

**THE WORKS OF CHARLES
PAUL DE KOCK. SCENES
OF PARISIAN LIFE**

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The works of Charles Paul De Kock. Scenes of Parisian life by Charles Paul de Kock

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CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

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PAUL DE KOCK. SCENES
OF PARISIAN LIFE**

The Works of
CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

WITH A GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY
JULES CLARETIE

SCENES OF PARISIAN LIFE

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY
EDITH MARY NORRIS



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A RECEIPT FOR THE MAKING OF A MARRIAGE

A LADY of my acquaintance has a mania for matchmaking. I say mania advisedly, for if she were impelled by interest, speculation or love of feasting, I could understand the avidity with which she sets about this kind of thing; but she gets no profit from it in any way,—she does not dance, she hardly eats anything. What pleasure, then, can she obtain in going to a wedding? Is it that later on she may hear the reproaches and complaints of those she has lured into the paths of matrimony, which certainly must be more frequent than the thanks of the ones she has made happy. There are some things in this world so strange as to be inexplicable and these things are exceedingly numerous.

This lady has always a great number of young ladies to provide for, young, middle-aged (one never calls them old), amiable, gentle, witty, but rarely rich; those who are so never need to take any trouble to find husbands, their only embarrassment is that of choice. But if the matches offered by Madame B—— were not well dowered on the money side of the question, they were always rich in virtues and good qualities. Unfortunately for poor young ladies, we live in an age of gold; that is to say, in an age where gold is considered the first and greatest power on earth, the underlying active

principle which puts everything in motion ; and where it has the precedence over integrity and very often over ability also ; and, I am obliged to confess, I believe it has been the same in all ages. The men of former times were no better in this respect than those of today, as history itself will show us. What crimes, what impostures, what knaveries have been committed, and always for gold. People cringed before those in power because they distributed favors to them, employed them, and those they employed gained much gold. "What is necessary to make war?" said Frederick the Great, "money, money, and money!"

These words of the king of Prussia might be applied to other things beside war. What must be considered, deferred to in making love to or marrying off young girls? "Money, money, and money!"

"But," you will perhaps answer me, "I have known many who had none, and for all that they married."

I admit it, there is no rule without an exception and what I am going to relate to you is a proof of it ; but what troubles and trials had to be overcome before attaining one's end, and is it really attained when in order to avoid dying in celibacy one allies one's self to a being with whom one has not the slightest sympathy and who as likely as not is an object of aversion.

But we will leave these reflections, which are

leading us too far from our subject, and return to the lady who was so fond of matchmaking.

Madame B—— cannot make a match for me, since I am already married ; but she never sees me without saying,—

“ Can't you find me a suitable match for my little Celestine? She is such a good girl! so gentle and so amiable, such a disposition as one rarely sees ; she is never in a bad temper, even when she has the toothache! Ah, how happy a husband would be with such a wife as that ! ”

“ Has she a dowry ? ”

“ No, I am sorry to say she has not. To tell you the truth, had she had one she would have been married ten years ago ! ”

“ Ten years ago ! How old is your little Celestine, may I ask ? ”

“ Between twenty-seven and twenty-eight years old, but as simple and innocent as possible, I will answer for that.”

“ If I'm not mistaken, she is quite plain.”

“ Why, the idea ! how unkind of you ! It is true that she isn't pretty, especially since she had the smallpox, which left her with an eye that weeps continually ; but it doesn't show when she is laughing. I assure you she isn't ugly ; there is nothing repulsive about her and she has a pleasant smile.”

“ Oh, yes, she has quite an extensive smile ! it shows all her gums, and her teeth, which look like wild boar's tusks.”