

***E. PHILLIPS  
OPPENHEIM***



***MR. BILLINGHAM,  
THE MARQUIS  
AND MADELON***

**E. Phillips Oppenheim**

# **Mr. Billingham, the Marquis and Madelon**

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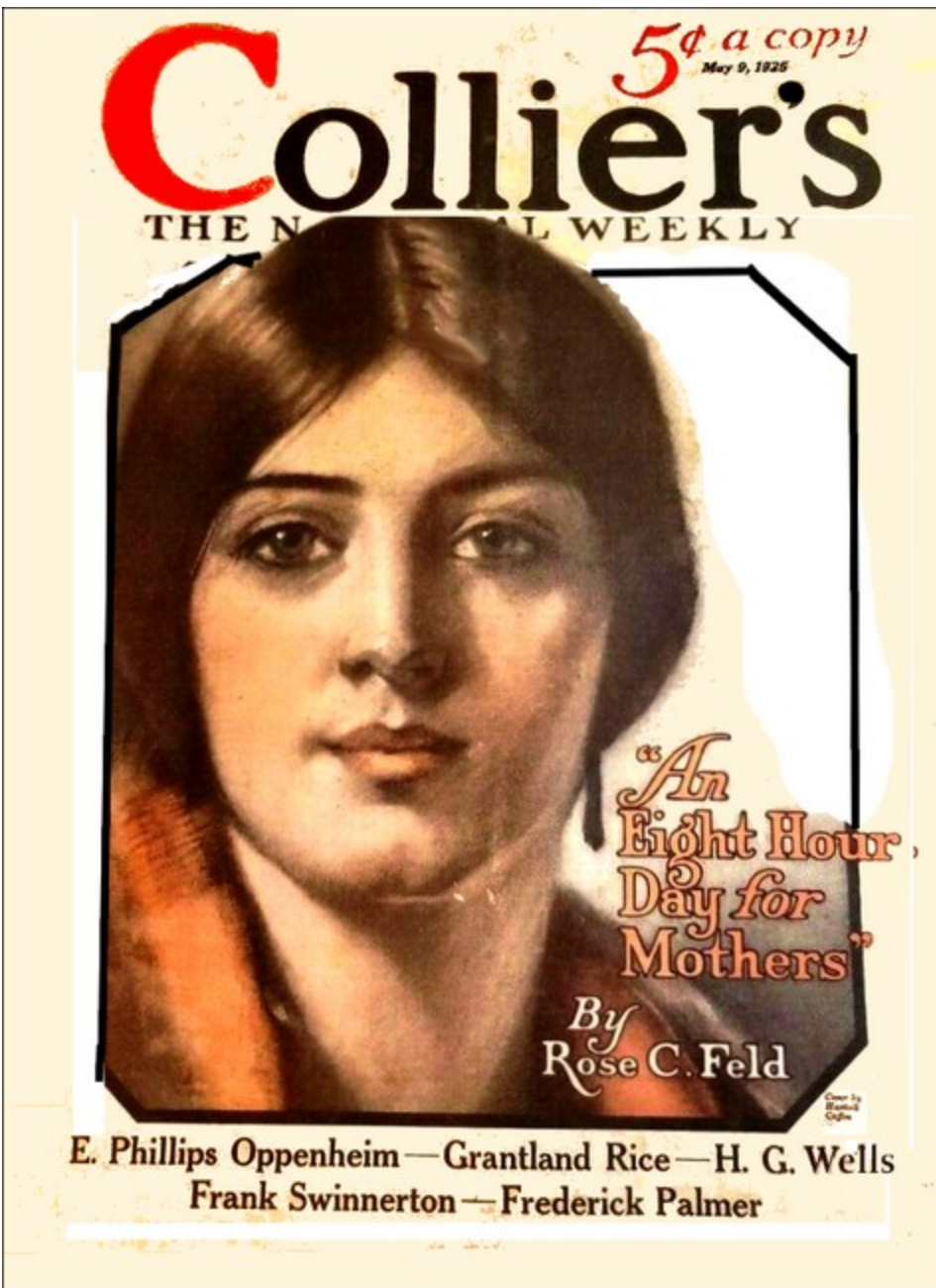
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# I.—THE BAMBOOZLING OF MR. GASCOIGNE

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"The Bamboozling Of Mr. Gascoigne"

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MR. BILLINGHAM, THE MARQUIS AND MADELON



№ 1

The Bamboozling of  
Mr. Gascoigne

By  
E. PHILLIPS  
OPPENHEIM

Headpiece from Collier's Weekly

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MR. SAMUEL T. BILLINGHAM of New York, recently landed from the great liner anchored a few miles out, walked along the Terrace at Monte Carlo, serene, light-hearted, beatifically content. His yellow shoes and his variegated socks might be described as a trifle vivid, but the rest of his attire—his well-pressed grey suit, his irreproachable linen, and his well-shaped grey Homburg hat—was beyond criticism. He was a man of medium height, thick-set, inclined a little, perhaps, to embonpoint. His complexion was pink, his flaxen hair only slightly streaked with grey, his eyes filled with the light of good-humour. He was possibly about forty-five years of age, but he walked with the spring of a young man. In his pocket was his carte de saison for the Cercle Prive and card of membership of the Sporting Club, taken out an hour or so before. In the same pocket was also a well-filled money case, and in his mind the consciousness of pleasant quarters in his favourite hotel, and the knowledge that he was in the spot which he loved more than any place on earth. Furthermore, he was pleasantly aware of the fact that he was in the immediate neighbourhood of various interesting little rendezvous where restrictions as to any refreshment he might deem advisable for his welfare were non-existent; where compatriots were always to be found and amusement plentiful. Mr. Samuel T. Billingham, brimming over with

good-humour, was certainly an agreeable circumstance in a wonderful setting.

At half-past eleven o'clock—Mr. Billingham was a man of regular habits—he quitted the promenade, crossed the Place in front of the Casino, and selected a table outside the Café de Paris. He selected it simply because it happened to be the nearest empty one and without even a glance at his neighbours. It was nevertheless, without a doubt, by the direction of that mysterious influence called fate that he should have chosen that particular chair and ordered his champagne cocktail with that clear and pleasant directness of speech which caused the two people at the adjacent table to turn and focus their attention upon him.

"A champagne cocktail," he enjoined confidently, frankly ignoring the fact that he was addressing a foreigner, "and some of them little salted nuts—and say, get a move on!"

The waiter hurried off. Mr. Samuel T. Billingham looked around him genially and met the faintly amused, gently enquiring gaze of his neighbours. Mr. Billingham smiled back again but at that moment no words were exchanged.

The man and the girl were of ingratiating, even distinguished appearance. The former seemed to be about fifty or perhaps fifty-five years of age. He was tall and thin, dressed in dark clothes from which the first freshness had gone, and though no fault could have been found with his linen or the less important appurtenances of his toilette, it was noticeable that his shirt cuffs were a little frayed, his patent boots a little cracked, his coat a little shiny at the seams. His face was gaunt, his eyes were deep-set, but his mouth had a most attractive and humorous outline. The girl

with whom he was seated and at whom Mr. Billingham had permitted himself a single glance of admiration, was young enough to be his daughter, but bore him no resemblance. Her hair was of a most attractive shade of brown and her eyes were of the very darkest shade of blue. She seemed pale from the absence of all cosmetics, but her lack of colour was, as a matter of fact, healthy and natural. There was something a little insolent about her expression, as though she were one of those often at war with the world and circumstances, but amongst the cosmopolitan little crowd by which they were surrounded she preserved an air of distinction which a keen student of his fellow-creatures, such as Mr. Billingham, was not slow to recognise. He waited for his cocktail without impatience and with the air of one entirely satisfied with himself and his particular corner of the world. Meanwhile the man and the girl talked—the former in broken English—and, although they never seemed to raise their voices, every word they said was audible to their neighbour.

"It is incredible, Madelon," her companion exclaimed irritably, "that you should have been so careless! Our day is spoilt."

"I am very sorry," she replied humbly. "It is not often I forget such things. As you told me, I put three mille notes in my little sacque early this morning. Then, alas! the sun came out, I wore a different dress, and I brought the other sacque. There it is upon my dressing-table!"

"And here are we," the man grumbled, "without a penny to pay for our consommation, to say nothing of luncheon. Furthermore, there are the Rooms and perhaps a fortune



waiting. Last night I dreamed of fourteen, three times following."

"It is not so wonderful," she declared a little pettishly. "You always dream of fourteen, but it never arrives."

The champagne cocktail, well frosted and with a thin line of sugar around the rim of the glass, was brought to Mr. Billingham, who accepted it with an air of content. The eyes of the man and the girl rested for a moment upon the glass with a veiled expression of envy. Mr. Billingham lifted his hat and leaned forward.



Mr. Billingham lifted his hat and leaned forward.

"Sir," he said, addressing the man, "I am blessed, or should I say cursed, with acute hearing. From what you were saying to the young lady I gather that you have left your money at home."

His neighbour, also with his hat slightly uplifted, listened with an air of grave embarrassment.

"Sir," he rejoined, "I regret that, in some temporary excitement, owing to the discovery of my niece's carelessness, my voice was a little raised. May I venture to suggest, however, that my conversation was not intended to reach the ear of a stranger, nor can I—pardon me—understand what significance it can have for him."

"That's very well put," Mr. Billingham commented approvingly. "I'm rather a plain-spoken man myself, but what I figured out in my own mind was that this being my first morning in Monte Carlo after an absence of a good many years, and this being my favourite spot upon the earth, and the sun shining and my cocktail looking pretty good, I thought perhaps I might take the liberty of inviting you and the young lady to join me."

The elderly gentleman rose to his feet, hat in hand, and bowed.

"Sir," he said, "we shall accept your courtesy in—may I say—a spirit of reciprocity. Permit me to present my niece, Mademoiselle Madelon de Felan. I myself am known as the Marquis de Felan."

Mr. Billingham rose also to his feet, lifted his hat, fumbled in his pocket and produced a card. "Samuel T. Billingham is my name, sir," he announced. "I come from New York and I'm interested in linoleum—that is to say, I was, only I've recently sold out. Pleased to meet you both.... *Garçon!*"

Their prospective host accepted an invitation to bring his chair to the table of his new acquaintances, and the succeeding half-an-hour passed agreeably enough. Certain orders concerning champagne cocktails were given and

repeated whilst the usual amenities of general conversation were exchanged.

"I was thinking of moving on to *Ciro's* presently," Mr. Billingham announced, glancing at his watch. "We might try one there and, say, why shouldn't you and the young lady join me in a bite of luncheon."

The girl laughed at him pleasantly—and it was • a very pleasant laugh indeed.

"I'm so hungry," she murmured.

The Marquis was touched.

"Really, sir," he said, "your kindness is astounding. We will join you on the distinct understanding that we are allowed within the course of the next few days to reciprocate your hospitality."

"Good enough!" Mr. Billingham assented. "That goes, then! We'll move on as soon as the garçon has brought me my change. Now promise you won't go back on our luncheon engagement, whatever happens."

"Not a chance," the girl assured him, with that twinkle in her eyes which Mr. Billingham was already beginning to love. "I'm far too hungry, and *Ciro's* is my favourite restaurant."

"Very well, then," Mr. Billingham concluded, drawing his chair up a little closer. "So long as it's understood that you don't take offence, I just want to ask you one thing. Do I look such an almighty hayseed that you should pick me out to try that old wheeze on?"

There was a moment's silence. The orchestra rattled on, corks still popped, a pleasant murmur of conversation swelled and flowed around. The man and the girl, however,

remained speechless. The latter had lost that smile of pleasant anticipation; her face was suddenly a little drawn and troubled. The man seemed older. His manner, however, preserved its dignity.

"Sir," he began

"Cut it out," Mr. Billingham begged. "I know pretty well what I look like, but you see it's my job to look like it. Any one would think I was what I want them to think me—an American traveller, over here, probably for the first time in his life, with plenty of the stuff. Well, I ain't! I'm from the United States all right, but I'm looking after a little bit of that stuff myself. Perhaps that's why I sized you two up so easily."

The Marquis half rose to his feet. Mr. Billingham pulled him back into his chair.

"Look here," he insisted genially, "cut out the starch. I'm a bit of a crook—I'll admit that—but I'm not a bad sort and I've taken a fancy to you two. We're going on to *Ciro's* and we're going to have that little lunch together. I can pay for it all right, and dinner afterwards most likely. No reason why we shouldn't have a pleasant day together. We might even get to talking business." The Marquis coughed. He was beginning to recover himself.

"We will certainly accompany you to *Ciro's*— er—Mr. Billingham," he assented. "In the meantime tell me, I beg of you, why you arrived at the conclusion that my niece and I were—er?"

"I figured it out this way," Mr. Billingham interrupted. "You are both French. What did you want to talk in English for

except that you wanted me to understand? That was enough for me to be going on with!"

"Our story is a sad one," the Marquis commenced.

"Say, we'll have that after luncheon," Mr. Billingham suggested, rising to his feet.... The cocktails at Ciro's were equal to Mr. Billingham's anticipations, and the luncheon which he presently ordered was entirely satisfactory. Conversation, so far as his two guests were concerned, was a little stilted and diffident. Their host, however, was absolutely at his ease.

"I guess you wouldn't believe it, you two," he recounted, as they attacked a wonderful selection of hors d'oeuvres, "but I was once a rich man, and I never got such fun out of life in those days as I am helping myself to now. I figure it out like this. When you've got your money in the Bank, and the bits coming in, you're kind of tied up with respectability. Now, since I was a lad I've always been for adventures, and there's only one sort of adventure that counts, and that is the adventure which sets your brain against another man's and brings you in the stuff if you come out on top. It don't seem to me that a rich man has got any fighting outlook on life.... Do you get me, Miss de Felan?"

"I understand what you mean," she replied, a little dubiously, "but I am afraid I do not agree with you. You see, I have always been poor, and I hate poverty."

"Might be kind of different for a young woman," Mr. Billingham conceded thoughtfully, "but for a man, to go about the world doing no one any particular harm but living by his wits and what he can make by being a trifle smarter than other people, that's my idea of a happy time! I don't

mind telling you that my present job over here is to swindle a man out of half a million dollars."

"Half a million dollars!" the Marquis gasped. "It is incredible!"

"What an imagination!" the girl sighed. "What courage!"

"I guess I'm not out for pinching old ladies' reticules," their host confided. "I like a big deal. And," he went on, leaning a little across the table, "if I can make up my mind that you two are to be trusted—I'm not saying I mightn't let you in on this little affair. I need just the sort of help you might be able to give, and that's a fact!"

The Marquis concealed his impatience with all the restraint which was doubtless an inheritance of his breeding. He polished a worn and scratched horn-rimmed eyeglass with a clean but frayed handkerchief and prepared to listen with tolerant partiality. The girl, however, was frankly eager. She leaned across towards her host, her elbows upon the table, her chin supported by her two hands. There was a light in her very beautiful eyes which was almost adoring.

"Tell us about it, Mr. Billingham," she begged. "We are so very poor and I am tired of being poor."

"My niece has the natural desire of the young for luxuries," the Marquis observed. "Frankly, I have outlived the necessity for wealth. My modest dejeuner here or at the Hotel de Paris, my dinner, my bottle of Burgundy, my choice of brandies, carte blanche at my tailors, a mille or two to play with when the fancy seizes me, are all I wish for."

"You don't aim at putting together a pile for later on in life?" Mr. Billingham queried.

The Marquis sighed.

"That is beyond my hopes," he admitted.

"And you, Mademoiselle?"

The girl was terribly in earnest.

"If I had the chance," she said, "I would save. I love all the things which go to making life here so delightful, but more than anything else on earth I should love my independence. I should love to feel that it was no longer necessary for me to worry to-morrow as to how I was going to pay the next day's bills."

"Good spirit!" Mr. Billingham approved. "Good spirit, that!"

"Madelon is more practical than I," the Marquis sighed. "And now concerning that little affair of business, Mr. Billingham, you were about to place before us."

Mr. Billingham's attention, however, had wandered. He was watching the approach of an obvious compatriot—a man the very antithesis of himself, but with equally distinct transatlantic attributes; a small man with a sallow face and little hair, teeth stopped plentifully with gold, a wizened expression about the mouth, a short-sighted squint, neat clothes and square-toed shoes. Mr. Billingham welcomed him as a long-lost brother.

"Say, if this isn't Joe Gascoigne!" he exclaimed. "Well, well, when did you come along?"

Mr. Gascoigne's reciprocating smile was frosty. His manner showed him to be a man of reserves.

"Paris, last night," he answered. "How's oil?"

Mr. Billingham shook his head gloomily.



"Can't say those new lands are panning out quite as we expected," he admitted.

"No gushers?" Mr. Gascoigne enquired.

"Nothing of that sort reported up to the present," was the cautious but somewhat depressed reply. "Still, one never knows. Where there's oil there's hope! Where are you staying?"

"Hotel de Paris."

"Fine!" Mr. Billingham commented. "Sold your option yet, Joe?"

"I guess I didn't come to Monte Carlo to talk business," the other rejoined, as he turned to pass on his way down the room.

Mr. Billingham was thoughtful for a moment or two after his friend's departure. The fact, however, did not impair his appetite.

"Why did you not present your friend?" the girl enquired. "I thought Americans always introduced everybody."

Mr. Billingham smiled.

"That," he explained, "is the man whom we are going to rob. In case you come into the game, I didn't ask you to shake hands with him. He's as near-sighted as a clam and too vain to wear spectacles."

"He is presumably wealthy," the Marquis ventured.

"He is of the genus known as 'millionaire,'" Mr. Billingham acquiesced.

The Marquis nodded approvingly.

"To rob the rich," he murmured, "is a reasonable hobby."

"When you add to that," Mr. Billingham continued, "that Joe Gascoigne is the doggonest, meanest cuss that ever

drank water and preached prohibition, you've got him sized up about right."

"To rob such a man," the Marquis suggested hopefully—"or shall I say to assist in the redistribution of his wealthy—would seem to be a charity. Five hundred thousand dollars, I think you said, sir?"

"Maybe more," Mr. Billingham assented. "It's like enough I'll take you two in, but we'll quit it now until later on. I've got to size you up a bit more first.... Some salmon, this!" he added, almost reverently, as he laid down his fork. "The sauce tastes good to me, too!"

"Loire salmon," the Marquis confided. "Very good fish, but short season."

"Supposing you get on with that sad story of yours, Marquis," Mr. Billingham proposed, as they waited for the next course. "I don't say as I'm going to believe every word of it, mind you, but I'd like to hear your own account of yourself and the young lady."

The Marquis was a little stiff at first, but he gradually warmed to his task. He came, it appeared, of a noble but impoverished family, and his various attempts at earning an honest living had met with a singular lack of success. He had been, in turn, a vineyard proprietor, a vendor of wines, an insurance agent, and had interested himself in a cigarette business. In all of these undertakings he had suffered from lack of capital. A year ago the daughter of his only brother, who had married an Englishwoman, was left with practically no one else to look after her. They had lived in Paris for some short time upon the very trifling sum of money which she had brought with her. A small investment

in a lottery business had been a failure. Behold them at Monte Carlo, practically destitute!

It was becoming indeed a question of money sufficient for a meal between them. Mademoiselle Madelon was ready to give French lessons, and she had some knowledge of typing. The Marquis had even gone so far as to offer himself as a sort of super-guide to strangers of wealth to whom the best restaurants and manifold pleasures of the place were unknown.

"Ever any trouble with the police?" Mr. Billingham asked.

"Not in these parts," the Marquis hastened to explain. There had been some slight misunderstanding in Paris, he added, with reference to his mismanagement of a gambling club, and the investigation into his lottery business had made a hurried departure from the city advisable. Here, however, they had a clean sheet; had modest rooms at an unpretentious hotel, and so far had paid their way.

"I sized you both up as being amateurs in this crook business," Mr. Billingham observed. "You may make good at it, of course, but I am not so sure about the young lady—kind of dangerous, with her appearance!"

"Sir," the Marquis replied, "I am a man of honour, but frankly I think that my niece should make more use of her undoubted attractions. She receives many invitations to lunch or dine with acquaintances, all of which she refuses. I think that she is wrong."

Madelon remained undisturbed. The frank admiration with which her host was contemplating her brought only a slight tinge of colour into her cheeks.

"My uncle thinks always," she explained, "of some millionaire or nobleman who will invite me to lunch and find me so charming that he will propose marriage to me. Our acquaintances, unfortunately, are of the bar or the Casino, and I do not fancy that they are quite of the class likely to propose marriage to an honest but impecunious young woman."

"One never knows," the Marquis grumbled. "This is the land of chance, and in case of trouble you have always me to protect you."

Madelon preserved a tactful silence and the luncheon drew on to its close. After he had paid the bill, Mr. Billingham produced five hundred-franc notes.

"What about dining with me to-night?" he enquired.

"Two good meals in one day!" the girl exclaimed blissfully.

"We shall be charmed," the Marquis assented, with a courteous wave of the hand.

"I have only one evening dress," the girl observed thoughtfully.

"One will be all you need," was her prospective host's cheerful rejoinder. "I'll get a corner table in the Sporting Club. And if I can see my way to letting you in on this little job of mine I'll tell you about it. In the meantime if five hundred francs"

"As a loan, my dear sir—a loan!" the Marquis interrupted, stretching out his hand eagerly.

"Precisely," Mr. Billingham agreed. "Three for you, sir, and two for the young lady."

The Marquis clutched his three without hesitation; Madelon made no movement.

"I do not think that we ought to take this money until we are sure that there is something we can do to earn it," she said, looking at Mr. Billingham with doubt in her beautiful eyes.

"It is for—how you say it?—a lien upon our services," her uncle declared, thrusting the notes deep down into his pocket. "We are now at Mr. Billingham's commands. You look at the affair in that light, I am sure, my dear sir."

Mr. Billingham lit a cigar and smiled.

"I guess that's the idea, sir," he acquiesced. "Don't let me keep you. I see you are kind of fidgety to be off."

The Marquis rose to his feet; Madelon laid her hand upon his arm.

"Not to the Rooms just yet," she begged.

"My dear," he replied tolerantly, "have no fear. I shall play carefully; start with the little gold pieces, force my luck as I win. Later on I will show you something!"

"Meanwhile," Mr. Billingham reminded them, as he took leave of his guests, "at eight-thirty at the Sporting Club."

Perhaps because of the smallness of the room and the absence of any orchestral music, the babel of conversation at the Sporting Club was that night almost deafening. Under its cover Mr. Samuel T. Billingham took his two guests into his confidence.

"It ain't worth while," he began, leaning forward so that the three heads nearly touched, "to try and put you wise to all the details but, as a business proposition, this is how the matter stands. That swab of a fellow, Joseph Gascoigne,

whom you saw at luncheon time, has got an option on ten thousand shares in an oil tract out in Arkansas—the 'Great Divide,' they call it. He left 'em some money for a new plant a year ago and insisted on the option in return. The option's up on Saturday. Last month they struck oil in eleven different places. Luckily the boss of the company was down there and he had all work stopped at once. It's a big find, though, and if Joe Gascoigne gets to hear of it and exercises the option, it means that he'll buy ten thousand shares at a hundred dollars that are certainly worth a thousand dollars and maybe worth twice as much."

"What happens to the shares if Mr. Gascoigne does not exercise his option?" the girl asked. Mr. Billingham looked at her with a smile of admiration.

"A cute question," he admitted. "Those shares are divided equally amongst the five directors—or, rather, they are allowed to buy them at a low price. Now, I'm well in with the boss of this company and he knows I don't mind a bit of crooked work occasionally. If I, or we, can stop Joe Gassoigne cabling to America before Saturday and taking up his option, there's fifteen thousand dollars coming to me."

"Fifteen thousand dollars!" the girl murmured.

The Marquis rolled his eyes in silent ecstasy.

"An affair of two hundred thousand francs!" he gasped.

"What makes me look for a trifle of help in the matter," Mr. Billingham continued, "is that Joe is kind of wise to my being in with the crowd, and if he sees too much of me he'll be suspicious."

"You have some sort of a plan?" Madelon demanded abruptly.

"I'd like his code," Mr. Billingham confided. "It's the simplest affair—two typewritten pages inside blue cardboard covers with just paper fasteners through. There ain't more than twenty or thirty sentences there, and the only other man who has a copy is his partner in New York. I know he means to sit tight until the last moment, and I know he's moving heaven and earth to discover whether there's any truth in the rumours of a gush, or whether it's a rig to make him buy the shares. He's getting cables most days, and he won't send his off until Friday. I had a man on the boat," Mr. Billingham went on reflectively, "who could have had the code in a minute, but Joe was too artful for him. He handed it over to the purser with his valuables directly he boarded the steamer. In Paris he changed his hotel, so we didn't get a show there. That didn't worry me any, though, for I knew he was coming here. He's in room number 246, Hotel de Paris, and he uses the code book every day. What I want is to get hold of the book for an hour without his knowing, and then replace it."

"You don't want the book destroyed, then?" Madelon enquired.

"Not on your life," was the prompt response. "Joe would tumble to it right away that there was something doing, and he'd cable out directly for the shares."

"It is a deeficult matter," the Marquis mused.

The girl said nothing. She was looking down at her plate with a thoughtful smile upon her lips. Mr. Billingham watched her. He had noticed that smile once before during the last few minutes.

"You have an idea, Mademoiselle?" he ventured. She nodded.

"This morning," she confided, "I went to a bureau here to try to find a post as lady's companion or secretary. There was nothing of the sort to be had. The only vacancies were for chamber-maids at the Hotel de Paris."

The Marquis burst into excited and fluent French. Madelon stopped him with a superb little gesture.

"You have perhaps made a fortune this afternoon with the money lent you by monsieur?" she demanded.

Her uncle's excitement subsided. He sighed mournfully.

"I chose the wrong tables," he confessed. "My numbers were everywhere, all around me, save at the tables where I played."

"That means," the girl pointed out, "that you have lost everything. We have no money, we cannot pay monsieur what he has advanced us. I find that situation more humiliating than to figure as a chamber-maid for a week at the Hotel de Paris."

"It's an idea," Mr. Billingham admitted, "but the Hotel is a big place. How do you know, supposing they take you on, that you will be anywhere near Joe Gascoigne's rooms?"

"I have spoken several times to the housekeeper," Madelon explained. "I may be able to arrange it. It seems to me worth trying. I can think of nothing else."

"To-day is Monday," Mr. Billingham reflected. "We have until Friday at least. Joe has promised to cable on Friday. He'll wait until then for the latest information. What I'd like to see you do, Mademoiselle, is to go back to your rooms, change that very becoming frock, put on your old clothes,



and try and land the job at the Hotel de Paris. There's no sense in wasting time."

"Supposing I get the book, what do I do with it?" Madelon enquired.

"You will bring it right to me in room number 114 of the same hotel," Mr. Billingham replied. "You will let me have it for about half an hour. Then you'll fetch it away again and try to leave it where you found it."

The Marquis sighed.

"I much regret the fact," he said, "that my niece is subjecting herself to indignity and perhaps trouble in this affair. I wish very much that it were possible for me to take a more active share in the business."

"You may do your bit yet," Mr. Billingham promised him, dryly. "Now, say, how much have you left of that five hundred francs?"

"Not a centime," was the dismal reply. "My niece, however"

"I have a hundred francs," the young lady interrupted, "and I am sorry, Uncle, but I mean to keep it. I cannot go to this place penniless."

"Of course not," Mr. Billingham agreed, drawing out his pocket-book and extracting from it a five-hundred-franc note. "You can have that for your evening's amusement, Marquis, on account of what may be coming to you when we succeed. When you have lost that, however, nothing doing! Remember that!"

The Marquis' smile was one of superb confidence. The note was already buttoned up in his pocket.

"I shall win!" he declared.

Mr. Joseph Gascoigne, although not in the strict sense of the word a susceptible man, was not wholly insensible to feminine attractions. Seated at his desk with a pile of cable forms before him and an open manuscript code book on his left-hand side, he heard the soft ingress of his very attractivelooking chamber-maid into the bathroom. He laid down his pen and listened. It was she beyond a doubt. It was an occasion to progress a little in the flirtation which he had already essayed. He crossed the room.

"Hullo! Late this morning, aren't you?" he remarked, looking into the bathroom.

Madelon glanced at him from behind a barricade of towels.

"There is so much to do," she complained. "One fatigues oneself here terribly."

Mr. Gascoigne smiled palely. It was an opening.

"The work is too hard for you," he declared. "How would you like to leave it and let me find you something easier?"

"Ah, Monsieur!" she sighed.

He advanced a little nearer.

"I've had my eye on you all this week," he confided. "You're too good for this job. Give 'em notice. Leave right away. Say where you live and I'll come round this afternoon, and I bet you we fix up something a good deal better than this." Madelon was half-distressed, half-overcome by some sort of emotion. Mr. Gascoigne smiled and drew out his pocket-book.

"Say, do you know what this is?" he asked. "Guess you don't come across many of them. It's a mille note! Put it in

your pocket, drop those towels, give me a kiss, and go and tell the housekeeper you've found a better job."



"Say, do you know what this is?" he asked. "Guess you don't come across many of them. It's a mille note!"

Madelon gazed at the mille note ecstatically. "But Monsieur is generous!" she exclaimed.