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IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH BY A. B. EDWARDS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH.

BY

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IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE ÉCOLE DE NATATION.

IT seemed to me that I had but just closed my eyes, when I was waked by a hand upon my shoulder, and a voice calling me by my name. I started up to find the early sunshine pouring in at the window, and Franz Müller standing by my bedside.

“*Tiens!*” said he. “How lovely are the slumbers of innocence! I was hesitating, *mon cher*, whether to wake or sketch you.”

I muttered something between a growl and a yawn, to the effect that I should have been better satisfied if he had left me alone.

“You prefer everything that is basely self-indulgent, young man,” replied Müller, making a divan of my bed, and coolly lighting his pipe under my very nose. “Contrary to all the laws of *bon-camaraderie*, you stole away last night, leaving your unprotected friend in the hands of the enemy. And for what?—for the sake of a few hours’ ignominious oblivion! Look at me—I have not been to bed all night, and I am as lively as a lobster in a lobster-pot.”

"How did you get home?" I asked, rubbing my eyes; "and when?"

"I have not got home at all yet," replied my visitor. "I have come to breakfast with you first."

Just at this moment, the *pendule* in the adjoining room struck six.

"To breakfast!" I repeated. "At this hour?—you who never breakfast before midday!"

"True, *mon cher*; but then you see there are reasons. In the first place, we danced a little too long, and missed the last train, so I was obliged to bring the dear creatures back to Paris in a fiacre. In the second place, the driver was drunk, and the horse was groggy, and the fiacre was in the last stage of dilapidation. The powers below only know how many hours we were on the road; for we all fell asleep, driver included, and never woke till we found ourselves at the Barrière de l'Étoile at dawn of day."

"Then what have you done with Madame Marotte and Mademoiselle Marie?"

"Deposited them at their own door in the Rue du Faubourg St. Denis, as was the bounden duty of a *preux chevalier*. But then, *mon cher*, I had no money; and having no money, I couldn't pay for the fiacre; so I drove on here—and here I am—and number One Thousand and Eleven is now at the door, waiting to be paid."

"The deuce he is!"

"So you see, sad as it was to disturb the slumbers of innocence, I couldn't possibly let you go on sleeping at the rate of two francs an hour."

"And what is the rate at which you have waked me?"

"Sixteen francs the fare, and something for the driver—say twenty in all."

"Then, my dear fellow, just open my desk and take one of the two Napoleons you will see lying inside, and dismiss number One Thousand and Eleven without loss of time; and then . . ."

"A thousand thanks! And then what?"

"Will you accept a word of sound advice?"

"Depends on whether it's pleasant to follow, *caro mio*."

"Go home; get three or four hours' rest; and meet me in the Palais Royal about twelve for breakfast."

"In order that you may turn round and go to sleep again in comfort? No, young man, I will do nothing of the kind. You shall get up, instead, and we'll go down to Molino's."

"To Molino's?"

"Yes—don't you know Molino's?—the large swimming-school by the Pont Neuf. It's a glorious morning for a plunge in the Seine."

A plunge in the Seine! Now, given a warm bed, a chilly autumn morning, and a decided inclination to quote the words of the sluggard, and "slumber again," could any proposition be more inopportune, savage, and alarming? I shuddered; I protested; I resisted; but in vain.

"I shall be up again in less time than it will take you to tell your beads, *mon gaillard*," said Müller the ferocious, as, having captured my Napoleon, he prepared to go down and liquidate with number One Thousand and Eleven. "And it's of no use to bolt me out, because I shall hammer away till you let me