

EAU DE COLOGNE.



SEEING how universal in all civilised countries is the use of the perfume known as Eau de Cologne, it is difficult to imagine a time when it had no existence.

It is scarcely a luxury in this age, but rather a necessity. It not only occupies the post of honour on the toilet tables of the rich, but is scarcely ever absent from the sick wards of our hospitals and the sick-rooms of the poor, where it never ceases to refresh, purify, and console; and one can scarcely make a more acceptable present to the old, the sick, and the rheumatic than a bottle of the genuine Eau de Cologne, with a few directions how to use it.

All beginnings are interesting, and sometimes they are romantic. The battle which everything must fight ere it can take its proper place in the world is not less severe than that fought by men, the difference being that might is right among men, and genuineness, if clearly made out, gains the victory in materials.

To the uninitiated, the true and the false look as much alike as the wheat and the tares growing together in a field, until tested. In Eau de Cologne, as in other things, all desire to have the best; all like to know which is the best; all are interested in knowing the history, if it have any, and all are curious to learn how the false is made to appear so like the real that it is difficult to tell them apart.

There is a very curious legend about the origin of Eau de Cologne which is not generally known, and we will therefore relate it before giving the facts as they really occurred.

In far-away times a young Italian named Farina came to study in Cologne, and fell in love with a girl whose beauty had gained for her the name of the "White Rose of Cologne." Her father, however, did not approve of the young man, alleging, as a reason, that he had done no great or worthy deed deserving of such a reward. The legend states that in those days Satan visited the earth in visible form, and one of his favourite resorts was Cologne and its neighbourhood, and the walk he liked best was on the heights of the Drachenfels. During these visits the people of Cologne became so wicked that a monk named Gregory, a good and pious man, determined, after many prayers, to rid Cologne of the evil one. And so one summer night he ventured alone to the Drachenfels, and there wrestled long with the devil in the sight of the people of Cologne, and, after a terrific conflict, vanquished the enemy, who agreed to discontinue his visits; but by some incompleteness in the bargain the devil left behind a most objectionable smell in Cologne, which made it

almost impossible for the inhabitants to continue dwelling in it. The monk's life was a burden to him, for he felt that it was owing to his want of faith or earnestness in his purpose that had brought about this catastrophe.

Young Farina was greatly attached to Gregory, and seeing how he was affected by his failure, determined to apply to a friend of his, a water-nymph who dwelt in a fountain outside Cologne, for her aid. She listened favourably, and bestowed upon him a phial containing a liquid which she instructed him how to make.

One fine day a procession entered Cologne, composed of lords, barons, and clergy, to do honour to the Emperor, who was on a visit. The stench was worse than ever, and Farina, who was with the monk, saw his opportunity, drew near to where the Emperor stood, and scattered some drops from his flask, when the air at once became fresh and pure, and the people were loud in their joy and thanks. The result was that Farina wedded the White Rose, settled in Cologne, and devoted himself to making the perfume which rendered innocuous the smell left by the evil one.

The devil, enraged by his loss of power, punished Farina by multiplying his family name and the makers of spurious Eau de Cologne to such an extent that it was next to impossible to obtain the genuine.

The facts are that close upon two hundred years ago Johann Maria Farina,* a merchant, dealing in Italian wares, silk, and perfumery, came to live at Cologne, and took up his residence opposite the Jülichs Platz, and having discovered a new perfume, he called it by the name of the town of his adoption, Eau de Cologne, and devoted himself to its manufacture.

This he composed of the finest essential oils and aromatic spices that the vegetable world produces, but the way he prepared and mixed them has been a secret from that day to this, except to the ten people, including the two who are now at the head of the firm, to whom it has been entrusted, or rather who have inherited it.

Every effort has been made by outsiders to get at the secret, but in vain. It was thought possible to get at it by means of a chemical analysis of the perfume, but science has not yet advanced so far as to decide positively by analytical experiments the relative quantity and quality in any mixture of volatile oils.

Whenever a person or thing is a great success, imitators and imitations are sure to spring up so like the original in features and dress that one is puzzled, and of course Eau de Cologne has not escaped.

As the genuine article was so bound up with the name Farina, it was of the highest importance that the imitators should assume that name, or import persons of that name into the business, even though they were unable to read and write, and this was done to such an extent that at one time there were sixty manufactories of Eau de Cologne in the city, most of them carried on in the name of Farina. Nor was this all; even the mark, the bottle,

the appearance, and the address of the genuine article was copied without the slightest knowledge of the secret which made its excellence and its success.

Like many other people, we were anxious to learn what made the difference between the true and the false—how the real was made, of what materials, and in what quantities, and being in Cologne, and with a letter of introduction in our pockets to Johann Maria Farina, the real man, we determined to deliver it.

The premises are a good five minutes' walk from the Cathedral, and situate opposite the Jülichs Platz; they are large, handsome, and aristocratic in appearance.

Passing through the shop, we came into the inner room, where Johann Maria Farina himself received us kindly, and showed us many objects of interest; for example, the letters and diplomas of the crowned heads of Europe, the certificates of merit from the Exhibitions of London, Paris, Vienna, and New York, with which the firm intends to rest content, as, in their own words, the Eau de Cologne never varies, never has varied, and can never be improved. We saw also the portraits of the true Farina, seven in number, from the founder down to the father of the present head. We saw also the books of the firm—even the very first, written in 1709; it is written on rough paper somewhat like blotting-paper, and the ink retains its colour well. The manufacturing premises are separate from the house, divided by a sort of courtyard.

We took the rooms as they came, and not according to the manufacturing process, and so it happened that we saw the filling of the bottles first—a work performed by men and boys. There were many large urns containing the perfume, and before each sat a man with a hamper of bottles and a heap of corks by his side. Very rapidly he filled one after another, having rinsed them first with a little of the perfume, let a few drops fall on the cork to make it slip in easily, and pressed it into the bottle. These freshly-filled flasks are not at once for sale, but are kept at least six months, increasing in goodness as the perfume grows older. Every day some twenty-five bottles burst, making a loud report. A fresh supply of bottles comes in every Thursday; the long green ones are strung together by a straw band in fives, and the ordinary ones in rolls of five or six. The basket covering for the bottles is made by three families, who bring in every Friday the two or three thousand they have covered, get the money for their work, and another week's supply. These are all placed in the hands of women, who wash them in warm water heated by gas.

Another room is fitted up like wine bins, and stored with white boxes of Eau de Cologne ready to be sent out. The day we were there forty thousand boxes stood in readiness. More than two million bottles are sold in a year; one house in London takes 150,000. A large quantity of poplar wood grows in the neighbourhood of Cologne, and it is of this they are made; and in order to get the boxes white, as we are accustomed to see them, they are sulphured.

We found the cellars most interesting; they are immense places under the mansion house, each having its own entrance, and effectually cut off from each other in case of fire. All round stand immense casks of Eau de Cologne, and over each cask stands a slate bearing the date when it was filled. Some we noticed had been in the cellar fifty years. These cellars are under constant supervision, because it not infrequently happens that a cask bursts. This is why half a dozen casks are always left empty, in readiness to receive the contents of the burst

* Born in 1685, in the district of Domo d'Ossola.

ones. With the exception of these half-dozen, a cask is rarely empty more than twenty-four hours.

Twice a year the cellars have to be cleaned and whitewashed, owing to the evaporation, which forms a crust on the roof and sides like that on old port wine bottles. One of the cellars was full of grape spirit, which is like the strongest wine.

All the huge casks in the cellars are made of cedars from Lebanon, which are carried to Marseilles and there made up for this firm. Johann Maria Farina told us that this wood had for him two excellent qualities—strength and freedom from smell.

The casks being made, they are filled with French grape spirit, the use of which is peculiar to this firm. Others use German spirit, or spirit extracted from the potato. To ensure purity they distil their own spirit from the French grape; their distillery is near the Spanish frontier at Narbonne.

The process of making is to fill a cask half full of French grape spirit, then add the essential oils, and fill up with more grape spirit. This is left to stand a fortnight, when the Eau de Cologne becomes quite clear, and can be drawn off.

The refuse or dregs looks like green mustard, and is a wonderful remedy for rheumatism. It is supplied to the hospitals or given to any sufferer who applies with a physician's order. Eau de Cologne, if allowed to evaporate in boiling water, purifies the sick room of all noxious smells, without the slightest inconvenience to the invalid, and when the dregs cannot be obtained, rubbing in the Eau de Cologne itself on the part affected by rheumatism, till the skin becomes quite warm, is of the greatest benefit.

We were taken into a small laboratory filled with tin cans containing the essential oils; one small tin alone is worth £80. And lastly we were admitted into the identical room

where the inventor himself worked two hundred years ago, and where the secret is kept. This precious document is kept in a crystal goblet, and under triple locks.

This part of the building is solid stone and iron, and the doors have double locks.

The visit was of the most interesting character, and we were very thankful to Johann Maria Farina, who himself conducted us through the building.

With a little care there need be no difficulty in distinguishing the genuine Eau de Cologne by the label on the bottles—Johann Maria Farina, Gegenüber dem Jülich's Platz—and on the left-hand side the most decided mark of the genuine, viz. :



Without these lines and dots it would not be genuine.

The house is without a number.

"CHARLIE IS MY DARLING."

By ANNE BEALE, Author of "Seven Years for Rachel," "The Queen o' the May," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEWS.

A VERY depressing cloud hung over the Farm during the interval between Mr. Dauncey's departure and the period when a letter from Montreal might be expected. Belle and the children, to say nothing of Molly, did their best to lighten it, but Flo only added to its gloom. The bright, lively, volatile Flo seemed a changed person, and no one but Belle knew the reason. She scolded, argued, petted by turns, but nothing overcame Flo's scornful reserve. Everyone else attributed the change to anxiety about her brother, but anxious though she undoubtedly was, the root of her malady lay elsewhere.

"My dear Belle, you are quite mistaken; I don't care a straw for him," she said one evening, when the day's work was done, and they were together in the parlour. "But I do care for having to teach. It is really an impossible task. Oh, yes, the children are very good, at least, they are better than I was when a child; but that doesn't say much for them. They are quite afraid of me, which is very amusing, when everybody said I should never have authority enough. Marjory is fearfully persevering, and keeps Dolly up to the mark in a way that would divert me, if it were not all so matter-of-fact and dull. I was not born for a teacher."

"What were you born for?" asked Belle. "I suppose none of us are sent into the world for nothing."

"I suppose not; but I haven't found my vocation, unless it is that of travelling companion; and even then, between ourselves, I hated knocking under. Naturally, Mrs. Prendergast took the lead, and I followed obediently, but I always wanted to be first."

Belle was amused with this naïve confession, but would not lose her opportunity of striving to bring her sister to reason, by enlarging upon it.

"You must do something, Flo, and nothing offers but teaching. Mrs.

Burmester says you are a very good mistress—" she began.

"Mistress! schoolmistress! She surely could not have used so objectionable a term," interrupted Flo.

"She probably said teacher; but I didn't learn her words off by heart. If you would have a little patience, and not think it necessary to alter your manners and act like a tragedy queen, just because you have made a mistake about a perfect stranger, you would find teaching more easy. I must speak out, dear, because this is no time for indulging in pique or imaginary grievances. We have to look life in the face, and to see, perhaps, the shadow of death behind it. Oh, Flo, do be reasonable, and forget this passing fancy. A few hours, or at most a day, used to be time enough to heal all your wounds. What has altered you so?"

"A tragedy queen! Somebody abroad said I was rather like a celebrated actress," said Flo. "I wish I were on the stage. But you are really mistaken, Belle. I hate that—name. I was going to say man, but I despise him too much to hate him. I will be a better girl, and try to consider the scholastic art as the highest of any. To train children for—you know the rest, Belle, and I am sure it is highly praiseworthy. But I must be allowed to do it my own way, and to be successful I must be severe. If I were to relax ever so little, I should lose my authority, and 'obedience, instant obedience,' is the secret of training children. I read that in a book, and endorsed it from my own experience. I am a failure, because no one insisted on my obeying."

To Belle's relief, Flo smiled. She was so unlike herself that she was puzzled as to her real state. She only wished that she could bring her to a more natural condition.

"Only tell me if this Mr. Mute actually proposed for you?" she asked.

"He merely said he would 'ask my father,'" replied Flo, with a provoking

attempt at a laugh. "But he is what people call 'beneath contempt,' so pray let me forget him. I will turn over a new leaf in the teacher's calendar tomorrow, and win Dolly and Marjory's attention by love, not fear. Isn't that what one ought to do? Where are the children?"

She ran off, and Belle followed. They found them by the dining-room fire, Mamy on Weatherley's knee, and Marjory at his feet. They were talking by the firelight, and the words that reached Flo were—"Aunt Belle says God can bring dear father back." They were spoken by Weatherley, and went straight to Flo's heart and conscience. She was thinking only of self and her own grievances. She joined the children, and was distressed to feel that Marjory shrunk from her.

"Are you afraid of me, Marjory?" she asked.

"Yes—a little," replied the child, hesitating.

"Dolly and Marjory say you are quite different from what you used to be, Aunt Flo, ever since you have taught them," put in plain-spoken Weatherley. "I say you are quite right, for girls must be kept in order."

"You know nothing about it, sir. Tomorrow it will be their turn, and they are to keep me in order. What do you say to that, Marjory?"

"It will be great fun; but how are we to do it?" asked Marjory.

"Weatherley, who knows everything, he is so clever, will tell you. Now, Weatherley, how are they to do it?"

"Like this!" cried the boy, jumping up and pinioning Flo, which caused a shout of very salutary laughter, and convinced Marjory that Aunt Flo was severe only during school-hours.

It need scarcely be said that she was severe no more, but, Mrs. Burmester feared, far too indulgent.

The following morning Mr. Pearce again arrived at the Farm. He was unusually early. Belle was obliged to