

**SMOKE; OR, LIFE AT
BADEN; A NOVEL. IN
TWO VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Smoke; Or, Life at Baden; A Novel. In Two Volumes, Vol. II by J. Tourguenef

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By J. TOURGUENEF.

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VOL. II.



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S M O K E .

CHAPTER XIV.

LITVINOF found a large number of people at Irene's. In one corner three of the generals of the picnic were sitting at a table at cards—the stout one, the irascible one, and the mealy-mouthed one.

They were playing whist with a dummy, and our vocabulary has no terms to express the gravity with which they dealt the cards, picked up the tricks, and laid down a club or a diamond; they were true statesmen.

Leaving to common people the jokes which usually accompany card-playing, our generals uttered none but necessary words; the stout one alone permitted himself, between the tricks, to call out energetically, "Oh! he had the spade!"

Among the ladies, Litvinof recognized those who had been present at the picnic; but there were also others whom he had not seen before.

One of them was so old, that she looked as though she would fall to dust; she displayed shoulders which were so colourless and bony that it was painful to look at them; and, with her mouth hidden behind her fan, she was looking with a languishing expression at Ratmirof with eyes which resembled those of a corpse. The latter was profuse in his attentions to her, and she was held in great consideration by the

whole of the company, because she was the last maid-of-honour to the Empress Catherine.

At a window, dressed like a nymph, was sitting the Countess Ch——, “the queen of wasps,” surrounded by a number of young men, among whom could be distinguished, by his arrogant air, his flat skull, and the brutish expression of his features—worthy of a khan in Bucharía or Heliogabale—the celebrated capitalist, Finikof.

Another lady, also a countess, better known by the name of Lise, was conversing with a fair-haired spark, a spiritualist, with a wax-like face and nervous eyes, by the side of whom stood a gentleman also very pale, and wearing his hair extremely long, who smiled with a look of importance. To spiritualism he added the gift of

prophecy, and explained with equal facility the Apocalypse and the Talmud. None of his predictions, it is true, had ever been realized, but that did not trouble him in the least, and he continued to prophesy with unabated confidence.

At the piano was installed the "rough diamond" who had so harrowed up the temper of Potoughine. With one hand he was absently striking an occasional note as he gazed negligently about him.

Irene was sitting upon a divan, between Prince Coco and Madame H——, an ex-beauty and *ex-femme d'esprit*, now a lady of pious pretensions and a bad temper; the oil of sanctity had diluted the venom of her tongue without washing a particle of it away.

On seeing Litvinof, Irene coloured and rose, and when he reached her, she eagerly