for morality, than all the moralists in the world. 134

"Therefore, I confess to you, that I, who would not rob any one of a pin, have not only no scruple in doing my best to control fate, but, in cheating, I think I carry out a principle, eminently useful to humanity.

"The art of cheating at play, is to me only high philosophy put in practice."

Young Olivier had listened with the most intense interest, to the eloquent pleading of his friend in favour of cheating, and it was easy to perceive, that his feelings of probity on the subject, were giving way before the subtle sophistry of the tempter, and that he already began to approve of some of the arguments he had heard in its favour.

Chauvignac perceived it, and wishing to continue his work of evil—

"Let us see," added he, in an insinuating manner, "what have we to weigh in your own case? On the one hand, wealth, pleasure, and enjoyment of every description; on the other hand, hard-hearted creditors, misery, and ruin."

"But," observed Olivier at length, quite carried away in spite of himself, "one might be discovered, and then —"

"How weak and childish you are!—Here, come into this café with me, and you shall see how easily these things are done. 135

"You see yonder big Benoit, with his small annuity. I am going to propose a game of piquet to him, and make him pay for a cup of coffee for each of us. 'Tis a pity he has not more to lose."

Benoit is accosted by these gentlemen. The game and the stake are accepted: the result is not long delayed. In two hands the game was over. Chauvignac and his friend left the café, and once in the street, the former put the finishing stroke to his unworthy maxims.

"There, it is not difficult, you observe," said he. "Oh! how delightful it is to be able to wrestle with fate, by fleecing a set of simpletons, whom that capricious Dame Fortune loves so often to favour."

"Does it take long to learn?" said Olivier, quite bewildered with all he had seen and heard.

"That depends upon circumstances," replied his perfidious friend; "it is with this art, as with the piano, one can soon give pleasure; it depends on the professor, and his method of teaching.

"But, as we are not far from where I live, come in; and whilst we smoke a cigar together, I'll explain a few things to you."

Olivier still rather hesitated to follow him.

"Oh! nonsense! it binds you to nothing; you can do just as you please. It is as well to know a little of everything, and at all events, if you do not like to practise the system yourself, it will put you on your guard when attacked. One never knows what may happen." 136

Chauvignac would certainly not have taken so much trouble about the matter, if he had not had in view some act of treachery towards his companion. The conversation ended by Olivier accepting the offer held out to him.

Behold them now, seated on a sofa, each with a cigar in his mouth, and Chauvignac with a pack of cards in his hand.

"Look! here is a hand, tell me if you see any signs of cheating in any of the cards?"

The novice examined the cards with great attention, but not being an adept in the art, failed to discover anything.

"You observe nothing in this hand of cards?" said Chauvignac. "They have, however, been subjected to a process that we call *biseutage*,^H or having one end made narrower than the other. This system shows the player what cards he is to retain, and how to class them, in the order he requires for playing."

Chauvignac, joining precept to example, showed his friend the way it was to be done. 137

"Now," added he, "to prove to you that this trick is not difficult, I will make you do it yourself. Let us sit down at this table, and suppose we are playing for a thousand francs."

Although Olivier had no great talent for sleight of hand, he succeeded in learning from his friend how to gain the whole of the five tricks, twice running, at *écarté*.

"This trick," said Chauvignac to him, "is one of the first, as well as the most easy, in the art of cheating. In a little while, I shall teach you how to play with prepared cards, and you will, in time, I hope, become an accomplished philosopher."

Olivier made no reply, his mind was in a perfect state of chaos, from the thousand and one thoughts which filled it.

The tempter, judging his victim to be now sufficiently compromised, left him to the temptations which he had suggested to him. He made the excuse of having some visits to pay, and the two friends separated.

Two days afterwards the Professor went to see his pupil.

"Would you like to join me," asked he, "in a little tour of pleasure I am about to make?"

"Your kind proposal is badly timed," replied Olivier. "I am not only without funds just now, but I am trying to obtain a thousand francs, to pay a cursed bill of exchange that I signed, and which falls due this very day." 138

"Is that all?" said Chauvignac, taking a banknote for the amount out of his pocket-book—"Here it is; but mind, you must return it to me to-morrow."

"You are deranged."

"Perhaps I am, but in my insanity, I am mad enough to offer you another thousand francs, to enable you to go and secure thirty thousand which are awaiting you."

"Pray explain yourself, or else you will turn my brain also!"

"Listen: if ever there was a desperate gambler, it is the Count de Vandermool, a rich Belgian capitalist, and who can well afford to lose a hundred thousand francs (4000*l.*). He is just now in Boulogne, and intends remaining there a week. We must bleed this millionaire; nothing will be more easy, as a friend and colleague of mine from Paris, named Chaffard, is already acquainted with him, so all we have to do is to set to work at once.

"You are now one of us. That is well understood, is it not? In a short time you will be able to satisfy your creditors, and to give your mistress a Cashmere shawl." 139

"But you go too quick," said Olivier in a wavering tone. "Wait a bit, I have not yet said yes."

"I don't ask you to say 'yes' now, you shall say it at Boulogne—make haste, and go and pay your bill; we shall leave this in two hours. The post-horses are ordered, we shall start from my house—be punctual."

The same evening the two philosophers arrive at Boulogne. They alight at the Hôtel de L'Univers, which has been selected for them by their accomplice—by whom they are shortly welcomed.

He tells them they have no time to lose, as the Count has spoken of quitting Boulogne the following day.

The travellers swallow a hasty dinner, make some slight toilette, and bend their steps towards the apartment occupied by the Count, preceded by Chaffard, who introduces them as two friends of his, who have estates in the neighbourhood.

The Count de Vandermool is a man about fifty years of age, he has an open and pleasing countenance; on his breast hang several foreign decorations.

The new arrivals are received by him with the most flattering cordiality; he does more; he invites them to spend the evening with him. 140

The invitation, it is needless to say, is accepted. The conversation, at first animated, begins to flag a little. The Count proposes a game of cards, which proposal is also eagerly accepted by the three confederates.

Whilst the tables are being arranged, Chauvignac gave his young friend two packs of cards, *biseautés*, to be substituted for those which should be produced by the Count.

Écarté was the game fixed on, and Olivier was selected to play with the Belgian; the two others having pretended not to know the game, contented themselves by betting one against the other—as their interests were in common, it was of little consequence which won the bet.

Olivier was at first thunderstruck at the assertion of his two friends, that they did not know how to play, but from certain telegraphic signs they made to him, he discovered that it was to prevent suspicion, in case he should win.

The wealthy Count would only play for bank-notes. "Metal," he said, "has not an agreeable odour in a drawing-room."

The young novice, at first confused by being a party to such a snare, neglected for a time to take advantage of the prepared cards, and following the dictates of his conscience, trusted to the chances of fortune. 141

The capricious goddess, far from being grateful for his trust, forsook him.

In two hands, the only thousand-franc note he possessed fell into the hands of his opponent.

Now it is, that, pressed on by the glances of Chauvignac, as well as anxious to regain his loss, Olivier essays some of the manœuvres which his friend had taught him.

They were easy to execute, for the Count was so near-sighted, that his nose was almost buried in his cards.

Of course the luck now turned, and the bank-notes began to accumulate beside Olivier, who, elated with his success, was indefatigable in his work.

The Count Vandermool was a good-tempered player. His repeated losses did not make him lose his jovial good-humour.

To look at his happy countenance, you would certainly have thought he was the winner.

"I am not in a lucky vein," observed he, good-naturedly, taking a pinch of snuff from a superb gold snuff-box.

"In this last trick, I vainly hoped to gain all, and I've got nothing."

Olivier was serious, his mind was not in a state to talk lightly. He continued to handle his cards with feverish eagerness. 142

Not wishing, however, to seem wanting in politeness towards so noble a host—"You are admirable to-night," said he to him with a faint smile.

"'Admirable,' do you say—Yes, yes, Monsieur Olivier, that's the word. I wish you joy. Go on; give me some cards!"

"It is useless to go on. Trump, and then trump. I cut, and it is the king of diamonds, which stands good—this gives me the five points."

"Ah! ill-luck has certainly fastened on me this evening," said the Count, "that makes eighty thousand francs I have lost; I see I shall soon make up the hundred thousand."

"I think it right to tell you, that I never go beyond that sum, and that if I am to lose it, I shall propose having some supper before I lose my last twenty thousand. Perhaps, that may change my luck; you certainly owe me this much."

The proposition to sup, met with general approbation.

Olivier, almost out of his wits with joy, at becoming the possessor of eighty thousand francs, could not resist the impulse he felt to testify his feelings of gratitude to Chauvignac. He drew him aside, and shook him warmly by the hand.

The wretched man had no idea of the cruel deception which had been practised on him, and which had all been pre-arranged by his two comrades. 143

The rich Belgian capitalist, the respectable count, was no other than a clever Parisian sharper, whom Chauvignac had persuaded to come, for the express purpose of ruining the unfortunate young man, who never perceived, whilst his back was turned, that the count changed the two packs of clipped cards which they had hitherto used, for two packs *biseautés* in the contrary way.

During supper they drank but little, wishing to keep their heads clear. The meal, nevertheless, was very merry; and as soon as it was over, they recommenced playing.

"Now," said the Parisian sharper, seating himself at the table, "I wish to end this affair one way or other, quickly. Let us make the stake twenty thousand francs (800*l.*)"

Olivier, after having won so largely, could not but accept the proposition. It was only just towards his adversary. But, oh! cruel deception! the stake of twenty thousand francs, on which Olivier had so surely counted, passed into the hands of his opponent.

A stake of forty thousand francs shared the fate of its predecessor. Breathless, bewildered, and discouraged, Olivier knew not what to do. In vain he manipulated the cards; he got none but the lowest, whilst his adversary had all the trumps in his hand; and as it was Olivier who dealt them to him, he could not complain. 144

In his despair, he looked enquiringly at Chauvignac, who made signs to him to go on.

Distracted, and quite beside himself, the poor victim continued to stake enormous sums; and, in his turn, shortly owed his adversary a hundred thousand francs.

The pretended count then gave up playing, folded his arms, and thus addressed Olivier:

"M. Olivier de X—," said he, in a stern tone of voice, "you must be very well off, to stake such sums; but be careful, for, rich as you are, you must be aware, that if people lose a hundred thousand francs, they must also pay them, as I did."

"So now, just pay me the sum you have lost, and then we'll go on playing."

"That's only fair, sir," muttered young Olivier; "I am willing to satisfy your demands, but you know that gambling debts ... my word...."

"Devil take it, sir," exclaimed the count, giving the table a violent blow with his fist. "What's that you say about your word? It well becomes you to talk of debts of honour. We'll play, if you please, another kind of game, and let us put things as they really are. M. Olivier de X—, you are a knave! Yes; a knave! The cards you have been using are clipped; and it is you who have brought them here." 145

"Sir, you insult me."

"You don't say so, sir," said the count, ironically.

"Sir, this is too much—I demand satisfaction for this—and that immediately. Do you hear, sir? let us go, and settle it at once."

"No, no, let us remain here, and settle *this* affair of honour. Stay, your two friends will be your witnesses, and I will send to some of my friends, to come and be mine."

Scarcely had the sharper uttered these words, than he got up, and rang violently.

His servant answered the bell.

"Go to the Procureur du Roi, and ask him to come here at once, on an affair of great importance; make haste, do you understand?"

"Pardon! sir, pardon! Do not ruin me," said the unhappy Olivier, in a tone of supplication. "I throw myself on your mercy."

"Étienne, mind you wait outside that door, and if, in ten minutes, you do not receive orders to the contrary you will do as I told you." 146

"Now then, sir," continued the count, turning to Olivier, "I will talk to you. These cards have been substituted by you in the place of those which I had provided. I insist upon your making these cards up in a packet, and sealing them with the ring on your finger, which bears your crest and coat of arms."

In vain Olivier looked from one to the other; neither Chauvignac nor Chaffard gave him any encouragement, but looked at him as much as to say, there was nothing for it but to do as he was desired.

Olivier obeyed.

As soon as the demand had been complied with, the pretended Belgian again attacked him. "Besides, this is not all, sir; I have fairly won my money, and you will give me a guarantee that it will be paid to me. You will give me bills at sight for the sum of one hundred thousand francs which you owe me."

The unhappy Olivier hesitating to comply with this demand, his implacable creditor rose and seized the bell.

"Oh! do not ring, sir—do not ring," said the young man, "I will sign the paper."

And he signed it.

The villainous plot was consummated.

Olivier returned to his family, and humbly confessed all that he had done.

His old father, rather than bring disgrace on his child, paid the money, esteeming his son's honour beyond all price.

The Society of Philosophers had shared in this roguery, in the persons of Chaffard and the Belgian capitalist.

To Chaffard was delegated the arrangement of the money department; and so well did he manage the business, that, in a very short space of time, he had the satisfaction of receiving a hundred thousand francs, in exchange for the bills which he held.

Chauvignac, ever watchful for his own interest, immediately claimed his portion of the booty. Half the sum (as had been agreed on) was handed over to him, for having arranged the scheme and prepared the victim. The remaining fifty thousand francs were left in the hands of Chaffard, to be divided between the three philosophers.

But the cunning rascal finding himself in possession of funds sufficient to give him a year's enjoyment and luxury, and living, as he did, in fear from day to day of being arrested for his numerous misdeeds, instead of going to Paris, directed his steps to Brussels, to play in his turn (but in good earnest) the rôle of a French capitalist.

In a moment of weakness, Chaffard had confided his project to Chauvignac, who immediately wrote, and told the two other philosophers of it.

Raymond, who was a philosopher in the true acceptation of the word, received the news with great coolness; he had learned to his cost that one must never depend on the honour of a rogue.

This fresh *escapade* of Chaffard did not surprise him; he had rather expected it.

With Andréas it was otherwise: furious at seeing himself the puppet of a man whom he regarded as his inferior, if not in bodily strength, at least in intelligence and sagacity, he swore that he would overtake the thief, and make him disgorge his ill-gotten gains.

Full of artifices and schemes, he started for Belgium; but, by way of precaution, he took with him, as a fellow-traveller and companion, a celebrated pugilist—a sort of herculean bull-dog, whom he intended to let loose at his antagonist, if occasion required.

Once separated from the man, whom he had every reason to regard as his bad angel, Raymond felt no longer sufficient strength to follow the dangerous profession, into which he had been so fatally enticed.

The constant dangers by which he was surrounded, a last spark of conscience, and a return of better feelings, made him determine to quit for ever the discreditable career which he was following.

Possessed of twenty thousand francs, he had sufficient funds to keep him for awhile, and give him time to find some employment, which would enable him to live honourably. But after some months, led on by his old love of gambling in general and roulette in particular, he visited the various spas and watering-places, where those engines of ruin, gambling tables, are to be found, and where he undertook his famous crusade against the banks and their "croupiers."

We know the result of the calculations and computations of Voisin Raymond,—the inevitable fate of all gamblers who count on benefiting by the favours of fortune.

* * * * *

It took Raymond some days to narrate to me the above story, as, when the clock struck the hour for beginning to play, he immediately quitted me, and thought of nothing but his hypothetical combinations.

He was trying a new system, about which, by-the-bye, he would never tell me a word, but I had little doubt that it would prove as fallacious as the former one, and leave him nothing but his own bright dreams as his reward.

When I quitted Baden, he was penniless, and I had to add to the loan I had already made him.

Since his conversion, I had had good proof, that he preferred suffering the most severe privations, rather than have recourse to his skill in sharpening; and this it was which made me advance him a larger sum.

When we parted, I left Raymond overjoyed with the hopes of being able to repay me all he owed, in a very short space of time, and even of being able to break the bank with the money I had lent him.

These golden visions, alas! were never destined to be realised. Soon afterwards, I went to Paris to resume

my "séances," and whilst there, I received a letter from Raymond, making a last appeal to my generosity, to enable him to live until he got a situation he was trying for.

Wishing to prevent a recurrence of similar appeals, I did not answer his letter, but wrote to one of my friends at Strasbourg, to send the wretched man fifty francs, without telling him the name of his benefactor.

A whole year passed without my hearing any more of Raymond. I thought it very probable he had died of want, when one day, on returning home in a cab, I could not drive up to my own door, as an elegant brougham, which had just driven up, was standing opposite to it. 151

I therefore got out, and what was my astonishment, at recognising in my visitor, Voisin Raymond, extremely well dressed, and sporting all his beard, as in the former happy roulette days, except that it was not quite so long.

I almost hesitated to address him, so great was my surprise; I thought I must be the victim of an illusion.

"Ah!" exclaimed Raymond (making use of precisely the same words he did at our first meeting at Baden), "how a beard changes a man! especially when that man is transformed into a demi-millionnaire!"

"Come in quickly," said I to Raymond, "I am curious to know, to what lucky chance you owe your present prosperity."

My visitor followed me without uttering a word, and even after our entrance into the drawing-room, still remained silent.

I was the first to speak.

"How is it, my friend, that your great good luck has never been mentioned in the newspapers? You know, that when the bank loses, they make a point of giving the fact publicity through the press, in hopes of alluring fresh players?" 152

Still no reply from Raymond; but, after a protracted silence of several moments, he said:

"I am doing my best to find some means of prolonging your error; not finding any, I decide to tell you the truth.

"You doubtless remember, that when I commenced the history of my life, out of respect for one of the members of my family, I concealed my name. It was out of regard to my brother, who held a high appointment in the magistracy.

"This brother, who, thank God! knew nothing of my doings, except that I had run through my fortune, died three months since, without leaving a will. I am his sole heir, and have come into twenty-five thousand francs a year.

"This is how I have managed to become a rich man.

"I have entirely renounced gambling," continued Raymond. "I am rich enough for all I require, and have no ambition to become more wealthy.

"I could now, however," added he, with an air of triumph, "break every one of the banks, if I liked; and what a glorious vengeance I could take for all my former ill-luck! Fortunately, my heart is too full of happiness to leave any room for vengeance." 153

* * * * *

Raymond took up his abode in the Marais, where he lived respected. I lost sight of him, when I went to reside in the country; but three years afterwards, I had occasion to come to Paris, and learned that my friend had died, and left all his fortune to various charitable institutions in the capital.

THE TECHNICAL PART.

We are now come to the most important part of this work. I intend, in it, to explain to the reader, the manœuvres of the different sorts of Greeks I have just sketched. To make this more intelligible, it will be necessary for me to enter into certain details, which will, I trust, prove interesting.

I must preface this, however, by mentioning, that nothing is further from my intention, than to give a lecture on sleight-of-hand. I care more about putting the public on their guard, than about teaching them how the tricks are performed. I shall merely mention what is absolutely necessary, to make those who play, SHARP, and warn them against SHARPERS.

GENERAL RULES.

THE DIFFERENT TRICKS PRACTISED AT GAMES OF CARDS.

1. The saut de coupe.
 2. The passe-coupe, or cut beneath.
 3. The enjambage, or cut above.
 4. The carte large, or large card.
 5. The pont, or bridge.
 6. The carte tuilée, or bent card.
 7. The filage, or card changed.
 8. The enlevage, or card abstracted.
 9. The posage, or card replaced.
 10. The carte à l'œil, or glance.
 11. The substitution des jeux, or pack of cards substituted.
 12. The boîte à la manche, or box of cards in the sleeve.
 13. The faux mélanges, or false shuffle.
 14. The mélange classificateur, or arranged shuffle.
 15. The mélange partiel, or partial shuffle.
 16. The éventail, or fan.
 17. The queue d'aronde, or dove-tail.
 18. The cartes adhérentes ou glissantes, or adherent or sliding cards.
 19. The cartes teintées, or tinted cards.
 20. The cartes hors d'équerre, or slanting cards.
 21. The cartes pointées, or pricked cards.
 22. The cartes morfilées, or cards with indented edges.
 23. The cartes ondulées, or wavy cards.
 24. The cartes tarotées, or enamelled cards.
 25. The cartes marquées, or marked cards.
 26. The chapelet, or rosary.
 27. The bague à marquer, or ring for marking.
 28. The tabatière à réflexion, or reflecting snuff-box.
 29. The télégraphie, or telegraph.
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CHAPTER I.

THE FALSE CUT.

The *saut de coupe*—The *passee-coupe*—The cut above—The large card—The bridge—The bent card.

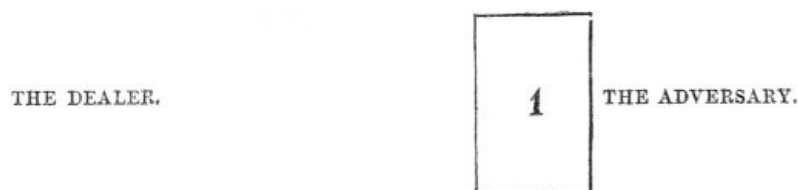
The art of making a false cut, is the most important artifice employed by sharpers: and the Greek always exerts his best energies to accomplish this feat.

In order to show what a false cut is, I must recall to the mind of my reader, the use and end of the regular cut.

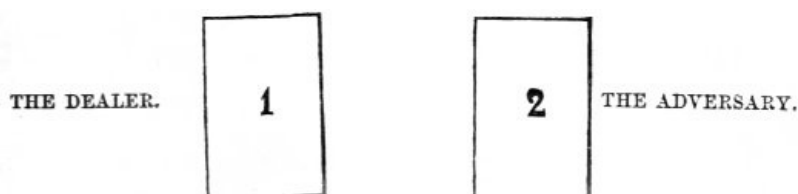
In all games of cards, it is the custom for the dealer, when he has done shuffling, to present the pack of cards to his adversary to cut: it is a sort of guarantee of good faith, which is also performed even amongst perfectly honest players.

The following is the way in which it is generally done:—

The cards are placed by the dealer near his adversary.



The adversary cuts, that is to say, he takes away a portion of the pack of cards, and places them beside the dealer, thus making two packets, No. 1 and No. 2. 159



The dealer raises the packet No. 2 and places it on No. 1.



Thus the two packets are formed into one, and the natural or artificial arrangement of the cards is disordered.

It is of great importance to the Greek to prevent this, as it would defeat his plans, and prevent him availing himself of the arrangements he has made against his adversary. It is necessary, then, for his success, that the two packets, whilst in his hands, should regain their first position. For this purpose, he employs different methods, the principal of which are:— 160

1. The *saut de coupe*.
2. The cut beneath.
3. The cut above.
4. The bridge.
5. The large card.

PART I.

THE "SAUT DE COUPE."

The reader who is uninitiated in the mysteries of sleight of hand, will probably think it incredible, not to say impossible, that a Greek can thus transpose invisibly the arrangement of two packs of cards, before the very eyes of his adversaries. Nothing, however, is more true.

The treatises on sleight of hand give the method of executing this trick. As this work, however, has not for its object the same sort of instruction, I shall content myself with unveiling here, the preparations and arrangements necessary for the performance of the trick.

When the Greek, takes up the packet of cards No. 2, to place them on No. 1, as before mentioned, instead of placing them equally one upon the top of the other [which would prevent his being able to distinguish them], he places No. 2 a little further back than No. 1, so that the latter advances about a quarter of an inch beyond, as exemplified below, in figure 4. 161

Fig. 4.



By means of this projection of the cards, the Greek, as soon as he gets the pack between his hands, slips the little finger of his left hand between the two packets Nos. 1 and 2, and holds himself in readiness "*Sauter la coupe*,"¹ when the opportunity serves.

Clever swindlers have yet another, and more adroit, manner of keeping the two packets separate.

They will, with the right hand, take up packet No. 2 as if to place it on the other; but, instead of so doing, they manage to keep the two sufficiently apart, to enable them to slip the little finger of the left hand between, in the same way as before mentioned. 162

Fig. 5.



I have just said, that a Greek always waits his opportunity to execute the sliding cut.

It is only the new hands who are in a hurry. The experienced sharper always bides his time, and, whilst relating some amusing anecdote, accompanied by a variety of gestures and gesticulations with his other hand, completely draws off the attention of the company, and prevents their watching his performances.

For example, "What are the stakes?" he will ask, with an air of unconsciousness, stretching out his hand towards them; and with the same gesture towards the score, he will ascertain the number of points, as if he was not thinking what he was about.

But let the "sliding-cut" be performed ever so well, it is very difficult to practise it where the play is high. In such company, every dealer ought to be sober in his movements; for, the least gesture which deviates from the regular rules, in sorting, shuffling, or dealing the cards, is certain to awaken suspicion. But a Greek is, notwithstanding, seldom at fault; if he fail with one trickery, he has another at hand, his *répertoire* being as varied as it is numerous. 163

PART II.

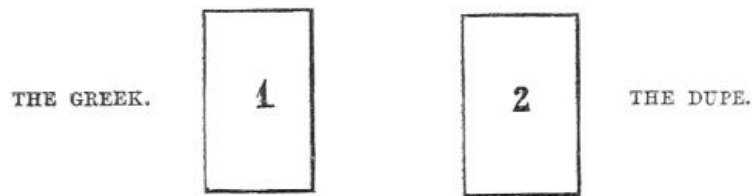
THE PASSE-COUPÉ, OR CUT BENEATH.

All sharpers are cunning, clever, and tricky, but they do not all possess the same facility for tricks of sleight of hand. Many of them not being able to accomplish the sliding cut, so as not to be seen, are obliged to have recourse to other tricks less difficult. Of this number is the "passe-coupe."

This trick is of the same use as the preceding one, and, if well executed, stands as little chance of being discovered.

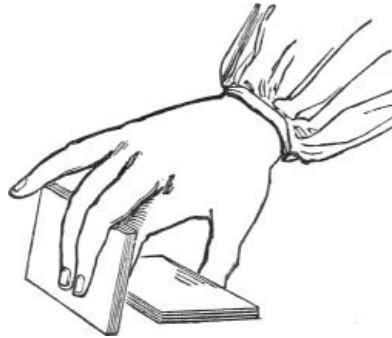
In order to explain this trick, it is necessary for me to revert to that paragraph where the cards have been divided into two packs by cutting.

Fig. 6.



The Greek, in taking up the two packets of cards, instead of putting No. 2 on No. 1, slides it in underneath, as in figure 7. 164

Fig. 7.



When he has raised packet No. 2, he places it between the first and second fingers, and whilst raising packet No. 1, artfully manages to slide it underneath.

To facilitate this manœuvre, the rogue takes care to bend the cards whilst he shuffles them.

Some Greeks, instead of placing the packet No. 2 between the two first fingers, merely take the cards into their hands, and slide them beneath one another, as above described. But in this latter case the transposition is easily discovered. 165

PART III.

THE ENJAMBAGE, OR CUT ABOVE.

The "cut above" is a very simple and clever trick, and it is astonishing, when one knows it, to think how easily people are deceived, and that it should not be discovered. However, I candidly confess, the first time I saw it done, I was taken in, as others are.

In this trick, the Greek, instead of placing packet No. 2 on packet No. 1, passes the former over without stopping into the left hand, which he holds a little in advance, and places packet No. 1 on the top.

This trick, as well as the preceding one, is more especially practised in public-houses and places of low resort.

PART IV.

THE CARTE LARGE, OR LARGE CARD.

The heading of this division sufficiently indicates the nature of the trick I am about to describe.

It is to have one card larger than all the rest. When introduced into a pack this card, by its projection, almost forces the pack to divide, wherever the person who places it wishes. 166

If the Greek has previously arranged the cards as he wishes them to be, their being cut, in no way disarranges his plans, as the card alluded to remains where it was placed at the commencement of the deal.

The large card is also used by the swindler as a sort of mark, to alter the cut to wherever he thinks it would be most beneficial to him.

PART V.

THE PONT, OR BRIDGE.

The bridge is one of the oldest tricks in use amongst sharpers, and it is almost impossible to be on one's guard against its use, when well done.

As in the preceding examples, it is used to make a false cut, and thus to retain the cards as they have been arranged by the sharper to enable him to win.

The pack of cards must be held in the right hand, and bent, by pressing them against the first finger of the left. The upper part of the pack must then be bent in an opposite direction, so as to form an arch, as in figure 8. 167

Fig. 8.



This being accomplished, the upper portion of the pack is laid on the top of the other, as if to mix the cards.

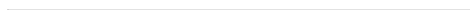
The two bent cards are thus brought in contact, and it is the gap produced by these two arcs, which forces the cut to be made oftener at that spot than at any other, as represented in figure 9.

Fig. 9.



The smallest space between any two cards is sufficient for this purpose. The "carte tuilée," or card bent lengthways, is also used for this purpose.

The two portions of the pack, being bent lengthways, and laid face to face, are sure to make the cut at that particular spot, by causing a division in the pack; but this trick is not so good as the last-mentioned, and is, consequently, seldom employed. 168



CHAPTER II.

TO CHANGE A CARD.

"*Filer la carte*" is to change one card for another.

In the hands of an adroit sharper, this change is performed so instantaneously, that it is almost impossible for the quickest eye to detect it.

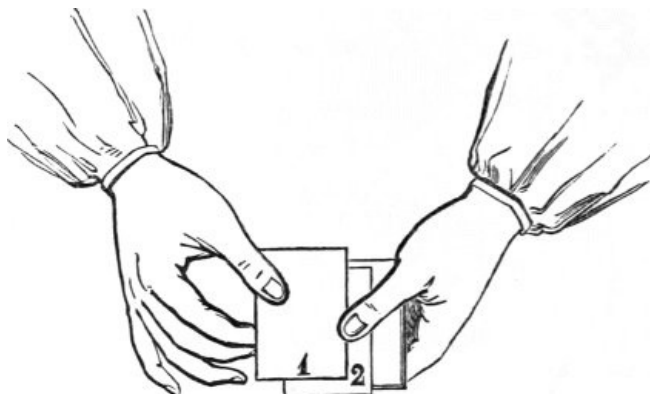
Let us suppose that, in dealing the cards, the Greek discovers, by means which I will hereafter explain, that the card he is going to give to his adversary would be advantageous to himself, he hides, or slips away, the card which ought to have been dealt to his adversary, and gives him, instead, the one which follows.

I will just explain how this manœuvre is managed.

When the Greek intends to perform this trick, he takes care, whilst dealing, to push two cards a little in advance of the rest of the pack, as shown in Nos. 1 and 2 in figure 10.

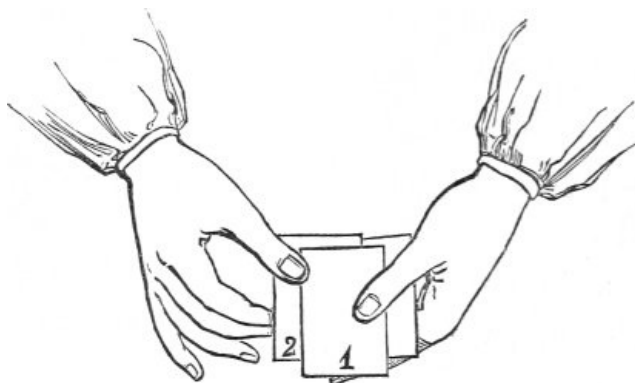
170

Fig. 10.



In a regular deal, No. 1 would be given before No. 2; but if the Greek thinks it to his interest to retain it, he substitutes the second for the first. Thus, by holding the two cards together, between his thumb and forefinger, he pushes them contrary ways, that is to say, he pushes No. 2 forward, and No. 1 backward, as represented in the figure below.

Fig. 11.



He then passes over the first card with his right hand, and gives the second.

This feat, which I have been obliged to explain thus lengthily, to make it clearly understood, ought to be done instantaneously, and with the rapidity of lightning. 171

Those who are expert, whilst advancing the right hand to give a card, at the same time draw back the left. This manœuvre completely deceives the eye, and may be practised as often as is necessary for the card in reserve to come into the hand of the Greek.

To give an idea how completely a person may be deceived by this trick, I will just relate what once happened to myself.

A certain Greek (of whom I have already spoken in my Memoirs) was anxious to show me this trick, and by way of illustrating his theory, selected the King of Spades, and placed it on the top of the pack. He then dealt the cards one after the other, and by thirty-one successive "filages," he so managed, that the King of Spades was the last card of the pack.

I acknowledge, and indeed I do so still, that so adroit was he, that though I knew the trick myself, I could not detect him.

CHAPTER III.

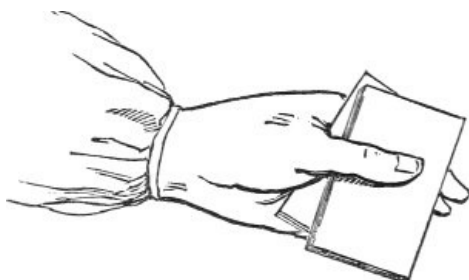
THE ABSTRACTED CARD.

When one has not been initiated into the mysteries of sleight-of-hand, it is difficult to believe that a sharper can abstract several cards, and put them back again, under the very eyes of his antagonist, without being detected. Such, however, is the fact.

The art of abstracting cards is one of the most useful tricks in sleight-of-hand, and it requires great skill and adroitness to perform the feat cleverly.

In order to do this trick, the Greek keeps the cards he wishes to abstract, placed diagonally in his left hand, at the top of the others, and a little advanced towards his right hand; as in figure 12.

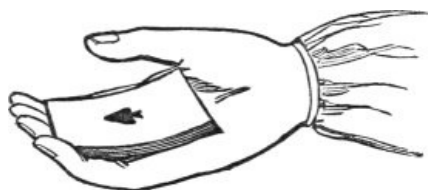
Fig. 12.



He takes possession of the cards with his right hand, and holds them tightly between the top joints of the four fingers, and the first joint of the thumb, or the *thenar*, as it is termed in medical parlance. 173

The cards are consequently slightly bent, as in figure 13.

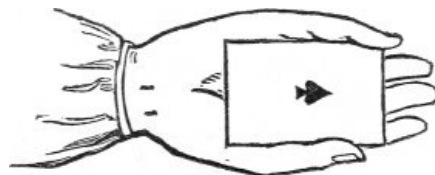
Fig. 13.



There is yet another manner of abstracting cards; but it is less practised by sharpers, than by conjurors, who often show off the trick in various ways, where it would be impossible for a sharper to make use of it.

It simply consists in holding the cards lightly, between the thumb and little finger of the hand which takes up the cards; a very slight pressure will do, and in this manner the cards do not require to be bent.

Fig. 14.



My readers will doubtless be surprised to hear, that as many as six cards can be thus hidden in the hand, at one time, without being seen; and it will astonish them even more, when I tell them, that a clever sharper will, with the same hand where the cards are concealed, cut and go on with the game, gesticulating in the most natural way, without any difficulty. 174

CHAPTER IV.

THE CARD REPLACED.

Once in possession of the cards which he has abstracted, the Greek, whether the game he is playing be Lansquenet, Baccarat, or Vingt-et-un, replaces them in the pack in such a way, that they will be sure when dealt to return to him.

This trick is the easiest to execute that I have yet described.

The Greek waits, until it is his turn to gather up, either the whole, or a portion of, the pack; then, whilst drawing them towards him, he quietly places the cards he had in reserve on the top, taking care to hide the action, by spreading out his hand over them.

CHAPTER V.

THE CARTE A L'ŒIL, OR GLANCE.

In playing, it is sometimes necessary for the Greek to obtain a sight of some particular card in the pack.

In order to do this, he resorts to the following manœuvre:—

One of his little fingers is slipped into the pack, where the card he wishes to see, lies; quick as lightning he glances his eye across it, and with such rapidity is the action performed, that those playing with him cannot see it, particularly as the backs of the cards are turned towards them, and he is gesticulating with his other hand, to draw off their attention.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUBSTITUTION DES JEUX, OR PACK OF CARDS CHANGED.

The substituted pack—The box in the sleeve.

The way this is done depends much on the class of Greek performing the trick.

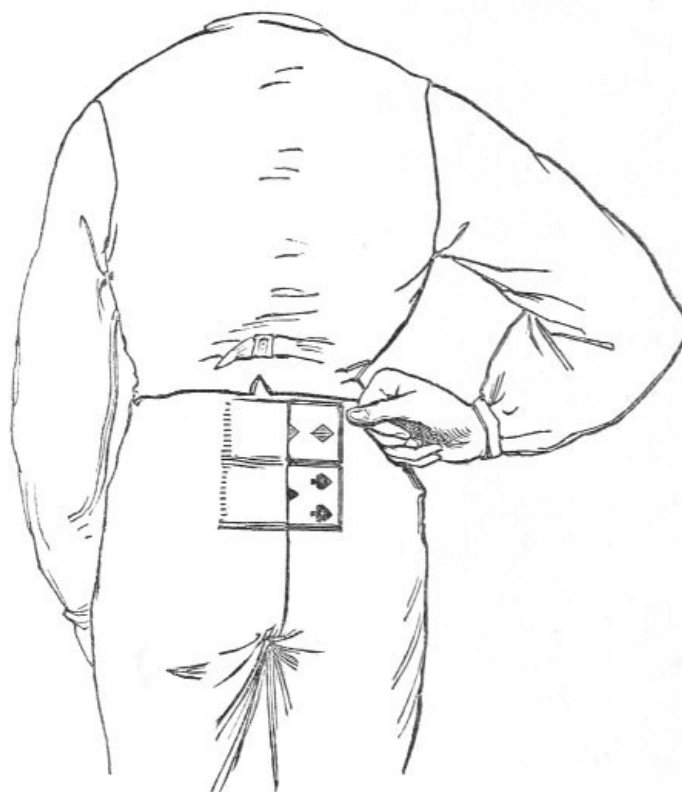
The high-bred sharper, for instance, very seldom makes use of it; he has other far more subtle methods, unknown to his brother rogue of low life.

The following tricks, however, may be considered as common to Greeks of every shade:—

A sharper has always under his coat, at the back of his trowsers, one or more little pockets, termed *finettes*, in which are carried the packs of cards he intends substituting for those of the house where he plays. These cards are so placed, that they can be drawn out with great facility, as may be perceived by the sketch on the next page.

Before the play begins, the Greek wanders about the room, in the neighbourhood of the card-tables, with his right hand placed, as shown, on his hip, and seizes a favourable opportunity, when he thinks no one is observing him, to substitute his own pack for those on the table, slipping the latter into a deep pocket called a *profonde*, which he has under the flap of his coat. 178

Fig. 15.



Others, more bold in their manœuvres, do not fear to execute this trick before the very eyes of their adversaries.

To do this with ease, pockets are made in the waistcoat, and are called *costières*, or side pockets,^J because they are made at the left side, a little above the region of the heart. They are entirely hidden by the coat. 179

1st. In seating himself at the table, the Greek artfully draws out of one of his pockets the prepared cards, and holds them in readiness in his right hand, as I have before described in the chapter on the "Abstraction of Cards."

2nd. He then, with his left hand, takes up the pack which is on the table, as if to withdraw it from its envelope, and places his own pack on the top, carefully hiding both packs with his right hand.

3rd. He manages, in cutting, to put the false pack at the top, and removes the other, in the manner already related in the chapter on "Abstraction."

4th. Finally, he disposes of the original pack in his large pocket, or *profonde*.

To accomplish this feat with greater facility, he pretends to draw his chair nearer to the table, which brings his hand in juxtaposition with his pocket.

All the operations above described, may be regarded as one, and are performed with infinite address and promptitude, whilst the Greek is entertaining his adversary with some animated and amusing discourse. 180

It is needless to say, that the two envelopes of the cards are identical, the Greek of course having seen to

that beforehand.

When sharpers find, that they have to be continually changing the packs of cards, and dread detection, should they try the trick too often, they arrange with one of their associates, whom they bribe, by offering him half the profits, to go and take the place of a servant, in those houses or clubs where they intend to cheat.

With such an arrangement, the two Greeks quietly pocket considerable sums. Others, less wary, take no accomplice, but change the cards themselves.

The Greek first finds out the name and address of the tradesman who furnishes the playing cards to the house or club, which he is in the habit of frequenting. He then goes to the shop, and makes a few trifling purchases, just to pave his way. He does this more than once, and returns again and again.

At length, one fine day, he calls at the shop to select, for a friend (he says), a dozen, or half a dozen, packs of cards, according as the shop is a large or a small one. 181

The next morning, pretending that the cards are not of the colour required, he takes them back again.

The packets being unopened, the shopkeeper has no hesitation in receiving and changing them for others.

But the Greek has passed the night, in opening and re-sealing the packets by a peculiar process known to sharpers.

The cards have been marked by him, before returning them to the shopkeeper, who has them now in his shop. The cheat is accomplished, and the Greek is biding his time.

PART I.

THE BOX IN THE SLEEVE.

There is yet another way of changing the pack, under the very eyes of your adversary. It consists in having a tin box fastened to your arm, under the sleeve of your coat, and which is not perceptible.

In this box, the Greek carries the cards he has marked for his own purposes.

When it is his turn to cut, he stretches out his hand across the table towards the pack, so as to hide it entirely; then, resting his arm lightly on the tablecloth, he presses a spring which opens the box, out of which falls the marked pack,—at the same time that there comes out another spring, which seizes the cards on the table, and draws them into the box. 182

Before concluding this chapter, I ought to mention that, though all these various tricks are each clever in their way, they cannot be employed indiscriminately.

The operations in question must depend on circumstances, and the manner of employing them should vary, according to whether they be performed in a smoking-tavern, a gambling-house, a drawing-room, or a club.

The Greek knows well what will suit each party with whom he plays, and rarely ventures on the trick without he is sure of succeeding.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FALSE SHUFFLE.

False shuffles: The arranged shuffle—The partial shuffle—The fan—The dove-tail.

It may be said that a false shuffle is not cheating, since the cards are but retained in their original order. Such acts, however, are not far removed from cheating, and the persons who are guilty of them may be compared to the receivers of stolen goods, who, though not the actual robbers, are judged to be so by the law.

When the pack of cards has been arranged by the sharper, whether he prepares them beforehand, or only in the presence of his adversary, he must be very careful not to disturb them.

To avoid this, he has recourse to various methods of evading a proper shuffle.

Of these there are four kinds, which vary according to the circumstances required.

They are:

The arranged shuffle.

The partial shuffle.

The fan.

The dove-tail.

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PART I.

THE ARRANGED SHUFFLE.

The arranged shuffle consists in pretending to shuffle, whilst all the time you are arranging the cards, in the order you require them for cheating. Let us suppose, for example, that a Greek, in playing Écarté, places in the pack four cards of the same suit, three of which are trumps, and the fourth is the turn-up card; this he manages to do by arranging the shuffle in the following manner. He divides the pack of cards into two parts, holding one in each hand, as it is usual to do in shuffling in the ordinary way. In mixing the two packs, he knows how to slip in successively, above the four cards, seven others, which will complete the series necessary for the deal.

He then hands them to be cut, makes a false cut, and when he has dealt out the eleven cards, the four remaining are three trumps and the turn-up card.

The arrangement of the game of Piquet, mentioned in another chapter, is a further instance of this trick.

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PART II.

THE PARTIAL SHUFFLE.

The partial shuffle is employed for those games, where only a portion of the cards is distributed at a time, such as Écarté. In this instance, we will suppose the Greek to have arranged eleven cards, so as to enable him to win the game, and it is of consequence that these cards should not be disarranged.

He therefore puts these eleven cards at the bottom of the pack, and, at the same time, carefully keeps his little finger between the upper and lower packet, which he avoids mixing, until after dealing the twenty-first card. This done, he performs the *saut de coupe* a second time, to bring the arranged packet again on the top of the pack, unless, by making the bridge, he gains the same end by forcing his adversary's cut.

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PART III.

THE FAN.

The following trick is termed the Fan, because the Greek, to do the false shuffle, spreads the cards out in the shape of a fan. He then divides the pack into two parts, holding, as before, one in each hand; then, by a certain manipulation with the fingers of his right hand, he passes the cards under those in the left, which, to the spectator, gives the effect of mixing the cards; but this is far from being the case. The cards retain the position they would have done if the pack had been cut, as the upper packet has passed beneath the lower one. The operation, consequently, requires to be gone through a second time, to bring the cards into their original position. This shuffle may remain in the above condition as long as the Greek finds it convenient.

PART IV.

THE DOVE-TAIL.

The ways of doing the false shuffle are numerous, each Greek having some special method of his own. All of them are more or less derived from the principles I have just described.

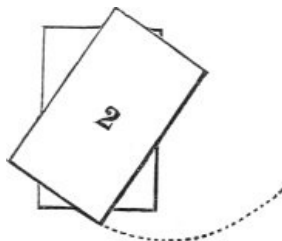
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It would take too long, as well as be useless, to enter into the details of these proceedings, as they are nearly all the same.

The false shuffle, with which I am about to close this chapter, is a peculiar one, and is very often used by sharpers.

To prevent any suspicions which might be raised by the use of the preceding shuffle, the Greek sometimes employs the Dove-tail, which consists in separating the cards into two packs, and then shuffling them one with the other; but, instead of finishing the shuffle by equalising the pack, the Greek manages to leave them at an angle as they are represented in figure 16 below.

Fig. 16.



Then begins an operation which is hidden by his right hand.

The Greek, after having passed packet No. 1 across packet No. 2, twists round the lower portion in a semicircle towards the right, which completely separates it from the other, and allows him to replace it beneath packet No. 1, as it originally was. 188



CHAPTER VIII.

DOCTORED CARDS.

Cartes biseautées—Tinted cards—Sticky or slippery cards—Slanting cards—Pricked cards—Cards with indented edges—Wavy cards—Chequered cards—Marked cards.

PART I.

THE CARTES BISEAUTÉES.

The Biseauté Card was one of the principal methods of cheating in the last century. The trick, at that period, was only known to the adepts of the higher ranks, and with it they succeeded in victimising numbers of people.

It is now chiefly made use of in public-houses, for it is so plain and palpable an artifice, that it could not fail to be discovered by more intelligent people than those who frequent these resorts.

The real signification of "biseautées" cards is, that they are larger at one end than at the other, as in figure 17.

To do this, the Greek, with a pair of sharp scissors, cuts both sides of every card, beginning at the twentieth 190 part of an inch, and going off to nothing.

Fig. 17.



All the cards being equally clipped at one end, if they are placed contrariwise, it is evident the edges will protrude the smallest bit possible beyond the other cards, and can be easily discovered by the sharper, however carefully they may have been shuffled by the opposite party.

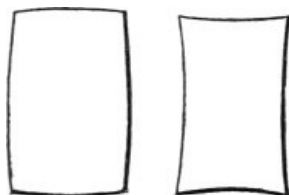
What answers with one card, will do so equally with all. Thus, we will suppose the Greek has put all the court cards one way, and the common cards the other, he can, by feeling the cards in cutting, cut a court card or not, as he pleases.

This I merely give as one example, for slanting cards can be used in various other ways.

Some Greeks make use of cards cut on both sides, in two opposite ways: it is the same thing under another form.

For instance, the cards represented below are cut so that the edge of some are convex, as in figure 18, and others concave, as in figure 19. 191

Figs. 18 and 19.



The result, with these cards, is the same as with the preceding, only that the latter afford a greater scope for cheating.

The more expert a sharper is, the less is it necessary to cut the edges of the cards; indeed, I have seen some so slightly cut, that you were obliged to examine them with the greatest minuteness to find it out.

PART II.

THE TINTED, OR STAINED CARD.

When white cards are not of first-rate quality, many of them are slightly tinted or stained; that is to say, the purity of the white varies. This imperfection is caused by the bad quality of the card-board of which they are

manufactured.

From these slight shades, the Greek can, after seeing them for a few moments, recognise many of the cards. 192

If there are no blemishes or stains on them, the Greek contrives to give them various tints, which he alone can perceive. To this end, he rubs very lightly over, with a cloth dipped in blacklead, such of the cards as he wishes to know again.

The person with whom the Greek is playing, even if he were warned of this trick, could scarcely observe the marks. It requires the lynx eyes of the sharper to distinguish the imperceptible shades.

We ought also to mention that the Greeks have each their particular *forte*. One who has an excellent eyesight, and sensitive touch, will make use of the marked cards; another, for other reasons, will have recourse to sleight of hand.

PART III.

THE ADHERENT, OR SLIDING CARDS.

By the foregoing it will be observed, that a Greek is always ready to profit by the slightest differences in the cards; but what my readers will scarcely find credible is, that even a pack of new cards, when first taken out of its envelope, will furnish him with the means and signs of recognising the court from the plain cards. This cheat is most practicable, when the cards have not been kept in a perfectly dry place. 193

The Greek, in dealing, presses his left thumb on the cards, as if to disengage the upper ones, and push them towards his right hand. When the cards are damp, the plain ones slide more easily than the court cards, the reason for which, is to be thus accounted for:—

That in manufacturing the court cards, and in order to give a brightness to their colours, a preparation of gum is used, which is easily affected by the damp, and becomes slightly sticky; this is why they do not slip with such facility as the others.

The higher class of sharpers are much in the habit of using this trick, which they perform with a sensitiveness of touch of astounding delicacy.

The lower order of Greek is obliged to prepare the pack beforehand, and rubs the court cards lightly over with soap, and the others he paints with an extremely pure resin. 194

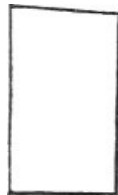
PART IV.

THE "HORS D'ÉQUERRE," OR SLANTING CARDS.

I was once requested by a magistrate, to examine some packs of cards which had been seized in a gambling-house, and many of which had been used for the game of *Vingt-et-un*. I acceded to his request, and it was only owing to my knowledge of mechanism, that I was enabled to discover the trick, by means of which the *banquier* of the gambling-table could distinguish, whilst dealing, whether the card he took from the top of the pack was higher or lower than a ten.

All the court cards and aces were cut on the slant at the top, so as to prevent them being quite straight, as in figure 20, but much less so in reality than is here represented.

Fig. 20.



To discover this very slight alteration it required a most practised eye; but slight as it was, it was sufficient for the sharper; and, according to these indications, he either took the upper card, if it were to his advantage, or dealt to himself the lower one by the "filage."^K In this manner he could also, at the end of the deal, retain or give himself the card he required. 195

PART V.

THE "POINTÉES," OR PRICKED CARDS.

These marks are made by the Greek to distinguish all the high cards.

With the point of a pin, a little blunted, he pricks the card in the corner at the side of the picture, so as to produce a minute elevation on the upper surface.

Some Greeks improve on this trick, by pricking between the two card-boards, and afterwards pasting them together again. In this way, nothing is to be seen on the upper part of the card but a small roughness, which, should it ever be remarked, would pass for a defect in the card-board.

Others, who are still more adroit, instead of making any mark above, do it from beneath, and in this manner the mark is completely hidden by the painting, and can only be discovered by the touch.

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PART VI.

THE CARDS "MORFILÉES," OR WITH INDENTED EDGES.

This trick very much resembles the preceding one, only that it is done in presence of the dupe.

Each time that a card which will be favourable to his play, passes through the hands of the Greek, he makes a small dent with his nail on the edge of it. This mark is easily felt by the Greek.

It must be confessed, that those amongst the Greeks who are adepts at this trick, have an extreme delicacy of touch, which they preserve by always wearing gloves, when they are not playing at cards. Some of them even rub the ends of their fingers with pumice stone, or dip them in certain acids, which give extreme sensibility to the skin.

PART VII.

THE "ONDULÉES," OR WAVY CARDS.

The above marks, or waves, are also made whilst playing.

When the Greek observes any cards, which will suit him to perform the trick he is about to play, he makes, at the bottom of the left-hand corner, a little fold, or arch, inwards. This alteration, be it ever so slight, produces a kind of lustre on the card, which the eye of the Greek can immediately detect.

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This trick is generally employed in cheating at Piquet. The Greek, in this way, marks all the aces and high cards in any of the suits.

With certain arts of *legerdemain*, which I have before alluded to, he can so arrange all, or part, of his hand, that no play of his adversary, be it ever so good, could stand against it.

PART VIII.

THE "TAROTÉES," OR FIGURED OR CHECQUERED CARDS.

It often happens that, in packs of playing-cards, the backs of which are ornamented with figures and designs, these ornaments are not placed exactly in the same spot on each card.

If examined attentively, it will be seen, that the designs are not always the same distance from the edge of the card. The manufacturer himself, and players in general, pay little attention to these irregularities, but the Greek turns them to account, and makes them useful in his tricks.

By the time the cards have been dealt two or three times round, he can distinguish many of them.

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Sharppers are themselves often the manufacturers of their own cards, and can, therefore, arrange and place their designs where they please.

For instance, let us suppose that the design consists of a series of lozenges, placed one above the other. The Greek would so arrange them that, at the edge of the card, the lozenge should be entire for the ace. Then, as it approaches the edge, it is cut in half for the queen, quarterly for the king, and three-quarters for the knave.

In the same way, on the upper side of the card, the lozenges, by similar arrangements, would point out the spades, hearts, clubs, or diamonds, and also show the principal cards in the game of Piquet.

All this would seem to be the effect of chance, and no one could assert that there was anything fraudulent.

PART IX.

THE MARKED, OR SPOTTED CARDS.

This trick of marking cards, is equal to any of the most refined abbreviations used in stenography, as here, by the aid of a single spot, any one of the thirty-two cards in the game of Piquet may be known.

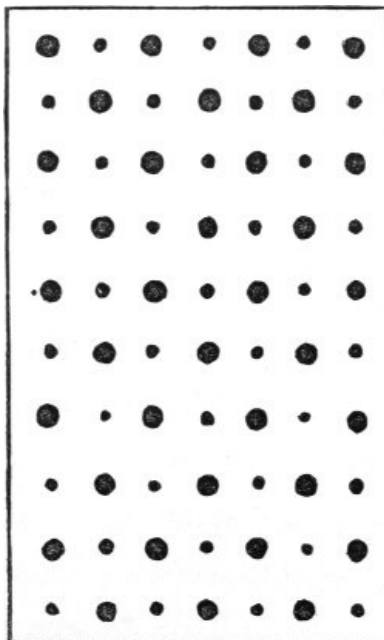
199

We will imagine, for example, a design formed of spots, or some other device, arranged symmetrically, as these sorts of patterns usually are. For instance, as in figure 21.

The first large spot, beginning from the top of the card, on the left hand, will represent a heart; the second, in descending, a diamond, the third a club, and the fourth a spade.

Now, if, by the side of any of these, another spot is added, it will immediately serve to show what card it is.

Fig. 21.



The mark should be placed near one of the original spots, as shown below in figure 22, which, when placed at the top, shows it is an ace; going round to the right of it, the next spot would be a king, the third spot a queen, the fourth a knave, and so on to the seven. 200

**Fig.
22.**



It must be clearly understood that only one spot is to be made, as in [figure 21](#), where that which is added to the third spot, would (according to the rules I have laid down), mark the eight of clubs.

After these explanations, I feel convinced, my reader has already made up his mind, never again to play with cards on which there are devices.

"If these are the sort of tricks one is subject to," exclaims he, "I'll take care that I never play with anything but plain cards again."

Unfortunately, even these can be tampered with, as I have already shown in speaking of tinted cards; of which I will now give another proof.

In the year 1849, the judge of the Criminal Court of the Seine, begged me to examine a hundred and fifty packs of cards, which were supposed to have been tampered with.

They were found in the possession of a man, whose antecedents were far from being as pure, as the colour of his cards. 201

The cards were in fact all white, and had hitherto defied the most minute inspection.

It was impossible for the most practised eye to discover, that they had been altered or marked in any way.

They seemed all of the best quality.

I spent nearly a fortnight in examining (not only with my naked eye, but with a strong magnifying glass) the card board, the shape, and the almost imperceptible shades, of each of these one hundred and fifty packs of cards.

I could detect nothing; and tired out, I was going to give the same opinion as the experts who had previously examined them.

"There is certainly nothing wrong with these cards," exclaimed I, one evening, in a pettish tone, throwing the pack from me across the table.

All at once, on the shining back of one of the cards, near one of the corners, I thought I saw a dull-looking spot, which had before escaped me. On looking close at it, it disappeared; but strange to say, as I went far off from it, it re-appeared.

"How glad I am," cried I aloud, enthusiastically. "Now I see what it is. It's all right. This then is the mark!" and following the rules, used by sharpers, I satisfied myself, that on every card there was the same spot, which, being placed in various parts, were distinctive signs of the card and the suit. The following was the way the thing was done. 202

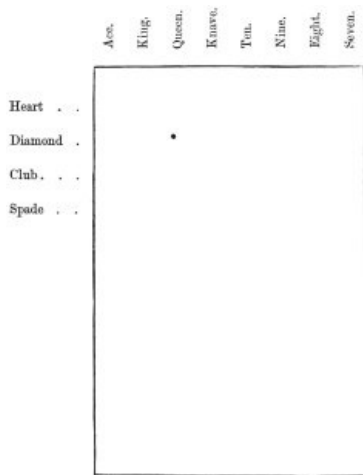
We must imagine the cards divided into eight divisions perpendicularly, and four horizontally, as in [figure](#)

23. The former will indicate the value of the card, the latter the suit. The mark is placed where each of these divisions intersect one another. The above is the way the cheat is performed, and practice does the rest.

I must be allowed to decline mentioning the method, by which these mysterious marks are made on the cards. My object being, as I have already stated, more than once, to expose the tricks of sharpers, but not to show how they are done. Suffice it to say, that when looked at closely, these spots are invisible; but when viewed from afar, the reflection of a strong light makes the card shine, but leaves the spot dull.

At first sight, it would seem a difficult task to distinguish one card from another, by an isolated spot on the back of it. However, if my readers will attend to what I have told them, and look at the example given in figure 23, they will see that it does not belong to the second, nor the fourth perpendicular division; and by the same rule, they will observe, that the spot is in the second horizontal division, and represents, therefore, the queen of diamonds. 203

Fig. 23.



From all this, it is evident that a swindler plays and stakes—I will not say his honour, but his liberty, against fortune; and that, by reason of the importance of the stake, he ought to have devoted the most serious attention to an art, on which all his future depends. 204

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHAPLET, OR ROSARY.

The rosary is a particular arrangement of the cards, according to certain words in a sentence, which is learnt by heart. In other words, it is a sort of mnemonics, or artificial memory, to enable people to cheat at play. There are several sorts of "*chapelets*," more or less ingenious. The best are those which recall to one's mind a feeling, a thought, or even only an amusing combination.

One of the oldest rosaries consists of two Latin verses, every word in each of which represents one of the fifty-two cards of a pack—

Unus, quinque, novem, famulus, sex, quatuor, duo,
Rex, septem, octo, foemina, trina, decem;

which may be translated thus:

Ace, five, nine, knave, six, four, two,
King, seven, eight, queen, three, ten.

These thirteen cards are also arranged according to their suits, namely—spades, hearts, clubs, diamonds, as follows: 206

1. Unus (ace) of spades,
2. Quinque (five) of hearts,
3. Novem (nine) of clubs,
4. Famulus (knave) of diamonds,
5. Sex (six) of spades,

and so on, by following the words of the rosary and the suit, to the last card.

I will now give a sentence or rosary, for the thirty-two cards used in the game of Piquet—

Le Roi dix-huit ne valait pas ses dames;

Or—

Le Roi, dix, huit, neuf, valet, as, sept, dame.

Which means—

The king, ten, eight, nine, knave, ace, seven, queen.

In this, as well as in the preceding example, the cards are classed according to their suits, as above described; only, at the end of the rosary after the queen, instead of putting the suit which follows, for the king which comes after, they arrange so that the king and queen should be of the same suit. Were this not done, one would require four kings of spades, four tens of hearts, &c., &c. The following example will show what I mean: 207

ARRANGEMENT OF A ROSARY OF THIRTY-TWO CARDS:

1. The king of spades.
2. The ten of hearts.
3. The eight of clubs.
4. The nine of diamonds.
5. The knave of spades.
6. The ace of hearts.
7. The seven of clubs.
8. The queen of diamonds.
9. The king of diamonds.
10. The ten of spades.
11. The eight of hearts.
12. The nine of clubs.
13. The knave of diamonds.
14. The ace of spades.
15. The seven of hearts.
16. The queen of clubs.
17. The king of clubs.
18. The ten of diamonds.
19. The eight of spades.
20. The nine of hearts.
21. The knave of clubs.
22. The ace of diamonds.
23. The seven of spades.
24. The queen of hearts.
25. The king of hearts.
26. The ten of clubs.

27. The eight of diamonds.
28. The nine of spades.
29. The knave of hearts.
30. The ace of clubs.
31. The seven of diamonds.
32. The queen of spades.

It must be remembered that, when the cards are thus arranged, however often the pack is cut, the order of the cards remains the same.

When a Greek has substituted a pack of cards, arranged à *chapelet* for another, and has made a false shuffle which does not alter them, he will easily know what cards his adversary holds, by looking at his own hand.

For example at Écarté, if he holds—

The eight of hearts,
The nine of clubs,
The queen of clubs,
The king of clubs,
The ten of diamonds;

208

He will know that his adversary has—

The king of diamonds,
The ten of spades,
The knave of diamonds,
The ace of spades,
The seven of hearts.

The turn-up card will be the eight of spades; and knowing all the other cards which follow after this, he can demand or refuse them, as he judges best.

It is, at the games of Vingt-et-un, Baccarat, and Lansquenet, that this cheating is the most dangerous, as well as the most easily accomplished. The packs are changed beforehand, and even though they may be really properly shuffled, it will be some time before the order of the cards is completely altered. Some few cards may be displaced, but the Greek manages to play on, and to know the card which is coming, by having seen the one which precedes it.

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CHAPTER X.

THE RING FOR MARKING.

The Greek sometimes carries his trickery even into the domains of science; of which the instrument I am about to describe is a proof.

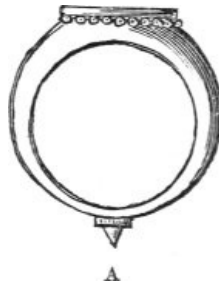
If this jewel had not been invented for the sole purpose of cheating, one would have been tempted to admire it.

The ring, shown in [figure 24](#), is known by the name of a *trépan*. It is hollow, and forms a kind of reservoir, which is filled with very liquid ink. This liquid would escape by a small opening, at the point A, but that the capillary attraction retains the ink at its mouth. In short, it is a kind of pen with a reservoir.

As this point is hidden in the inside of the hand, the Greek can, at any moment, mark the cards he pleases, with an almost imperceptible spot, before the very eyes of his adversary.

These spots can, as I have before explained, by the manner in which they are placed, mark particular cards. 210

Fig. 24.



The Greek also makes use of this instrument to cheat at dominoes.

For this purpose, the ring is a very massive one, and the point alluded to is made of steel, and very sharp.

It is easy to understand, that when the Greek has the dominoes in his hands, in moving them about on the table, he can put a mark on them, so as to know them again.

The point of the ring, fine as it is, is blunted, so that the marks it makes are so light and shining, as to awaken no suspicion, and it is only to the eyes of the sharper, who has made them, that they are visible.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REFLECTING SNUFF-BOX.

As I am on the subject of curiosities of art, here is another, which is also very clever.

It is difficult to believe that a snuff-box can be made an instrument for cheating.

The Greek, when placing himself at the table to play, puts down a snuff-box, on the lid of which is a small medallion of the size of a franc, enclosing a miniature.

It is the portrait of a lady exquisitely painted.

The eyes of the players naturally turn to this object, and they sometimes even take it up to admire, or display it to their friends.

When the game has begun, the Greek takes a pinch of snuff, which gives him the opportunity of drawing the box towards him.

But, at the same time, he presses an invisible spring, which withdraws the portrait, and in its place out comes a convex glass, which is of the greatest utility to him; for, when he is dealing, this mirror being underneath the cards which he deals to his adversary, he has only to look in it to see the reflection of the cards he is giving. 212

During the evening, the Greek makes the medallion return, and offers a pinch of snuff to his victims.

CHAPTER XII.

APPLICATION OF THE PRECEDING PRINCIPLES.

Arrangement of the pack—Coups de piquet—How to repique and capot an adversary—How to repique and capot an adversary although he has shuffled the cards—Abstraction and substitution of cards—Coup d'écarté—Jeu de règle—Lansquenet—Baccarat—Vingt-et-un, &c. &c.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE PACK.

It is a well-known fact that, by the aid of the principles which I have herein laid down, a clever Greek will gain at every game, by giving himself the cards which are favourable to his interest.

But it must not be believed, that these sharpers are so unskilful as to cheat always by sleight of hand. They would very soon be discovered.

These intelligent rogues husband their resources, and act with prudence. They usually only deal themselves what is called a "*jeu de règle*," or hand which is sure of making three tricks; and their adroitness and tact, coupled with this slight advantage, is sufficient to ensure to them the favours of fortune.

In most cases, the Greek only uses his arts according to the circumstances required. The more able player he is, the less is it necessary to call cheating to his aid. If he finds he has an indifferent player for his opponent, he only plays the regular game, and reserves his rogueries for another occasion. But, as it often happens that the proverb, "a new hand always wins," is verified, he takes care to be on the defensive, and to use his weapons if required. 214

For this reason, it is quite impossible to give an exact definition of the play of a Greek; but as I am anxious to enlighten my readers on his marvellous powers, I will just give one example of the *haute école*, or high school, as they say at the Cirque Olympique (the Astley's of Paris).

It is the greatest *coup* that it is possible to make at piquet.

In this trick, which is done in the presence of his adversary, and without any previous preparation, the Greek can win the game with a first hand, by a hundred and sixty-three points. ^L

In perusing the following details of the different manipulations, which serve as the basis of all sorts of cheating at games of cards, I hope my readers will take this warning, which is the real purpose of my work:—that it is dangerous to hazard large sums of money on chances which can be so easily turned against them. 215

PART I.

THE "COUP DE PIQUET."

How to Repique and Capot one's Adversary.

The trick I am about to describe, dates from the last century. It was the invention of a juggler named Comus, who performed it with his eyes bandaged.

From this interesting combination, have originated all the other *coups de piquet*, so often displayed by jugglers.

I shall here give a description of how it is done, as it will make what I have mentioned in the preceding chapter, more easy to understand.

In taking up the pack of cards, the juggler, with a pretended awkwardness, shuffles the cards in such a manner, that many of them are turned face to face. This enables him, under the pretext of turning them the right way about, to select and place at the bottom of the pack a sequence of eight cards in any suit, a king and three aces. 216

Once in possession of these twelve cards, he slightly bends the corners, which leaves a ridge that he can easily discern. (See [part vii.](#), [chapter ix.](#))

He then hands the cards to his adversary to shuffle.

Whilst this is being done he has his eyes bandaged with a handkerchief, which, however, does not prevent his seeing through the interstices caused by the projection of his nose.

He then takes back the pack, and whilst pretending to shuffle, he finds the marked cards, and places them where he wishes, as will be explained in the following part.

Some jugglers, instead of bending the cards, with the greatest *sang froid*, pass the twelve cards above alluded to, underneath the others, and then pretend to shuffle. 217

PART II.

THE "COUP DE PIQUET."

How the Greek is enabled to Repique and Capot his Adversary, although he has Shuffled the Cards.

As I am addressing those who are supposed to know piquet, I need enter into no details about that game.

In playing the first hand, the Greek must secure a *sixième-major* (or sequence of six cards from the ace downwards, which counts sixteen), a quatorze of aces (the four aces), and a quatorze of kings (the four kings), as seen by the table below:—

1. The ace of spades.
2. The king of spades.
3. The queen of spades.
4. The knave of spades.
5. The ten of spades.
6. The nine of spades.
7. The ace of hearts.
8. The ace of diamonds.
9. The ace of clubs.
10. The king of hearts.
11. The king of diamonds.
12. The king of clubs.

His adversary must be the dealer, as it is in playing the first hand, that the selection of these twelve cards is managed.

This difficult trick is done in the following manner. It is customary, before beginning to play, for each person to cut for the deal.

The Greek, in mixing the cards, with a rapid glance, seeks for an ace, which he passes under the pack, and putting in practice the principles which I have pointed out in the first chapter, part 5, [figure 9](#), he makes the bridge. 218

"Let us see," exclaims he, putting the pack on the table, "who shall deal?"

He cuts first himself, at the bridge where the ace (the highest card in cutting at piquet) is placed, and as it does not often happen that his opponent cuts another ace—"You shall deal," says he, "we will make the game one hundred and fifty points."

The first hand is not of much importance; the Greek leaves to chance the distribution of the cards. He well knows that his adversary will not gain the game in one hand; he, therefore, only thinks of making himself master of the cards before mentioned.

Twelve cards are dealt to him by his adversary, and five others are in reserve for him in the "*talon*."

It is most probable that, out of these seventeen cards, he will find some of the number mentioned in the preceding list.

He must, at all hazards, prevent those cards getting into his opponent's hands, and must keep them near him for the following hand.

Consequently, he discards the weakest cards in his hand, and makes a little heap of them on his right hand, on which he places successively, and without concealment, all the aces, kings, and spades, he can get from his adversary. 219

We will imagine that, by the time the hand is played, he has only been able to obtain six of the cards he wants.

To secure the other six, still in the pack, he has recourse to the following manœuvre.

Whilst playing, he has intentionally left all the tricks he has gained face upwards; and, as it is his turn to deal, he does the same thing with those of his adversary.

Profiting by the moment when the latter is marking his points, in taking up the pack, the Greek selects the cards required, and places them underneath with those which he has already secured.

If my readers are not "*au fait*" at tricks of cards, they will doubtless find the explanation I have given, both tedious and difficult of comprehension. It is really nothing; it resembles those tricks of sleight of hand, which require long explanations to make a very short operation understood.

But that is not the question; my sole wish being to make myself understood, which has perhaps caused me to be rather prolix.

The Greek having, in the twinkling of an eye, put the twelve cards he wanted at the bottom of the pack, then places them, so that they will all return to him in the deal, and whilst pretending to shuffle the cards, he puts alternately on the pack, 220

1. Three cards from the bottom.
2. Three indifferent cards taken from the middle of the pack.
3. Three cards from the bottom.
4. Three indifferent cards.
5. Three cards from the bottom.
6. Three indifferent cards.

After which, a false shuffle, a false cut, and a deal of three at a time.

It will be seen that, out of the twelve cards which were placed under the pack, nine must have come back to the Greek in the course of the deal; the three others come to him in the exchange. He therefore has in his hand:

1. A *sixième-major* in spades,

2. A quatorze of aces,
3. A quatorze of kings:

with which he gains the game by capoting his adversary.

In this hand, then, he has made a hundred and sixty-three points. 221

This selection of cards, and their arrangement, is a specimen of what can be done by cheating; however, a Greek usually will not venture to do it on so large a scale; but contents himself with a quatorze of aces or kings, or even a simple quint. The selection of these cards is simple and easy, compared with the former trick.

PART III. THE "COUP DE PIQUET."

Abstraction and Substitution of Cards.

In former days, it was the fashion at piquet, when the deal was finished, to divide the *talon* into two unequal packets, and place them one on the top of the other, in the shape of a cross. Now, however, these eight cards are left in one packet.

This new fashion has given rise to a fresh roguery, which, though a very audacious one, is no less difficult to discover, where the parties are not cognisant of it.

Once known, it is quite another thing.

This rascality is executed in the following manner: 222

The sharper, in dealing, gives himself three cards too many. He then intentionally places the *talon* a little nearer to himself than to his adversary.

The latter, not thinking about it, does not perceive that his opponent has taken extra cards, being at that moment as much occupied with taking up and sorting his cards, as with the discard.

Whilst his adversary is thus occupied, the sharper hastily takes the three worst cards in his hand, and conveys them by a method I have pointed out, and places them on the *talon*, pushing it at the same time, as if to place it nearer to his antagonist. This movement is so natural, that the artifice is completely concealed.

Thus the Greek is not only relieved of his three bad cards, but he passes them on to his adversary, so that he gains an advantage in more ways than one. 223

PART IV. THE "COUP D'ÉCARTÉ."

The King and the Vole.

Before commencing this article on Écarté, I wish to point out an error very generally diffused among players.

When speaking of a swindler, people are apt to say, "He is a man who turns up the king whenever he pleases." This is a decided error. A Greek, if he is clever, will never do anything so imprudent. He knows very well that, by turning up a king too often, he arouses suspicion, and only marks one point; whereas, by keeping it in his own hand, he enjoys the advantage of marking two. In the same way, a sharper of experience will never deal himself so good a hand as that which I am about to describe, because such an assemblage of trumps would create doubts in the mind of his opponent.

The following hand must, therefore, only be regarded as an example, of what can be done by tricking at écarté.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE PACK.

The Greek, whilst shuffling the cards with apparent indifference, has quietly introduced underneath the pack a sixième-major, or sequence of six cards from the king (the highest card at écarté) downwards. 224

This done, nothing is easier than for him to arrange the cards, so that they will fall to him in the deal.

To effect this, while pretending to shuffle, he puts alternately on the pack—

1. Four cards from beneath (good).
2. Three cards from the middle (bad).
3. Two cards from beneath (good).
4. Two cards from the middle (bad).

This performance ended, he makes a false cut, as described in the first chapter, and deals.

Contrary to his principles, he will turn up the king, and hold in his own hand a sequence from the queen of trumps downwards.

PART V. A JEU DE RÈGLE.^M

From the preceding tricks, it will be seen that it is necessary for the Greek, before he begins playing, to put a certain number of cards into the pack, both at the top and underneath, all of which he arranges in readiness to be dealt to him. 225

This he does whilst pretending to shuffle them, and almost always in the midst of an animated conversation about the hand which has just been played. All this he performs so naturally that it is never observed.

A sharper, who understands his business, never amuses himself with essaying "*tours de force*," but is content with a few good cards, of which he knows how to make the best use.

His manner of acting under such circumstances is very simple.

Let us suppose that the first hand has been played out, and it is now the Greek's turn to deal.

He gathers up, as usual, the eleven cards which are on the table; but, in so doing, he, with great dexterity, separates all the cards of one suit, and places them on the *talon*, the rest he puts underneath.

Suppose the cards chosen by him are the following:—

1. The king of hearts.
2. The ace of hearts.
3. The ten of hearts.
4. The seven of hearts.

In order that the last of these cards may be turned up, and that the three others may be in his own hand, he need only put above them the first cards that come, to make the number eleven, which can be easily done whilst pretending to shuffle. 226

After which, he makes a false cut, by means of the Bridge, or any other of the methods given in the first chapter, and deals.

The Greek now holds in his own hand the king, ace, and ten of hearts. As to the other two cards he trusts to chance, not caring much whether they are good or bad.

Should you have any doubts about the honesty of your adversary, the way to detect this cheat is to watch the cards which are taken up, and especially to observe whether those cards, which have been used in a previous hand, do not appear again in his play.

PART VI. LANSQUENET.

The "Dépôt de Portées."

This trick is about the most simple and dangerous that I have yet described, and the performance of it is unfortunately very easy.

The Greek must place on the pack, at the moment when he is dealer, a series of cards, called "portées," so as to secure beforehand several *refaits*. 227

These "portées" are composed of ten cards, and are arranged, for example, as follows:—

1. Queen.
2. Queen.
3. Ten.
4. Seven.
5. Ten.
6. Nine.
7. Nine.
8. Ace.
9. Eight.
10. Ace.

When this "portée" is exhausted, the Greek passes on the cards.

These cards are placed in such a manner about the sharper, as to allow him to get at them with ease.

To show you how this is done, I must strip my sharper of his coat.

It will be seen that, in the waistcoat of [the figure](#) on the next page, there are two pockets, called "costières," which are made on the left side.

When it is his turn to deal, he leans forward on the table, and, in so doing, brings his hand as near as possible to his "portées;" thus he can, when he pleases, take them out, as is shown in the fourth chapter, and put them on the pack.

The Greek having his coat buttoned at the top, this proceeding is prevented from being seen, and the opening at the bottom enables him to put his hand inside, without it being noticed. 228

Fig. 25.



Some Greeks are expert enough to abstract several *refaits* from the pack itself, and put them into their side-pockets in readiness for their next hand. Others keep them hidden in their hand, and await an opportune moment for replacing them on the pack. So that, in this manner, there are never more cards in a pack than there ought to be.

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PART VII. ON GAMES WITH FOUR PLAYERS.

It may be imagined, that in a game where there are four people playing, cheating is impracticable, since the cards the sharper ought to deal, are collected and shuffled by another person.

The reader may remember that in one of the chapters, at the beginning of this work, I have given him a concise explanation of this very subject. This explanation I will now complete.

At the game of Bouillotte, for example, a Greek makes an agreement with an accomplice, whom he places near him.

This accomplice, while collecting and shuffling the cards, arranges them for the following hand. The trick will cause no suspicion; for it is not to the Greek who deals the cards, but to his confederate, that the good hand comes. Besides, these gentlemen always pretend to be unacquainted with each other.

There are numerous other tricks in which no second party is required, and which are all contained in the general rules I have laid down.

* * * * *

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Again, I have sometimes heard it observed, that a Greek cannot exercise his vocation in the higher class of clubs, as they are so strictly watched.

He will certainly not venture, in these *réunions*, in the midst of a crowd of lookers on, all more or less interested in the game, to *sauter la coupe*, *filer la carte*, &c., &c. But, can he not have recourse to other deceptions, where there is no danger of discovery?

The marked cards, for example: can he not bribe a servant, by offering him half the profits, to let him have the packs of cards before giving them to the players?

The telegraph also is equally available, even before the most critical observers.

The Greek of fashionable life has sufficient tact and *finesse* to cope with any situation, however difficult, in which he may be placed; and when he makes up his mind to cheat, he generally succeeds.

If he does not venture on sleight of hand in public, he makes use of it in small parties, where the players are not conspicuous for their intelligence and perspicacity.

Far be it from me to say, that wherever there are players, there must be rogues; on the contrary, I believe that in many clubs such a character is unknown; still, that is no reason that sooner or later a Greek might not gain entrance there, and exercise his infamous vocation.

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CHAPTER XIII.

ENTERTAINING TRICKS.

Piquet—Écarté—Baccarat—Impériale—Whist—Bouillotte—Bézigue—&c., &c.

In the former chapter I have given various examples of serious cheats performed by Greeks.

I shall now present to my readers, a series of what may be termed entertaining tricks; they are done in such a way that a juggler may, whilst amusing his spectators, show them how easily they may be cheated at every game.

Let us go back to the preceding *coup de piquet*, which we will now perform in a more agreeable manner.

We will suppose the juggler to have in his hand—

1. A *sixième* of spades.
2. A *quatorze* of aces.
3. A *quatorze* of kings.

His adversary is the elder hand; it is for him to call; he announces a *sixième* from the queen; for, as he has the chance of a sequence in three suits, it is most probable that he will succeed with one. 233

"Six cards," says he.

"What do they count?"

"Fifty-four."

"That's not good. Is that all you have to declare?"

"Yes; for it is not likely that my three queens will turn out valueless."

"Indeed!" You then spread your *sixième* major on the table, and say—sixteen and six make twenty-two; and *quatorze* of kings (you show them) ninety-six; and *quatorze* of aces, a hundred and ten.

These two *quatorzes* have all this time been hidden in your left hand.

Here I must explain, *par parenthèse*, something which it will be necessary for my readers to know, so as to understand what follows. While continuing the counting of this *coup de piquet*, we will secretly prepare a *coup d'écarté*, which we will execute after this game.

Let us take up the counting where we left off.

"A hundred and ten," we have said. "A hundred and eleven," you say, taking up the nine of spades of your *sixième*, and putting it on one side—"a hundred and twelve," putting the ten on it; and, continuing your calculation, you do the same with the other four cards; with this difference, that when you come to the king, you put the ace before him, so that he may be the last card in the pack. 234

In finishing your counting, you put the three kings and the three aces on these six cards, which brings it to a hundred and twenty-three. This, with forty for the *capot*, makes a hundred and sixty-three.

The pack not being played out, the cards have not been shuffled, and it is easy, with the slight preparation I have just pointed out, to arrange the following *coup*.

PART I.

ÉCARTÉ.

An Amusing Game at Écarté.

According to the arrangement of the cards mentioned in the preceding trick, you have in hand six spades, three kings, and three aces, which you put on the pack.

You then take up, with apparent indifference, the three cards of your discard, which you have left close to yourself, and place them under the two first cards; then, by a false shuffle, you pass two of the undermost cards of the pack to the top. 235

This manœuvre arranges the cards in the following manner:

Two indifferent cards.

Two spades.

Three indifferent cards.

Four spades—one of which is a king, and will serve as the turn-up card.

Afterwards come the three kings and three aces.

This operation is performed whilst a conversation is being carried on, and without your having declared your intention to continue playing; then you place the pack on the table.

"You see," say you, "the danger of playing at cards. A sharper would not make a joke of it, and, with such chances at his disposal, he would soon see the bottom of your purse."

"By the bye, do you know another game for two to play at? Écarté, for instance?"

"Yes; I do."

"Oh! very well! Then let us play a game at écarté."

We take the pack already prepared; we make a false shuffle, a false cut, and we deal the cards.

"I am going to turn up the king," you say. "Here he is; and I have a handful of trumps." You throw down the five trumps in succession on the table, saying, "Trump, trump," &c., &c. 236

PART II. CONTINUATION OF THE GAME.

Another Amusing Trick.

"The *vole* and the king. I mark three; it is your turn to deal," presenting the pack to your adversary; and, at the same time, drawing out five or six cards which you keep hidden in your hand, according to the principles laid down in the third chapter, [figure 13](#).

The adversary shuffles the cards, and, that he shall not notice the diminution of the pack, you distract his attention by an animated conversation. Something in this style.

"Have you any knowledge of sleight of hand?"

"I don't think so."

"I am sorry for it, as I would have taught you a trick."

"Oh! that's of no consequence; show it to me all the same."

"With pleasure. But you must first practice a whole year to *sauter la coupe*," &c., &c. Your *vis-à-vis* then hands the cards to you to cut, and deals. Taking up your cards, you pass in underneath, those you had secreted, being careful to press them very forcibly one against the other. 237

"Ah! Well, what game did you say we were to play at?"

"At écarté; I thought you said at écarté."

"Then why do you give me so many cards?" spreading out the cards side by side.

"A false deal. You've lost your deal," you exclaim, at the same time passing with a rapid glance all the cards in review before you.

This hasty glance, rapid as it is, has been long enough to show you, out of these eleven or twelve cards, which is the dominant suit.

You select four of them, and, as you ought to recollect, the three kings and three aces were amongst them.

To the four above-mentioned you add the king and the ace of hearts, and place them all together at the bottom of the pack; then, by an operation similar to that described for piquet, whilst pretending to shuffle, you put on the top of the pack—

1. Four cards from the bottom.
 2. Three indifferent cards from the middle.
 3. Two cards from the bottom.
 4. Two indifferent cards.
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The pack is accordingly thus arranged for playing. Eleven prepared cards. That is to say—

1. Two chance cards.
2. Two hearts.
3. Three chance cards.
4. Three hearts.
5. A heart, as the turn-up card.

You make a false shuffle, a false cut, and then proceed to deal.

"I turned up the king just now," you observe, in finishing the deal. "This time I shall keep it in my own hand." You mark the king, and make the point, which wins the game.

PART III. THE "COUP D'ÉCARTÉ."

In which your Adversary is made to Win.

Thus, as I have just explained, in collecting the cards, you select a *sixième-major* in whichever suit you please, put it at the bottom of the pack, and add in succession the following:

1. One card from the bottom.
 2. Three chance cards from the middle.
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3. Three cards from the bottom.
4. Two chance cards from the middle.
5. Two cards from the bottom.

A false shuffle, a false cut, and then deal first two, then three.

In arranging your cards you must not let the king be the turn-up card.

PART IV. A GAME AT ÉCARTÉ.

In which the Adversary loses a Bet he has made, judging from what he has already seen of the Hand of the Dealer.

Put on the top of the pack the following eleven cards:

1. The queen of hearts.
2. The ace of hearts.
3. The king of hearts.
4. The knave of hearts.
5. The ten of hearts.
6. The nine of hearts.
7. The king of diamonds.
8. The seven of hearts.
9. The seven of clubs.
10. The seven of spades.
11. The eight of hearts.

Then make a false shuffle, a false cut, and deal by twos and threes.

The cards by this manœuvre will be thus divided:

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THE DEALER.

The king of hearts.
The knave of hearts.
The seven of hearts.
The seven of spades.
The seven of clubs.

THE ADVERSARY.

The queen of hearts.
The ace of hearts.
The ten of hearts.
The nine of hearts.
The king of diamonds.

The turn-up card is the eight of hearts.

"Oh! good Heavens!" you exclaim, laying down your trio of sevens on the table, "what dreadful cards!" But you are careful not to display the king and knave of hearts.

"But, notwithstanding" (you continue), "I have such luck, that even with this bad hand I may win the game after all."

Your adversary, knowing the splendid hand he holds, falls into the trap, and bets largely that he will make the point. He plays with confidence, but let him play as he will, he cannot help losing three tricks, as two of his trumps must fall to your small cards, and your seven of trumps will prevent his winning with the king of diamonds. You still have in your hand what is vulgarly called the "*fourchette*," or alternate cards, to win the game with.

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PART V. BACCARAT.

A Game of Baccarat which is advantageous to the Banquier.

You place at the bottom of the pack, sixteen cards in the following order:

1. A nine.
2. A court card.
3. A nine.
4. A court card.
5. A nine.
6. A court card.

7. A nine.
8. A court card.
9. An eight.
10. An ace.
11. An eight.
12. An ace.
13. An eight.
14. An ace.
15. An eight.
16. An ace.

CLASSIFICATION.

Place in succession on the top of the pack, sixteen times consecutively:

1. The last card.
2. Two chance cards.
3. The last.
4. Two chance cards, and so on.

A false cut, and deal one card at a time. The "banquier" will have, from the beginning, at each *coup*, nine or nineteen; and will in this way win on all sides.

This example of recreative cheating at baccarat, is only given as a specimen.

A Greek would fear to win in this way, on so large a scale, and especially by these *coups d'emblée*.

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PART VI. IMPÉRIALE.

A Capot at Impériale.

Put at the bottom of the pack the following thirteen cards:

1. Three kings.
2. Three queens.
3. A sixième major in hearts.
4. A seven of hearts, as the turn-up card.

CLASSIFICATION.

Put in succession at the top of the pack:

1. The four last cards.
2. Three chance cards.
3. The three last cards.
4. Three chance cards.
5. The three last cards.
6. Three chance cards.
7. Three last cards.
8. Three chance cards.

After which a false cut, and deal three cards at a time.

The dealer will have in his hand:

1. An impériale of kings.
2. An impériale of queens.
3. An impériale for the sixième.

And when he has finished the hand, he will, besides the above, have two other impériaes for the twelve tricks, which will give him the game.

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PART VII. WHIST.

A Game at Whist in which you gain every Trick.

Place on the top of the pack twelve cards of the same suit, and arrange them with a false shuffle, by the following operations:

1st. Having taken the thirteen cards in your right hand, put the last one on the top of the packet of the thirty-nine others, which you hold in your left hand.

2nd. Then immediately slide that card, with the three others which follow, on the packet in your right hand.

3rd. Afterwards, again slide the last of this packet on the top of those in your left hand, and proceed as before, to place them with three others, on the top of the pack. 244

Go on with this routine until the whole of the pack of cards in your left hand are finished.

This false shuffle is a most complete deception.

A false cut and deal.

With the thirteen trumps in his hand the dealer cannot fail to win every trick.

PART VIII.

A GAME AT WHIST.

In which each Player holds an entire Suit, but which, however, does not prevent the Dealer from winning every Trick.

All the cards must be separated in suits, namely: hearts, diamonds, spades, and clubs, one of each alternately, without reference as to their being high or low in their classification.

Make a false shuffle, and hand the cards to be cut, without any fear of their being disarranged by this proceeding.

They must be dealt one at the time.

After the deal, every person will have a sequence of thirteen cards, but the dealer will have the advantage of having all the trumps in his own hand. 245

PART IX.

BOUILLOTTE.

A Brehan-carré, or Four Cards of the same sort.

Put at the bottom of the pack, four cards of the same sort, for instance, four sevens, four tens, &c.

Then, for the arrangement of them, put in succession on the pack:

1. The two last cards.
2. Three chance cards.
3. The last card.
4. Three chance cards.
5. The last card.
6. Three chance cards.

A false shuffle, and false cut; when you deal, you will have in your hand four cards of the same sort, whilst your adversaries will only hold what chance has given them, which, under any circumstances, will not be equal to what you have. 246

PART X.

A GAME AT BOUILLOTTE.

In which you win, after having induced your Adversaries to stake on their Cards.

Put the following thirteen cards under the pack:

1. Four nines.
2. Three queens.
3. Three kings.
4. Three aces.

Then put in succession, on the top of the pack:

1. The two last cards.
2. The third, the sixth and the ninth before the last.
3. The last card.
4. The second, the fourth and the sixth before the last.
5. The four last cards.

A false shuffle, a false cut, and deal.

Each player, possessing three cards of the same sort, feels almost certain of winning.

It is not surprising, therefore, that each person stakes on his cards; but the dealer, having four cards of the same sort, marks higher than any of his opponents; and is, of course, the winner.

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PART XI. BÉZIGUE.

A curious Game at Bézigue, in which, with a single hand of Thirty-two Cards, you make, at the first "coup," five hundred and ten points, without your Adversary having been able to mark a single one.

This game is very amusing, and merits a description of its *mise en scène*. This we shall give after the cards are cut.

Put at the bottom of the pack, the seventeen cards which follow:

1. Ten of hearts.
2. Ten of clubs.
3. Ten of diamonds.
4. King of hearts.
5. King of clubs.
6. King of diamonds.
7. Ace of hearts.
8. Ace of clubs.
9. Ace of diamonds.
10. Ace of spades.
11. King of spades.
12. Queen of spades.
13. Knave of spades.
14. Ten of spades.
15. Nine of spades,
16. Seven of spades.
17. Eight of spades.

CLASSIFICATION, UNDER PRETENCE OF SHUFFLING.

Place in succession on the top of the pack:

1. The five last (five spades).
2. Three indifferent cards.
3. Three cards from the bottom of the pack (three spades).
4. Four indifferent cards.

The classification above mentioned, ought to answer for both packs. The "talon," or stock, must then be arranged, so that all the cards necessary for you to win the game with will come successively into your hands. For this purpose, you must change the form of your false shuffle, and continue thus: 248

1st. Take in your right hand, the fourteen first cards, which have been placed on the top of the pack.

2nd. Hold the rest of the pack in your left hand between the thumb and four fingers, then slip in successively under the packet in your right hand:

1st. With the thumb of the left hand, the cards on the top of this packet.

2nd. With the four fingers of the same hand, the bottom card of the same packet.

3rd. With the thumb of the left hand, the upper card, and so on, to the end of the packet.

To be certain that you are doing it all right, you have only to look at the last card, which ought to be a ten.

The cards should appear in the following order:

1. Three useless cards.
2. Three good cards.
3. Three useless cards.
4. Three good cards.
5. The seven of spades (the turn-up card).
6. The eight of spades.
7. A useless card.
8. The ace of hearts.
9. A useless card.

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And in the same way for the aces, the three kings, and the three tens, which ought to be separated from each other by indifferent cards.

Then a false cut, and deal three cards at a time.

"When the game of Bézigue was first invented," you say to your adversary, "they used to play with the same number of cards as at Piquet, making five hundred points the game; and, in consequence of the small quantity of cards, each player had never more than six cards in his hand at a time. Let us do things as they ought to be done, and play it in that way."

You deal—"Three, three, three, three," you say, and turn up a seven of spades, which marks ten points 10

The dealer has a sequence of six in spades.

"I beg to inform you, sir, before looking at my hand, that whatever be the card you may play, I shall take it with the nine of trumps, so as to count a *mariage* in that suit."

You take up your cards. 250

"You see I am right. I take the trick and mark forty 40

"I am now going to draw out of the *talon* the eight of trumps, with which I shall take the trick again, in order to mark my two hundred and fifty 250
300

"I require two hundred points yet to win the game. Let us see what will be the most expeditious mode of doing so. The four aces will count a hundred, for example."

You take in an ace.

You then play one of your trumps to be the first to draw, and, each time you draw, you say, "Here is another,—now another," &c., until you have drawn out the fourth ace.

"This ought to be the ace of ..." (as the other three aces have been named before drawing, you can name the suit of this last ace without hesitation).

"I mark a hundred" 100

"Let us now endeavour to get eighty for the four kings. Here is one, now another, &c., and here is the fourth. I mark eighty 80

"Remember, sir, that I warned you that I would make five hundred points, before you marked one. But if you have the *brisques* (the four tens) you may count them. I will, however, save you unnecessary trouble, by getting them myself," and you take them in, one after the other. 251

"The turn-up card is yours by right, but, that it may not injure me I am going to trump it, which makes me game. Thus, ten for the last card, and twenty for *brisques*, make thirty, which, added to four hundred and eighty, make five hundred and ten."

It must be understood, that in this game you must take every trick, so as to be always the first to play.

This game is certainly a difficult one to play, but it has the advantage of producing a very brilliant effect.

PART XII. A "COUP DE PIQUET."

In which you repique with Cartes-blanches,^N and gain the Game in spite of being capoted. This Game consists of one hundred points.

Arrange a pack of cards beforehand in the following manner:

1. Ace of diamonds.
2. King of diamonds.
3. Queen of diamonds.
4. Ten of clubs.
5. Nine of clubs.
6. Eight of clubs.
7. Knave of diamonds.
8. Ten of diamonds.
9. Ace of spades.
10. Seven of clubs.
11. Ten of hearts.
12. Nine of hearts.
13. Queen of spades.
14. Knave of spades.
15. Nine of spades.
16. Eight of hearts.
17. Seven of hearts.
18. Nine of diamonds.
19. Seven of spades.
20. Ace of hearts.
21. Ace of clubs.
22. Eight of diamonds.

23. Seven of diamonds.
24. Eight of spades.
25. King of hearts.
26. Queen of hearts.
27. King of clubs.
28. King of spades.
29. Ten of spades.
30. Queen of clubs.
31. Knave of clubs.
32. Knave of hearts.

As this arrangement of the cards, would be much too long a proceeding to enact before your adversary, the best plan is to have a pack of cards ready prepared, and to exchange them for those on the table, before beginning to play.

Make a false cut, and deal three at a time.

After which, you commence by showing cartes-blanches (which counts ten), then discard the seven, eight, and nine of diamonds; and, if required, the eight of spades. If your adversary leaves, as he ought to do, a card on the *talon*, you have, by the *rentrée* of the queen of clubs, the knave of clubs, and the knave of hearts, a sixième in clubs, and a quint in hearts, with which you repique, and make a hundred and seven points. You will be the winner, even if you are capoted. 253

For, your adversary having discarded, according to the rules of the game, the queen, knave, nine, and seven of spades, has taken for his *rentrée* the king and queen of hearts, the king of clubs, and the king of spades.

He will hold in his hand a quint major in diamonds, a quatorze of aces, and a quatorze of kings, with which, had they been good, he would have made one hundred and forty-nine points.

PART XIII.

A CLEVER "COUP DE PIQUET."

In which you allow your adversary to choose:—1st. In what suit he would like to be capoted and repiqued; 2nd. Whether he wishes to have the cards dealt to him by twos or by threes; 3rd. To select whichever of the packs he pleases.

The following is the order that the cards must be placed in, before you hand them to be cut:^o

1. The queen of clubs.
2. The nine of clubs.
3. The eight of clubs.
4. *The seven of clubs.
5. The ace of hearts.
6. The king of hearts.
7. The knave of hearts.
8. The ten of hearts.
9. The queen of hearts.
10. The nine of hearts.
11. The eight of hearts.
12. *The seven of hearts.
13. The ace of spades.
14. The king of spades.
15. The knave of spades.
16. The ten of spades.
17. The queen of spades.
18. The nine of spades.
19. The eight of spades.
20. *The seven of spades.
21. The ace of diamonds.
22. The king of diamonds.
23. The knave of diamonds.
24. The ten of diamonds.
25. The queen of diamonds.
26. The nine of diamonds.
27. The eight of diamonds.
28. *The seven of diamonds.
29. The ace of clubs.
30. The king of clubs.
31. The knave of clubs.
32. The ten of clubs.

The four cards marked with an asterisk are large cards.

By the arrangement of the cards in the order above, it is evident that, if the pack is cut where one of the large cards, which are the last of each suit, is placed, there will always remain in the talon eight cards of the

same suit; consequently, if your adversary wishes to be repiqued in clubs, in cutting the pack at the first large card, which is the seven of clubs, you necessarily put the eight clubs at the bottom of the pack, and you will have for your *rentrée* a quint major in clubs.

This will be the case with all the suits in cutting at the seventh card.

Your adversary having expressed a wish to be repiqued in clubs, his wish will be gratified if the cards are dealt two at a time. 255

THE FIRST PLAYER.	THE SECOND PLAYER.
Ace of hearts.	Knave of hearts.
King of hearts.	Ten of hearts.
Queen of hearts.	Eight of hearts.
Nine of hearts.	Seven of hearts.
Ace of spades.	Knave of spades.
King of spades.	Ten of spades.
Queen of spades.	Eight of spades.
Nine of spades.	Seven of spades.
Ace of diamonds.	Knave of diamonds.
King of diamonds.	Ten of diamonds.
Queen of diamonds.	Eight of diamonds.
Nine of diamonds.	Seven of diamonds.

"RENTRÉE" OF THE FIRST PLAYER.	"RENTRÉE" OF THE SECOND PLAYER.
Ace of clubs.	Nine of clubs.
King of clubs.	Eight of clubs.
Knave of clubs.	Seven of clubs.
Ten of clubs.	
Queen of clubs.	

If, on the contrary, your adversary wishes to have the cards dealt in threes, the following will be the result:

THE FIRST PLAYER.	THE SECOND PLAYER.
Ace of hearts.	Ten of hearts.
King of hearts.	Queen of hearts.
Knave of hearts.	Nine of hearts.
Eight of hearts.	King of spades.
Seven of hearts.	Knave of spades.
Ace of spades.	Ten of spades.
Queen of spades.	Seven of spades.
Nine of spades.	Ace of diamonds.
Eight of spades.	King of diamonds.
Knave of diamonds.	Nine of diamonds.
Ten of diamonds.	Eight of diamonds.
Queen of diamonds.	Seven of diamonds.

"RENTRÉE" OF THE FIRST PLAYER.	"RENTRÉE" OF THE SECOND PLAYER.
Ace of clubs.	Nine of clubs.
King of clubs.	Eight of clubs.
Knave of clubs.	Seven of clubs.
Ten of clubs.	
Queen of clubs.	

When your adversary has named the suit in which he wishes to be repiqued, and which we will suppose to be clubs, you must cut at the seven of this suit, and then tell him he is at liberty to have the cards dealt to him in twos or threes, whichever he pleases.

The cards having been dealt out, either in one way or the other, you then tell your adversary that he may, before looking at them, select whichever of the packs of cards he likes, provided he will agree to be second hand.

Should the cards have been given in twos, and each one retains his own hand, you must discard the nines of hearts, spades, and diamonds, and two queens of any suit. 257

The *rentrée* will be a quint major in clubs, a quatorze of aces, and a quatorze of kings, with which, of course, you make a repique.

If, on the contrary, your adversary chooses to be the first player, you will discard the sevens of hearts,

spades, and diamonds, and two eights of any suit. This will give you, for your *rentrée*, the same quint in clubs, a quatorze of queens, and a quatorze of knaves, which will equally produce a repique.

If your adversary, instead of having the cards dealt in twos, prefers that they should be given in threes, and that he keeps his own hand, you must discard the king, the eight and the seven of hearts, and the nine and eight of spades, so as to have for your *rentrée* a quint major in clubs, a tierce from the queen in diamonds, three aces, three queens, and three knaves, with which you repique.

If he chooses to be the first player, you will discard the queen and the nine of hearts, the knave and the seven of spades, and the ace of diamonds.

By this you will have, for your *rentrée*, the same quint major in clubs, a tierce from the nine in diamonds, three kings, and three tens, which will make twenty-nine points. In playing, you will only make sixty the game.

Although we have supposed the repique to have been asked for in clubs by your adversary, it must be clearly understood, that it may be similarly done in any other suit; and it is only necessary, as has been already explained at the beginning of this chapter, to cut at the seven of the suit called for.

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CHAPTER XIV.

MINOR CHEATS OF MEN OF THE WORLD.

Ruses and Frauds allowable by custom in Society.

In the ordinary affairs of life, it is easy to know the difference between honesty and roguery: conscience and the laws have traced a line of demarcation, about which all right-minded people agree.

In the matter of play, it is not the same thing: one knows perfectly where roguery ends, but it is very difficult to say where it begins?

Let me hasten to give an explanation, without which my readers will have a right to call me to task.

"Do you mean to pretend," they will say, "that a man of sense is not capable of discriminating between honesty and roguery?" This would, indeed, be giving too great a position to cheating.

I at once disclaim the assertion of any such opinion; none believe more in honesty than myself. But for that firm belief, this work would probably never have seen the light.

But let a man be ever so upright and just in his play, there are houses where certain licences are allowed, where the play is not high enough, to make it worth a man's while to cheat. 260

These peccadilloes, may for want of a better appellation, be termed clever manœuvres, finesses, ruses, and mental sleight-of-hand.

Of these I will just mention a few, beginning with the most innocent, and progressing by degrees, until I come to actual sharpening. At the same time I must request my readers to fix their own limits, where honesty ends and roguery begins.

* * * * *

For instance, if you are playing with an awkward adversary, who, in arranging his cards, classes his trumps too ostensibly, ought you, therefore, to avoid taking advantage of this awkwardness, as a guide to your adversary's hand?

* * * * *

Again, if your adversary, through carelessness, shows his cards, or if, by holding them too near the candle, they are rendered transparent: is it necessary to tell him of it?

* * * * *

Then, in playing Écarté. What is to be said of an adversary who consults the bye-standers, as if he had the right to do so, as to whether he shall play or not, and who, after a little hesitation, decides to discard? From thus acting it might be supposed, that he had a first-rate hand, and that prudence alone prompted the question. Do not be taken in: He will discard all his five cards. He wished to deceive his adversary, and if the latter is inexperienced, he will succeed in so doing. 261

* * * * *

Another man will, before proposing, look at his counters, as if to mark the king, then, after giving you this false alarm, he asks for cards, and is only too glad if you acquiesce in his request: for not only had he no king at all, but a very bad hand.

* * * * *

You are still playing at Écarté, and you have three points, but your adversary is doubtless in ignorance of the fact, since he inquires of you, where you are? "I count three," you reply. This announcement seems to make him decide not to stand on his own cards, so he proposes. From this, you would suppose he had a good hand. You would be wrong in this case to refuse, so you accept and give him *five* cards, as all this little bye-play was intended to intimidate you. He had nothing at all.

* * * * *

Some players endeavour to depict on their countenances, the contrary of what they really feel. If they have a good hand, they eagerly ask for cards, and when they have a bad one, they pretend to hesitate. Others, with good cards, pretend to be in a bad temper, and frown; whilst, with bad cards, they appear gay and anxious to begin to play. 262

* * * * *

It sometimes happens that a player, at the end of a game, is puzzled which of the two last cards he is to throw down. One of them may save the vole, but he is not sure which. Instead of playing according to the proverb, which says *qui garde à carreau n'est pas capot*, he holds down his hand, so that his adversary may see both cards, and fixes his eyes upon those of his *vis-à-vis*, which very naturally, are bent on the card which is against himself. The other profits by this look, and saves himself from being capoted.

This is an infallible criterion, but is it a right thing to do?

The following anecdote is related on this subject, and will not be out of place here:

At a game of Piquet, in which many were greatly interested, one of the players was on the point of being

capoted. He had but two cards to play, the king of hearts, and the king of spades. One of these would save him, if he only played the right one; but which? He laid them both down on the table, and, after some hesitation, he decided on playing the king of spades, when he felt some one press his foot. Accepting this indication as a warning, he changed his intention, played the king of hearts, and lost the game. It was the king of spades he ought to have played. Vexed at the error he had committed, he asked who it was that pressed his foot, and found out it was his adversary. The latter apologised, pretending it was by accident. In this instance, again, the reader must judge for himself of the honesty of both the players.

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* * * * *

When a game of Écarté is being played, it is not considered right, first to bet on one side, and then on the other. Whether you bet or not, you always continue on the same side.

There are people, however, who even manage to win on both sides, and this is the way they manage it:

Two persons agree to make their interest common, and place themselves on opposite sides of the table. If a good hand is dealt to either party, the accomplice makes a sign to his friend, and he accordingly bets high. The other, meanwhile, makes no bet this time. When fortune appears in favour of the opposite party, the stakes change sides. These manœuvres are very innocent, no doubt, but they are not acknowledged.

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* * * * *

In games of four players, as in Whist, for example, you ought to make no communication whatever to your partner, except such as are authorised and allowed by the rules of the game. To this no objection can be made, as it is equally open to both sides: but some players make a series of signs, and nervous contractions of the muscles of the face, which enlighten their partner considerably as to what sort of hand they have.

* * * * *

In playing Écarté, whilst shuffling the cards, some players allow their adversary to see the card at the bottom of the pack. There are some persons who take advantage of this negligence. This is the little manœuvre which they employ:—

The dealer offers the cards to his adversary to cut. This is done in such a manner as to leave only about eleven cards, which will, of course, go on the top of the pack. The observer, therefore, well knows, that if that card is not in his own hand, it must be in that of his adversary; and every Écarté player is aware, of how much consequence it is, to know even one card in the hand of your adversary, in that game.

The following facts I particularly commend to the attention of my readers.

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Every one knows, that in certain games, Écarté especially, the cards are apt to run in suits, the reason of which is evident, as, in playing, one is always obliged to follow suit.

Without you try the thing yourself, you will scarcely believe it; but if the cards be ever so well shuffled, it is very difficult to separate any two or three cards, which have been played together.

An expert player will derive great advantage, from the glimpse he obtains whilst his opponent is shuffling the cards.

Let us suppose, for example, that he has seen amongst the cards a sequence from the king, as the king, queen, and knave of hearts. It is more than probable, that the above cards, after the shuffle, still remain together; and if, after the deal, you have the king in your own hand, and it was the second of the two cards dealt to you first, you may be pretty sure that the queen and knave, following close after, are in your adversary's hand.

On the other hand, if the knave is the first card of the three next that are dealt to you, your adversary will have the king and queen. Again, if the king is turned up, the two others will be the next to follow in the *talon*.

To obtain these results, may not a person, in spite of himself, be led into neglecting to shuffle the cards too well?

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* * * * *

It often happens at the game of Bouillotte, that a player who has a bad hand, proposes to play for a very considerable stake; this is done merely to alarm his opponent. This *finesse* sometimes succeeds, but it is of too gross a character, to be tolerated in many clubs.

* * * * *

As a *finale* to this collection of minor tricks, more or less allowable in play, I will cite an anecdote, which, true or not, the world gives the credit of to M. de Talleyrand.

Talleyrand was once playing at Bouillotte; he had just dealt the cards, and was waiting, according to the rules of the game, to stake.

The two first adversaries allowed their turn to pass, without risking anything.

"Ten louis," said the third player.

"Twenty," said Talleyrand.

"Forty," said the adversary.

"I stake my all," continued the Diplomatist, pointing to the hundred louis before him, and, at the same time, he let a card fall out of his hand on the table.

It was a nine; he took it up again hastily.

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His adversary had just time to see the card, and, although he had a *brejan* of kings, he thought it more prudent to stop betting.

He concluded that Talleyrand must have a first-rate hand, to back it so heavily. He was led to this opinion, because the turn-up card was a nine, and in all probability, the nine which fell from the hands of the Diplomatist, was one of a *brejan* of four.

Each player laid his hand on the table; Talleyrand gained with three odd cards, amongst which was the nine he had dropped insidiously on the table to deceive his adversary.

Here I had better stop; for, if I continued such stories for many more pages, I fear that the heading of this chapter would be insensibly merged in those which have preceded it. My readers must, however, by this time, be sufficiently edified on the nature of the rogueries I have exposed, and will be strengthened in the opinion, that an honourable player ought only to take the advantages offered him by his own good fortune or good play.

* * * * *

My task is ended. Allow me, dear reader, to disclose to you an apprehension, which has haunted me throughout this work. This apprehension you will more easily understand if I preface it, by way of illustration, with the following apologue. 268

You have, doubtless, witnessed the singular spectacle of two men fighting in the public highway, and, suddenly reconciled, turning their united strength against the officious persons who separate them.

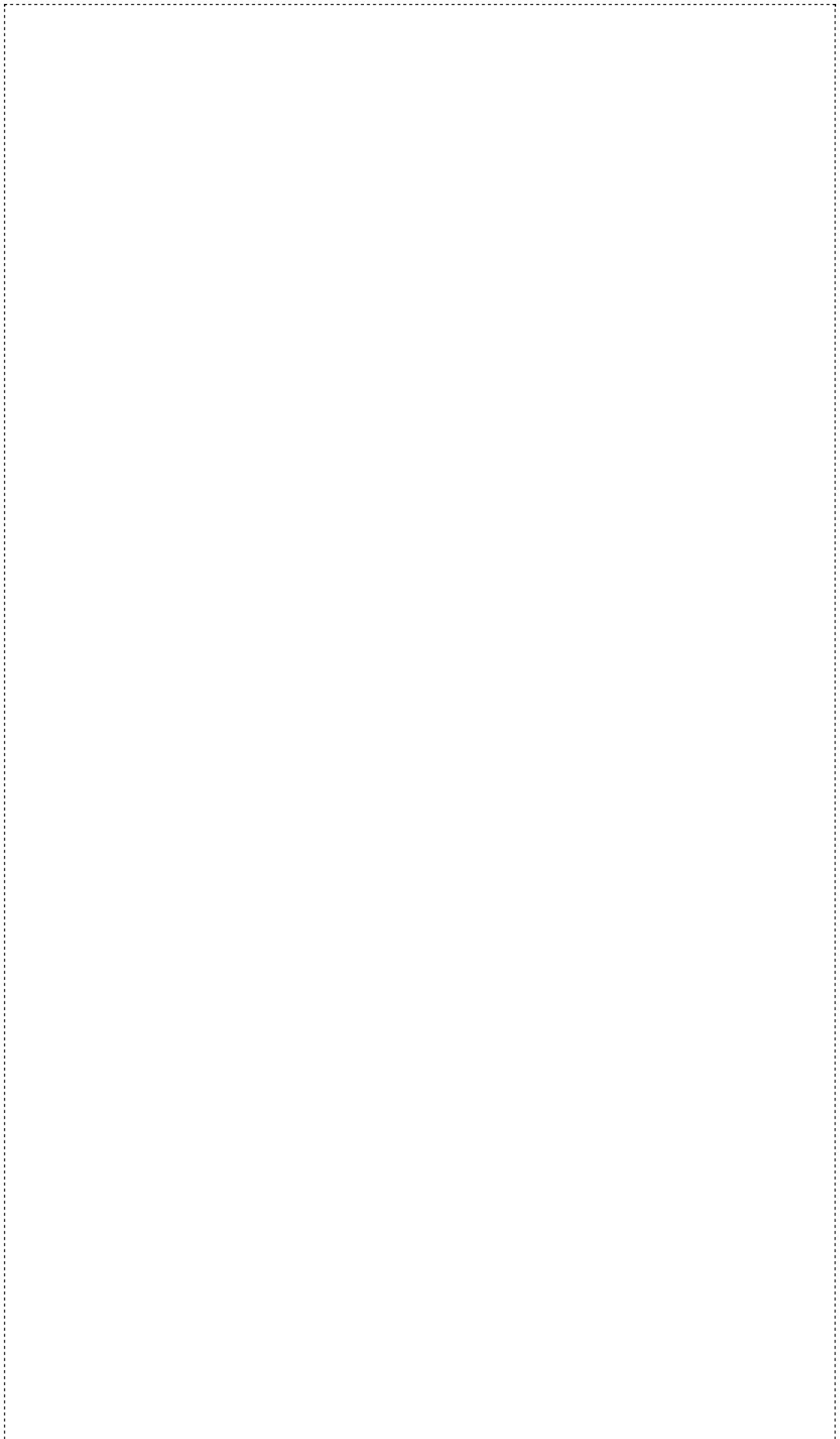
In a similar manner, does not the author of these pages run the same risk?

May it not happen, that the losers and the winners, the dupes as well as the rogues, may regard him as their common enemy?

The infatuated gamblers will reproach him for making them afraid of being robbed, and thereby preventing them from playing.

The Greeks will be sure to hate him, for having unmasked their knaveries.

These considerations, you see, have not prevented me from following out the task I had imposed upon myself, and, whatever happens, I trust the public will give me credit for a wish to enlighten them, and for having had their interest more at heart even than my own.



FOOTNOTES

^A In the United States of America this perfidious scheme was brought to great perfection, and carried out by the bankers themselves at these establishments.

Robertson, in his Memoirs, thus describes it:—In the centre of the tables for play a mechanical spring is concealed, which, by being touched, can make the ball enter the division of "pair" or "impair" at pleasure.

If "Pair" is the favourite, and large stakes are on it, the spring under the table is touched, and, by tightening by the hundredth part of an inch all the "pairs," the ball is forced to enter the "impairs," which are larger.

Whilst this was going on, the victims were pricking their cards and reckoning their chances of winning, but what could the most learned calculator do against a push of the knee?

^B Benazet is the name of the proprietor of the gambling-tables.

^C M. Ancelot.

^D Two well-known public-houses in the vicinity of the Marché de la Halle.

^E Pair, Impair, Passe, Manque, Rouge, Noir, and the thirty-eight numbers in Roulette.

^F To martingale, is to double your stake each time that you lose.

^G See the interesting work of Edouard Gourdon, "Les faucheurs de Nuit"—the chapter on fetishes.

^H See the technical part of this work on cards "*biseautées*."

^I "*Sauter la coupe*" is, to pass the lower packet of cards on the top of the other, without being seen.

^J See the figure in the article on Lansquenet, page [228](#).

^K See page [170](#).

^L One may also make as many as two hundred points by having the four tierce majors in your hand; but the smallest *quart* in the hand of your adversary, if it were only the tens, greatly lessens your advantages.

^M *Jeu de règle* is a hand to be played without discarding.

^N "Cartes-blanches" is a hand at Piquet without a court card—it counts ten.

^O For this trick, like the preceding one, the pack ought to be prepared beforehand, and the packs changed before the game begins.

Transcribers' Notes

Punctuation, hyphenation, and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected; occasional unbalanced quotation marks retained.

Ambiguous hyphens at the ends of lines were retained.

Page [40](#): "one of the betters." was printed with that spelling.

Page [90](#): "clandestine hell" was printed that way, not as "hall".

Page [216](#): The hyperlinks assigned by the Transcriber to the "part" and "chapter" references on this page may be incorrect: two links were provided because there is no "part vii" in either of the two "chapter ix's".

Page [259](#): "where it begins?" was printed with the question mark.

[Footnote J](#) (originally on page [179](#)) refers to a figure on page 219, and a "2" was handwritten over the "1", but the figure actually appears on page [228](#). The reference has been corrected in this eBook.

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