

**THE BATTLES OF LIFE.  
THE IRONMASTER,  
VOL. III**

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The battles of life. The ironmaster, Vol. III by Georges Ohnet & Lady G. O.

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**GEORGES OHNET & LADY G. O.**

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THE IRONMASTER.

FROM THE FRENCH OF  
GEORGES OHNET,

AUTHOR OF

"LA COMTESSE SARAH," "LISE FLEURON," ETC. ETC.

By LADY G. O.

*AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION.*

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# THE IRONMASTER.



## CHAPTER I.

THE Duke had not come of his own free will to instal himself at La Varenne. He could not bear the country. A Parisian in his soul, the plane-trees of the Boulevards and the chestnut-trees of the Champs-Elysées seemed to him quite sufficient verdure. His club, where he passed his afternoons and the greater part of his evenings, formed the basis of his life. He was in nowise contemplative and detested reading.

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When his father-in-law escorted him with pride to the hot-houses of La Varenne, to show him a superb collection of orchids, that his gardener, a man to whom Moulinet spoke with deference, had reared at great expense, the Duke cast an absent glance upon the pots symmetrically arranged, murmured indifferently: "Very pretty." Then, with the tips of his fingers, detaching from its stem a marvellous flower, he placed it in his button-hole.

The gardener was appalled, at seeing plucked in such a disrespectful manner a flower of which the culture had cost so much money and labour. He let fall a pot of begonia that he was preparing to show, and, darting at Moulinet a severe look, went out in silence.

"Do you know that it is a flower worth fifteen louis that you have just gathered?"

smilingly said the late Judge at the Tribunal de Commerce.

“Indeed?” said the Duke with tranquillity. “Well, but I do not think it too dear for myself.”

Moulinet looked askance at his son-in-law, but made no reply. In fact, he feared him. The Duke had a way of eyeing him from head to foot that overawed him. Moulinet had said one evening to the foppish Maître Escandre: “Whatever we may do, we shall never be the equals of these people!” And although he had, above all since his electoral designs, equalizing tendencies, he did not feel himself on an even footing with the Duke.

Having so little succeeded with his hot-houses, he hoped to make more impression with his stables. He had mustered there a dozen horses for riding and driving, of