The Human Comedy
Scenes from Private Life
Part II

By

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PAZ

(LA FAUSSE MAITRESSE)

I

In September, 1835, one of the richest heiresses of the faubourg Saint-Germain, Mademoiselle du Rouvre, the only daughter of the Marquis du Rouvre, married Comte Adam Mitgislas Laginski, a young Polish exile.

We ask permission to write these Polish names as they are pronounced, to spare our readers the aspect of the fortifications of consonants by which the Slave language protects its vowels,—probably not to lose them, considering how few there are.

The Marquis du Rouvre had squandered nearly the whole of a princely fortune, which he obtained originally through his marriage with a Demoiselle de Ronquerolles. Therefore, on her mother's side Clementine du Rouvre had the Marquis de Ronquerolles for uncle, and Madame de Serizy for aunt. On her father's side she had another uncle in the eccentric person of the Chevalier du Rouvre, a younger son of the house, an old bachelor who had become very rich by speculating in lands and houses. The Marquis de Ronquerolles had the misfortune to lose both his children at the time of the cholera, and the only son of Madame de Serizy, a young soldier of great promise, perished in Africa in the affair of the Makta. In these days rich families stand between the danger of impoverishing their children if they have too many, or of extinguishing their names if they have too few,—a singular result of the Code which Napoleon never thought of. By a curious turn of fortune Clementine became, in spite of her father having squandered his substance on Florine (one of the most charming actresses in Paris), a great heiress. The Marquis de Ronquerolles, a clever diplomatist under the new dynasty, his sister, Madame de Serizy, and the Chevalier du Rouvre agreed, in order to save their fortunes from the dissipations of the marquis, to settle them on their niece, to whom, moreover, they each pledged themselves to pay ten thousand francs a year from the day of her marriage.

It is quite unnecessary to say that the Polish count, though an exile, was no expense to the French government. Comte Adam Laginski belonged to one of the oldest and most illustrious families in Poland, which was allied to many of the princely houses of Germany,—Sapieha, Radziwill, Mniszech, Rzewuski, Czartoryski, Leczinski, Lubormirski, and all the other great Sarmatian SKIS. But heraldic knowledge is not the most distinguishing feature of the French

nation under Louis-Philippe, and Polish nobility was no great recommendation to the bourgeoisie who were lording it in those days. Besides, when Adam first made his appearance, in 1833, on the boulevard des Italiens, at Frascati, and at the Jockey-Club, he was leading the life of a young man who, having lost his political prospects, was taking his pleasure in Parisian dissipation. At first he was thought to be a student.

The Polish nationality had at this period fallen as low in French estimation, thanks to a shameful governmental reaction, as the republicans had sought to raise it. The singular struggle of the Movement against Resistance (two words which will be inexplicable thirty years hence) made sport of what ought to have been truly respected,—the name of a conquered nation to whom the French had offered hospitality, for whom fetes had been given (with songs and dances by subscription), above all, a nation which in the Napoleonic struggle between France and Europe had given us six thousand men, and what men!

Do not infer from this that either side is taken here; either that of the Emperor Nicholas against Poland, or that of Poland against the Emperor. It would be a foolish thing to slip political discussion into tales that are intended to amuse or interest. Besides, Russia and Poland were both right,—one to wish the unity of its empire, the other to desire its liberty. Let us say in passing that Poland might have conquered Russia by the influence of her morals instead of fighting her with weapons; she should have imitated China which, in the end, Chinesed the Tartars, and will, it is to be hoped, Chinese the English. Poland ought to have Polonized Russia. Poniatowski tried to do so in the least favorable portion of the empire; but as a king he was little understood,—because, possibly, he did not fully understand himself.

But how could the Parisians avoid disliking an unfortunate people who were the cause of that shameful falsehood enacted during the famous review at which all Paris declared its will to succor Poland? The Poles were held up to them as the allies of the republican party, and they never once remembered that Poland was a republic of aristocrats. From that day forth the bourgeoisie treated with base contempt the exiles of the nation it had worshipped a few days earlier. The wind of a riot is always enough to veer the Parisians from north to south under any regime. It is necessary to remember these sudden fluctuations of feeling in order to understand why it was that in 1835 the word "Pole" conveyed a derisive meaning to a people who consider themselves the wittiest and most courteous nation on earth, and their city of Paris the focus of enlightenment, with the sceptre of arts and literature within its grasp.

There are, alas! two sorts of Polish exiles,—the republican Poles, sons of Lelewel, and the noble Poles, at the head of whom is Prince Adam Czartoryski. The two classes are like fire and water; but why complain of that? Such divisions are always to be found among exiles, no matter of what nation

they may be, or in what countries they take refuge. They carry their countries and their hatreds with them. Two French priests, who had emigrated to Brussels during the Revolution, showed the utmost horror of each other, and when one of them was asked why, he replied with a glance at his companion in misery: "Why? because he's a Jansenist!" Dante would gladly have stabbed a Guelf had he met him in exile. This explains the virulent attacks of the French against the venerable Prince Adam Czartoryski, and the dislike shown to the better class of Polish exiles by the shopkeeping Caesars and the licensed Alexanders of Paris.

In 1834, therefore, Adam Mitgislas Laginski was something of a butt for Parisian pleasantry.

"He is rather nice, though he is a Pole," said Rastignac.

"All these Poles pretend to be great lords," said Maxime de Trailles, "but this one does pay his gambling debts, and I begin to think he must have property."

Without wishing to offend these banished men, it may be allowable to remark that the light-hearted, careless inconsistency of the Sarmatian character does justify in some degree the satire of the Parisians, who, by the bye, would behave in like circumstances exactly as the Poles do. The French aristocracy, so nobly succored during the Revolution by the Polish lords, certainly did not return the kindness in 1832. Let us have the melancholy courage to admit this, and to say that the faubourg Saint-Germain is still the debtor of Poland.

Was Comte Adam rich, or was he poor, or was he an adventurer? This problem was long unsolved. The diplomatic salons, faithful to instructions, imitated the silence of the Emperor Nicholas, who held that all Polish exiles were virtually dead and buried. The court of the Tuileries, and all who took their cue from it, gave striking proof of the political quality which was then dignified by the name of sagacity. They turned their backs on a Russian prince with whom they had all been on intimate terms during the Emigration, merely because it was said that the Emperor Nicholas gave him the cold shoulder. Between the caution of the court and the prudence of the diplomates, the Polish exiles of distinction lived in Paris in the Biblical solitude of "super flumina Babylonis," or else they haunted a few salons which were the neutral ground of all opinions. In a city of pleasure, like Paris, where amusements abound on all sides, the heedless gayety of a Pole finds twice as many encouragements as it needs to a life of dissipation.

It must be said, however, that Adam had two points against him,—his appearance, and his mental equipment. There are two species of Pole, as there are two species of Englishwoman. When an Englishwoman is not very handsome she is horribly ugly. Comte Adam belonged in the second category

of human beings. His small face, rather sharp in expression, looked as if it had been pressed in a vise. His short nose, and fair hair, and reddish beard and moustache made him look all the more like a goat because he was small and thin, and his tarnished yellow eyes caught you with that oblique look which Virgil celebrates. How came he, in spite of such obvious disadvantages, to possess really exquisite manners and a distinguished air? The problem is solved partly by the care and elegance of his dress, and partly by the training given him by his mother, a Radziwill. His courage amounted to daring, but his mind was not more than was needed for the ephemeral talk and pleasantry of Parisian conversation. And yet it would have been difficult to find among the young men of fashion in Paris a single one who was his superior. Young men talk a great deal too much in these days of horses, money, taxes, deputies; French conversation is no longer what it was. Brilliancy of mind needs leisure and certain social inequalities to bring it out. There is, probably, more real conversation in Vienna or St. Petersburg than in Paris. Equals do not need to employ delicacy or shrewdness in speech; they blurt out things as they are. Consequently the dandies of Paris did not discover the great seigneur in the rather heedless young fellow who, in their talks, would flit from one subject to another, all the more intent upon amusement because he had just escaped from a great peril, and, finding himself in a city where his family was unknown, felt at liberty to lead a loose life without the risk of disgracing his name.

But one fine day in 1834 Adam suddenly bought a house in the rue de la Pepiniere. Six months later his style of living was second to none in Paris. About the time when he thus began to take himself seriously he had seen Clementine du Rouvre at the Opera and had fallen in love with her. A year later the marriage took place. The salon of Madame d'Espard was the first to sound his praises. Mothers of daughters then learned too late that as far back as the year 900 the family of the Laginski was among the most illustrious of the North. By an act of prudence which was very unPolish, the mother of the young count had mortgaged her entire property on the breaking out of the insurrection for an immense sum lent by two Jewish bankers in Paris. Comte Adam was now in possession of eighty thousand francs a year. When this was discovered society ceased to be surprised at the imprudence which had been laid to the charge of Madame de Serizy, the Marquis de Ronquerolles, and the Chevalier du Rouvre in yielding to the foolish passion of their niece. People jumped, as usual, from one extreme of judgment to the other.

During the winter of 1836 Comte Adam was the fashion, and Clementine Laginska one of the queens of Paris. Madame Laginska is now a member of that charming circle of young women represented by Mesdames de Lestorade, de Portenduere, Marie de Vandenesse, du Guenic, and de Maufrigneuse, the flowers of our present Paris, who live at such immeasurable distance from the parvenus, the vulgarians, and the speculators of the new regime.

This preamble is necessary to show the sphere in which was done one of those noble actions, less rare than the calumniators of our time admit,—actions which, like pearls, the fruit of pain and suffering, are hidden within rough shells, lost in the gulf, the sea, the tossing waves of what we call society, the century, Paris, London, St. Petersburg,—or what you will.

If the axiom that architecture is the expression of manner and morals was ever proved, it was certainly after the insurrection of 1830, during the present reign of the house of Orleans. As all the old fortunes are diminishing in France, the majestic mansions of our ancestors are constantly being demolished and replaced by species of phalansteries, in which the peers of July occupy the third floor above some newly enriched empirics on the lower floors. A mixture of styles is confusedly employed. As there is no longer a real court or nobility to give the tone, there is no harmony in the production of art. Never, on the other hand, has architecture discovered so many economical ways of imitating the real and the solid, or displayed more resources, more talent, in distributing them. Propose to an architect to build upon the garden at the back of an old mansion, and he will run you up a little Louvre overloaded with ornament. He will manage to get in a courtyard, stables, and if you care for it, a garden. Inside the house he will accommodate a quantity of little rooms and passages. He is so clever in deceiving the eye that you think you will have plenty of space; but it is only a nest of small rooms, after all, in which a ducal family has to turn itself about in the space that its own bakehouse formerly occupied.

The hotel of the Comtesse Laginska, rue de la Pepiniere, is one of these creations, and stands between court and garden. On the right, in the court, are the kitchens and offices; to the left the coachhouse and stables. The porter's lodge is between two charming portes-cocheres. The chief luxury of the house is a delightful greenhouse contrived at the end of a boudoir on the ground-floor which opens upon an admirable suite of reception rooms. An English philanthropist had built this architectural bijou, designed the garden, added the greenhouse, polished the doors, bricked the courtyard, painted the window-frames green, and realized, in short, a dream which resembled (proportions excepted) George the Fourth's Pavilion at Brighton. The inventive and industrious Parisian workmen had moulded the doors and window-frames; the ceilings were imitated from the middle-ages or those of a Venetian palace; marble veneering abounded on the outer walls. Steinbock and Francois Souchet had designed the mantel-pieces and the panels above the doors; Schinner had painted the ceilings in his masterly manner. The beauties of the staircase, white as a woman's arm, defied those of the hotel Rothschild. On account of the riots and the unsettled times, the cost of this folly was only about eleven hundred thousand francs,—to an Englishman a mere nothing. All this luxury, called princely by persons who do not know what real princes are,

was built in the garden of the house of a purveyor made a Croesus by the Revolution, who had escaped to Brussels and died there after going into bankruptcy. The Englishman died in Paris, of Paris; for to many persons Paris is a disease,—sometimes several diseases. His widow, a Methodist, had a horror of the little nabob establishment, and ordered it to be sold. Comte Adam bought it at a bargain; and how he came to do so shall presently be made known, for bargains were not at all in his line as a grand seigneur.

Behind the house lay the verdant velvet of an English lawn shaded at the lower end by a clump of exotic trees, in the midst of which stood a Chinese pagoda with soundless belfries and motionless golden eggs. The greenhouse concealed the garden wall on the northern side, the opposite wall was covered with climbing plants trained upon poles painted green and connected with crossway trellises. This lawn, this world of flowers, the gravelled paths, the simulated forest, the verdant palisades, were contained within the space of five and twenty square rods, which are worth to-day four hundred thousand francs, —the value of an actual forest. Here, in this solitude in the middle of Paris, the birds sang, thrushes, nightingales, warblers, bulfinches, and sparrows. The greenhouse was like an immense jardiniere, filling the air with perfume in winter as in summer. The means by which its atmosphere was made to order, torrid as in China or temperate as in Italy, were cleverly concealed. Pipes in which hot water circulated, or steam, were either hidden under ground or festooned with plants overhead. The boudoir was a large room. The miracle of the modern Parisian fairy named Architecture is to get all these many and great things out of a limited bit of ground.

The boudoir of the young countess was arranged to suit the taste of the artist to whom Comte Adam entrusted the decoration of the house. It is too full of pretty nothings to be a place for repose; one scarce knows where to sit down among carved Chinese work-tables with their myriads of fantastic figures inlaid in ivory, cups of yellow topaz mounted on filagree, mosaics which inspire theft, Dutch pictures in the style which Schinner has adopted, angels such as Steinbock conceived but often could not execute, statuettes modelled by genius pursued by creditors (the real explanation of the Arabian myth), superb sketches by our best artists, lids of chests made into panels alternating with fluted draperies of Italian silk, portieres hanging from rods of old oak in tapestried masses on which the figures of some hunting scene are swarming, pieces of furniture worthy to have belonged to Madame de Pompadour, Persian rugs, et cetera. For a last graceful touch, all these elegant things were subdued by the half-light which filtered through embroidered curtains and added to their charm. On a table between the windows, among various curiosities, lay a whip, the handle designed by Mademoiselle de Fauveau, which proved that the countess rode on horseback.

Such is a lady's boudoir in 1837,—an exhibition of the contents of many shops, which amuse the eye, as if ennui were the one thing to be dreaded by the social world of the liveliest and most stirring capital in Europe. Why is there nothing of an inner life? nothing which leads to revery, nothing reposeful? Why indeed? Because no one in our day is sure of the future; we are living our lives like prodigal annuitants.

One morning Clementine appeared to be thinking of something. She was lying at full length on one of those marvellous couches from which it is almost impossible to rise, the upholsterer having invented them for lovers of the "far niente" and its attendant joys of laziness to sink into. The doors of the greenhouse were open, letting the odors of vegetation and the perfume of the tropics pervade the room. The young wife was looking at her husband who was smoking a narghile, the only form of pipe she would have suffered in that room. The portieres, held back by cords, gave a vista through two elegant salons, one white and gold, comparable only to that of the hotel Forbin-Janson, the other in the style of the Renaissance. The dining-room, which had no rival in Paris except that of the Baron de Nucingen, was at the end of a short gallery decorated in the manner of the middle-ages. This gallery opened on the side of the courtyard upon a large antechamber, through which could be seen the beauties of the staircase.

The count and countess had just finished breakfast; the sky was a sheet of azure without a cloud, April was nearly over. They had been married two years, and Clementine had just discovered for the first time that there was something resembling a secret or a mystery in her household. The Pole, let us say it to his honor, is usually helpless before a woman; he is so full of tenderness for her that in Poland he becomes her inferior, though Polish women make admirable wives. Now a Pole is still more easily vanquished by a Parisian woman. Consequently Comte Adam, pressed by questions, did not even attempt the innocent roguery of selling the suspected secret. It is always wise with a woman to get some good out of a mystery; she will like you the better for it, as a swindler respects an honest man the more when he finds he cannot swindle him. Brave in heart but not in speech, Comte Adam merely stipulated that he should not be compelled to answer until he had finished his narghile.

"If any difficulty occurred when we were travelling," said Clementine, "you always dismissed it by saying, 'Paz will settle that.' You never wrote to any one but Paz. When we returned here everybody kept saying, 'the captain, the captain.' If I want the carriage—'the captain.' Is there a bill to pay—'the captain.' If my horse is not properly bitted, they must speak to Captain Paz. In short, it is like a game of dominoes—Paz is everywhere. I hear of nothing but Paz, but I never see Paz. Who and what is Paz? Why don't you bring forth

your Paz?"

"Isn't everything going on right?" asked the count, taking the "bocchettino" of his narghile from his lips.

"Everything is going on so right that other people with an income of two hundred thousand francs would ruin themselves by going at our pace, and we have only one hundred and ten thousand."

So saying she pulled the bell-cord (an exquisite bit of needlework). A footman entered, dressed like a minister.

"Tell Captain Paz that I wish to see him."

"If you think you are going to find out anything that way—" said Comte Adam, laughing.

It is well to mention that Adam and Clementine, married in December, 1835, had gone soon after the wedding to Italy, Switzerland, and Germany, where they spent the greater part of two years. Returning to Paris in November, 1837, the countess entered society for the first time as a married woman during the winter which had just ended, and she then became aware of the existence, half-suppressed and wholly dumb but very useful, of a species of factotum who was personally invisible, named Paz,—spelt thus, but pronounced "Patz."

"Monsieur le capitaine Paz begs Madame la comtesse to excuse him," said the footman, returning. "He is at the stables; as soon as he has changed his dress Comte Paz will present himself to Madame."

"What was he doing at the stables?"

"He was showing them how to groom Madame's horse," said the man. "He was not pleased with the way Constantin did it."

The countess looked at the footman. He was perfectly serious and did not add to his words the sort of smile by which servants usually comment on the actions of a superior who seems to them to derogate from his position.

"Ah! he was grooming Cora."

"Madame la comtesse intends to ride out this morning?" said the footman, leaving the room without further answer.

"Is Paz a Pole?" asked Clementine, turning to her husband, who nodded by way of affirmation.

Madame Laginska was silent, examining Adam. With her feet extended upon a cushion and her head poised like that of a bird on the edge of its nest listening to the noises in a grove, she would have seemed enchanting even to a

blase man. Fair and slender, and wearing her hair in curls, she was not unlike those semi-romantic pictures in the Keepsakes, especially when dressed, as she was this morning, in a breakfast gown of Persian silk, the folds of which could not disguise the beauty of her figure or the slimness of her waist. The silk with its brilliant colors being crossed upon the bosom showed the spring of the neck,—its whiteness contrasting delightfully against the tones of a guipure lace which lay upon her shoulders. Her eyes and their long black lashes added at this moment to the expression of curiosity which puckered her pretty mouth. On the forehead, which was well modelled, an observer would have noticed a roundness characteristic of the true Parisian woman,—self-willed, merry, well-informed, but inaccessible to vulgar seductions. Her hands, which were almost transparent, were hanging down at the end of each arm of her chair; the tapering fingers, slightly turned up at their points, showed nails like almonds, which caught the light. Adam smiled at his wife's impatience, and looked at her with a glance which two years of married life had not yet chilled. Already the little countess had made herself mistress of the situation, for she scarcely paid attention to her husband's admiration. In fact, in the look which she occasionally cast at him, there seemed to be the consciousness of a Frenchwoman's ascendancy over the puny, volatile, and red-haired Pole.

"Here comes Paz," said the count, hearing a step which echoed through the gallery.

The countess beheld a tall and handsome man, well-made, and bearing on his face the signs of pain which come of inward strength and secret endurance of sorrow. He wore one of those tight, frogged overcoats which were then called "polonaise." Thick, black hair, rather unkempt, covered his square head, and Clementine noticed his broad forehead shining like a block of white marble, for Paz held his visored cap in his hand. The hand itself was like that of the Infant Hercules. Robust health flourished on his face, which was divided by a large Roman nose and reminded Clementine of some handsome Transteverino. A black silk cravat added to the martial appearance of this six-foot mystery, with eyes of jet and Italian fervor. The amplitude of his pleated trousers, which allowed only the tips of his boots to be seen, revealed his faithfulness to the fashions of his own land. There was something really burlesque to a romantic woman in the striking contrast no one could fail to remark between the captain and the count, the little Pole with his pinched face and the stalwart soldier.

"Good morning, Adam," he said familiarly. Then he bowed courteously as he asked Clementine what he could do for her.

"You are Laginski's friend!" exclaimed the countess.

"For life and death," answered Paz, to whom the count threw a smile of

affection as he drew a last puff from his perfumed pipe.

"Then why don't you take your meals with us? why did you not accompany us to Italy and Switzerland? why do you hide yourself in such a way that I am unable to thank you for the constant services that you do for us?" said the countess, with much vivacity of manner but no feeling.

In fact, she thought she perceived in Paz a sort of voluntary servitude. Such an idea carried with it in her mind a certain contempt for a social amphibian, a being half-secretary, half-bailiff, and yet neither the one nor the other, a poor relation, an embarrassing friend.

"Because, countess," he answered with perfect ease of manner, "there are no thanks due. I am Adam's friend, and it gives me pleasure to take care of his interests."

"And you remain standing for your pleasure, too," remarked Comte Adam.

Paz sat down on a chair near the door.

"I remember seeing you about the time I was married, and afterwards in the courtyard," said Clementine. "But why do you put yourself in a position of inferiority,—you, Adam's friend?"

"I am perfectly indifferent to the opinion of the Parisians," he replied. "I live for myself, or, if you like, for you two."

"But the opinion of the world as to a friend of my husband is not indifferent to me—"

"Ah, madame, the world will be satisfied if you tell them I am 'an original.'"

After a moment's silence he added, "Are you going out to-day?"

"Will you come with us to the Bois?"

"Certainly."

So saying, Paz bowed and withdrew.

"What a good soul he is!" said Adam. "He has all the simplicity of a child."

"Now tell me all about your relations with him," said Clementine.

"Paz, my dear," said Laginski, "belongs to a noble family as old and illustrious as our own. One of the Pazzi of Florence, at the time of their disasters, fled to Poland, where he settled with some of his property and founded the Paz family, to which the title of count was granted. This family, which distinguished itself greatly in the glorious days of our royal republic, became rich. The graft from the tree that was felled in Italy flourished so

vigorously in Poland that there are several branches of the family still there. I need not tell you that some are rich and some are poor. Our Paz is the scion of a poor branch. He was an orphan, without other fortune than his sword, when he served in the regiment of the Grand Duke Constantine at the time of our revolution. Joining the Polish cause, he fought like a Pole, like a patriot, like a man who has nothing,—three good reasons for fighting well. In his last affair, thinking he was followed by his men, he dashed upon a Russian battery and was taken prisoner. I was there. His brave act roused me. 'Let us go and get him!' I said to my troop, and we charged the battery like a lot of foragers. I got Paz—I was the seventh man; we started twenty and came back eight, counting Paz. After Warsaw was sold we were forced to escape those Russians. By a curious chance, Paz and I happened to come together again, at the same hour and the same place, on the other side of the Vistula. I saw the poor captain arrested by some Prussians, who made themselves the blood-hounds of the Russians. When we have fished a man out of the Styx we cling to him. This new danger for poor Paz made me so unhappy that I let myself be taken too, thinking I could help him. Two men can get away where one will perish. Thanks to my name and some family connections in Prussia, the authorities shut their eyes to my escape. I got my dear captain through as a man of no consequence, a family servant, and we reached Dantzic. There we got on board a Dutch vessel and went to London. It took us two months to get there. My mother was ill in England, and expecting me. Paz and I took care of her till her death, which the Polish troubles hastened. Then we left London and came to France. Men who go through such adversities become like brothers. When I reached Paris, at twenty-two years of age, and found I had an income of over sixty thousand francs a year, without counting the proceeds of the diamonds and the pictures sold by my mother, I wanted to secure the future of my dear Paz before I launched into dissipation. I had often noticed the sadness in his eyes—sometimes tears were in them. I had had good reason to understand his soul, which is noble, grand, and generous to the core. I thought he might not like to be bound by benefits to a friend who was six years younger than himself, unless he could repay them. I was careless and frivolous, just as a young fellow is, and I knew I was certain to ruin myself at play, or get inveigled by some woman, and Paz and I might then be parted; and though I had every intention of always looking out for him, I knew I might sometime or other forget to provide for him. In short, my dear angel, I wanted to spare him the pain and mortification of having to ask me for money, or of having to hunt me up if he got into distress. SO, one morning, after breakfast, when we were sitting with our feet on the andirons smoking pipes, I produced, —with the utmost precaution, for I saw him look at me uneasily,—a certificate of the Funds payable to bearer for a certain sum of money a year."

Clementine jumped up and went and seated herself on Adam's knee, put

her arms round his neck, and kissed him. "Dear treasure!" she said, "how handsome he is! Well, what did Paz do?"

"Thaddeus turned pale," said the count, "but he didn't say a word."

"Oh! his name is Thaddeus, is it?"

"Yes; Thaddeus folded the paper and gave it back to me, and then he said: 'I thought, Adam, that we were one for life or death, and that we should never part. Do you want to be rid of me?' 'Oh!' I said, 'if you take it that way, Thaddeus, don't let us say another word about it. If I ruin myself you shall be ruined too.' 'You haven't fortune enough to live as a Laginski should,' he said, 'and you need a friend who will take care of your affairs, and be a father and a brother and a trusty confidant.' My dear child, as Paz said that he had in his look and voice, calm as they were, a maternal emotion, and also the gratitude of an Arab, the fidelity of a dog, the friendship of a savage,—not displayed, but ever ready. Faith! I seized him, as we Poles do, with a hand on each shoulder, and I kissed him on the lips. 'For life and death, then! all that I have is yours—do what you will with it.' It was he who found me this house and bought it for next to nothing. He sold my Funds high and bought in low, and we have paid for this barrack with the profits. He knows horses, and he manages to buy and sell at such advantage that my stable really costs very little; and yet I have the finest horses and the most elegant equipages in all Paris. Our servants, brave Polish soldiers chosen by him, would go through fire and water for us. I seem, as you say, to be ruining myself; and yet Paz keeps the house with such method and economy that he has even repaired some of my foolish losses at play,—the thoughtless folly of a young man. My dear, Thaddeus is as shrewd as two Genoese, as eager for gain as a Polish Jew, and provident as a good housekeeper. I never could force him to live as I did when I was a bachelor. Sometimes I had to use a sort of friendly coercion to make him go to the theatre with me when I was alone, or to the jovial little dinners I used to give at a tavern. He doesn't like social life."

"What does he like, then?" asked Clementine.

"Poland; he loves Poland and pines for it. His only spendings are sums he gives, more in my name than in his own, to some of our poor brother-exiles."

"Well, I shall love him, the fine fellow!" said the countess, "he looks to me as simple-hearted as he is grand."

"All these pretty things you have about you," continued Adam, who praised his friend in the noblest sincerity, "he picked up; he bought them at auction, or as bargains from the dealers. Oh! he's keener than they are themselves. If you see him rubbing his hands in the courtyard, you may be sure he has traded away one good horse for a better. He lives for me; his

happiness is to see me elegant, in a perfectly appointed equipage. The duties he takes upon himself are all accomplished without fuss or emphasis. One evening I lost twenty thousand francs at whist. 'What will Paz say?' thought I as I walked home. Paz paid them to me, not without a sigh; but he never reproached me, even by a look. But that sigh of his restrained me more than the remonstrances of uncles, mothers, or wives could have done. 'Do you regret the money?' I said to him. 'Not for you or me, no,' he replied; 'but I was thinking that twenty poor Poles could have lived a year on that sum.' You must understand that the Pazzi are fully the equal of the Laginski, so I couldn't regard my dear Paz as an inferior. I never went out or came in without going first to Paz, as I would to my father. My fortune is his; and Thaddeus knows that if danger threatened him I would fling myself into it and drag him out, as I have done before."

"And that is saying a good deal, my dear friend," said the countess. "Devotion is like a flash of lightning. Men devote themselves in battle, but they no longer have the heart for it in Paris."

"Well," replied Adam, "I am always ready, as in battle, to devote myself to Paz. Our two characters have kept their natural asperities and defects, but the mutual comprehension of our souls has tightened the bond already close between us. It is quite possible to save a man's life and kill him afterwards if we find him a bad fellow; but Paz and I know THAT of each other which makes our friendship indissoluble. There's a constant exchange of happy thoughts and impressions between us; and really, perhaps, such a friendship as ours is richer than love."

A pretty hand closed the count's mouth so promptly that the action was somewhat like a blow.

"Yes," he said, "friendship, my dear angel, knows nothing of bankrupt sentiments and collapsed joys. Love, after giving more than it has, ends by giving less than it receives."

"One side as well as the other," remarked Clementine laughing.

"Yes," continued Adam, "whereas friendship only increases. You need not pucker up your lips at that, for we are, you and I, as much friends as lovers; we have, at least I hope so, combined the two sentiments in our happy marriage."

"I'll explain to you what it is that has made you and Thaddeus such good friends," said Clementine. "The difference in the lives you lead comes from your tastes and from necessity; from your likings, not your positions. As far as one can judge from merely seeing a man once, and also from what you tell me, there are times when the subaltern might become the superior."

"Oh, Paz is truly my superior," said Adam, naively; "I have no advantage

over him except mere luck."

His wife kissed him for the generosity of those words.

"The extreme care with which he hides the grandeur of his feelings is one form of his superiority," continued the count. "I said to him once: 'You are a sly one; you have in your heart a vast domain within which you live and think.' He has a right to the title of count; but in Paris he won't be called anything but captain."

"The fact is that the Florentine of the middle-ages has reappeared in our century," said the countess. "Dante and Michael Angelo are in him."

"That's the very truth," cried Adam. "He is a poet in soul."

"So here I am, married to two Poles," said the young countess, with a gesture worthy of some genius of the stage.

"Dear child!" said Adam, pressing her to him, "it would have made me very unhappy if my friend did not please you. We were both rather afraid of it, he and I, though he was delighted at my marriage. You will make him very happy if you tell him that you love him,—yes, as an old friend."

"I'll go and dress, the day is so fine; and we will all three ride together," said Clementine, ringing for her maid.

II

Paz was leading so subterranean a life that the fashionable world of Paris asked who he was when the Comtesse Laginska was seen in the Bois de Boulogne riding between her husband and a stranger. During the ride Clementine insisted that Thaddeus should dine with them. This caprice of the sovereign lady compelled Paz to make an evening toilet. Clementine dressed for the occasion with a certain coquetry, in a style that impressed even Adam himself when she entered the salon where the two friends awaited her.

"Comte Paz," she said, "you must go with us to the Opera."

This was said in the tone which, coming from a woman means: "If you refuse we shall quarrel."

"Willingly, madame," replied the captain. "But as I have not the fortune of a count, have the kindness to call me captain."

"Very good, captain; give me your arm," she said,—taking it and leading the way to the dining-room with the flattering familiarity which enchants all

lovers.

The countess placed the captain beside her; his behavior was that of a poor sub-lieutenant dining at his general's table. He let Clementine talk, listened deferentially as to a superior, did not differ with her in anything, and waited to be questioned before he spoke at all. He seemed actually stupid to the countess, whose coquettish little ways missed their mark in presence of such frigid gravity and conventional respect. In vain Adam kept saying: "Do be lively, Thaddeus; one would really suppose you were not at home. You must have made a wager to disconcert Clementine." Thaddeus continued heavy and half asleep. When the servants left the room at the end of the dessert the captain explained that his habits were diametrically opposite to those of society,—he went to bed at eight o'clock and got up very early in the morning; and he excused his dulness on the ground of being sleepy.

"My intention in taking you to the Opera was to amuse you, captain; but do as you prefer," said Clementine, rather piqued.

"I will go," said Paz.

"Duprez sings 'Guillaume Tell,'" remarked Adam. "But perhaps you would rather go to the 'Varietes'?"

The captain smiled and rang the bell. "Tell Constantin," he said to the footman, "to put the horses to the carriage instead of the coupe. We should be rather squeezed otherwise," he said to the count.

"A Frenchman would have forgotten that," remarked Clementine, smiling.

"Ah! but we are Florentines transplanted to the North," answered Thaddeus with a refinement of accent and a look in his eyes which made his conduct at table seem assumed for the occasion. There was too evident a contrast between his involuntary self-revelation in this speech and his behavior during dinner. Clementine examined the captain with a few of those covert glances which show a woman's surprise and also her capacity for observation.

It resulted from this little incident that silence reigned in the salon while the three took their coffee, a silence rather annoying to Adam, who was incapable of imagining the cause of it. Clementine no longer tried to draw out Thaddeus. The captain, on the other hand, retreated within his military stiffness and came out of it no more, neither on the way to the Opera nor in the box, where he seemed to be asleep.

"You see, madame, that I am a very stupid man," he said during the dance in the last act of "Guillaume Tell." "Am I not right to keep, as the saying is, to my own specialty?"

"In truth, my dear captain, you are neither a talker nor a man of the world,

but you are perhaps Polish."

"Therefore leave me to look after your pleasures, your property, your household—it is all I am good for."

"Tartufe! pooh!" cried Adam, laughing. "My dear, he is full of ardor; he is thoroughly educated; he can, if he chooses, hold his own in any salon. Clementine, don't believe his modesty."

"Adieu, comtesse; I have obeyed your wishes so far; and now I will take the carriage and go home to bed and send it back for you."

Clementine bowed her head and let him go without replying.

"What a bear!" she said to the count. "You are a great deal nicer."

Adam pressed her hand when no one was looking.

"Poor, dear Thaddeus," he said, "he is trying to make himself disagreeable where most men would try to seem more amiable than I."

"Oh!" she said, "I am not sure but what there is some calculation in his behavior; he would have taken in an ordinary woman."

Half an hour later, when the chasseur, Boleslas, called out "Gate!" and the carriage was waiting for it to swing back, Clementine said to her husband, "Where does the captain perch?"

"Why, there!" replied Adam, pointing to a floor above the porte-cochere which had one window looking on the street. "His apartments are over the coachhouse."

"Who lives on the other side?" asked the countess.

"No one as yet," said Adam; "I mean that apartment for our children and their instructors."

"He didn't go to bed," said the countess, observing lights in Thaddeus's rooms when the carriage had passed under the portico supported by columns copied from those of the Tuileries, which replaced a vulgar zinc awning painted in stripes like cloth.

The captain, in his dressing-gown with a pipe in his mouth, was watching Clementine as she entered the vestibule. The day had been a hard one for him. And here is the reason why: A great and terrible emotion had taken possession of his heart on the day when Adam made him go to the Opera to see and give his opinion on Mademoiselle du Rouvre; and again when he saw her on the occasion of her marriage, and recognized in her the woman whom a man is forced to love exclusively. For this reason Paz strongly advised and promoted the long journey to Italy and elsewhere after the marriage. At peace so long as

Clementine was away, his trial was renewed on the return of the happy household. As he sat at his window on this memorable night, smoking his latakia in a pipe of wild-cherry wood six feet long, given to him by Adam, these are the thoughts that were passing through his mind:—

"I, and God, who will reward me for suffering in silence, alone know how I love her! But how shall I manage to have neither her love nor her dislike?"

And his thoughts travelled far on this strange theme.

It must not be supposed that Thaddeus was living without pleasure, in the midst of his sufferings. The deceptions of this day, for instance, were a source of inward joy to him. Since the return of the count and countess he had daily felt ineffable satisfactions in knowing himself necessary to a household which, without his devotion to its interests, would infallibly have gone to ruin. What fortune can bear the strain of reckless prodigality? Clementine, brought up by a spendthrift father, knew nothing of the management of a household which the women of the present day, however rich or noble they are, are often compelled to undertake themselves. How few, in these days, keep a steward. Adam, on the other hand, son of one of the great Polish lords who let themselves be preyed on by the Jews, and are wholly incapable of managing even the wreck of their vast fortunes (for fortunes are vast in Poland), was not of a nature to check his own fancies or those of his wife. Left to himself he would probably have been ruined before his marriage. Paz had prevented him from gambling at the Bourse, and that says all.

Under these circumstances, Thaddeus, feeling that he loved Clementine in spite of himself, had not the resource of leaving the house and travelling in other lands to forget his passion. Gratitude, the key-note of his life, held him bound to that household where he alone could look after the affairs of the heedless owners. The long absence of Adam and Clementine had given him peace. But the countess had returned more lovely than ever, enjoying the freedom which marriage brings to a Parisian woman, displaying the graces of a young wife and the nameless attraction she gains from the happiness, or the independence, bestowed upon her by a young man as trustful, as chivalric, and as much in love as Adam. To know that he was the pivot on which the splendor the household depended, to see Clementine when she got out of her carriage on returning from some fete, or got into it in the morning when she took her drive, to meet her on the boulevards in her pretty equipage, looking like a flower in a whorl of leaves, inspired poor Thaddeus with mysterious delights, which glowed in the depths of his heart but gave no signs upon his face.

How happened it that for five whole months the countess had never perceived the captain? Because he hid himself from her knowledge, and

carefully concealed the pains he took to avoid her. Nothing so resembles the Divine love as hopeless human love. A man must have great depth of heart to devote himself in silence and obscurity to a woman. In such a heart is the worship of love for love's sake only—sublime avarice, sublime because ever generous and founded on the mysterious existence of the principles of creation. Effect is nature, and nature is enchanting; it belongs to man, to the poet, the painter, the lover. But Cause, to a few privileged souls and to certain mighty thinkers, is superior to nature. Cause is God. In the sphere of causes live the Newtons and all such thinkers as Laplace, Kepler, Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, Buffon; also the true poets and solitarys of the second Christian century, and the Saint Teresas of Spain, and such sublime ecstatics. All human sentiments bear analogy to these conditions whenever the mind abandons Effect for Cause. Thaddeus had reached this height, at which all things change their relative aspect. Filled with the joys unutterable of a creator he had attained in his love to all that genius has revealed to us of grandeur.

"No," he was thinking to himself as he watched the curling smoke of his pipe, "she was not entirely deceived. She might break up my friendship with Adam if she took a dislike to me; but if she coquetted with me to amuse herself, what would become of me?"

The conceit of this last supposition was so foreign to the modest nature and Teutonic timidity of the captain that he scolded himself for admitting it, and went to bed, resolved to await events before deciding on a course.

The next day Clementine breakfasted very contentedly without Paz, and without even noticing his disobedience to her orders. It happened to be her reception day, when the house was thrown open with a splendor that was semi-royal. She paid no attention to the absence of Comte Paz, on whom all the burden of these parade days fell.

"Good!" thought he, as he heard the last carriages driving away at two in the morning; "it was only the caprice or the curiosity of a Parisian woman that made her want to see me."

After that the captain went back to his ordinary habits and ways, which had been somewhat upset by this incident. Diverted by her Parisian occupations, Clementine appeared to have forgotten Paz. It must not be thought an easy matter to reign a queen over fickle Paris. Does any one suppose that fortunes alone are risked in the great game? The winters are to fashionable women what a campaign once was to the soldiers of the Empire. What works of art and genius are expended on a gown or a garland in which to make a sensation! A fragile, delicate creature will wear her stiff and brilliant harness of flowers and diamonds, silk and steel, from nine at night till two and often three o'clock in the morning. She eats little, to attract remark to her slender waist; she

satisfied her hunger with debilitating tea, sugared cakes, ices which heat her, or slices of heavy pastry. The stomach is made to yield to the orders of coquetry. The awakening comes too late. A fashionable woman's whole life is in contradiction to the laws of nature, and nature is pitiless. She has no sooner risen than she makes an elaborate morning toilet, and thinks of the one which she means to wear in the afternoon. The moment she is dressed she has to receive and make visits, and go to the Bois either on horseback or in a carriage. She must practise the art of smiling, and must keep her mind on the stretch to invent new compliments which shall seem neither common nor far-fetched. All women do not succeed in this. It is no surprise, therefore, to find a young woman who entered fashionable society fresh and healthy, faded and worn out at the end of three years. Six months spent in the country will hardly heal the wounds of the winter. We hear continually, in these days, of mysterious ailments,—gastritis, and so forth,—ills unknown to women when they busied themselves about their households. In the olden time women only appeared in the world at intervals; now they are always on the scene. Clementine found she had to struggle for her supremacy. She was cited, and that alone brought jealousies; and the care and watchfulness exacted by this contest with her rivals left little time even to love her husband. Paz might well be forgotten. Nevertheless, in the month of May, as she drove home from the Bois, just before she left Paris for Ronquerolles, her uncle's estate in Burgundy, she noticed Thaddeus, elegantly dressed, sauntering on one of the side-paths of the Champs-Elysees, in the seventh heaven of delight at seeing his beautiful countess in her elegant carriage with its spirited horses and sparkling liveries,—in short, his beloved family the admired of all.

"There's the captain," she said to her husband.

"He's happy!" said Adam. "This is his delight. He knows there's no equipage more elegant than ours, and he is rejoicing to think that some people envy it. Have you only just noticed him? I see him there nearly every day."

"I wonder what he is thinking about now," said Clementine.

"He is thinking that this winter has cost a good deal, and that it is time we went to economize with your old uncle Ronquerolles," replied Adam.

The countess stopped the carriage near Paz, and bade him take the seat beside her. Thaddeus grew as red as a cherry.

"I shall poison you," he said; "I have been smoking."

"Doesn't Adam poison me?" she said.

"Yes, but he is Adam," returned the captain.

"And why can't Thaddeus have the same privileges?" asked the countess,

smiling.

That divine smile had a power which triumphed over the heroic resolutions of poor Paz; he looked at Clementine with all the fire of his soul in his eyes, though, even so, its flame was tempered by the angelic gratitude of the man whose life was based upon that virtue. The countess folded her arms in her shawl, lay back pensively on her cushions, ruffling the feathers of her pretty bonnet, and looked at the people who passed her. That flash of a great and hitherto resigned soul reached her sensibilities. What was Adam's merit in her eyes? It was natural enough to have courage and generosity. But Thaddeus—surely Thaddeus possessed, or seemed to possess, some great superiority over Adam. They were dangerous thoughts which took possession of the countess's mind as she again noticed the contrast of the fine presence that distinguished Thaddeus, and the puny frame in which Adam showed the degenerating effects of intermarriage among the Polish aristocratic families. The devil alone knew the thoughts that were in Clementine's head, for she sat still, with thoughtful, dreamy eyes, and without saying a word until they reached home.

"You will dine with us; I shall be angry if you disobey me," she said as the carriage turned in. "You are Thaddeus to me, as you are to Adam. I know your obligations to him, but I also know those we are under to you. Both generosities are natural—but you are generous every day and all day. My father dines here to-day, also my uncle Ronquerolles and my aunt Madame de Serizy. Dress yourself therefore," she said, taking the hand he offered to assist her from the carriage.

Thaddeus went to his own room to dress with a joyful heart, though shaken by an inward dread. He went down at the last moment and behaved through dinner as he had done on the first occasion, that is, like a soldier fit only for his duties as a steward. But this time Clementine was not his dupe; his glance had enlightened her. The Marquis de Ronquerolles, one of the ablest diplomates after Talleyrand, who had served with de Marsay during his short ministry, had been informed by his niece of the real worth and character of Comte Paz, and knew how modestly he made himself the steward of his friend Laginski.

"And why is this the first time I have the pleasure of seeing Comte Paz?" asked the marquis.

"Because he is so shy and retiring," replied Clementine with a look at Paz telling him to change his behavior.

Alas! that we should have to avow it, at the risk of rendering the captain less interesting, but Paz, though superior to his friend Adam, was not a man of parts. His apparent superiority was due to his misfortunes. In his lonely and poverty-stricken life in Warsaw he had read and taught himself a good deal; he

had compared and meditated. But the gift of original thought which makes a great man he did not possess, and it can never be acquired. Paz, great in heart only, approached in heart to the sublime; but in the sphere of sentiments, being more a man of action than of thought, he kept his thoughts to himself; and they only served therefore to eat his heart out. What, after all, is a thought unexpressed?

After Clementine's little speech, the Marquis de Ronquerolles and his sister exchanged a singular glance, embracing their niece, Comte Adam, and Paz. It was one of those rapid scenes which take place only in France and Italy,—the two regions of the world (all courts excepted) where eyes can say everything. To communicate to the eye the full power of the soul, to give it the value of speech, needs either the pressure of extreme servitude, or complete liberty. Adam, the Marquis du Rouvre, and Clementine did not observe this luminous by-play of the old coquette and the old diplomatist, but Paz, the faithful watchdog, understood its meaning. It was, we must remark, an affair of two seconds; but to describe the tempest it roused in the captain's soul would take far too much space in this brief history.

"What!" he said to himself, "do the aunt and uncle think I might be loved? Then my happiness only depends on my own audacity! But Adam—"

Ideal love and desire clashed with gratitude and friendship, all equally powerful, and, for a moment, love prevailed. The lover would have his day. Paz became brilliant, he tried to please, he told the story of the Polish insurrection in noble words, being questioned about it by the diplomatist. By the end of dinner Paz saw Clementine hanging upon his lips and regarding him as a hero, forgetting that Adam too, after sacrificing a third of his vast fortune, had been an exile. At nine o'clock, after coffee had been served, Madame de Serizy kissed her niece on the forehead, pressed her hand, and went away, taking Adam with her and leaving the Marquis de Ronquerolles and the Marquis du Rouvre, who soon followed. Paz and Clementine were alone together.

"I will leave you now, madame," said Thaddeus. "You will of course rejoin them at the Opera?"

"No," she answered, "I don't like dancing, and they give an odious ballet to-night 'La Revolte au Serail.'"

There was a moment's silence.

"Two years ago Adam would not have gone to the Opera without me," said Clementine, not looking at Paz.

"He loves you madly," replied Thaddeus.

"Yes, and because he loves me madly he is all the more likely not to love me to-morrow," said the countess.

"How inexplicable Parisian women are!" exclaimed Thaddeus. "When they are loved to madness they want to be loved reasonably: and when they are loved reasonably they reproach a man for not loving them at all."

"And they are quite right. Thaddeus," she went on, smiling, "I know Adam well; I am not angry with him; he is volatile and above all grand seigneur. He will always be content to have me as his wife and he will never oppose any of my tastes, but—"

"Where is the marriage in which there are no 'buts'?" said Thaddeus, gently, trying to give another direction to Clementine's mind.

The least presuming of men might well have had the thought which came near rendering this poor lover beside himself; it was this: "If I do not tell her now that I love her I am a fool," he kept saying to himself.

Neither spoke; and there came between the pair one of those deep silences that are crowded with thoughts. The countess examined Paz covertly, and Paz observed her in a mirror. Buried in an armchair like a man digesting his dinner, the image of a husband or an indifferent old man, Paz crossed his hands upon his stomach and twirled his thumbs mechanically, looking stupidly at them.

"Why don't you tell me something good of Adam?" cried Clementine suddenly. "Tell me that he is not volatile, you who know him so well."

The cry was fine.

"Now is the time," thought poor Paz, "to put an insurmountable barrier between us. Tell you good of Adam?" he said aloud. "I love him; you would not believe me; and I am incapable of telling you harm. My position is very difficult between you."

Clementine lowered her head and looked down at the tips of his varnished boots.

"You Northern men have nothing but physical courage," she said complainingly; "you have no constancy in your opinions."

"How will you amuse yourself alone, madame?" said Paz, assuming a careless air.

"Are not you going to keep me company?"

"Excuse me for leaving you."

"What do you mean? Where are you going?"

The thought of a heroic falsehood had come into his head.

"I—I am going to the Circus in the Champs Elysees; it opens to-night, and I can't miss it."

"Why not?" said Clementine, questioning him by a look that was half-anger.

"Must I tell you why?" he said, coloring; "must I confide to you what I hide from Adam, who thinks my only love is Poland."

"Ah! a secret in our noble captain?"

"A disgraceful one—which you will perhaps understand, and pity."

"You, disgraced?"

"Yes, I, Comte Paz; I am madly in love with a girl who travels all over France with the Bouthor family,—people who have the rival circus to Franconi; but they play only at fairs. I have made the director at the Cirque-Olympique engage her."

"Is she handsome?"

"To my thinking," said Paz, in a melancholy tone. "Malaga (that's her stage name) is strong, active, and supple. Why do I prefer her to all other women in the world?—well, I can't tell you. When I look at her, with her black hair tied with a blue satin ribbon, floating on her bare and olive-colored shoulders, and when she is dressed in a white tunic with a gold edge, and a knitted silk bodice that makes her look like a living Greek statue, and when I see her carrying those flags in her hand to the sound of martial music, and jumping through the paper hoops which tear as she goes through, and lighting so gracefully on the galloping horse to such applause,—no hired clapping,—well, all that moves me."

"More than a handsome woman in a ballroom?" asked Clementine, with amazement and curiosity.

"Yes," answered Paz, in a choking voice. "Such agility, such grace under constant danger seems to me the height of triumph for a woman. Yes, madame, Cinti and Malibran, Grisi and Taglioni, Pasta and Ellsler, all who reign or have reigned on the stage, can't be compared, to my mind, with Malaga, who can jump on or off a horse at full gallop, or stand on the point of one foot and fall easily into the saddle, and knit stockings, break eggs, and make an omelette with the horse at full speed, to the admiration of the people, —the real people, peasants and soldiers. Malaga, madame, is dexterity personified; her little wrist or her little foot can rid her of three or four men. She is the goddess of gymnastics."

"She must be stupid—"

"Oh, no," said Paz, "I find her as amusing as the heroine of 'Peveril of the Peak.' Thoughtless as a Bohemian, she says everything that comes into her head; she thinks no more about the future than you do of the sous you fling to the poor. She says grand things sometimes. You couldn't make her believe that an old diplomatist was a handsome young man, not if you offered her a million of francs. Such love as hers is perpetual flattery to a man. Her health is positively insolent, and she has thirty-two oriental pearls in lips of coral. Her muzzle—that's what she calls the lower part of her face—has, as Shakespeare expresses it, the savor of a heifer's nose. She can make a man unhappy. She likes handsome men, strong men, Alexanders, gymnasts, clowns. Her trainer, a horrible brute, used to beat her to make her supple, and graceful, and intrepid —"

"You are positively intoxicated with Malaga."

"Oh, she is called Malaga only on the posters," said Paz, with a piqued air. "She lives in the rue Saint-Lazare, in a pretty apartment on the third story, all velvet and silk, like a princess. She has two lives, her circus life and the life of a pretty woman."

"Does she love you?"

"She loves me—now you will laugh—solely because I'm a Pole. She saw an engraving of Poles rushing with Poniatowski into the Elster,—for all France persists in thinking that the Elster, where it is impossible to get drowned, is an impetuous flood, in which Poniatowski and his followers were engulfed. But in the midst of all this I am very unhappy, madame."

A tear of rage fell from his eyes and affected the countess.

"You men have such a passion for singularity."

"And you?" said Thaddeus.

"I know Adam so well that I am certain he could forget me for some mountebank like your Malaga. Where did you first see her?"

"At Saint-Cloud, last September, on the fete-day. She was at a corner of a booth covered with flags, where the shows are given. Her comrades, all in Polish costumes, were making a horrible racket. I watched her standing there, silent and dumb, and I thought I saw a melancholy expression in her face; in truth there was enough about her to sadden a girl of twenty. That touched me."

The countess was sitting in a delicious attitude, pensive and rather melancholy.

"Poor, poor Thaddeus!" she exclaimed. Then, with the kindliness of a true

great lady she added, not without a malicious smile, "Well go, go to your Circus."

Thaddeus took her hand, kissed it, leaving a hot tear upon it, and went out.

Having invented this passion for a circus-rider, he bethought him that he must give it some reality. The only truth in his tale was the momentary attention he had given to Malaga at Saint-Cloud; and he had since seen her name on the posters of the Circus, where the clown, for a tip of five francs, had told him that the girl was a foundling, stolen perhaps. Thaddeus now went to the Circus and saw her again. For ten francs one of the grooms (who take the place in circuses of the dressers at a theatre) informed him that Malaga was named Marguerite Turquet, and lived on the fifth story of a house in the rue des Fosses-du-Temple.

The following day Paz went to the faubourg du Temple, found the house, and asked to see Mademoiselle Turquet, who during the summer was substituting for the leading horsewoman at the Cirque-Olympique, and a supernumerary at a boulevard theatre in winter.

"Malaga!" cried the portress, rushing into the attic, "there's a fine gentleman wanting you. He is getting information from Chapuzot, who is playing him off to give me time to tell you."

"Thank you, M'ame Chapuzot; but what will he think of me if he finds me ironing my gown?"

"Pooh! when a man's in love he loves everything about us."

"Is he an Englishman? they are fond of horses."

"No, he looks to me Spanish."

"That's a pity; they say Spaniards are always poor. Stay here with me, M'ame Chapuzot; I don't want him to think I'm deserted."

"Who is it you are looking for, monsieur?" asked Madame Chapuzot, opening the door for Thaddeus, who had now come upstairs.

"Mademoiselle Turquet."

"My dear," said the portress, with an air of importance, "here is some one to see you."

A line on which the clothes were drying caught the captain's hat and knocked it off.

"What is it you wish, monsieur?" said Malaga, picking up the hat and giving it to him.

"I saw you at the Circus," said Thaddeus, "and you reminded me of a

daughter whom I have lost, mademoiselle; and out of affection for my Heloise, whom you resemble in a most striking manner, I should like to be of some service to you, if you will permit me."

"Why, certainly; pray sit down, general," said Madame Chapuzot; "nothing could be more straightforward, more gallant."

"But I am not gallant, my good lady," exclaimed Paz. "I am an unfortunate father who tries to deceive himself by a resemblance."

"Then am I to pass for your daughter?" said Malaga, slyly, and not in the least suspecting the perfect sincerity of his proposal.

"Yes," said Paz, "and I'll come and see you sometimes. But you shall be lodged in better rooms, comfortably furnished."

"I shall have furniture!" cried Malaga, looking at Madame Chapuzot.

"And servants," said Paz, "and all you want."

Malaga looked at the stranger suspiciously.

"What countryman is monsieur?"

"I am a Pole."

"Oh! then I accept," she said.

Paz departed, promising to return.

"Well, that's a stiff one!" said Marguerite Turquet, looking at Madame Chapuzot; "I'm half afraid he is wheedling me, to carry out some fancy of his own—Pooh! I'll risk it."

A month after this eccentric interview the circus-rider was living in a comfortable apartment furnished by Comte Adam's own upholsterer, Paz having judged it desirable to have his folly talked about at the hotel Laginski. Malaga, to whom this adventure was like a leaf out of the Arabian Nights, was served by Monsieur and Madame Chapuzot in the double capacity of friends and servants. The Chapuzots and Marguerite were constantly expecting some result of all this; but at the end of three months none of them were able to make out the meaning of the Polish count's caprice. Paz arrived duly and passed about an hour there once a week, during which time he sat in the salon, and never went into Malaga's boudoir nor into her bedroom, in spite of the clever manoeuvring of the Chapuzots and Malaga to get him there. The count would ask questions as to the small events of Marguerite's life, and each time that he came he left two gold pieces of forty francs each on the mantel-piece.

"He looks as if he didn't care to be here," said Madame Chapuzot.

"Yes," said Malaga, "the man's as cold as an icicle."

"But he's a good fellow all the same," cried Chapuzot, who was happy in a new suit of clothes made of blue cloth, in which he looked like the servant of some minister.

The sum which Paz deposited weekly on the mantel-piece, joined to Malaga's meagre salary, gave her the means of sumptuous living compared with her former poverty. Wonderful stories went the rounds of the Circus about Malaga's good-luck. Her vanity increased the six thousand francs which Paz had spent on her furniture to sixty thousand. According to the clowns and the supers, Malaga was squandering money; and she now appeared at the Circus wearing burnous and shawls and elegant scarfs. The Pole, it was agreed on all sides, was the best sort of man a circus-rider had ever encountered, not fault-finding nor jealous, and willing to let Malaga do just what she liked.

"Some women have the luck of it," said Malaga's rival, "and I'm not one of them,—though I do draw a third of the receipts."

Malaga wore pretty things, and occasionally "showed her head" (a term in the lexicon of such characters) in the Bois, where the fashionable young men of the day began to remark her. In fact, before long Malaga was very much talked about in the questionable world of equivocal women, who presently attacked her good fortune by calumnies. They said she was a somnambulist, and the Pole was a magnetizer who was using her to discover the philosopher's stone. Some even more envenomed scandals drove her to a curiosity that was greater than Psyche's. She reported them in tears to Paz.

"When I want to injure a woman," she said in conclusion, "I don't calumniate her; I don't declare that some one magnetizes her to get stones out of her, but I say plainly that she is humpbacked, and I prove it. Why do you compromise me in this way?"

Paz maintained a cruel silence. Madame Chapuzot was not long in discovering the name and title of Comte Paz; then she heard certain positive facts at the hotel Laginski: for instance, that Paz was a bachelor, and had never been known to have a daughter, alive or dead, in Poland or in France. After that Malaga could not control a feeling of terror.

"My dear child," Madame Chapuzot would say, "that monster—" (a man who contented himself with only looking, in a sly way,—not daring to come out and say things,—and such a beautiful creature too, as Malaga,—of course such a man was a monster, according to Madame Chapuzot's ideas) "—that monster is trying to get a hold upon you, and make you do something illegal and criminal. Holy Father, if you should get into the police-courts! it makes me tremble from head to foot; suppose they should put you in the newspapers! I'll tell you what I should do in your place; I'd warn the police."

One particular day, after many foolish notions had fermented for some time in Malaga's mind, Paz having laid his money as usual on the mantel-piece, she seized the bits of gold and flung them in his face, crying out, "I don't want stolen money!"

The captain gave the gold to Chapuzot, went away without a word, and did not return.

Clementine was at this time at her uncle's place in Burgundy.

When the Circus troop discovered that Malaga had lost her Polish count, much excitement was produced among them. Malaga's display of honor was considered folly by some, and shrewdness by others. The conduct of the Pole, however, even when discussed by the cleverest of women, seemed inexplicable. Thaddeus received in the course of the next week thirty-seven letters from women of their kind. Happily for him, his astonishing reserve did not excite the curiosity of the fashionable world, and was only discussed in the demi-mondaine regions.

Two weeks later the handsome circus-rider, crippled by debt, wrote the following letter to Comte Paz, which, having fallen into the hands of Comte Adam, was read by several of the dandies of the day, who pronounced it a masterpiece:—

"You, whom I still dare to call my friend, will you not pity me after all that has passed,—which you have so ill understood? My heart disavows whatever may have wounded your feelings. If I was fortunate enough to charm you and keep you beside me in the past, return to me; otherwise, I shall fall into despair. Poverty has overtaken me, and you do not know what horrid things it brings with it. Yesterday I lived on a herring at two sous, and one sou of bread. Is that a breakfast for the woman you loved? The Chapuzots have left me, though they seemed so devoted. Your desertion has caused me to see to the bottom of all human attachments. The dog we feed does not leave us, but the Chapuzots have gone. A sheriff has seized everything on behalf of the landlord, who has no heart, and the jeweller, who refused to wait even ten days,—for when we lose the confidence of such as you, credit goes too. What a position for women who have nothing to reproach themselves with but the happiness they have given! My friend, I have taken all I have of any value to my uncle's; I have nothing but the memory of you left, and here is the winter coming on. I shall be fireless when it turns cold; for the boulevards are to play only melodramas, in which I have nothing but little bits of parts which don't pose a woman. How could you misunderstand the nobleness of my feelings for you?—for there are two ways of expressing gratitude. You who seemed so happy in seeing me well-off, how can you leave me in poverty? Oh, my sole friend on earth, before I go back to the country fairs with Bouthor's circus,

where I can at least make a living, forgive me if I wish to know whether I have lost you forever. If I were to let myself think of you when I jump through the hoops, I should be sure to break my legs by losing a time. Whatever may be the result, I am yours for life.

"Marguerite Turquet."

"That letter," thought Thaddeus, shouting with laughter, "is worth the ten thousand francs I have spent upon her."

III

Clementine came home the next day, and the day after that Paz beheld her again, more beautiful and graceful than ever. After dinner, during which the countess treated Paz with an air of perfect indifference, a little scene took place in the salon between the count and his wife when Thaddeus had left them. On pretence of asking Adam's advice, Thaddeus had left Malaga's letter with him, as if by mistake.

"Poor Thaddeus!" said Adam, as Paz disappeared, "what a misfortune for a man of his distinction to be the plaything of the lowest kind of circus-rider. He will lose everything, and get lower and lower, and won't be recognizable before long. Here, read that," added the count, giving Malaga's letter to his wife.

Clementine read the letter, which smelt of tobacco, and threw it from her with a look of disgust.

"Thick as the bandage is over his eyes," continued Adam, "he must have found out something; Malaga tricked him, no doubt."

"But he goes back to her," said Clementine, "and he will forgive her! It is for such horrible women as that that you men have indulgence."

"Well, they need it," said Adam.

"Thaddeus used to show some decency—in living apart from us," she remarked. "He had better go altogether."

"Oh, my dear angel, that's going too far," said the count, who did not want the death of the sinner.

Paz, who knew Adam thoroughly, had enjoined him to secrecy, pretending to excuse his dissipations, and had asked his friend to lend him a few thousand francs for Malaga.

"He is a very firm fellow," said Adam.

"How so?" asked Clementine.

"Why, for having spent no more than ten thousand francs on her, and letting her send him that letter before he would ask me for enough to pay her debts. For a Pole, I call that firm."

"He will ruin you," said Clementine, in the sharp tone of a Parisian woman, when she shows her feline distrusts.

"Oh, I know him," said Adam; "he will sacrifice Malaga, if I ask him."

"We shall see," remarked the countess.

"If it is best for his own happiness, I sha'n't hesitate to ask him to leave her. Constantin says that since Paz has been with her he, sober as he is, has sometimes come home quite excited. If he takes to intoxication I shall be just as grieved as if he were my own son."

"Don't tell me anything more about it," cried the countess, with a gesture of disgust.

Two days later the captain perceived in the manner, the tones of voice, but, above all, in the eyes of the countess, the terrible results of Adam's confidences. Contempt had opened a gulf between the beloved woman and himself. He was suddenly plunged into the deepest distress of mind, for the thought gnawed him, "I have myself made her despise me!" His own folly stared him in the face. Life then became a burden to him, the very sun turned gray. And yet, amid all these bitter thoughts, he found again some moments of pure joy. There were times when he could give himself up wholly to his admiration for his mistress, who paid not the slightest attention to him. Hanging about in corners at her parties and receptions, silent, all heart and eyes, he never lost one of her attitudes, nor a tone of her voice when she sang. He lived in her life; he groomed the horse which she rode, he studied the ways and means of that splendid establishment, to the interests of which he was now more devoted than ever. These silent pleasures were buried in his heart like those of a mother, whose heart a child never knows; for is it knowing anything unless we know it all? His love was more perfect than the love of Petrarch for Laura, which found its ultimate reward in the treasures of fame, the triumph of the poem which she had inspired. Surely the emotion that the Chevalier d'Assas felt in dying must have been to him a lifetime of joy. Such emotions as these Paz enjoyed daily,—without dying, but also without the guerdon of immortality.

But what is Love, that, in spite of all these ineffable delights, Paz should still have been unhappy? The Catholic religion has so magnified Love that she

has wedded it indissolubly to respect and nobility of spirit. Love is therefore attended by those sentiments and qualities of which mankind is proud; it is rare to find true Love existing where contempt is felt. Thaddeus was suffering from the wounds his own hand had given him. The trial of his former life, when he lived beside his mistress, unknown, unappreciated, but generously working for her, was better than this. Yes, he wanted the reward of his virtue, her respect, and he had lost it. He grew thin and yellow, and so ill with constant low fever that during the month of January he was obliged to keep his bed, though he refused to see a doctor. Comte Adam became very uneasy about him; but the countess had the cruelty to remark: "Let him alone; don't you see it is only some Olympian trouble?" This remark, being repeated to Thaddeus, gave him the courage of despair; he left his bed, went out, tried a few amusements, and recovered his health.

About the end of February Adam lost a large sum of money at the Jockey-Club, and as he was afraid of his wife, he begged Thaddeus to let the sum appear in the accounts as if he had spent it on Malaga.

"There's nothing surprising in your spending that sum on the girl; but if the countess finds out that I have lost it at cards I shall be lowered in her opinion, and she will always be suspicious in future."

"Ha! this, too!" exclaimed Thaddeus, with a sigh.

"Now, Thaddeus, if you will do me this service we shall be forever quits,—though, indeed, I am your debtor now."

"Adam, you will have children; don't gamble any more," said Paz.

"So Malaga has cost us another twenty thousand francs," cried the countess, some time later, when she discovered this new generosity to Paz. "First, ten thousand, now twenty more,—thirty thousand! the income of which is fifteen hundred! the cost of my box at the Opera, and the whole fortune of many a bourgeois. Oh, you Poles!" she said, gathering some flowers in her greenhouse; "you are really incomprehensible. Why are you not furious with him?"

"Poor Paz is—"

"Poor Paz, poor Paz, indeed!" she cried, interrupting him, "what good does he do us? I shall take the management of the household myself. You can give him the allowance he refused, and let him settle it as he likes with his Circus."

"He is very useful to us, Clementine. He has certainly saved over forty thousand francs this last year. And besides, my dear angel, he has managed to put a hundred thousand with Nucingen, which a steward would have pocketed."

Clementine softened down; but she was none the less hard in her feelings to Thaddeus. A few days later, she requested him to come to that boudoir where, one year earlier, she had been surprised into comparing him with her husband. This time she received him alone, without perceiving the slightest danger in so doing.

"My dear Paz," she said, with the condescending familiarity of the great to their inferiors, "if you love Adam as you say you do, you will do a thing which he will not ask of you, but which I, his wife, do not hesitate to exact."

"About Malaga?" said Thaddeus, with bitterness in his heart.

"Well, yes," she said; "if you wish to end your days in this house and continue good friends with us, you must give her up. How an old soldier—"

"I am only thirty-five, and haven't a white hair."

"You look old," she said, "and that's the same thing. How so careful a manager, so distinguished a—"

The horrible part of all this was her evident intention to rouse a sense of honor in his soul which she thought extinct.

"—so distinguished a man as you are, Thaddeus," she resumed after a momentary pause which a gesture of his hand had led her to make, "can allow yourself to be caught like a boy! Your proceedings have made that woman celebrated. My uncle wanted to see her, and he did see her. My uncle is not the only one; Malaga receives a great many gentlemen. I did think you such a noble soul. For shame! Will she be such a loss that you can't replace her?"

"Madame, if I knew any sacrifice I could make to recover your esteem I would make it; but to give up Malaga is not one—"

"In your position, that is what I should say myself, if I were a man," replied Clementine. "Well, if I accept it as a great sacrifice there can be no ill-will between us."

Paz left the room, fearing he might commit some great folly, and feeling that wild ideas were getting the better of him. He went to walk in the open air, lightly dressed in spite of the cold, but without being able to cool the fire in his cheeks or on his brow.

"I thought you had a noble soul,"—the words still rang in his ears.

"A year ago," he said to himself, "she thought me a hero who could fight the Russians single-handed!"

He thought of leaving the hotel Laginski, and taking service with the spahis and getting killed in Africa, but the same great fear checked him. "Without me," he thought, "what would become of them? they would soon be

ruined. Poor countess! what a horrible life it would be for her if she were reduced to even thirty thousand francs a year. No, since all is lost for me in this world,—courage! I will keep on as I am."

Every one knows that since 1830 the carnival in Paris has undergone a transformation which has made it European, and far more burlesque and otherwise lively than the late Carnival of Venice. Is it that the diminishing fortunes of the present time have led Parisians to invent a way of amusing themselves collectively, as for instance at their clubs, where they hold salons without hostesses and without manners, but very cheaply? However this may be, the month of March was prodigal of balls, at which dancing, joking, coarse fun, excitement, grotesque figures, and the sharp satire of Parisian wit, produced extravagant effects. These carnival follies had their special Pandemonium in the rue Saint-Honore and their Napoleon in Musard, a small man born expressly to lead an orchestra as noisy as the disorderly audience, and to set the time for the galop, that witches' dance, which was one of Auber's triumphs, for it did not really take form or poesy till the grand galop in "Gustave" was given to the world. That tremendous finale might serve as the symbol of an epoch in which for the last fifty years all things have hurried by with the rapidity of a dream.

Now, it happened that the grave Thaddeus, with one divine and immaculate image in his heart, proposed to Malaga, the queen of the carnival dances, to spend an evening at the Musard ball; because he knew the countess, disguised to the teeth, intended to come there with two friends, all three accompanied by their husbands, and look on at the curious spectacle of one of these crowded balls.

On Shrove Tuesday, of the year 1838, at four o'clock in the morning, the countess, wrapped in a black domino and sitting on the lower step of the platform in the Babylonian hall, where Valentino has since then given his concerts, beheld Thaddeus, as Robert Macaire, threading the galop with Malaga in the dress of a savage, her head garnished with plumes like the horse of a hearse, and bounding through the crowd like a will-o-the-wisp.

"Ah!" said Clementine to her husband, "you Poles have no honor at all! I did believe in Thaddeus. He gave me his word that he would leave that woman; he did not know that I should be here, seeing all unseen."

A few days later she requested Paz to dine with them. After dinner Adam left them alone together, and Clementine reproved Paz and let him know very plainly that she did not wish him to live in her house any longer.

"Yes, madame," said Paz, humbly, "you are right; I am a wretch; I did give you my word. But you see how it is; I put off leaving Malaga till after the carnival. Besides, that woman exerts an influence over me which—"

"An influence!—a woman who ought to be turned out of Musard's by the police for such dancing!"

"I agree to all that; I accept the condemnation and I'll leave your house. But you know Adam. If I give up the management of your property you must show energy yourself. I may have been to blame about Malaga, but I have taken the whole charge of your affairs, managed your servants, and looked after the very least details. I cannot leave you until I see you prepared to continue my management. You have now been married three years, and you are safe from the temptations to extravagance which come with the honeymoon. I see that Parisian women, and even titled ones, do manage both their fortunes and their households. Well, as soon as I am certain not so much of your capacity as of your perseverance I shall leave Paris."

"It is Thaddeus of Warsaw, and not that Circus Thaddeus who speaks now," said Clementine. "Go, and come back cured."

"Cured! never," said Paz, his eyes lowered and fixed on Clementine's pretty feet. "You do not know, countess, what charm, what unexpected piquancy of mind she has." Then, feeling his courage fail him, he added hastily, "There is not a woman in society, with her mincing airs, that is worth the honest nature of that young animal."

"At any rate, I wish nothing of the animal about me," said the countess, with a glance like that of an angry viper.

After that evening Comte Paz showed Clementine the exact state of her affairs; he made himself her tutor, taught her the methods and difficulties of the management of property, the proper prices to pay for things, and how to avoid being cheated by her servants. He told her she could rely on Constantin and make him her major-domo. Thaddeus had trained the man thoroughly. By the end of May he thought the countess fully competent to carry on her affairs alone; for Clementine was one of those far-sighted women, full of instinct, who have an innate genius as mistress of a household.

This position of affairs, which Thaddeus had led up to naturally, did not end without further cruel trials; his sufferings were fated not to be as sweet and tender as he was trying to make them. The poor lover forgot to reckon on the hazard of events. Adam fell seriously ill, and Thaddeus, instead of leaving the house, stayed to nurse his friend. His devotion was unwearied. A woman who had any interest in employing her perspicacity might have seen in this devotion a sort of punishment imposed by a noble soul to repress an involuntary evil thought; but women see all, or see nothing, according to the condition of their souls—love is their sole illuminator.

During forty-five days Paz watched and tended Adam without appearing to

think of Malaga, for the very good reason that he never did think of her. Clementine, feeling that Adam was at the point of death though he did not die, sent for all the leading doctors of Paris in consultation.

"If he comes safely out of this," said the most distinguished of them all, "it will only be by an effort of nature. It is for those who nurse him to watch for the moment when they must second nature. The count's life is in the hands of his nurses."

Thaddeus went to find Clementine and tell her this result of the consultation. He found her sitting in the Chinese pavilion, as much for a little rest as to leave the field to the doctors and not embarrass them. As he walked along the winding gravelled path which led to the pavilion, Thaddeus seemed to himself in the depths of an abyss described by Dante. The unfortunate man had never dreamed that the possibility might arise of becoming Clementine's husband, and now he had drowned himself in a ditch of mud. His face was convulsed, when he reached the kiosk, with an agony of grief; his head, like Medusa's, conveyed despair.

"Is he dead?" said Clementine.

"They have given him up; that is, they leave him to nature. Do not go in; they are still there, and Bianchon is changing the dressings."

"Poor Adam! I ask myself if I have not sometimes pained him," she said.

"You have made him very happy," said Thaddeus; "you ought to be easy on that score, for you have shown every indulgence for him."

"My loss would be irreparable."

"But, dear, you judged him justly."

"I was never blind to his faults," she said, "but I loved him as a wife should love her husband."

"Then you ought, in case you lose him," said Thaddeus, in a voice which Clementine had never heard him use, "to grieve for him less than if you lost a man who was your pride, your love, and all your life,—as some men are to you women. Surely you can be frank at this moment with a friend like me. I shall grieve, too; long before your marriage I had made him my child, I had sacrificed my life to him. If he dies I shall be without an interest on earth; but life is still beautiful to a widow of twenty-four."

"Ah! but you know that I love no one," she said, with the impatience of grief.

"You don't yet know what it is to love," said Thaddeus.

"Oh, as husbands are, I have sense enough to prefer a child like my poor

Adam to a superior man. It is now over a month that we have been saying to each other, 'Will he live?' and these alternations have prepared me, as they have you, for this loss. I can be frank with you. Well, I would give my life to save Adam. What is a woman's independence in Paris? the freedom to let herself be taken in by ruined or dissipated men who pretend to love her. I pray to God to leave me this husband who is so kind, so obliging, so little fault-finding, and who is beginning to stand in awe of me."

"You are honest, and I love you the better for it," said Thaddeus, taking her hand which she yielded to him, and kissing it. "In solemn moments like these there is unspeakable satisfaction in finding a woman without hypocrisy. It is possible to converse with you. Let us look to the future. Suppose that God does not grant your prayer,—and no one cries to him more than I do, 'Leave me my friend!' Yes, these fifty nights have not weakened me; if thirty more days and nights are needed I can give them while you sleep,—yes, I will tear him from death if, as the doctors say, nursing can save him. But suppose that in spite of you and me, the count dies,—well, then, if you were loved, oh, adored, by a man of a heart and soul that are worthy of you—"

"I may have wished for such love, foolishly, but I have never met with it."

"Perhaps you are mistaken—"

Clementine looked fixedly at Thaddeus, imagining that there was less of love than of cupidity in his thoughts; her eyes measured him from head to foot and poured contempt upon him; then she crushed him with the words, "Poor Malaga!" uttered in tones which a great lady alone can find to give expression to her disdain. She rose, leaving Thaddeus half unconscious behind her, slowly re-entered her boudoir, and went back to Adam's chamber.

An hour later Paz returned to the sick-room, and began anew, with death in his heart, his care of the count. From that moment he said nothing. He was forced to struggle with the patient, whom he managed in a way that excited the admiration of the doctors. At all hours his watchful eyes were like lamps always lighted. He showed no resentment to Clementine, and listened to her thanks without accepting them; he seemed both dumb and deaf. To himself he was saying, "She shall owe his life to me," and he wrote the thought as it were in letters of fire on the walls of Adam's room. On the fifteenth day Clementine was forced to give up the nursing, lest she should utterly break down. Paz was unwearied. At last, towards the end of August, Bianchon, the family physician, told Clementine that Adam was out of danger.

"Ah, madame, you are under no obligation to me," he said; "without his friend, Comte Paz, we could not have saved him."

The day after the meeting of Paz and Clementine in the kiosk, the Marquis

de Ronquerolles came to see his nephew. He was on the eve of starting for Russia on a secret diplomatic mission. Paz took occasion to say a few words to him. The first day that Adam was able to drive out with his wife and Thaddeus, a gentleman entered the courtyard as the carriage was about to leave it, and asked for Comte Paz. Thaddeus, who was sitting on the front seat of the caleche, turned to take a letter which bore the stamp of the ministry of Foreign affairs. Having read it, he put it into his pocket in a manner which prevented Clementine or Adam from speaking of it. Nevertheless, by the time they reached the porte Maillot, Adam, full of curiosity, used the privilege of a sick man whose caprices are to be gratified, and said to Thaddeus: "There's no indiscretion between brothers who love each other,—tell me what there is in that despatch; I'm in a fever of curiosity."

Clementine glanced at Thaddeus with a vexed air, and remarked to her husband: "He has been so sulky with me for the last two months that I shall never ask him anything again."

"Oh, as for that," replied Paz, "I can't keep it out of the newspapers, so I may as well tell you at once. The Emperor Nicholas has had the grace to appoint me captain in a regiment which is to take part in the expedition to Khiva."

"You are not going?" cried Adam.

"Yes, I shall go, my dear fellow. Captain I came, and captain I return. We shall dine together to-morrow for the last time. If I don't start at once for St. Petersburg I shall have to make the journey by land, and I am not rich, and I must leave Malaga a little independence. I ought to think of the only woman who has been able to understand me; she thinks me grand, superior. I dare say she is faithless, but she would jump—"

"Through the hoop, for your sake and come down safely on the back of her horse," said Clementine sharply.

"Oh, you don't know Malaga," said the captain, bitterly, with a sarcastic look in his eyes which made Clementine thoughtful and uneasy.

"Good-by to the young trees of this beautiful Bois, which you Parisians love, and the exiles who find a home here love too," he said, presently. "My eyes will never again see the evergreens of the avenue de Mademoiselle, nor the acacias nor the cedars of the rond-points. On the borders of Asia, fighting for the Emperor, promoted to the command, perhaps, by force of courage and by risking my life, it may happen that I shall regret these Champs-Elysees where I have driven beside you, and where you pass. Yes, I shall grieve for Malaga's hardness—the Malaga of whom I am now speaking."

This was said in a manner that made Clementine tremble.

"Then you do love Malaga very much?" she asked.

"I have sacrificed for her the honor that no man should ever sacrifice."

"What honor?"

"That which we desire to keep at any cost in the eyes of our idol."

After that reply Thaddeus said no more; he was silent until, as they passed a wooden building on the Champs Elysees, he said, pointing to it, "That is the Circus."

He went to the Russian Embassy before dinner, and thence to the Foreign office, and the next morning he had started for Havre before the count and countess were up.

"I have lost a friend," said Adam, with tears in his eyes, when he heard that Paz had gone,—"a friend in the true meaning of the word. I don't know what has made him abandon me as if a pestilence were in my house. We are not friends to quarrel about a woman," he said, looking intently at Clementine. "You heard what he said yesterday about Malaga. Well, he has never so much as touched the little finger of that girl."

"How do you know that?" said Clementine.

"I had the natural curiosity to go and see Mademoiselle Turquet, and the poor girl can't explain even to herself the absolute reserve which Thad—"

"Enough!" said the countess, retreating into her bedroom. "Can it be that I am the victim of some noble mystification?" she asked herself. The thought had hardly crossed her mind when Constantin brought her the following letter written by Thaddeus during the night:—

"Countess,—To seek death in the Caucasus and carry with me your contempt is more than I can bear. A man should die untainted. When I saw you for the first time I loved you as we love a woman whom we shall love forever, even though she be unfaithful to us. I loved you thus,—I, the friend of the man you had chosen and were about to marry; I, poor; I, the steward,—a voluntary service, but still the steward of your household.

"In this immense misfortune I found a happy life. To be to you an indispensable machine, to know myself useful to your comfort, your luxury, has been the source of deep enjoyments. If these enjoyments were great when I thought only of Adam, think what they were to my soul when the woman I loved was the mainspring of all I did. I have known the pleasures of maternity in my love. I accepted life thus. Like the paupers who live along the great highways, I built myself a hut on the borders of your beautiful domain, though I never sought to approach you. Poor and lonely, struck blind by Adam's good fortune, I was, nevertheless, the giver. Yes, you were surrounded by a love as

pure as a guardian-angel's; it waked while you slept; it caressed you with a look as you passed; it was happy in its own existence,—you were the sun of my native land to me, poor exile, who now writes to you with tears in his eyes as he thinks of the happiness of those first days.

"When I was eighteen years old, having no one to love, I took for my ideal mistress a charming woman in Warsaw, to whom I confided all my thoughts, my wishes; I made her the queen of my nights and days. She knew nothing of all this; why should she? I loved my love.

"You can fancy from this incident of my youth how happy I was merely to live in the sphere of your existence, to groom your horse, to find the new-coined gold for your purse, to prepare the splendor of your dinners and your balls, to see you eclipsing the elegance of those whose fortunes were greater than yours, and all by my own good management. Ah! with what ardor I have ransacked Paris when Adam would say to me, 'She wants this or that.' It was a joy such as I can never express to you. You wished for a trifle at one time which kept me seven hours in a cab scouring the city; and what delight it was to weary myself for you. Ah! when I saw you, unseen by you, smiling among your flowers, I could forget that no one loved me. On certain days, when my happiness turned my head, I went at night and kissed the spot where, to me, your feet had left their luminous traces. The air you had breathed was balmy; in it I breathed in more of life; I inhaled, as they say persons do in the tropics, a vapor laden with creative principles.

"I must tell you these things to explain the strange presumption of my involuntary thoughts,—I would have died rather than avow it until now.

"You will remember those few days of curiosity when you wished to know the man who performed the household miracles you had sometimes noticed. I thought,—forgive me, madame,—I believed you might love me. Your good-will, your glances interpreted by me, a lover, seemed to me so dangerous—for me—that I invented that story of Malaga, knowing it was the sort of liaison which women cannot forgive. I did it in a moment when I felt that my love would be communicated, fatally, to you. Despise me, crush me with the contempt you have so often cast upon me when I did not deserve it; and yet I am certain that, if, on that evening when your aunt took Adam away from you, I had said what I have now written to you, I should, like the tamed tiger that sets his teeth once more in living flesh, and scents the blood, and—

"Midnight."

"I could not go on; the memory of that hour is still too living. Yes, I was maddened. Was there hope for me in your eyes? then victory with its scarlet banners would have flamed in mine and fascinated yours. My crime has been to think all this; perhaps wrongly. You alone can judge of that dreadful scene

when I drove back love, desire, all the most invincible forces of our manhood, with the cold hand of gratitude,—gratitude which must be eternal.

"Your terrible contempt has been my punishment. You have shown methere is no return from loathing or disdain. I love you madly. I should have gone had Adam died; all the more must I go because he lives. A man does not tear his friend from the arms of death to betray him. Besides, my going is my punishment for the thought that came to me that I would let him die, when the doctors said that his life depended on his nursing.

"Adieu, madame; in leaving Paris I lose all, but you lose nothing now in my being no longer near you.

"Your devoted

"Thaddeus Paz."

"If my poor Adam says he has lost a friend, what have I lost?" thought Clementine, sinking into a chair with her eyes fixed on the carpet.

The following letter Constantin had orders to give privately to the count:—

"My dear Adam,—Malaga has told me all. In the name of all your future happiness, never let a word escape you to Clementine about your visits to that girl; let her think that Malaga has cost me a hundred thousand francs. I know Clementine's character; she will never forgive you either your losses at cards or your visits to Malaga.

"I am not going to Khiva, but to the Caucasus. I have the spleen; and at the pace at which I mean to go I shall be either Prince Paz in three years, or dead. Good-by; though I have taken sixty-thousand francs from Nucingen, our accounts are even.

"Thaddeus."

"Idiot that I was," thought Adam; "I came near to cutting my throat just now, talking about Malaga."

It is now three years since Paz went away. The newspapers have as yet said nothing about any Prince Paz. The Comtesse Laginska is immensely interested in the expeditions of the Emperor Nicholas; she is Russian to the core, and reads with a sort of avidity all the news that comes from that distant land. Once or twice every winter she says to the Russian ambassador, with an air of indifference, "Do you know what has become of our poor Comte Paz?"

Alas! most Parisian women, those beings who think themselves so clever and clear-sighted, pass and repass beside a Paz and never recognize him. Yes, many a Paz is unknown and misconceived, but—horrible to think of!—some are misconceived even though they are loved. The simplest women in society

exact a certain amount of conventional sham from the greatest men. A noble love signifies nothing to them if rough and unpolished; it needs the cutting and setting of a jeweller to give it value in their eyes.

In January, 1842, the Comtesse Laginska, with her charm of gentle melancholy, inspired a violent passion in the Comte de La Palferine, one of the most daring and presumptuous lions of the day. La Palferine was well aware that the conquest of a woman so guarded by reserve as the Comtesse Laginska was difficult, but he thought he could inveigle this charming creature into committing herself if he took her unawares, by the assistance of a certain friend of her own, a woman already jealous of her.

Quite incapable, in spite of her intelligence, of suspecting such treachery, the Comtesse Laginska committed the imprudence of going with her so-called friend to a masked ball at the Opera. About three in the morning, led away by the excitement of the scene, Clementine, on whom La Palferine had expended his seductions, consented to accept a supper, and was about to enter the carriage of her faithless friend. At this critical moment her arm was grasped by a powerful hand, and she was taken, in spite of her struggles, to her own carriage, the door of which stood open, though she did not know it was there.

"He has never left Paris!" she exclaimed to herself as she recognized Thaddeus, who disappeared when the carriage drove away.

Did any woman ever have a like romance in her life? Clementine is constantly hoping she may again see Paz.

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STUDY OF A WOMAN

The Marquise de Listomere is one of those young women who have been brought up in the spirit of the Restoration. She has principles, she fasts, takes the sacrament, and goes to balls and operas very elegantly dressed; her confessor permits her to combine the mundane with sanctity. Always in conformity with the Church and with the world, she presents a living image of the present day, which seems to have taken the word "legality" for its motto. The conduct of the marquise shows precisely enough religious devotion to attain under a new Maintenon to the gloomy piety of the last days of Louis XIV., and enough worldliness to adopt the habits of gallantry of the first years of that reign, should it ever be revived. At the present moment she is strictly virtuous from policy, possibly from inclination. Married for the last seven years to the Marquis de Listomere, one of those deputies who expect a

peerage, she may also consider that such conduct will promote the ambitions of her family. Some women are reserving their opinion of her until the moment when Monsieur de Listomere becomes a peer of France, when she herself will be thirty-six years of age,—a period of life when most women discover that they are the dupes of social laws.

The marquis is a rather insignificant man. He stands well at court; his good qualities are as negative as his defects; the former can no more make him a reputation for virtue than the latter can give him the sort of glamor cast by vice. As deputy, he never speaks, but he votes RIGHT. He behaves in his own home as he does in the Chamber. Consequently, he is held to be one of the best husbands in France. Though not susceptible of lively interest, he never scolds, unless, to be sure, he is kept waiting. His friends have named him "dull weather,"—aptly enough, for there is neither clear light nor total darkness about him. He is like all the ministers who have succeeded one another in France since the Charter. A woman with principles could not have fallen into better hands. It is certainly a great thing for a virtuous woman to have married a man incapable of follies.

Occasionally some fops have been sufficiently impertinent to press the hand of the marquise while dancing with her. They gained nothing in return but contemptuous glances; all were made to feel the shock of that insulting indifference which, like a spring frost, destroys the germs of flattering hopes. Beaux, wits, and fops, men whose sentiments are fed by sucking their canes, those of a great name, or a great fame, those of the highest or the lowest rank in her own world, they all blanch before her. She has conquered the right to converse as long and as often as she chooses with the men who seem to her agreeable, without being entered on the tablets of gossip. Certain coquettish women are capable of following a plan of this kind for seven years in order to gratify their fancies later; but to suppose any such reservations in the Marquise de Listomere would be to calumniate her.

I have had the happiness of knowing this phoenix. She talks well; I know how to listen; consequently I please her, and I go to her parties. That, in fact, was the object of my ambition.

Neither plain nor pretty, Madame de Listomere has white teeth, a dazzling skin, and very red lips; she is tall and well-made; her foot is small and slender, and she does not put it forth; her eyes, far from being dulled like those of so many Parisian women, have a gentle glow which becomes quite magical if, by chance, she is animated. A soul is then divined behind that rather indefinite form. If she takes an interest in the conversation she displays a grace which is otherwise buried beneath the precautions of cold demeanor, and then she is charming. She does not seek success, but she obtains it. We find that for which we do not seek: that saying is so often true that some day it will be turned into

a proverb. It is, in fact, the moral of this adventure, which I should not allow myself to tell if it were not echoing at the present moment through all the salons of Paris.

The Marquise de Listomere danced, about a month ago, with a young man as modest as he is lively, full of good qualities, but exhibiting, chiefly, his defects. He is ardent, but he laughs at ardor; he has talent, and he hides it; he plays the learned man with aristocrats, and the aristocrat with learned men. Eugene de Rastignac is one of those extremely clever young men who try all things, and seem to sound others to discover what the future has in store. While awaiting the age of ambition, he scoffs at everything; he has grace and originality, two rare qualities because the one is apt to exclude the other. On this occasion he talked for nearly half an hour with madame de Listomere, without any predetermined idea of pleasing her. As they followed the caprices of conversation, which, beginning with the opera of "Guillaume Tell," had reached the topic of the duties of women, he looked at the marquise, more than once, in a manner that embarrassed her; then he left her and did not speak to her again for the rest of the evening. He danced, played at ecarte, lost some money, and went home to bed. I have the honor to assure you that the affair happened precisely thus. I add nothing, and I suppress nothing.

The next morning Rastignac woke late and stayed in bed, giving himself up to one of those matutinal reveries in the course of which a young man glides like a sylph under many a silken, or cashmere, or cotton drapery. The heavier the body from its weight of sleep, the more active the mind. Rastignac finally got up, without yawning over-much as many ill-bred persons are apt to do. He rang for his valet, ordered tea, and drank immoderately of it when it came; which will not seem extraordinary to persons who like tea; but to explain the circumstance to others, who regard that beverage as a panacea for indigestion, I will add that Eugene was, by this time, writing letters. He was comfortably seated, with his feet more frequently on the andirons than, properly, on the rug. Ah! to have one's feet on the polished bar which connects the two griffins of a fender, and to think of our love in our dressing-gown is so delightful a thing that I deeply regret the fact of having neither mistress, nor fender, nor dressing-gown.

The first letter which Eugene wrote was soon finished; he folded and sealed it, and laid it before him without adding the address. The second letter, begun at eleven o'clock, was not finished till mid-day. The four pages were closely filled.

"That woman keeps running in my head," he muttered, as he folded this second epistle and laid it before him, intending to direct it as soon as he had ended his involuntary revery.

He crossed the two flaps of his flowered dressing-gown, put his feet on a stool, slipped his hands into the pockets of his red cashmere trousers, and lay back in a delightful easy-chair with side wings, the seat and back of which described an angle of one hundred and twenty degrees. He stopped drinking tea and remained motionless, his eyes fixed on the gilded hand which formed the knob of his shovel, but without seeing either hand or shovel. He ceased even to poke the fire,—a vast mistake! Isn't it one of our greatest pleasures to play with the fire when we think of women? Our minds find speeches in those tiny blue flames which suddenly dart up and babble on the hearth. We interpret as we please the strong, harsh tones of a "burgundian."

Here I must pause to put before all ignorant persons an explanation of that word, derived from a very distinguished etymologist who wishes his name kept secret.

"Burgundian" is the name given, since the reign of Charles VI., to those noisy detonations, the result of which is to fling upon the carpet or the clothes a little coal or ember, the trifling nucleus of a conflagration. Heat or fire releases, they say, a bubble of air left in the heart of the wood by a gnawing worm. "Inde amor, inde burgundus." We tremble when we see the structure we had so carefully erected between the logs rolling down like an avalanche. Oh! to build and stir and play with fire when we love is the material development of our thoughts.

It was at this moment that I entered the room. Rastignac gave a jump and said:—

"Ah! there you are, dear Horace; how long have you been here?"

"Just come."

"Ah!"

He took up the two letters, directed them, and rang for his servant.

"Take these," he said, "and deliver them."

Joseph departed without a word; admirable servant!

We began to talk of the expedition to Morea, to which I was anxious to be appointed as physician. Eugene remarked that I should lose a great deal of time if I left Paris. We then conversed on various matters, and I think you will be glad if I suppress the conversation.

When the Marquise de Listomere rose, about half-past two in the afternoon of that day, her waiting-maid, Caroline, gave her a letter which she read while Caroline was doing her hair (an imprudence which many young women are thoughtless enough to commit).

"Dear angel of love," said the letter, "treasure of my life and happiness—"

At these words the marquise was about to fling the letter in the fire; but there came into her head a fancy—which all virtuous women will readily understand—to see how a man who began a letter in that style could possibly end it. When she had turned the fourth page and read it, she let her arms drop like a person much fatigued.

"Caroline, go and ask who left this letter."

"Madame, I received it myself from the valet of Monsieur le Baron de Rastignac."

After that there was silence for some time.

"Does Madame intend to dress?" asked Caroline at last.

"No—He is certainly a most impertinent man," reflected the marquise.

I request all women to imagine for themselves the reflections of which this was the first.

Madame de Listomere ended hers by a formal decision to forbid her porter to admit Monsieur de Rastignac, and to show him, herself, something more than disdain when she met him in society; for his insolence far surpassed that of other men which the marquise had ended by overlooking. At first she thought of keeping the letter; but on second thoughts she burned it.

"Madame had just received such a fine love-letter; and she read it," said Caroline to the housemaid.

"I should never have thought that of madame," replied the other, quite surprised.

That evening Madame de Listomere went to a party at the Marquis de Beauseant's, where Rastignac would probably betake himself. It was Saturday. The Marquis de Beauseant was in some way a connection of Monsieur de Rastignac, and the young man was not likely to miss coming. By two in the morning Madame de Listomere, who had gone there solely for the purpose of crushing Eugene by her coldness, discovered that she was waiting in vain. A brilliant man—Stendhal—has given the fantastic name of "crystallization" to the process which Madame de Listomere's thoughts went through before, during, and after this evening.

Four days later Eugene was scolding his valet.

"Ah ca! Joseph; I shall soon have to send you away, my lad."

"What is it, monsieur?"

"You do nothing but make mistakes. Where did you carry those letters I

gave you Saturday?"

Joseph became stolid. Like a statue in some cathedral porch, he stood motionless, entirely absorbed in the labors of imagination. Suddenly he smiled idiotically, and said:—

"Monsieur, one was for the Marquise de Listomere, the other was for Monsieur's lawyer."

"You are certain of what you say?"

Joseph was speechless. I saw plainly that I must interfere, as I happened to be again in Eugene's apartment.

"Joseph is right," I said.

Eugene turned and looked at me.

"I read the addresses quite involuntarily, and—"

"And," interrupted Eugene, "one of them was not for Madame de Nucingen?"

"No, by all the devils, it was not. Consequently, I supposed, my dear fellow, that your heart was wandering from the rue Saint-Lazare to the rue Saint-Dominique."

Eugene struck his forehead with the flat of his hand and began to laugh; by which Joseph perceived that the blame was not on him.

Now, there are certain morals to this tale on which young men had better reflect. First mistake: Eugene thought it would be amusing to make Madame de Listomere laugh at the blunder which had made her the recipient of a love-letter which was not intended for her. Second mistake: he did not call on Madame de Listomere for several days after the adventure, thus allowing the thoughts of that virtuous young woman to crystallize. There were other mistakes which I will here pass over in silence, in order to give the ladies the pleasure of deducing them, "ex professo," to those who are unable to guess them.

Eugene at last went to call upon the marquise; but, on attempting to pass into the house, the porter stopped him, saying that Madame la marquise was out. As he was getting back into his carriage the Marquis de Listomere came home.

"Come in, Eugene," he said. "My wife is at home."

Pray excuse the marquis. A husband, however good he may be, never attains perfection. As they went up the staircase Rastignac perceived at least a dozen blunders in worldly wisdom which had, unaccountably, slipped into this

page of the glorious book of his life.

When Madame de Listomere saw her husband ushering in Eugene she could not help blushing. The young baron saw that sudden color. If the most humble-minded man retains in the depths of his soul a certain conceit of which he never rids himself, any more than a woman ever rids herself of coquetry, who shall blame Eugene if he did say softly in his own mind: "What! that fortress, too?" So thinking, he posed in his cravat. Young men may not be grasping but they like to get a new coin in their collection.

Monsieur de Listomere seized the "Gazette de France," which he saw on the mantelpiece, and carried it to a window, to obtain, by journalistic help, an opinion of his own on the state of France.

A woman, even a prude, is never long embarrassed, however difficult may be the position in which she finds herself; she seems always to have on hand the fig-leaf which our mother Eve bequeathed to her. Consequently, when Eugene, interpreting, in favor of his vanity, the refusal to admit him, bowed to Madame de Listomere in a tolerably intentional manner, she veiled her thoughts behind one of those feminine smiles which are more impenetrable than the words of a king.

"Are you unwell, madame? You denied yourself to visitors."

"I am well, monsieur."

"Perhaps you were going out?"

"Not at all."

"You expected some one?"

"No one."

"If my visit is indiscreet you must blame Monsieur le marquis. I had already accepted your mysterious denial, when he himself came up, and introduced me into the sanctuary."

"Monsieur de Listomere is not in my confidence on this point. It is not always prudent to put a husband in possession of certain secrets."

The firm and gentle tones in which the marquise said these words, and the imposing glance which she cast upon Rastignac made him aware that he had posed in his cravat a trifle prematurely.

"Madame, I understand you," he said, laughing. "I ought, therefore, to be doubly thankful that Monsieur le marquis met me; he affords me an opportunity to offer you excuses which might be full of danger were you not kindness itself."

The marquise looked at the young man with an air of some surprise, but she answered with dignity:—

"Monsieur, silence on your part will be the best excuse. As for me, I promise you entire forgetfulness, and the pardon which you scarcely deserve."

"Madame," said Rastignac, hastily, "pardon is not needed where there was no offence. The letter," he added, in a low voice, "which you received, and which you must have thought extremely unbecoming, was not intended for you."

The marquise could not help smiling, though she wished to seem offended.

"Why deceive?" she said, with a disdainful air, although the tones of her voice were gentle. "Now that I have duly scolded you, I am willing to laugh at a subterfuge which is not without cleverness. I know many women who would be taken in by it: 'Heavens! how he loves me!' they would say."

Here the marquise gave a forced laugh, and then added, in a tone of indulgence:—

"If we desire to continue friends let there be no more mistakes, of which it is impossible that I should be the dupe."

"Upon my honor, madame, you are so—far more than you think," replied Eugene.

"What are you talking about?" asked Monsieur de Listomere, who, for the last minute, had been listening to the conversation, the meaning of which he could not penetrate.

"Oh! nothing that would interest you," replied his wife.

Monsieur de Listomere tranquilly returned to the reading of his paper, and presently said:—

"Ah! Madame de Mortsauf is dead; your poor brother has, no doubt, gone to Clochegourde."

"Are you aware, monsieur," resumed the marquise, turning to Eugene, "that what you have just said is a great impertinence?"

"If I did not know the strictness of your principles," he answered, naively, "I should think that you wished either to give me ideas which I deny myself, or else to tear a secret from me. But perhaps you are only amusing yourself with me."

The marquise smiled. That smile annoyed Eugene.

"Madame," he said, "can you still believe in an offence I have not committed? I earnestly hope that chance may not enable you to discover the

name of the person who ought to have read that letter."

"What! can it be still Madame de Nucingen?" cried Madame de Listomere, more eager to penetrate that secret than to revenge herself for the impertinence of the young man's speeches.

Eugene colored. A man must be more than twenty-five years of age not to blush at being taxed with a fidelity that women laugh at—in order, perhaps, not to show that they envy it. However, he replied with tolerable self-possession:—

"Why not, madame?"

Such are the blunders we all make at twenty-five.

This speech caused a violent commotion in Madame de Listomere's bosom; but Rastignac did not yet know how to analyze a woman's face by a rapid or sidelong glance. The lips of the marquise paled, but that was all. She rang the bell for wood, and so constrained Rastignac to rise and take his leave.

"If that be so," said the marquise, stopping Eugene with a cold and rigid manner, "you will find it difficult to explain, monsieur, why your pen should, by accident, write my name. A name, written on a letter, is not a friend's opera-hat, which you might have taken, carelessly, on leaving a ball."

Eugene, discomfited, looked at the marquise with an air that was both stupid and conceited. He felt that he was becoming ridiculous; and after stammering a few juvenile phrases he left the room.

A few days later the marquise acquired undeniable proofs that Eugene had told the truth. For the last fortnight she has not been seen in society.

The marquis tells all those who ask him the reason of this seclusion:—

"My wife has an inflammation of the stomach."

But I, her physician, who am now attending her, know it is really nothing more than a slight nervous attack, which she is making the most of in order to stay quietly at home.

ANOTHER STUDY OF WOMAN

At Paris there are almost always two separate parties going on at every ball and rout. First, an official party, composed of the persons invited, a fashionable and much-bored circle. Each one grimaces for his neighbor's eye; most of the younger women are there for one person only; when each woman

has assured herself that for that one she is the handsomest woman in the room, and that the opinion is perhaps shared by a few others, a few insignificant phrases are exchanged, as: "Do you think of going away soon to La Crampade?" "How well Madame de Portenduere sang!" "Who is that little woman with such a load of diamonds?" Or, after firing off some smart epigrams, which give transient pleasure, and leave wounds that rankle long, the groups thin out, the mere lookers on go away, and the waxlights burn down to the sconces.

The mistress of the house then waylays a few artists, amusing people or intimate friends, saying, "Do not go yet; we will have a snug little supper." These collect in some small room. The second, the real party, now begins; a party where, as of old, every one can hear what is said, conversation is general, each one is bound to be witty and to contribute to the amusement of all. Everything is made to tell, honest laughter takes the place of the gloom which in company saddens the prettiest faces. In short, where the rout ends pleasure begins.

The Rout, a cold display of luxury, a review of self-conceits in full dress, is one of those English inventions which tend to mechanize other nations. England seems bent on seeing the whole world as dull as itself, and dull in the same way. So this second party is, in some French houses, a happy protest on the part of the old spirit of our light-hearted people. Only, unfortunately, so few houses protest; and the reason is a simple one. If we no longer have many suppers nowadays, it is because never, under any rule, have there been fewer men placed, established, and successful than under the reign of Louis Philippe, when the Revolution began again, lawfully. Everybody is on the march some whither, or trotting at the heels of Fortune. Time has become the costliest commodity, so no one can afford the lavish extravagance of going home to-morrow morning and getting up late. Hence, there is no second soiree now but at the houses of women rich enough to entertain, and since July 1830 such women may be counted in Paris.

In spite of the covert opposition of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, two or three women, among them Madame d'Espard and Mademoiselle des Touches, have not chosen to give up the share of influence they exercised in Paris, and have not closed their houses.

The salon of Mademoiselle des Touches is noted in Paris as being the last refuge where the old French wit has found a home, with its reserved depths, its myriad subtle byways, and its exquisite politeness. You will there still find grace of manner notwithstanding the conventionalities of courtesy, perfect freedom of talk notwithstanding the reserve which is natural to persons of breeding, and, above all, a liberal flow of ideas. No one there thinks of keeping his thought for a play; and no one regards a story as material for a

book. In short, the hideous skeleton of literature at bay never stalks there, on the prowl for a clever sally or an interesting subject.

The memory of one of these evenings especially dwells with me, less by reason of a confidence in which the illustrious de Marsay opened up one of the deepest recesses of woman's heart, than on account of the reflections to which his narrative gave rise, as to the changes that have taken place in the French woman since the fateful revolution of July.

On that evening chance had brought together several persons, whose indisputable merits have won them European reputations. This is not a piece of flattery addressed to France, for there were a good many foreigners present. And, indeed, the men who most shone were not the most famous. Ingenious repartee, acute remarks, admirable banter, pictures sketched with brilliant precision, all sparkled and flowed without elaboration, were poured out without disdain, but without effort, and were exquisitely expressed and delicately appreciated. The men of the world especially were conspicuous for their really artistic grace and spirit.

Elsewhere in Europe you will find elegant manners, cordiality, genial fellowship, and knowledge; but only in Paris, in this drawing-room, and those to which I have alluded, does the particular wit abound which gives an agreeable and changeful unity to all these social qualities, an indescribable river-like flow which makes this profusion of ideas, of definitions, of anecdotes, of historical incidents, meander with ease. Paris, the capital of taste, alone possesses the science which makes conversation a tourney in which each type of wit is condensed into a shaft, each speaker utters his phrase and casts his experience in a word, in which every one finds amusement, relaxation, and exercise. Here, then, alone, will you exchange ideas; here you need not, like the dolphin in the fable, carry a monkey on your shoulders; here you will be understood, and will not risk staking your gold pieces against base metal.

Here, again, secrets neatly betrayed, and talk, light or deep, play and eddy, changing their aspect and hue at every phrase. Eager criticism and crisp anecdotes lead on from one to the next. All eyes are listening, a gesture asks a question, and an expressive look gives the answer. In short, and in a word, everything is wit and mind.

The phenomenon of speech, which, when duly studied and well handled, is the power of the actor and the story-teller, had never so completely bewitched me. Nor was I alone under the influence of its spell; we all spent a delightful evening. The conversation had drifted into anecdote, and brought out in its rushing course some curious confessions, several portraits, and a thousand follies, which make this enchanting improvisation impossible to record; still, by setting these things down in all their natural freshness and abruptness, their

elusive divarications, you may perhaps feel the charm of a real French evening, taken at the moment when the most engaging familiarity makes each one forget his own interests, his personal conceit, or, if you like, his pretensions.

At about two in the morning, as supper ended, no one was left sitting round the table but intimate friends, proved by intercourse of fifteen years, and some persons of great taste and good breeding, who knew the world. By tacit agreement, perfectly carried out, at supper every one renounced his pretensions to importance. Perfect equality set the tone. But indeed there was no one present who was not very proud of being himself.

Mademoiselle des Touches always insists on her guests remaining at table till they leave, having frequently remarked the change which a move produces in the spirit of a party. Between the dining-room and the drawing-room the charm is destroyed. According to Sterne, the ideas of an author after shaving are different from those he had before. If Sterne is right, may it not be boldly asserted that the frame of mind of a party at table is not the same as that of the same persons returned to the drawing-room? The atmosphere is not heady, the eye no longer contemplates the brilliant disorder of the dessert, lost are the happy effects of that laxness of mood, that benevolence which comes over us while we remain in the humor peculiar to the well-filled man, settled comfortably on one of the springy chairs which are made in these days. Perhaps we are not more ready to talk face to face with the dessert and in the society of good wine, during the delightful interval when every one may sit with an elbow on the table and his head resting on his hand. Not only does every one like to talk then, but also to listen. Digestion, which is almost always attent, is loquacious or silent, as characters differ. Then every one finds his opportunity.

Was not this preamble necessary to make you know the charm of the narrative, by which a celebrated man, now dead, depicted the innocent jesuistry of women, painting it with the subtlety peculiar to persons who have seen much of the world, and which makes statesmen such delightful storytellers when, like Prince Talleyrand and Prince Metternich, they vouchsafe to tell a story?

De Marsay, prime minister for some six months, had already given proofs of superior capabilities. Those who had known him long were not indeed surprised to see him display all the talents and various aptitudes of a statesman; still it might yet be a question whether he would prove to be a solid politician, or had merely been moulded in the fire of circumstance. This question had just been asked by a man whom he had made a prefet, a man of wit and observation, who had for a long time been a journalist, and who admired de Marsay without infusing into his admiration that dash of acrid

criticism by which, in Paris, one superior man excuses himself from admiring another.

"Was there ever," said he, "in your former life, any event, any thought or wish which told you what your vocation was?" asked Emile Blondet; "for we all, like Newton, have our apple, which falls and leads us to the spot where our faculties develop——"

"Yes," said de Marsay; "I will tell you about it."

Pretty women, political dandies, artists, old men, de Marsay's intimate friends,—all settled themselves comfortably, each in his favorite attitude, to look at the Minister. Need it be said that the servants had left, that the doors were shut, and the curtains drawn over them? The silence was so complete that the murmurs of the coachmen's voices could be heard from the courtyard, and the pawing and champing made by horses when asking to be taken back to their stable.

"The statesman, my friends, exists by one single quality," said the Minister, playing with his gold and mother-of-pearl dessert knife. "To wit: the power of always being master of himself; of profiting more or less, under all circumstances, by every event, however fortuitous; in short, of having within himself a cold and disinterested other self, who looks on as a spectator at all the changes of life, noting our passions and our sentiments, and whispering to us in every case the judgment of a sort of moral ready-reckoner."

"That explains why a statesman is so rare a thing in France," said old Lord Dudley.

"From a sentimental point of view, this is horrible," the Minister went on. "Hence, when such a phenomenon is seen in a young man—Richelieu, who, when warned overnight by a letter of Concini's peril, slept till midday, when his benefactor was killed at ten o'clock—or say Pitt, or Napoleon, he was a monster. I became such a monster at a very early age, thanks to a woman."

"I fancied," said Madame de Montcornet with a smile, "that more politicians were undone by us than we could make."

"The monster of which I speak is a monster just because he withstands you," replied de Marsay, with a little ironical bow.

"If this is a love-story," the Baronne de Nucingen interposed, "I request that it may not be interrupted by any reflections."

"Reflection is so antipathetic to it!" cried Joseph Bridau.

"I was seventeen," de Marsay went on; "the Restoration was being consolidated; my old friends know how impetuous and fervid I was then. I was in love for the first time, and I was—I may say so now—one of the

handsomest young fellows in Paris. I had youth and good looks, two advantages due to good fortune, but of which we are all as proud as of a conquest. I must be silent as to the rest.—Like all youths, I was in love with a woman six years older than myself. No one of you here," said he, looking carefully round the table, "can suspect her name or recognize her. Ronquerolles alone, at the time, ever guessed my secret. He had kept it well, but I should have feared his smile. However, he is gone," said the Minister, looking round.

"He would not stay to supper," said Madame de Nucingen.

"For six months, possessed by my passion," de Marsay went on, "but incapable of suspecting that it had overmastered me, I had abandoned myself to that rapturous idolatry which is at once the triumph and the frail joy of the young. I treasured her old gloves; I drank an infusion of the flowers she had worn; I got out of bed at night to go and gaze at her window. All my blood rushed to my heart when I inhaled the perfume she used. I was miles away from knowing that woman is a stove with a marble casing."

"Oh! spare us your terrible verdicts," cried Madame de Montcornet with a smile.

"I believe I should have crushed with my scorn the philosopher who first uttered this terrible but profoundly true thought," said de Marsay. "You are all far too keen-sighted for me to say any more on that point. These few words will remind you of your own follies.

"A great lady if ever there was one, a widow without children—oh! all was perfect—my idol would shut herself up to mark my linen with her hair; in short, she responded to my madness by her own. And how can we fail to believe in passion when it has the guarantee of madness?

"We each devoted all our minds to concealing a love so perfect and so beautiful from the eyes of the world; and we succeeded. And what charm we found in our escapades! Of her I will say nothing. She was perfection then, and to this day is considered one of the most beautiful women in Paris; but at that time a man would have endured death to win one of her glances. She had been left with an amount of fortune sufficient for a woman who had loved and was adored; but the Restoration, to which she owed renewed lustre, made it seem inadequate in comparison with her name. In my position I was so fatuous as never to dream of a suspicion. Though my jealousy would have been of a hundred and twenty Othello-power, that terrible passion slumbered in me as gold in the nugget. I would have ordered my servant to thrash me if I had been so base as ever to doubt the purity of that angel—so fragile and so strong, so fair, so artless, pure, spotless, and whose blue eyes allowed my gaze to sound it to the very depths of her heart with adorable submissiveness. Never was

there the slightest hesitancy in her attitude, her look, or word; always white and fresh, and ready for the Beloved like the Oriental Lily of the 'Song of Songs!' Ah! my friends!" sadly exclaimed the Minister, grown young again, "a man must hit his head very hard on the marble to dispel that poem!"

This cry of nature, finding an echo in the listeners, spurred the curiosity he had excited in them with so much skill.

"Every morning, riding Sultan—the fine horse you sent me from England," de Marsay went on, addressing Lord Dudley, "I rode past her open carriage, the horses' pace being intentionally reduced to a walk, and read the order of the day signaled to me by the flowers of her bouquet in case we were unable to exchange a few words. Though we saw each other almost every evening in society, and she wrote to me every day, to deceive the curious and mislead the observant we had adopted a scheme of conduct: never to look at each other; to avoid meeting; to speak ill of each other. Self-admiration, swagger, or playing the disdained swain,—all these old manoeuvres are not to compare on either part with a false passion professed for an indifferent person and an air of indifference towards the true idol. If two lovers will only play that game, the world will always be deceived; but then they must be very secure of each other.

"Her stalking-horse was a man in high favor, a courtier, cold and sanctimonious, whom she never received at her own house. This little comedy was performed for the benefit of simpletons and drawing-room circles, who laughed at it. Marriage was never spoken of between us; six years' difference of age might give her pause; she knew nothing of my fortune, of which, on principle, I have always kept the secret. I, on my part, fascinated by her wit and manners, by the extent of her knowledge and her experience of the world, would have married her without a thought. At the same time, her reserve charmed me. If she had been the first to speak of marriage in a certain tone, I might perhaps have noted it as vulgar in that accomplished soul.

"Six months, full and perfect—a diamond of the purest water! That has been my portion of love in this base world.

"One morning, attacked by the feverish stiffness which marks the beginning of a cold, I wrote her a line to put off one of those secret festivals which are buried under the roofs of Paris like pearls in the sea. No sooner was the letter sent than remorse seized me: she will not believe that I am ill! thought I. She was wont to affect jealousy and suspiciousness.—When jealousy is genuine," said de Marsay, interrupting himself, "it is the visible sign of an unique passion."

"Why?" asked the Princesse de Cadignan eagerly.

"Unique and true love," said de Marsay, "produces a sort of corporeal apathy attuned to the contemplation into which one falls. Then the mind complicates everything; it works on itself, pictures its fancies, turns them into reality and torment; and such jealousy is as delightful as it is distressing."

A foreign minister smiled as, by the light of memory, he felt the truth of this remark.

"Besides," de Marsay went on, "I said to myself, why miss a happy hour? Was it not better to go, even though feverish? And, then, if she learns that I am ill, I believe her capable of hurrying here and compromising herself. I made an effort; I wrote a second letter, and carried it myself, for my confidential servant was now gone. The river lay between us. I had to cross Paris; but at last, within a suitable distance of her house, I caught sight of a messenger; I charged him to have the note sent up to her at once, and I had the happy idea of driving past her door in a hackney cab to see whether she might not by chance receive the two letters together. At the moment when I arrived it was two o'clock; the great gate opened to admit a carriage. Whose?—That of the stalking-horse!

"It is fifteen years since—well, even while I tell the tale, I, the exhausted orator, the Minister dried up by the friction of public business, I still feel a surging in my heart and the hot blood about my diaphragm. At the end of an hour I passed once more; the carriage was still in the courtyard! My note no doubt was in the porter's hands. At last, at half-past three, the carriage drove out. I could observe my rival's expression; he was grave, and did not smile; but he was in love, and no doubt there was business in hand.

"I went to keep my appointment; the queen of my heart met me; I saw her calm, pure, serene. And here I must confess that I have always thought that Othello was not only stupid, but showed very bad taste. Only a man who is half a Negro could behave so: indeed Shakespeare felt this when he called his play 'The Moor of Venice.' The sight of the woman we love is such a balm to the heart that it must dispel anguish, doubt, and sorrow. All my rage vanished. I could smile again. Hence this cheerfulness, which at my age now would be the most atrocious dissimulation, was the result of my youth and my love. My jealousy once buried, I had the power of observation. My ailing condition was evident; the horrible doubts that had fermented in me increased it. At last I found an opening for putting in these words: 'You have had no one with you this morning?' making a pretext of the uneasiness I had felt in the fear lest she should have disposed of her time after receiving my first note.—'Ah!' she exclaimed, 'only a man could have such ideas! As if I could think of anything but your suffering. Till the moment when I received your second note I could think only of how I could contrive to see you.'—'And you were alone?'—'Alone,' said she, looking at me with a face of innocence so perfect

that it must have been his distrust of such a look as that which made the Moor kill Desdemona. As she lived alone in the house, the word was a fearful lie. One single lie destroys the absolute confidence which to some souls is the very foundation of happiness.

"To explain to you what passed in me at that moment it must be assumed that we have an internal self of which the exterior I is but the husk; that this self, as brilliant as light, is as fragile as a shade—well, that beautiful self was in me thenceforth for ever shrouded in crape. Yes; I felt a cold and fleshless hand cast over me the winding-sheet of experience, dooming me to the eternal mourning into which the first betrayal plunges the soul. As I cast my eyes down that she might not observe my dizziness, this proud thought somewhat restored my strength: 'If she is deceiving you, she is unworthy of you!'

"I ascribed my sudden reddening and the tears which started to my eyes to an attack of pain, and the sweet creature insisted on driving me home with the blinds of the cab drawn. On the way she was full of a solicitude and tenderness that might have deceived the Moor of Venice whom I have taken as a standard of comparison. Indeed, if that great child were to hesitate two seconds longer, every intelligent spectator feels that he would ask Desdemona's forgiveness. Thus, killing the woman is the act of a boy.—She wept as we parted, so much was she distressed at being unable to nurse me herself. She wished she were my valet, in whose happiness she found a cause of envy, and all this was as elegantly expressed, oh! as Clarissa might have written in her happiness. There is always a precious ape in the prettiest and most angelic woman!"

At these words all the women looked down, as if hurt by this brutal truth so brutally stated.

"I will say nothing of the night, nor of the week I spent," de Marsay went on. "I discovered that I was a statesman."

It was so well said that we all uttered an admiring exclamation.

"As I thought over the really cruel vengeance to be taken on a woman," said de Marsay, continuing his story, "with infernal ingenuity—for, as we had loved each other, some terrible and irreparable revenges were possible—I despised myself, I felt how common I was, I insensibly formulated a horrible code—that of Indulgence. In taking vengeance on a woman, do we not in fact admit that there is but one for us, that we cannot do without her? And, then, is revenge the way to win her back? If she is not indispensable, if there are other women in the world, why not grant her the right to change which we assume?

"This, of course, applies only to passion; in any other sense it would be socially wrong. Nothing more clearly proves the necessity for indissoluble marriage than the instability of passion. The two sexes must be chained up,

like wild beasts as they are, by inevitable law, deaf and mute. Eliminate revenge, and infidelity in love is nothing. Those who believe that for them there is but one woman in the world must be in favor of vengeance, and then there is but one form of it—that of Othello.

"Mine was different."

The words produced in each of us the imperceptible movement which newspaper writers represent in Parliamentary reports by the words: great sensation.

"Cured of my cold, and of my pure, absolute, divine love, I flung myself into an adventure, of which the heroine was charming, and of a style of beauty utterly opposed to that of my deceiving angel. I took care not to quarrel with this clever woman, who was so good an actress, for I doubt whether true love can give such gracious delights as those lavished by such a dexterous fraud. Such refined hypocrisy is as good as virtue.—I am not speaking to you Englishwomen, my lady," said the Minister, suavely, addressing Lady Barimore, Lord Dudley's daughter. "I tried to be the same lover.

"I wished to have some of my hair worked up for my new angel, and I went to a skilled artist who at that time dwelt in the Rue Boucher. The man had a monopoly of capillary keepsakes, and I mention his address for the benefit of those who have not much hair; he has plenty of every kind and every color. After I had explained my order, he showed me his work. I then saw achievements of patience surpassing those which the story books ascribe to fairies, or which are executed by prisoners. He brought me up to date as to the caprices and fashions governing the use of hair. 'For the last year,' said he, 'there has been a rage for marking linen with hair; happily I had a fine collection of hair and skilled needlewomen,'—on hearing this a suspicion flashed upon me; I took out my handkerchief and said, 'So this was done in your shop, with false hair?'—He looked at the handkerchief, and said, 'Ay! that lady was very particular, she insisted on verifying the tint of the hair. My wife herself marked those handkerchiefs. You have there, sir, one of the finest pieces of work we have ever executed.' Before this last ray of light I might have believed something—might have taken a woman's word. I left the shop still having faith in pleasure, but where love was concerned I was as atheistical as a mathematician.

"Two months later I was sitting by the side of the ethereal being in her boudoir, on her sofa; I was holding one of her hands—they were very beautiful—and we scaled the Alps of sentiment, culling their sweetest flowers, and pulling off the daisy-petals; there is always a moment when one pulls daisies to pieces, even if it is in a drawing-room and there are no daisies. At the intensest moment of tenderness, and when we are most in love, love is so

well aware of its own short duration that we are irresistibly urged to ask, 'Do you love me? Will you love me always?' I seized the elegiac moment, so warm, so flowery, so full-blown, to lead her to tell her most delightful lies, in the enchanting language of love. Charlotte displayed her choicest allurements: She could not live without me; I was to her the only man in the world; she feared to weary me, because my presence bereft her of all her wits; with me, all her faculties were lost in love; she was indeed too tender to escape alarms; for the last six months she had been seeking some way to bind me to her eternally, and God alone knew that secret; in short, I was her god!"

The women who heard de Marsay seemed offended by seeing themselves so well acted, for he seconded the words by airs, and sidelong attitudes, and mincing grimaces which were quite illusory.

"At the very moment when I might have believed these adorable falsehoods, as I still held her right hand in mine, I said to her, 'When are you to marry the Duke?'

"The thrust was so direct, my gaze met hers so boldly, and her hand lay so tightly in mine, that her start, slight as it was, could not be disguised; her eyes fell before mine, and a faint blush colored her cheeks.—'The Duke! What do you mean?' she said, affecting great astonishment.—'I know everything,' replied I; 'and in my opinion, you should delay no longer; he is rich; he is a duke; but he is more than devout, he is religious! I am sure, therefore, that you have been faithful to me, thanks to his scruples. You cannot imagine how urgently necessary it is that you should compromise him with himself and with God; short of that you will never bring him to the point.'—'Is this a dream?' said she, pushing her hair from her forehead, fifteen years before Malibran, with the gesture which Malibran has made so famous.—'Come, do not be childish, my angel,' said I, trying to take her hands; but she folded them before her with a little prudish and indignant mein.—'Marry him, you have my permission,' said I, replying to this gesture by using the formal vous instead of tu. 'Nay, better, I beg you to do so.'—'But,' cried she, falling at my knees, 'there is some horrible mistake; I love no one in the world but you; you may demand any proofs you please.'—'Rise, my dear,' said I, 'and do me the honor of being truthful.'—'As before God.'—'Do you doubt my love?'—'No.'—'Nor my fidelity?'—'No.'—'Well, I have committed the greatest crime,' I went on. 'I have doubted your love and your fidelity. Between two intoxications I looked calmly about me.'—'Calmly!' sighed she. 'That is enough, Henri; you no longer love me.'

"She had at once found, you perceive, a loophole for escape. In scenes like these an adverb is dangerous. But, happily, curiosity made her add: 'And what did you see? Have I ever spoken of the Duke excepting in public? Have you detected in my eyes——?'—'No,' said I, 'but in his. And you have eight times

made me go to Saint-Thomas d'Aquin to see you listening to the same mass as he.'—'Ah!' she exclaimed, 'then I have made you jealous!'—Oh! I only wish I could be!' said I, admiring the pliancy of her quick intelligence, and these acrobatic feats which can only be successful in the eyes of the blind. 'But by dint of going to church I have become very incredulous. On the day of my first cold, and your first treachery, when you thought I was in bed, you received the Duke, and you told me you had seen no one.'—'Do you know that your conduct is infamous?'—'In what respect? I consider your marriage to the Duke an excellent arrangement; he gives you a great name, the only rank that suits you, a brilliant and distinguished position. You will be one of the queens of Paris. I should be doing you a wrong if I placed any obstacle in the way of this prospect, this distinguished life, this splendid alliance. Ah! Charlotte, some day you will do me justice by discovering how unlike my character is to that of other young men. You would have been compelled to deceive me; yes, you would have found it very difficult to break with me, for he watches you. It is time that we should part, for the Duke is rigidly virtuous. You must turn prude; I advise you to do so. The Duke is vain; he will be proud of his wife.'—'Oh!' cried she, bursting into tears, 'Henri, if only you had spoken! Yes, if you had chosen'—it was I who was to blame, you understand—'we would have gone to live all our days in a corner, married, happy, and defied the world.'—'Well, it is too late now,' said I, kissing her hands, and putting on a victimized air.—'Good God! But I can undo it all!' said she.—'No, you have gone too far with the Duke. I ought indeed to go a journey to part us more effectually. We should both have reason to fear our own affection——'—'Henri, do you think the Duke has any suspicions?' I was still 'Henri,' but the tu was lost for ever.—'I do not think so,' I replied, assuming the manner of a friend; 'but be as devout as possible, reconcile yourself to God, for the Duke waits for proofs; he hesitates, you must bring him to the point.'

"She rose, and walked twice round the boudoir in real or affected agitation; then she no doubt found an attitude and a look beseeming the new state of affairs, for she stopped in front of me, held out her hand, and said in a voice broken by emotion, 'Well, Henri, you are loyal, noble, and a charming man; I shall never forget you.'

"These were admirable tactics. She was bewitching in this transition of feeling, indispensable to the situation in which she wished to place herself in regard to me. I fell into the attitude, the manners, and the look of a man so deeply distressed, that I saw her too newly assumed dignity giving way; she looked at me, took my hand, drew me along almost, threw me on the sofa, but quite gently, and said after a moment's silence, 'I am dreadfully unhappy, my dear fellow. Do you love me?'—'Oh! yes.'—'Well, then, what will become of you?'"

At this point the women all looked at each other.

"Though I can still suffer when I recall her perfidy, I still laugh at her expression of entire conviction and sweet satisfaction that I must die, or at any rate sink into perpetual melancholy," de Marsay went on. "Oh! do not laugh yet!" he said to his listeners; "there is better to come. I looked at her very tenderly after a pause, and said to her, 'Yes, that is what I have been wondering.'—'Well, what will you do?'—'I asked myself that the day after my cold.'—'And——?' she asked with eager anxiety.—'And I have made advances to the little lady to whom I was supposed to be attached.'

"Charlotte started up from the sofa like a frightened doe, trembling like a leaf, gave me one of those looks in which women forgo all their dignity, all their modesty, their refinement, and even their grace, the sparkling glitter of a hunted viper's eye when driven into a corner, and said, 'And I have loved this man! I have struggled! I have——' On this last thought, which I leave you to guess, she made the most impressive pause I ever heard.—'Good God!' she cried, 'how unhappy are we women! we never can be loved. To you there is nothing serious in the purest feelings. But never mind; when you cheat us you still are our dupes!'—'I see that plainly,' said I, with a stricken air; 'you have far too much wit in your anger for your heart to suffer from it.'—This modest epigram increased her rage; she found some tears of vexation. 'You disgust me with the world and with life.' she said; 'you snatch away all my illusions; you deprave my heart.'

"She said to me all that I had a right to say to her, and with a simple effrontery, an artless audacity, which would certainly have nailed any man but me on the spot.—'What is to become of us poor women in a state of society such as Louis XVIII.'s charter made it?'—(Imagine how her words had run away with her.)—'Yes, indeed, we are born to suffer. In matters of passion we are always superior to you, and you are beneath all loyalty. There is no honesty in your hearts. To you love is a game in which you always cheat.'—'My dear,' said I, 'to take anything serious in society nowadays would be like making romantic love to an actress.'—'What a shameless betrayal! It was deliberately planned!'—'No, only a rational issue.'—'Good-bye, Monsieur de Marsay,' said she; 'you have deceived me horribly.'—'Surely,' I replied, taking up a submissive attitude, 'Madame la Duchesse will not remember Charlotte's grievances?'—'Certainly,' she answered bitterly.—'Then, in fact, you hate me?'—She bowed, and I said to myself, 'There is something still left!'

"The feeling she had when I parted from her allowed her to believe that she still had something to avenge. Well, my friends, I have carefully studied the lives of men who have had great success with women, but I do not believe that the Marechal de Richelieu, or Lauzun, or Louis de Valois ever effected a more judicious retreat at the first attempt. As to my mind and heart, they were cast

in a mould then and there, once for all, and the power of control I thus acquired over the thoughtless impulses which make us commit so many follies gained me the admirable presence of mind you all know."

"How deeply I pity the second!" exclaimed the Baronne de Nucingen.

A scarcely perceptible smile on de Marsay's pale lips made Delphine de Nucingen color.

"How we do forget!" said the Baron de Nucingen.

The great banker's simplicity was so extremely droll, that his wife, who was de Marsay's "second," could not help laughing like every one else.

"You are all ready to condemn the woman," said Lady Dudley. "Well, I quite understand that she did not regard her marriage as an act of inconstancy. Men will never distinguish between constancy and fidelity.—I know the woman whose story Monsieur de Marsay has told us, and she is one of the last of your truly great ladies."

"Alas! my lady, you are right," replied de Marsay. "For very nearly fifty years we have been looking on at the progressive ruin of all social distinctions. We ought to have saved our women from this great wreck, but the Civil Code has swept its leveling influence over their heads. However terrible the words, they must be spoken: Duchesses are vanishing, and marquises too! As to the baronesses—I must apologize to Madame de Nucingen, who will become a countess when her husband is made a peer of France—baronesses have never succeeded in getting people to take them seriously."

"Aristocracy begins with the viscountess," said Blondet with a smile.

"Countesses will survive," said de Marsay. "An elegant woman will be more or less of a countess—a countess of the Empire or of yesterday, a countess of the old block, or, as they say in Italy, a countess by courtesy. But as to the great lady, she died out with the dignified splendor of the last century, with powder, patches, high-heeled slippers, and stiff bodices with a delta stomacher of bows. Duchesses in these days can pass through a door without any need to widen it for their hoops. The Empire saw the last of gowns with trains! I am still puzzled to understand how a sovereign who wished to see his drawing-room swept by ducal satin and velvet did not make indestructible laws. Napoleon never guessed the results of the Code he was so proud of. That man, by creating duchesses, founded the race of our 'ladies' of to-day—the indirect offspring of his legislation."

"It was logic, handled as a hammer by boys just out of school and by obscure journalists, which demolished the splendors of the social state," said the Comte de Vandenesse. "In these days every rogue who can hold his head

straight in his collar, cover his manly bosom with half an ell of satin by way of a cuirass, display a brow where apocryphal genius gleams under curling locks, and strut in a pair of patent-leather pumps graced by silk socks which cost six francs, screws his eye-glass into one of his eye-sockets by puckering up his cheek, and whether he be an attorney's clerk, a contractor's son, or a banker's bastard, he stares impertinently at the prettiest duchess, appraises her as she walks downstairs, and says to his friend—dressed by Buisson, as we all are, and mounted in patent-leather like any duke himself—'There, my boy, that is a perfect lady.'"

"You have not known how to form a party," said Lord Dudley; "it will be a long time yet before you have a policy. You talk a great deal in France about organizing labor, and you have not yet organized property. So this is what happens: Any duke—and even in the time of Louis XVIII. and Charles X. there were some left who had two hundred thousand francs a year, a magnificent residence, and a sumptuous train of servants—well, such a duke could live like a great lord. The last of these great gentlemen in France was the Prince de Talleyrand.—This duke leaves four children, two of them girls. Granting that he has great luck in marrying them all well, each of these descendants will have but sixty or eighty thousand francs a year now; each is the father or mother of children, and consequently obliged to live with the strictest economy in a flat on the ground floor or first floor of a large house. Who knows if they may not even be hunting a fortune? Henceforth the eldest son's wife, a duchess in name only, has no carriage, no people, no opera-box, no time to herself. She has not her own rooms in the family mansion, nor her fortune, nor her pretty toys; she is buried in trade; she buys socks for her dear little children, nurses them herself, and keeps an eye on her girls, whom she no longer sends to school at a convent. Thus your noblest dames have been turned into worthy brood-hens."

"Alas! it is true," said Joseph Bridau. "In our day we cannot show those beautiful flowers of womanhood which graced the golden ages of the French Monarchy. The great lady's fan is broken. A woman has nothing now to blush for; she need not slander or whisper, hide her face or reveal it. A fan is of no use now but for fanning herself. When once a thing is no more than what it is, it is too useful to be a form of luxury."

"Everything in France has aided and abetted the 'perfect lady,'" said Daniel d'Arthez. "The aristocracy has acknowledged her by retreating to the recesses of its landed estates, where it has hidden itself to die—emigrating inland before the march of ideas, as of old to foreign lands before that of the masses. The women who could have founded European salons, could have guided opinion and turned it inside out like a glove, could have ruled the world by ruling the men of art or of intellect who ought to have ruled it, have committed

the blunder of abandoning their ground; they were ashamed of having to fight against the citizen class drunk with power, and rushing out on to the stage of the world, there to be cut to pieces perhaps by the barbarians who are at its heels. Hence, where the middle class insist on seeing princesses, these are really only ladylike young women. In these days princes can find no great ladies whom they may compromise; they cannot even confer honor on a woman taken up at random. The Duc de Bourbon was the last prince to avail himself of this privilege."

"And God alone knows how dearly he paid for it," said Lord Dudley.

"Nowadays princes have lady-like wives, obliged to share their opera-box with other ladies; royal favor could not raise them higher by a hair's breadth; they glide unremarkable between the waters of the citizen class and those of the nobility—not altogether noble nor altogether bourgeoises," said the Marquise de Rochegude acridly.

"The press has fallen heir to the Woman," exclaimed Rastignac. "She no longer has the quality of a spoken feuilleton—delightful calumnies graced by elegant language. We read feuilletons written in a dialect which changes every three years, society papers about as mirthful as an undertaker's mute, and as light as the lead of their type. French conversation is carried on from one end of the country to the other in a revolutionary jargon, through long columns of type printed in old mansions where a press groans in the place where formerly elegant company used to meet."

"The knell of the highest society is tolling," said a Russian Prince. "Do you hear it? And the first stroke is your modern word lady."

"You are right, Prince," said de Marsay. "The 'perfect lady,' issuing from the ranks of the nobility, or sprouting from the citizen class, and the product of every soil, even of the provinces is the expression of these times, a last remaining embodiment of good taste, grace, wit, and distinction, all combined, but dwarfed. We shall see no more great ladies in France, but there will be 'ladies' for a long time, elected by public opinion to form an upper chamber of women, and who will be among the fair sex what a 'gentleman' is in England."

"And that they call progress!" exclaimed Mademoiselle des Touches. "I should like to know where the progress lies?"

"Why, in this," said Madame de Nucingen. "Formerly a woman might have the voice of a fish-seller, the walk of a grenadier, the face of an impudent courtesan, her hair too high on her forehead, a large foot, a thick hand—she was a great lady in spite of it all; but in these days, even if she were a Montmorency—if a Montmorency would ever be such a creature—she would not be a lady."

"But what do you mean by a 'perfect lady'?" asked Count Adam Laginski.

"She is a modern product, a deplorable triumph of the elective system as applied to the fair sex," said the Minister. "Every revolution has a word of its own which epitomizes and depicts it."

"You are right," said the Russian, who had come to make a literary reputation in Paris. "The explanation of certain words added from time to time to your beautiful language would make a magnificent history. Organize, for instance, is the word of the Empire, and sums up Napoleon completely."

"But all that does not explain what is meant by a lady!" the young Pole exclaimed, with some impatience.

"Well, I will tell you," said Emile Blondet to Count Adam. "One fine morning you go for a saunter in Paris. It is past two, but five has not yet struck. You see a woman coming towards you; your first glance at her is like the preface to a good book, it leads you to expect a world of elegance and refinement. Like a botanist over hill and dale in his pursuit of plants, among the vulgarities of Paris life you have at last found a rare flower. This woman is attended by two very distinguished-looking men, of whom one, at any rate, wears an order; or else a servant out of livery follows her at a distance of ten yards. She displays no gaudy colors, no open-worked stockings, no over-elaborate waist-buckle, no embroidered frills to her drawers fussing round her ankles. You will see that she is shod with prunella shoes, with sandals crossed over extremely fine cotton stockings, or plain gray silk stockings; or perhaps she wears boots of the most exquisite simplicity. You notice that her gown is made of a neat and inexpensive material, but made in a way that surprises more than one woman of the middle class; it is almost always a long pelisse, with bows to fasten it, and neatly bound with fine cord or an imperceptible braid. The Unknown has a way of her own in wrapping herself in her shawl or mantilla; she knows how to draw it round her from her hips to her neck, outlining a carapace, as it were, which would make an ordinary woman look like a turtle, but which in her sets off the most beautiful forms while concealing them. How does she do it? This secret she keeps, though unguarded by any patent.

"As she walks she gives herself a little concentric and harmonious twist, which makes her supple or dangerous slenderness writhe under the stuff, as a snake does under the green gauze of trembling grass. Is it to an angel or a devil that she owes the graceful undulation which plays under her long black silk cape, stirs its lace frill, sheds an airy balm, and what I should like to call the breeze of a Parisienne? You may recognize over her arms, round her waist, about her throat, a science of drapery recalling the antique Mnemosyne.

"Oh! how thoroughly she understands the cut of her gait—forgive the

expression. Study the way she puts her foot forward moulding her skirt with such a decent preciseness that the passer-by is filled with admiration, mingled with desire, but subdued by deep respect. When an Englishwoman attempts this step, she looks like a grenadier marching forward to attack a redoubt. The women of Paris have a genius for walking. The municipality really owed them asphalt footwalks.

"Our Unknown jostles no one. If she wants to pass, she waits with proud humility till some one makes way. The distinction peculiar to a well-bred woman betrays itself, especially in the way she holds her shawl or cloak crossed over her bosom. Even as she walks she has a little air of serene dignity, like Raphael's Madonnas in their frames. Her aspect, at once quiet and disdainful, makes the most insolent dandy step aside for her.

"Her bonnet, remarkable for its simplicity, is trimmed with crisp ribbons; there may be flowers in it, but the cleverest of such women wear only bows. Feathers demand a carriage; flowers are too showy. Beneath it you see the fresh unworn face of a woman who, without conceit, is sure of herself; who looks at nothing, and sees everything; whose vanity, satiated by being constantly gratified, stamps her face with an indifference which piques your curiosity. She knows that she is looked at, she knows that everybody, even women, turn round to see her again. And she threads her way through Paris like a gossamer, spotless and pure.

"This delightful species affects the hottest latitudes, the cleanest longitudes of Paris; you will meet her between the 10th and 110th Arcade of the Rue de Rivoli; along the line of the Boulevards from the equator of the Passage des Panoramas, where the products of India flourish, where the warmest creations of industry are displayed, to the Cape of the Madeleine; in the least muddy districts of the citizen quarters, between No. 30 and No. 130 of the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honore. During the winter, she haunts the terrace of the Feuillants, but not the asphalt pavement that lies parallel. According to the weather, she may be seen flying in the Avenue of the Champs-Elysees, which is bounded on the east by the Place Louis XV., on the west by the Avenue de Marigny, to the south by the road, to the north by the gardens of the Faubourg Saint-Honore. Never is this pretty variety of woman to be seen in the hyperborean regions of the Rue Saint-Denis, never in the Kamtschatka of miry, narrow, commercial streets, never anywhere in bad weather. These flowers of Paris, blooming only in Oriental weather, perfume the highways; and after five o'clock fold up like morning-glory flowers. The women you will see later, looking a little like them, are would-be ladies; while the fair Unknown, your Beatrice of a day, is a 'perfect lady.'

"It is not very easy for a foreigner, my dear Count, to recognize the differences by which the observer emeritus distinguishes them—women are

such consummate actresses; but they are glaring in the eyes of Parisians: hooks ill fastened, strings showing loops of rusty-white tape through a gaping slit in the back, rubbed shoe-leather, ironed bonnet-strings, an over-full skirt, an over-tight waist. You will see a certain effort in the intentional droop of the eyelid. There is something conventional in the attitude.

"As to the bourgeoise, the citizen womankind, she cannot possibly be mistaken for the spell cast over you by the Unknown. She is bustling, and goes out in all weathers, trots about, comes, goes, gazes, does not know whether she will or will not go into a shop. Where the lady knows just what she wants and what she is doing, the townswoman is undecided, tucks up her skirts to cross a gutter, dragging a child by the hand, which compels her to look out for the vehicles; she is a mother in public, and talks to her daughter; she carries money in her bag, and has open-work stockings on her feet; in winter, she wears a boa over her fur cloak; in summer, a shawl and a scarf; she is accomplished in the redundancies of dress.

"You will meet the fair Unknown again at the Italiens, at the Opera, at a ball. She will then appear under such a different aspect that you would think them two beings devoid of any analogy. The woman has emerged from those mysterious garments like a butterfly from its silky cocoon. She serves up, like some rare dainty, to your lavished eyes, the forms which her bodice scarcely revealed in the morning. At the theatre she never mounts higher than the second tier, excepting at the Italiens. You can there watch at your leisure the studied deliberateness of her movements. The enchanting deceiver plays off all the little political artifices of her sex so naturally as to exclude all idea of art or premeditation. If she has a royally beautiful hand, the most perspicacious beholder will believe that it is absolutely necessary that she should twist, or refix, or push aside the ringlet or curl she plays with. If she has some dignity of profile, you will be persuaded that she is giving irony or grace to what she says to her neighbor, sitting in such a position as to produce the magical effect of the 'lost profile,' so dear to great painters, by which the cheek catches the high light, the nose is shown in clear outline, the nostrils are transparently rosy, the forehead squarely modeled, the eye has its spangle of fire, but fixed on space, and the white roundness of the chin is accentuated by a line of light. If she has a pretty foot, she will throw herself on a sofa with the coquettish grace of a cat in the sunshine, her feet outstretched without your feeling that her attitude is anything but the most charming model ever given to a sculptor by lassitude.

"Only the perfect lady is quite at her ease in full dress; nothing inconveniences her. You will never see her, like the woman of the citizen class, pulling up a refractory shoulder-strap, or pushing down a rebellious whalebone, or looking whether her tucker is doing its office of faithful

guardian to two treasures of dazzling whiteness, or glancing in the mirrors to see if her head-dress is keeping its place. Her toilet is always in harmony with her character; she had had time to study herself, to learn what becomes her, for she has long known what does not suit her. You will not find her as you go out; she vanishes before the end of the play. If by chance she is to be seen, calm and stately, on the stairs, she is experiencing some violent emotion; she has to bestow a glance, to receive a promise. Perhaps she goes down so slowly on purpose to gratify the vanity of a slave whom she sometimes obeys. If your meeting takes place at a ball or an evening party, you will gather the honey, natural or affected of her insinuating voice; her empty words will enchant you, and she will know how to give them the value of thought by her inimitable bearing."

"To be such a woman, is it not necessary to be very clever?" asked the Polish Count.

"It is necessary to have great taste," replied the Princesse de Cadignan.

"And in France taste is more than cleverness," said the Russian.

"This woman's cleverness is the triumph of a purely plastic art," Blondet went on. "You will not know what she said, but you will be fascinated. She will toss her head, or gently shrug her white shoulders; she will gild an insignificant speech with a charming pout and smile; or throw a Voltairean epigram into an 'Indeed!' an 'Ah!' a 'What then!' A jerk of her head will be her most pertinent form of questioning; she will give meaning to the movement by which she twirls a vinaigrette hanging to her finger by a ring. She gets an artificial grandeur out of superlative trivialities; she simply drops her hand impressively, letting it fall over the arm of her chair as dewdrops hang on the cup of a flower, and all is said—she has pronounced judgment beyond appeal, to the apprehension of the most obtuse. She knows how to listen to you; she gives you the opportunity of shining, and—I ask your modesty—those moments are rare?"

The candid simplicity of the young Pole, to whom Blondet spoke, made all the party shout with laughter.

"Now, you will not talk for half-an-hour with a bourgeoise without her alluding to her husband in one way or another," Blondet went on with unperturbed gravity; "whereas, even if you know that your lady is married, she will have the delicacy to conceal her husband so effectually that it will need the enterprise of Christopher Columbus to discover him. Often you will fail in the attempt single-handed. If you have had no opportunity of inquiring, towards the end of the evening you detect her gazing fixedly at a middle-aged man wearing a decoration, who bows and goes out. She has ordered her carriage, and goes.

"You are not the rose, but you have been with the rose, and you go to bed under the golden canopy of a delicious dream, which will last perhaps after Sleep, with his heavy finger, has opened the ivory gates of the temple of dreams.

"The lady, when she is at home, sees no one before four; she is shrewd enough always to keep you waiting. In her house you will find everything in good taste; her luxury is for hourly use, and duly renewed; you will see nothing under glass shades, no rags of wrappings hanging about, and looking like a pantry. You will find the staircase warmed. Flowers on all sides will charm your sight—flowers, the only gift she accepts, and those only from certain people, for nosegays live but a day; they give pleasure, and must be replaced; to her they are, as in the East, a symbol and a promise. The costly toys of fashion lie about, but not so as to suggest a museum or a curiosity shop. You will find her sitting by the fire in a low chair, from which she will not rise to greet you. Her talk will not now be what it was at the ball; there she was our creditor; in her own home she owes you the pleasure of her wit. These are the shades of which the lady is a marvelous mistress. What she likes in you is a man to swell her circle, an object for the cares and attentions which such women are now happy to bestow. Therefore, to attract you to her drawing-room, she will be bewitchingly charming. This especially is where you feel how isolated women are nowadays, and why they want a little world of their own, to which they may seem a constellation. Conversation is impossible without generalities."

"Yes," said de Marsay, "you have truly hit the fault of our age. The epigram—a volume in a word—no longer strikes, as it did in the eighteenth century, at persons or at things, but at squalid events, and it dies in a day."

"Hence," said Blondet, "the intelligence of the lady, if she has any, consists in casting doubts on everything. Here lies the great difference between two women; the townswoman is certainly virtuous; the lady does not know yet whether she is, or whether she always will be; she hesitates and struggles where the other refuses point-blank and falls full length. This hesitancy in everything is one of the last graces left to her by our horrible times. She rarely goes to church, but she will talk to you of religion; and if you have the good taste to affect Free-thought, she will try to convert you, for you will have opened the way for the stereotyped phrases, the head-shaking and gestures understood by all these women: 'For shame! I thought you had too much sense to attack religion. Society is tottering, and you deprive it of its support. Why, religion at this moment means you and me; it is property, and the future of our children! Ah! let us not be selfish! Individualism is the disease of the age, and religion is the only remedy; it unites families which your laws put asunder,' and so forth. Then she plunges into some neo-Christian speech sprinkled with

political notions which is neither Catholic nor Protestant—but moral? Oh! deuced moral!—in which you may recognize a fag end of every material woven by modern doctrines, at loggerheads together."

The women could not help laughing at the airs by which Blondet illustrated his satire.

"This explanation, dear Count Adam," said Blondet, turning to the Pole, "will have proved to you that the 'perfect lady' represents the intellectual no less than the political muddle, just as she is surrounded by the showy and not very lasting products of an industry which is always aiming at destroying its work in order to replace it by something else. When you leave her you say to yourself: She certainly has superior ideas! And you believe it all the more because she will have sounded your heart with a delicate touch, and have asked you your secrets; she affects ignorance, to learn everything; there are some things she never knows, not even when she knows them. You alone will be uneasy, you will know nothing of the state of her heart. The great ladies of old flaunted their love-affairs, with newspapers and advertisements; in these days the lady has her little passion neatly ruled like a sheet of music with its crotchets and quavers and minims, its rests, its pauses, its sharps to sign the key. A mere weak women, she is anxious not to compromise her love, or her husband, or the future of her children. Name, position, and fortune are no longer flags so respected as to protect all kinds of merchandise on board. The whole aristocracy no longer advances in a body to screen the lady. She has not, like the great lady of the past, the demeanor of lofty antagonism; she can crush nothing under foot, it is she who would be crushed. Thus she is apt at Jesuitical mezzo termine, she is a creature of equivocal compromises, of guarded proprieties, of anonymous passions steered between two reef-bound shores. She is as much afraid of her servants as an Englishwoman who lives in dread of a trial in the divorce-court. This woman—so free at a ball, so attractive out walking—is a slave at home; she is never independent but in perfect privacy, or theoretically. She must preserve herself in her position as a lady. This is her task.

"For in our day a woman repudiated by her husband, reduced to a meagre allowance, with no carriage, no luxury, no opera-box, none of the divine accessories of the toilet, is no longer a wife, a maid, or a townswoman; she is adrift, and becomes a chattel. The Carmelites will not receive a married woman; it would be bigamy. Would her lover still have anything to say to her? That is the question. Thus your perfect lady may perhaps give occasion to calumny, never to slander."

"It is all so horribly true," said the Princesse de Cadignan.

"And so," said Blondet, "our 'perfect lady' lives between English hypocrisy

and the delightful frankness of the eighteenth century—a bastard system, symptomatic of an age in which nothing that grows up is at all like the thing that has vanished, in which transition leads nowhere, everything is a matter of degree; all the great figures shrink into the background, and distinction is purely personal. I am fully convinced that it is impossible for a woman, even if she were born close to a throne, to acquire before the age of five-and-twenty the encyclopaedic knowledge of trifles, the practice of manoeuvring, the important small things, the musical tones and harmony of coloring, the angelic bedevilments and innocent cunning, the speech and the silence, the seriousness and the banter, the wit and the obtuseness, the diplomacy and the ignorance which make up the perfect lady."

"And where, in accordance with the sketch you have drawn," said Mademoiselle des Touches to Emile Blondet, "would you class the female author? Is she a perfect lady, a woman comme il faut?"

"When she has no genius, she is a woman comme il n'en faut pas," Blondet replied, emphasizing the words with a stolen glance, which might make them seem praise frankly addressed to Camille Maupin. "This epigram is not mine, but Napoleon's," he added.

"You need not owe Napoleon any grudge on that score," said Canalis, with an emphatic tone and gesture. "It was one of his weaknesses to be jealous of literary genius—for he had his mean points. Who will ever explain, depict, or understand Napoleon? A man represented with his arms folded, and who did everything, who was the greatest force ever known, the most concentrated, the most mordant, the most acid of all forces; a singular genius who carried armed civilization in every direction without fixing it anywhere; a man who could do everything because he willed everything; a prodigious phenomenon of will, conquering an illness by a battle, and yet doomed to die of disease in bed after living in the midst of ball and bullets; a man with a code and a sword in his brain, word and deed; a clear-sighted spirit that foresaw everything but his own fall; a capricious politician who risked men by handfuls out of economy, and who spared three heads—those of Talleyrand, of Pozzo de Borgo, and of Metternich, diplomatists whose death would have saved the French Empire, and who seemed to him of greater weight than thousands of soldiers; a man to whom nature, as a rare privilege, had given a heart in a frame of bronze; mirthful and kind at midnight amid women, and next morning manipulating Europe as a young girl might amuse herself by splashing water in her bath! Hypocritical and generous; loving tawdriness and simplicity; devoid of taste, but protecting the arts; and in spite of these antitheses, really great in everything by instinct or by temperament; Caesar at five-and-twenty, Cromwell at thirty; and then, like my grocer buried in Pere Lachaise, a good husband and a good father. In short, he improvised public works, empires,

kings, codes, verses, a romance—and all with more range than precision. Did he not aim at making all Europe France? And after making us weigh on the earth in such a way as to change the laws of gravitation, he left us poorer than on the day when he first laid hands on us; while he, who had taken an empire by his name, lost his name on the frontier of his empire in a sea of blood and soldiers. A man all thought and all action, who comprehended Desaix and Fouche."

"All despotism and all justice at the right moments. The true king!" said de Marsay.

"Ah! vat a pleashre it is to dichest vile you talk," said Baron de Nucingen.

"But do you suppose that the treat we are giving you is a common one?" asked Joseph Bridau. "If you had to pay for the charms of conversation as you do for those of dancing or of music, your fortune would be inadequate! There is no second performance of the same flash of wit."

"And are we really so much deteriorated as these gentlemen think?" said the Princesse de Cadignan, addressing the women with a smile at once sceptical and ironical. "Because, in these days, under a regime which makes everything small, you prefer small dishes, small rooms, small pictures, small articles, small newspapers, small books, does that prove that women too have grown smaller? Why should the human heart change because you change your coat? In all ages the passions remain the same. I know cases of beautiful devotion, of sublime sufferings, which lack the publicity—the glory, if you choose—which formerly gave lustre to the errors of some women. But though one may not have saved a King of France, one is not the less an Agnes Sorel. Do you believe that our dear Marquise d'Espard is not the peer of Madame Doublet, or Madame du Deffant, in whose rooms so much evil was spoken and done? Is not Taglioni a match for Camargo? or Malibran the equal of Saint-Huberti? Are not our poets superior to those of the eighteenth century? If at this moment, through the fault of the Grocers who govern us, we have not a style of our own, had not the Empire its distinguishing stamp as the age of Louis XV. had, and was not its splendor fabulous? Have the sciences lost anything?"

"I am quite of your opinion, madame; the women of this age are truly great," replied the Comte de Vandenesse. "When posterity shall have followed us, will not Madame Recamier appear in proportions as fine as those of the most beautiful women of the past? We have made so much history that historians will be lacking. The age of Louis XIV. had but one Madame de Sevigne; we have a thousand now in Paris who certainly write better than she did, and who do not publish their letters. Whether the Frenchwoman be called 'perfect lady,' or great lady, she will always be the woman among women.

"Emile Blondet has given us a picture of the fascinations of a woman of the day; but, at need, this creature who bridles or shows off, who chirps out the ideas of Mr. This and Mr. That, would be heroic. And it must be said, your faults, mesdames, are all the more poetical, because they must always and under all circumstances be surrounded by greater perils. I have seen much of the world, I have studied it perhaps too late; but in cases where the illegality of your feelings might be excused, I have always observed the effects of I know not what chance—which you may call Providence—inevitably overwhelming such as we consider light women."

"I hope," said Madame de Vandenesse, "that we can be great in other ways ____"

"Oh, let the Comte de Vandenesse preach to us!" exclaimed Madame de Serizy.

"With all the more reason because he has preached a great deal by example," said the Baronne de Nucingen.

"On my honor!" said General de Montriveau, "in all the dramas—a word you are very fond of," he said, looking at Blondet—"in which the finger of God has been visible, the most frightful I ever knew was very near being by my act——"

"Well, tell us all about it!" cried Lady Barimore; "I love to shudder!"

"It is the taste of a virtuous woman," replied de Marsay, looking at Lord Dudley's lovely daughter.

"During the campaign of 1812," General de Montriveau began, "I was the involuntary cause of a terrible disaster which may be of use to you, Doctor Bianchon," turning to me, "since, while devoting yourself to the human body, you concern yourself a good deal with the mind; it may tend to solve some of the problems of the will.

"I was going through my second campaign; I enjoyed danger, and laughed at everything, like the young and foolish lieutenant of artillery that I was. When we reached the Beresina, the army had, as you know, lost all discipline, and had forgotten military obedience. It was a medley of men of all nations, instinctively making their way from north to south. The soldiers would drive a general in rags and bare-foot away from their fire if he brought neither wood nor victuals. After the passage of this famous river disorder did not diminish. I had come quietly and alone, without food, out of the marshes of Zembin, and was wandering in search of a house where I might be taken in. Finding none or driven away from those I came across, happily towards evening I perceived a wretched little Polish farm, of which nothing can give you any idea unless you have seen the wooden houses of Lower Normandy, or the poorest farm-

buildings of la Beauce. These dwellings consist of a single room, with one end divided off by a wooden partition, the smaller division serving as a store-room for forage.

"In the darkness of twilight I could just see a faint smoke rising above this house. Hoping to find there some comrades more compassionate than those I had hitherto addressed, I boldly walked as far as the farm. On going in, I found the table laid. Several officers, and with them a woman—a common sight enough—were eating potatoes, some horseflesh broiled over the charcoal, and some frozen beetroots. I recognized among the company two or three artillery captains of the regiment in which I had first served. I was welcomed with a shout of acclamation, which would have amazed me greatly on the other side of the Beresina; but at this moment the cold was less intense; my fellow-officers were resting, they were warm, they had food, and the room, strewn with trusses of straw, gave the promise of a delightful night. We did not ask for so much in those days. My comrades could be philanthropists gratis—one of the commonest ways of being philanthropic. I sat down to eat on one of the bundles of straw.

"At the end of the table, by the side of the door opening into the smaller room full of straw and hay, sat my old colonel, one of the most extraordinary men I ever saw among all the mixed collection of men it has been my lot to meet. He was an Italian. Now, whenever human nature is truly fine in the lands of the South, it is really sublime. I do not know whether you have ever observed the extreme fairness of Italians when they are fair. It is exquisite, especially under an artificial light. When I read the fantastical portrait of Colonel Oudet sketched by Charles Nodier, I found my own sensations in every one of his elegant phrases. Italian, then, as were most of the officers of his regiment, which had, in fact, been borrowed by the Emperor from Eugene's army, my colonel was a tall man, at least eight or nine inches above the standard, and was admirably proportioned—a little stout perhaps, but prodigiously powerful, active, and clean-limbed as a greyhound. His black hair in abundant curls showed up his complexion, as white as a woman's; he had small hands, a shapely foot, a pleasant mouth, and an aquiline nose delicately formed, of which the tip used to become naturally pinched and white whenever he was angry, as happened often. His irascibility was so far beyond belief that I will tell you nothing about it; you will have the opportunity of judging of it. No one could be calm in his presence. I alone, perhaps, was not afraid of him; he had indeed taken such a singular fancy to me that he thought everything I did right. When he was in a rage his brow was knit and the muscles of the middle of his forehead set in a delta, or, to be more explicit, in Redgauntlet's horseshoe. This mark was, perhaps, even more terrifying than the magnetic flashes of his blue eyes. His whole frame quivered, and his strength, great as it was in his normal state, became almost

unbounded.

"He spoke with a strong guttural roll. His voice, at least as powerful as that of Charles Nordier's Oudet, threw an incredible fulness of tone into the syllable or the consonant in which this burr was sounded. Though this faulty pronunciation was at times a grace, when commanding his men, or when he was excited, you cannot imagine, unless you had heard it, what force was expressed by this accent, which at Paris is so common. When the Colonel was quiescent, his blue eyes were angelically sweet, and his smooth brow had a most charming expression. On parade, or with the army of Italy, not a man could compare with him. Indeed, d'Orsay himself, the handsome d'Orsay, was eclipsed by our colonel on the occasion of the last review held by Napoleon before the invasion of Russia.

"Everything was in contrasts in this exceptional man. Passion lives on contrast. Hence you need not ask whether he exerted over women the irresistible influences to which our nature yields"—and the general looked at the Princesse de Cadignan—"as vitreous matter is moulded under the pipe of the glass-blower; still, by a singular fatality—an observer might perhaps explain the phenomenon—the Colonel was not a lady-killer, or was indifferent to such successes.

"To give you an idea of his violence, I will tell you in a few words what I once saw him do in a paroxysm of fury. We were dragging our guns up a very narrow road, bordered by a somewhat high slope on one side, and by thickets on the other. When we were half-way up we met another regiment of artillery, its colonel marching at the head. This colonel wanted to make the captain who was at the head of our foremost battery back down again. The captain, of course, refused; but the colonel of the other regiment signed to his foremost battery to advance, and in spite of the care the driver took to keep among the scrub, the wheel of the first gun struck our captain's right leg and broke it, throwing him over on the near side of his horse. All this was the work of a moment. Our Colonel, who was but a little way off, guessed that there was a quarrel; he galloped up, riding among the guns at the risk of falling with his horse's four feet in the air, and reached the spot, face to face with the other colonel, at the very moment when the captain fell, calling out 'Help!' No, our Italian colonel was no longer human! Foam like the froth of champagne rose to his lips; he roared inarticulately like a lion. Incapable of uttering a word, or even a cry, he made a terrific signal to his antagonist, pointing to the wood and drawing his sword. The two colonels went aside. In two seconds we saw our Colonel's opponent stretched on the ground, his skull split in two. The soldiers of his regiment backed—yes, by heaven, and pretty quickly too.

"The captain, who had been so nearly crushed, and who lay yelping in the puddle where the gun carriage had thrown him, had an Italian wife, a beautiful

Sicilian of Messina, who was not indifferent to our Colonel. This circumstance had aggravated his rage. He was pledged to protect the husband, bound to defend him as he would have defended the woman herself.

"Now, in the hovel beyond Zembin, where I was so well received, this captain was sitting opposite to me, and his wife was at the other end of the table, facing the Colonel. This Sicilian was a little woman named Rosina, very dark, but with all the fire of the Southern sun in her black almond-shaped eyes. At this moment she was deplorably thin; her face was covered with dust, like fruit exposed to the drought of a highroad. Scarcely clothed in rags, exhausted by marches, her hair in disorder, and clinging together under a piece of a shawl tied close over her head, still she had the graces of a woman; her movements were engaging, her small rose mouth and white teeth, the outline of her features and figure, charms which misery, cold, and neglect had not altogether defaced, still suggested love to any man who could think of a woman. Rosina had one of those frames which are fragile in appearance, but wiry and full of spring. Her husband, a gentleman of Piedmont, had a face expressive of ironical simplicity, if it is allowable to ally the two words. Brave and well informed, he seemed to know nothing of the connections which had subsisted between his wife and the Colonel for three years past. I ascribed this unconcern to Italian manners, or to some domestic secret; yet there was in the man's countenance one feature which always filled me with involuntary distrust. His under lip, which was thin and very restless, turned down at the corners instead of turning up, and this, as I thought, betrayed a streak of cruelty in a character which seemed so phlegmatic and indolent.

"As you may suppose the conversation was not very sparkling when I went in. My weary comrades ate in silence; of course, they asked me some questions, and we related our misadventures, mingled with reflections on the campaign, the generals, their mistakes, the Russians, and the cold. A minute after my arrival the colonel, having finished his meagre meal, wiped his moustache, bid us good-night, shot a black look at the Italian woman, saying, 'Rosina?' and then, without waiting for a reply, went into the little barn full of hay, to bed. The meaning of the Colonel's utterance was self-evident. The young wife replied by an indescribable gesture, expressing all the annoyance she could not feel at seeing her thralldom thus flaunted without human decency, and the offence to her dignity as a woman, and to her husband. But there was, too, in the rigid setting of her features and the tight knitting of her brows a sort of presentiment; perhaps she foresaw her fate. Rosina remained quietly in her place.

"A minute later, and apparently when the Colonel was snug in his couch of straw or hay, he repeated, 'Rosina?'

"The tone of this second call was even more brutally questioning than the

first. The Colonel's strong burr, and the length which the Italian language allows to be given to vowels and the final syllable, concentrated all the man's despotism, impatience, and strength of will. Rosina turned pale, but she rose, passed behind us, and went to the Colonel.

"All the party sat in utter silence; I, unluckily, after looking at them all, began to laugh, and then they all laughed too.—'Tu ridi?—you laugh?' said the husband.

"'On my honor, old comrade,' said I, becoming serious again, 'I confess that I was wrong; I ask your pardon a thousand times, and if you are not satisfied by my apologies I am ready to give you satisfaction.'

"'Oh! it is not you who are wrong, it is I!' he replied coldly.

"Thereupon we all lay down in the room, and before long all were sound asleep.

"Next morning each one, without rousing his neighbor or seeking companionship, set out again on his way, with that selfishness which made our rout one of the most horrible dramas of self-seeking, melancholy, and horror which ever was enacted under heaven. Nevertheless, at about seven or eight hundred paces from our shelter we, most of us, met again and walked on together, like geese led in flocks by a child's wilful tyranny. The same necessity urged us all.

"Having reached a knoll where we could still see the farmhouse where we had spent the night, we heard sounds resembling the roar of lions in the desert, the bellowing of bulls—no, it was a noise which can be compared to no known cry. And yet, mingling with this horrible and ominous roar, we could hear a woman's feeble scream. We all looked round, seized by I know not what impulse of terror; we no longer saw the house, but a huge bonfire. The farmhouse had been barricaded, and was in flames. Swirls of smoke borne on the wind brought us hoarse cries and an indescribable pungent smell. A few yards behind, the captain was quietly approaching to join our caravan; we gazed at him in silence, for no one dared question him; but he, understanding our curiosity, pointed to his breast with the forefinger of his right hand, and, waving the left in the direction of the fire, he said, 'Son'io.'

"We all walked on without saying a word to him."

"There is nothing more terrible than the revolt of a sheep," said de Marsay.

"It would be frightful to let us leave with this horrible picture in our memory," said Madame de Montcornet. "I shall dream of it——"

"And what was the punishment of Monsieur de Marsay's 'First'?" said Lord Dudley, smiling.

"When the English are in jest, their foils have the buttons on," said Blondet.

"Monsieur Bianchon can tell us, for he saw her dying," replied de Marsay, turning to me.

"Yes," said I; "and her end was one of the most beautiful I ever saw. The Duke and I had spent the night by the dying woman's pillow; pulmonary consumption, in the last stage, left no hope; she had taken the sacrament the day before. The Duke had fallen asleep. The Duchess, waking at about four in the morning, signed to me in the most touching way, with a friendly smile, to bid me leave him to rest, and she meanwhile was about to die. She had become incredibly thin, but her face had preserved its really sublime outline and features. Her pallor made her skin look like porcelain with a light within. Her bright eyes and color contrasted with this languidly elegant complexion, and her countenance was full of expressive calm. She seemed to pity the Duke, and the feeling had its origin in a lofty tenderness which, as death approached, seemed to know no bounds. The silence was absolute. The room, softly lighted by a lamp, looked like every sickroom at the hour of death.

"At this moment the clock struck. The Duke awoke, and was in despair at having fallen asleep. I did not see the gesture of impatience by which he manifested the regret he felt at having lost sight of his wife for a few of the last minutes vouchsafed to him; but it is quite certain that any one but the dying woman might have misunderstood it. A busy statesman, always thinking of the interests of France, the Duke had a thousand odd ways on the surface, such as often lead to a man of genius being mistaken for a madman, and of which the explanation lies in the exquisiteness and exacting needs of their intellect. He came to seat himself in an armchair by his wife's side, and looked fixedly at her. The dying woman put her hand out a little way, took her husband's and clasped it feebly; and in a low but agitated voice she said, 'My poor dear, who is left to understand you now?' Then she died, looking at him."

"The stories the doctor tells us," said the Comte de Vandenesse, "always leave a deep impression."

"But a sweet one," said Mademoiselle des Touches, rising.

PARIS, June 1839-42.

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LA GRANDE BRETECHE

"Ah! madame," replied the doctor, "I have some appalling stories in my collection. But each one has its proper hour in a conversation—you know the pretty jest recorded by Chamfort, and said to the Duc de Fronsac: 'Between your sally and the present moment lie ten bottles of champagne.'"

"But it is two in the morning, and the story of Rosina has prepared us," said the mistress of the house.

"Tell us, Monsieur Bianchon!" was the cry on every side.

The obliging doctor bowed, and silence reigned.

"At about a hundred paces from Vendome, on the banks of the Loir," said he, "stands an old brown house, crowned with very high roofs, and so completely isolated that there is nothing near it, not even a fetid tannery or a squalid tavern, such as are commonly seen outside small towns. In front of this house is a garden down to the river, where the box shrubs, formerly clipped close to edge the walks, now straggle at their own will. A few willows, rooted in the stream, have grown up quickly like an enclosing fence, and half hide the house. The wild plants we call weeds have clothed the bank with their beautiful luxuriance. The fruit-trees, neglected for these ten years past, no longer bear a crop, and their suckers have formed a thicket. The espaliers are like a copse. The paths, once graveled, are overgrown with purslane; but, to be accurate there is no trace of a path.

"Looking down from the hilltop, to which cling the ruins of the old castle of the Dukes of Vendome, the only spot whence the eye can see into this enclosure, we think that at a time, difficult now to determine, this spot of earth must have been the joy of some country gentleman devoted to roses and tulips, in a word, to horticulture, but above all a lover of choice fruit. An arbor is visible, or rather the wreck of an arbor, and under it a table still stands not entirely destroyed by time. At the aspect of this garden that is no more, the negative joys of the peaceful life of the provinces may be divined as we divine the history of a worthy tradesman when we read the epitaph on his tomb. To complete the mournful and tender impressions which seize the soul, on one of the walls there is a sundial graced with this homely Christian motto, 'Ultimam cogita.'

"The roof of this house is dreadfully dilapidated; the outside shutters are always closed; the balconies are hung with swallows' nests; the doors are for ever shut. Straggling grasses have outlined the flagstones of the steps with green; the ironwork is rusty. Moon and sun, winter, summer, and snow have eaten into the wood, warped the boards, peeled off the paint. The dreary silence is broken only by birds and cats, polecats, rats, and mice, free to scamper round, and fight, and eat each other. An invisible hand has written over it all: 'Mystery.'

"If, prompted by curiosity, you go to look at this house from the street, you will see a large gate, with a round-arched top; the children have made many holes in it. I learned later that this door had been blocked for ten years. Through these irregular breaches you will see that the side towards the courtyard is in perfect harmony with the side towards the garden. The same ruin prevails. Tufts of weeds outline the paving-stones; the walls are scored by enormous cracks, and the blackened coping is laced with a thousand festoons of pellitory. The stone steps are disjointed; the bell-cord is rotten; the gutter-spouts broken. What fire from heaven could have fallen there? By what decree has salt been sown on this dwelling? Has God been mocked here? Or was France betrayed? These are the questions we ask ourselves. Reptiles crawl over it, but give no reply. This empty and deserted house is a vast enigma of which the answer is known to none.

"It was formerly a little domain, held in fief, and is known as La Grande Breteche. During my stay at Vendome, where Despleins had left me in charge of a rich patient, the sight of this strange dwelling became one of my keenest pleasures. Was it not far better than a ruin? Certain memories of indisputable authenticity attach themselves to a ruin; but this house, still standing, though being slowly destroyed by an avenging hand, contained a secret, an unrevealed thought. At the very least, it testified to a caprice. More than once in the evening I boarded the hedge, run wild, which surrounded the enclosure. I braved scratches, I got into this ownerless garden, this plot which was no longer public or private; I lingered there for hours gazing at the disorder. I would not, as the price of the story to which this strange scene no doubt was due, have asked a single question of any gossiping native. On that spot I wove delightful romances, and abandoned myself to little debauches of melancholy which enchanted me. If I had known the reason—perhaps quite commonplace—of this neglect, I should have lost the unwritten poetry which intoxicated me. To me this refuge represented the most various phases of human life, shadowed by misfortune; sometimes the peace of the graveyard without the dead, who speak in the language of epitaphs; one day I saw in it the home of lepers; another, the house of the Atridae; but, above all, I found there provincial life, with its contemplative ideas, its hour-glass existence. I often wept there, I never laughed.

"More than once I felt involuntary terrors as I heard overhead the dull hum of the wings of some hurrying wood-pigeon. The earth is dank; you must be on the watch for lizards, vipers, and frogs, wandering about with the wild freedom of nature; above all, you must have no fear of cold, for in a few moments you feel an icy cloak settle on your shoulders, like the Commendatore's hand on Don Giovanni's neck.

"One evening I felt a shudder; the wind had turned an old rusty

weathercock, and the creaking sounded like a cry from the house, at the very moment when I was finishing a gloomy drama to account for this monumental embodiment of woe. I returned to my inn, lost in gloomy thoughts. When I had supped, the hostess came into my room with an air of mystery, and said, 'Monsieur, here is Monsieur Regnault.'

"'Who is Monsieur Regnault?'

"'What, sir, do you not know Monsieur Regnault?—Well, that's odd,' said she, leaving the room.

"On a sudden I saw a man appear, tall, slim, dressed in black, hat in hand, who came in like a ram ready to butt his opponent, showing a receding forehead, a small pointed head, and a colorless face of the hue of a glass of dirty water. You would have taken him for an usher. The stranger wore an old coat, much worn at the seams; but he had a diamond in his shirt frill, and gold rings in his ears.

"'Monsieur,' said I, 'whom have I the honor of addressing?'—He took a chair, placed himself in front of my fire, put his hat on my table, and answered while he rubbed his hands: 'Dear me, it is very cold.—Monsieur, I am Monsieur Regnault.'

"I was encouraging myself by saying to myself, 'Il bondo cani! Seek!'

"'I am,' he went on, 'notary at Vendome.'

"'I am delighted to hear it, monsieur,' I exclaimed. 'But I am not in a position to make a will for reasons best known to myself.'

"'One moment!' said he, holding up his hand as though to gain silence. 'Allow me, monsieur, allow me! I am informed that you sometimes go to walk in the garden of la Grande Breteche.'

"'Yes, monsieur.'

"'One moment!' said he, repeating his gesture. 'That constitutes a misdemeanor. Monsieur, as executor under the will of the late Comtesse de Merret, I come in her name to beg you to discontinue the practice. One moment! I am not a Turk, and do not wish to make a crime of it. And besides, you are free to be ignorant of the circumstances which compel me to leave the finest mansion in Vendome to fall into ruin. Nevertheless, monsieur, you must be a man of education, and you should know that the laws forbid, under heavy penalties, any trespass on enclosed property. A hedge is the same as a wall. But, the state in which the place is left may be an excuse for your curiosity. For my part, I should be quite content to make you free to come and go in the house; but being bound to respect the will of the testatrix, I have the honor, monsieur, to beg that you will go into the garden no more. I myself, monsieur,

since the will was read, have never set foot in the house, which, as I had the honor of informing you, is part of the estate of the late Madame de Merret. We have done nothing there but verify the number of doors and windows to assess the taxes I have to pay annually out of the funds left for that purpose by the late Madame de Merret. Ah! my dear sir, her will made a great commotion in the town.'

"The good man paused to blow his nose. I respected his volubility, perfectly understanding that the administration of Madame de Merret's estate had been the most important event of his life, his reputation, his glory, his Restoration. As I was forced to bid farewell to my beautiful reveries and romances, I was to reject learning the truth on official authority.

"'Monsieur,' said I, 'would it be indiscreet if I were to ask you the reasons for such eccentricity?'

"At these words an expression, which revealed all the pleasure which men feel who are accustomed to ride a hobby, overspread the lawyer's countenance. He pulled up the collar of his shirt with an air, took out his snuffbox, opened it, and offered me a pinch; on my refusing, he took a large one. He was happy! A man who has no hobby does not know all the good to be got out of life. A hobby is the happy medium between a passion and a monomania. At this moment I understood the whole bearing of Sterne's charming passion, and had a perfect idea of the delight with which my uncle Toby, encouraged by Trim, bestrode his hobby-horse.

"'Monsieur,' said Monsieur Regnault, 'I was head-clerk in Monsieur Roguin's office, in Paris. A first-rate house, which you may have heard mentioned? No! An unfortunate bankruptcy made it famous.—Not having money enough to purchase a practice in Paris at the price to which they were run up in 1816, I came here and bought my predecessor's business. I had relations in Vendome; among others, a wealthy aunt, who allowed me to marry her daughter.—Monsieur,' he went on after a little pause, 'three months after being licensed by the Keeper of the Seals, one evening, as I was going to bed —it was before my marriage—I was sent for by Madame la Comtesse de Merret, to her Chateau of Merret. Her maid, a good girl, who is now a servant in this inn, was waiting at my door with the Countess' own carriage. Ah! one moment! I ought to tell you that Monsieur le Comte de Merret had gone to Paris to die two months before I came here. He came to a miserable end, flinging himself into every kind of dissipation. You understand?

"'On the day when he left, Madame la Comtesse had quitted la Grand Breteche, having dismantled it. Some people even say that she had burnt all the furniture, the hangings—in short, all the chattels and furniture whatever used in furnishing the premises now let by the said M.—(Dear, what am I

saying? I beg your pardon, I thought I was dictating a lease.)—In short, that she burnt everything in the meadow at Merret. Have you been to Merret, monsieur?—No,' said he, answering himself, 'Ah, it is a very fine place.'

"'For about three months previously,' he went on, with a jerk of his head, 'the Count and Countess had lived in a very eccentric way; they admitted no visitors; Madame lived on the ground-floor, and Monsieur on the first floor. When the Countess was left alone, she was never seen excepting at church. Subsequently, at home, at the chateau, she refused to see the friends, whether gentlemen or ladies, who went to call on her. She was already very much altered when she left la Grande Breteche to go to Merret. That dear lady—I say dear lady, for it was she who gave me this diamond, but indeed I saw her but once—that kind lady was very ill; she had, no doubt, given up all hope, for she died without choosing to send for a doctor; indeed, many of our ladies fancied she was not quite right in her head. Well, sir, my curiosity was strangely excited by hearing that Madame de Merret had need of my services. Nor was I the only person who took an interest in the affair. That very night, though it was already late, all the town knew that I was going to Merret.

"'The waiting-woman replied but vaguely to the questions I asked her on the way; nevertheless, she told me that her mistress had received the Sacrament in the course of the day at the hands of the Cure of Merret, and seemed unlikely to live through the night. It was about eleven when I reached the chateau. I went up the great staircase. After crossing some large, lofty, dark rooms, diabolically cold and damp, I reached the state bedroom where the Countess lay. From the rumors that were current concerning this lady (monsieur, I should never end if I were to repeat all the tales that were told about her), I had imagined her a coquette. Imagine, then, that I had great difficulty in seeing her in the great bed where she was lying. To be sure, to light this enormous room, with old-fashioned heavy cornices, and so thick with dust that merely to see it was enough to make you sneeze, she had only an old Argand lamp. Ah! but you have not been to Merret. Well, the bed is one of those old world beds, with a high tester hung with flowered chintz. A small table stood by the bed, on which I saw an "Imitation of Christ," which, by the way, I bought for my wife, as well as the lamp. There were also a deep armchair for her confidential maid, and two small chairs. There was no fire. That was all the furniture, not enough to fill ten lines in an inventory.

"'My dear sir, if you had seen, as I then saw, that vast room, papered and hung with brown, you would have felt yourself transported into a scene of a romance. It was icy, nay more, funereal,' and he lifted his hand with a theatrical gesture and paused.

"'By dint of seeking, as I approached the bed, at last I saw Madame de Merret, under the glimmer of the lamp, which fell on the pillows. Her face was

as yellow as wax, and as narrow as two folded hands. The Countess had a lace cap showing her abundant hair, but as white as linen thread. She was sitting up in bed, and seemed to keep upright with great difficulty. Her large black eyes, dimmed by fever, no doubt, and half-dead already, hardly moved under the bony arch of her eyebrows.—There,' he added, pointing to his own brow. 'Her forehead was clammy; her fleshless hands were like bones covered with soft skin; the veins and muscles were perfectly visible. She must have been very handsome; but at this moment I was startled into an indescribable emotion at the sight. Never, said those who wrapped her in her shroud, had any living creature been so emaciated and lived. In short, it was awful to behold! Sickness so consumed that woman, that she was no more than a phantom. Her lips, which were pale violet, seemed to me not to move when she spoke to me.

"'Though my profession has familiarized me with such spectacles, by calling me not infrequently to the bedside of the dying to record their last wishes, I confess that families in tears and the agonies I have seen were as nothing in comparison with this lonely and silent woman in her vast chateau. I heard not the least sound, I did not perceive the movement which the sufferer's breathing ought to have given to the sheets that covered her, and I stood motionless, absorbed in looking at her in a sort of stupor. In fancy I am there still. At last her large eyes moved; she tried to raise her right hand, but it fell back on the bed, and she uttered these words, which came like a breath, for her voice was no longer a voice: "I have waited for you with the greatest impatience." A bright flush rose to her cheeks. It was a great effort to her to speak.

""'Madame," I began. She signed to me to be silent. At that moment the old housekeeper rose and said in my ear, "Do not speak; Madame la Comtesse is not in a state to bear the slightest noise, and what you say might agitate her."

"'I sat down. A few instants after, Madame de Merret collected all her remaining strength to move her right hand, and slipped it, not without infinite difficulty, under the bolster; she then paused a moment. With a last effort she withdrew her hand; and when she brought out a sealed paper, drops of perspiration rolled from her brow. "I place my will in your hands—Oh! God! Oh!" and that was all. She clutched a crucifix that lay on the bed, lifted it hastily to her lips, and died.

"'The expression of her eyes still makes me shudder as I think of it. She must have suffered much! There was joy in her last glance, and it remained stamped on her dead eyes.

"'I brought away the will, and when it was opened I found that Madame de Merret had appointed me her executor. She left the whole of her property to the hospital at Vendome excepting a few legacies. But these were her

instructions as relating to la Grande Breteche: She ordered me to leave the place, for fifty years counting from the day of her death, in the state in which it might be at the time of her death, forbidding any one, whoever he might be, to enter the apartments, prohibiting any repairs whatever, and even settling a salary to pay watchmen if it were needful to secure the absolute fulfilment of her intentions. At the expiration of that term, if the will of the testatrix has been duly carried out, the house is to become the property of my heirs, for, as you know, a notary cannot take a bequest. Otherwise la Grande Breteche reverts to the heirs-at-law, but on condition of fulfilling certain conditions set forth in a codicil to the will, which is not to be opened till the expiration of the said term of fifty years. The will has not been disputed, so——' And without finishing his sentence, the lanky notary looked at me with an air of triumph; I made him quite happy by offering him my congratulations.

"'Monsieur,' I said in conclusion, 'you have so vividly impressed me that I fancy I see the dying woman whiter than her sheets; her glittering eyes frighten me; I shall dream of her to-night.—But you must have formed some idea as to the instructions contained in that extraordinary will.'

"'Monsieur,' said he, with comical reticence, 'I never allow myself to criticise the conduct of a person who honors me with the gift of a diamond.'

"However, I soon loosened the tongue of the discreet notary of Vendome, who communicated to me, not without long digressions, the opinions of the deep politicians of both sexes whose judgments are law in Vendome. But these opinions were so contradictory, so diffuse, that I was near falling asleep in spite of the interest I felt in this authentic history. The notary's ponderous voice and monotonous accent, accustomed no doubt to listen to himself and to make himself listened to by his clients or fellow-townsmen, were too much for my curiosity. Happily, he soon went away.

"'Ah, ha, monsieur,' said he on the stairs, 'a good many persons would be glad to live five-and-forty years longer; but—one moment!' and he laid the first finger of his right hand to his nostril with a cunning look, as much as to say, 'Mark my words!—To last as long as that—as long as that,' said he, 'you must not be past sixty now.'

"I closed my door, having been roused from my apathy by this last speech, which the notary thought very funny; then I sat down in my armchair, with my feet on the fire-dogs. I had lost myself in a romance a la Radcliffe, constructed on the juridical base given me by Monsieur Regnault, when the door, opened by a woman's cautious hand, turned on the hinges. I saw my landlady come in, a buxom, florid dame, always good-humored, who had missed her calling in life. She was a Fleming, who ought to have seen the light in a picture by Teniers.

"'Well, monsieur,' said she, 'Monsieur Regnault has no doubt been giving you his history of la Grande Breteche?'

"'Yes, Madame Lepas.'

"'And what did he tell you?'

"I repeated in a few words the creepy and sinister story of Madame de Merret. At each sentence my hostess put her head forward, looking at me with an innkeeper's keen scrutiny, a happy compromise between the instinct of a police constable, the astuteness of a spy, and the cunning of a dealer.

"'My good Madame Lepas,' said I as I ended, 'you seem to know more about it. Heh? If not, why have you come up to me?'

"'On my word, as an honest woman——'

"'Do not swear; your eyes are big with a secret. You knew Monsieur de Merret; what sort of man was he?'

"'Monsieur de Merret—well, you see he was a man you never could see the top of, he was so tall! A very good gentleman, from Picardy, and who had, as we say, his head close to his cap. He paid for everything down, so as never to have difficulties with any one. He was hot-tempered, you see! All our ladies liked him very much.'

"'Because he was hot-tempered?' I asked her.

"'Well, may be,' said she; 'and you may suppose, sir, that a man had to have something to show for a figurehead before he could marry Madame de Merret, who, without any reflection on others, was the handsomest and richest heiress in our parts. She had about twenty thousand francs a year. All the town was at the wedding; the bride was pretty and sweet-looking, quite a gem of a woman. Oh, they were a handsome couple in their day!'

"'And were they happy together?'

"'Hm, hm! so-so—so far as can be guessed, for, as you may suppose, we of the common sort were not hail-fellow-well-met with them.—Madame de Merret was a kind woman and very pleasant, who had no doubt sometimes to put up with her husband's tantrums. But though he was rather haughty, we were fond of him. After all, it was his place to behave so. When a man is a born nobleman, you see——'

"'Still, there must have been some catastrophe for Monsieur and Madame de Merret to part so violently?'

"'I did not say there was any catastrophe, sir. I know nothing about it.'

"'Indeed. Well, now, I am sure you know everything.'

"'Well, sir, I will tell you the whole story.—When I saw Monsieur Regnault go up to see you, it struck me that he would speak to you about Madame de Merret as having to do with la Grande Breteche. That put it into my head to ask your advice, sir, seeming to me that you are a man of good judgment and incapable of playing a poor woman like me false—for I never did any one a wrong, and yet I am tormented by my conscience. Up to now I have never dared to say a word to the people of these parts; they are all chatter-mags, with tongues like knives. And never till now, sir, have I had any traveler here who stayed so long in the inn as you have, and to whom I could tell the history of the fifteen thousand francs——'

"'My dear Madame Lepas, if there is anything in your story of a nature to compromise me,' I said, interrupting the flow of her words, 'I would not hear it for all the world.'

"'You need have no fears,' said she; 'you will see.'

"Her eagerness made me suspect that I was not the only person to whom my worthy landlady had communicated the secret of which I was to be the sole possessor, but I listened.

"'Monsieur,' said she, 'when the Emperor sent the Spaniards here, prisoners of war and others, I was required to lodge at the charge of the Government a young Spaniard sent to Vendome on parole. Notwithstanding his parole, he had to show himself every day to the sub-prefect. He was a Spanish grandee—neither more nor less. He had a name in os and dia, something like Bagos de Feredia. I wrote his name down in my books, and you may see it if you like. Ah! he was a handsome young fellow for a Spaniard, who are all ugly they say. He was not more than five feet two or three in height, but so well made; and he had little hands that he kept so beautifully! Ah! you should have seen them. He had as many brushes for his hands as a woman has for her toilet. He had thick, black hair, a flame in his eye, a somewhat coppery complexion, but which I admired all the same. He wore the finest linen I have ever seen, though I have had princesses to lodge here, and, among others, General Bertrand, the Duc and Duchesse d'Abrantes, Monsieur Descazes, and the King of Spain. He did not eat much, but he had such polite and amiable ways that it was impossible to owe him a grudge for that. Oh! I was very fond of him, though he did not say four words to me in a day, and it was impossible to have the least bit of talk with him; if he was spoken to, he did not answer; it is a way, a mania they all have, it would seem.

"'He read his breviary like a priest, and went to mass and all the services quite regularly. And where did he post himself?—we found this out later.—Within two yards of Madame de Merret's chapel. As he took that place the very first time he entered the church, no one imagined that there was any

purpose in it. Besides, he never raised his nose above his book, poor young man! And then, monsieur, of an evening he went for a walk on the hill among the ruins of the old castle. It was his only amusement, poor man; it reminded him of his native land. They say that Spain is all hills!

"'One evening, a few days after he was sent here, he was out very late. I was rather uneasy when he did not come in till just on the stroke of midnight; but we all got used to his whims; he took the key of the door, and we never sat up for him. He lived in a house belonging to us in the Rue des Casernes. Well, then, one of our stable-boys told us one evening that, going down to wash the horses in the river, he fancied he had seen the Spanish Grandee swimming some little way off, just like a fish. When he came in, I told him to be careful of the weeds, and he seemed put out at having been seen in the water.

"'At last, monsieur, one day, or rather one morning, we did not find him in his room; he had not come back. By hunting through his things, I found a written paper in the drawer of his table, with fifty pieces of Spanish gold of the kind they call doubloons, worth about five thousand francs; and in a little sealed box ten thousand francs worth of diamonds. The paper said that in case he should not return, he left us this money and these diamonds in trust to found masses to thank God for his escape and for his salvation.

"'At that time I still had my husband, who ran off in search of him. And this is the queer part of the story: he brought back the Spaniard's clothes, which he had found under a big stone on a sort of breakwater along the river bank, nearly opposite la Grande Breteche. My husband went so early that no one saw him. After reading the letter, he burnt the clothes, and, in obedience to Count Feredia's wish, we announced that he had escaped.

"'The sub-prefect set all the constabulary at his heels; but, pshaw! he was never caught. Lepas believed that the Spaniard had drowned himself. I, sir, have never thought so; I believe, on the contrary, that he had something to do with the business about Madame de Merret, seeing that Rosalie told me that the crucifix her mistress was so fond of that she had it buried with her, was made of ebony and silver; now in the early days of his stay here, Monsieur Feredia had one of ebony and silver which I never saw later.—And now, monsieur, do not you say that I need have no remorse about the Spaniard's fifteen thousand francs? Are they not really and truly mine?'

"'Certainly.—But have you never tried to question Rosalie?' said I.

"'Oh, to be sure I have, sir. But what is to be done? That girl is like a wall. She knows something, but it is impossible to make her talk.'

"After chatting with me for a few minutes, my hostess left me a prey to vague and sinister thoughts, to romantic curiosity, and a religious dread, not

unlike the deep emotion which comes upon us when we go into a dark church at night and discern a feeble light glimmering under a lofty vault—a dim figure glides across—the sweep of a gown or of a priest's cassock is audible—and we shiver! La Grande Breteche, with its rank grasses, its shuttered windows, its rusty iron-work, its locked doors, its deserted rooms, suddenly rose before me in fantastic vividness. I tried to get into the mysterious dwelling to search out the heart of this solemn story, this drama which had killed three persons.

"Rosalie became in my eyes the most interesting being in Vendome. As I studied her, I detected signs of an inmost thought, in spite of the blooming health that glowed in her dimpled face. There was in her soul some element of ruth or of hope; her manner suggested a secret, like the expression of devout souls who pray in excess, or of a girl who has killed her child and for ever hears its last cry. Nevertheless, she was simple and clumsy in her ways; her vacant smile had nothing criminal in it, and you would have pronounced her innocent only from seeing the large red and blue checked kerchief that covered her stalwart bust, tucked into the tight-laced bodice of a lilac- and white-striped gown. 'No,' said I to myself, 'I will not quit Vendome without knowing the whole history of la Grande Breteche. To achieve this end, I will make love to Rosalie if it proves necessary.'

"'Rosalie!' said I one evening.

"'Your servant, sir?'

"'You are not married?' She started a little.

"'Oh! there is no lack of men if ever I take a fancy to be miserable!' she replied, laughing. She got over her agitation at once; for every woman, from the highest lady to the inn-servant inclusive, has a native presence of mind.

"'Yes; you are fresh and good-looking enough never to lack lovers! But tell me, Rosalie, why did you become an inn-servant on leaving Madame de Merret? Did she not leave you some little annuity?'

"'Oh yes, sir. But my place here is the best in all the town of Vendome.'

"This reply was such an one as judges and attorneys call evasive. Rosalie, as it seemed to me, held in this romantic affair the place of the middle square of the chess-board: she was at the very centre of the interest and of the truth; she appeared to me to be tied into the knot of it. It was not a case for ordinary love-making; this girl contained the last chapter of a romance, and from that moment all my attentions were devoted to Rosalie. By dint of studying the girl, I observed in her, as in every woman whom we make our ruling thought, a variety of good qualities; she was clean and neat; she was handsome, I need not say; she soon was possessed of every charm that desire can lend to a

woman in whatever rank of life. A fortnight after the notary's visit, one evening, or rather one morning, in the small hours, I said to Rosalie:

"'Come, tell me all you know about Madame de Merret.'

"'Oh!' she said, 'I will tell you; but keep the secret carefully.'

"'All right, my child; I will keep all your secrets with a thief's honor, which is the most loyal known.'

"'If it is all the same to you,' said she, 'I would rather it should be with your own.'

"Thereupon she set her head-kerchief straight, and settled herself to tell the tale; for there is no doubt a particular attitude of confidence and security is necessary to the telling of a narrative. The best tales are told at a certain hour —just as we are all here at table. No one ever told a story well standing up, or fasting.

"If I were to reproduce exactly Rosalie's diffuse eloquence, a whole volume would scarcely contain it. Now, as the event of which she gave me a confused account stands exactly midway between the notary's gossip and that of Madame Lepas, as precisely as the middle term of a rule-of-three sum stands between the first and third, I have only to relate it in as few words as may be. I shall therefore be brief.

"The room at la Grande Breteche in which Madame de Merret slept was on the ground floor; a little cupboard in the wall, about four feet deep, served her to hang her dresses in. Three months before the evening of which I have to relate the events, Madame de Merret had been seriously ailing, so much so that her husband had left her to herself, and had his own bedroom on the first floor. By one of those accidents which it is impossible to foresee, he came in that evening two hours later than usual from the club, where he went to read the papers and talk politics with the residents in the neighborhood. His wife supposed him to have come in, to be in bed and asleep. But the invasion of France had been the subject of a very animated discussion; the game of billiards had waxed vehement; he had lost forty francs, an enormous sum at Vendome, where everybody is thrifty, and where social habits are restrained within the bounds of a simplicity worthy of all praise, and the foundation perhaps of a form of true happiness which no Parisian would care for.

"For some time past Monsieur de Merret had been satisfied to ask Rosalie whether his wife was in bed; on the girl's replying always in the affirmative, he at once went to his own room, with the good faith that comes of habit and confidence. But this evening, on coming in, he took it into his head to go to see Madame de Merret, to tell her of his ill-luck, and perhaps to find consolation. During dinner he had observed that his wife was very becomingly

dressed; he reflected as he came home from the club that his wife was certainly much better, that convalescence had improved her beauty, discovering it, as husbands discover everything, a little too late. Instead of calling Rosalie, who was in the kitchen at the moment watching the cook and the coachman playing a puzzling hand at cards, Monsieur de Merret made his way to his wife's room by the light of his lantern, which he set down at the lowest step of the stairs. His step, easy to recognize, rang under the vaulted passage.

"At the instant when the gentleman turned the key to enter his wife's room, he fancied he heard the door shut of the closet of which I have spoken; but when he went in, Madame de Merret was alone, standing in front of the fireplace. The unsuspecting husband fancied that Rosalie was in the cupboard; nevertheless, a doubt, ringing in his ears like a peal of bells, put him on his guard; he looked at his wife, and read in her eyes an indescribably anxious and haunted expression.

"'You are very late,' said she.—Her voice, usually so clear and sweet, struck him as being slightly husky.

"Monsieur de Merret made no reply, for at this moment Rosalie came in. This was like a thunder-clap. He walked up and down the room, going from one window to another at a regular pace, his arms folded.

"'Have you had bad news, or are you ill?' his wife asked him timidly, while Rosalie helped her to undress. He made no reply.

"'You can go, Rosalie,' said Madame de Merret to her maid; 'I can put in my curl-papers myself.'—She scented disaster at the mere aspect of her husband's face, and wished to be alone with him. As soon as Rosalie was gone, or supposed to be gone, for she lingered a few minutes in the passage, Monsieur de Merret came and stood facing his wife, and said coldly, 'Madame, there is some one in your cupboard!' She looked at her husband calmly, and replied quite simply, 'No, monsieur.'

"This 'No' wrung Monsieur de Merret's heart; he did not believe it; and yet his wife had never appeared purer or more saintly than she seemed to be at this moment. He rose to go and open the closet door. Madame de Merret took his hand, stopped him, looked at him sadly, and said in a voice of strange emotion, 'Remember, if you should find no one there, everything must be at an end between you and me.'

"The extraordinary dignity of his wife's attitude filled him with deep esteem for her, and inspired him with one of those resolves which need only a grander stage to become immortal.

"'No, Josephine,' he said, 'I will not open it. In either event we should be

parted for ever. Listen; I know all the purity of your soul, I know you lead a saintly life, and would not commit a deadly sin to save your life.'—At these words Madame de Merret looked at her husband with a haggard stare.—'See, here is your crucifix,' he went on. 'Swear to me before God that there is no one in there; I will believe you—I will never open that door.'

"Madame de Merret took up the crucifix and said, 'I swear it.'

"'Louder,' said her husband; 'and repeat: "I swear before God that there is nobody in that closet."' She repeated the words without flinching.

"'That will do,' said Monsieur de Merret coldly. After a moment's silence: 'You have there a fine piece of work which I never saw before,' said he, examining the crucifix of ebony and silver, very artistically wrought.

"'I found it at Duvivier's; last year when that troop of Spanish prisoners came through Vendome, he bought it of a Spanish monk.'

"'Indeed,' said Monsieur de Merret, hanging the crucifix on its nail; and he rang the bell.

"He had to wait for Rosalie. Monsieur de Merret went forward quickly to meet her, led her into the bay of the window that looked on to the garden, and said to her in an undertone:

"'I know that Gorenflot wants to marry you, that poverty alone prevents your setting up house, and that you told him you would not be his wife till he found means to become a master mason.—Well, go and fetch him; tell him to come here with his trowel and tools. Contrive to wake no one in his house but himself. His reward will be beyond your wishes. Above all, go out without saying a word—or else!' and he frowned.

"Rosalie was going, and he called her back. 'Here, take my latch-key,' said he.

"'Jean!' Monsieur de Merret called in a voice of thunder down the passage. Jean, who was both coachman and confidential servant, left his cards and came.

"'Go to bed, all of you,' said his master, beckoning him to come close; and the gentleman added in a whisper, 'When they are all asleep—mind, asleep—you understand?—come down and tell me.'

"Monsieur de Merret, who had never lost sight of his wife while giving his orders, quietly came back to her at the fireside, and began to tell her the details of the game of billiards and the discussion at the club. When Rosalie returned she found Monsieur and Madame de Merret conversing amiably.

"Not long before this Monsieur de Merret had had new ceilings made to all

the reception-rooms on the ground floor. Plaster is very scarce at Vendome; the price is enhanced by the cost of carriage; the gentleman had therefore had a considerable quantity delivered to him, knowing that he could always find purchasers for what might be left. It was this circumstance which suggested the plan he carried out.

"'Gorenflot is here, sir,' said Rosalie in a whisper.

"'Tell him to come in,' said her master aloud.

"Madame de Merret turned paler when she saw the mason.

"'Gorenflot,' said her husband, 'go and fetch some bricks from the coach-house; bring enough to wall up the door of this cupboard; you can use the plaster that is left for cement.' Then, dragging Rosalie and the workman close to him—'Listen, Gorenflot,' said he, in a low voice, 'you are to sleep here to-night; but to-morrow morning you shall have a passport to take you abroad to a place I will tell you of. I will give you six thousand francs for your journey. You must live in that town for ten years; if you find you do not like it, you may settle in another, but it must be in the same country. Go through Paris and wait there till I join you. I will there give you an agreement for six thousand francs more, to be paid to you on your return, provided you have carried out the conditions of the bargain. For that price you are to keep perfect silence as to what you have to do this night. To you, Rosalie, I will secure ten thousand francs, which will not be paid to you till your wedding day, and on condition of your marrying Gorenflot; but, to get married, you must hold your tongue. If not, no wedding gift!'

"'Rosalie,' said Madame de Merret, 'come and brush my hair.'

"Her husband quietly walked up and down the room, keeping an eye on the door, on the mason, and on his wife, but without any insulting display of suspicion. Gorenflot could not help making some noise. Madame de Merret seized a moment when he was unloading some bricks, and when her husband was at the other end of the room to say to Rosalie: 'My dear child, I will give you a thousand francs a year if only you will tell Gorenflot to leave a crack at the bottom.' Then she added aloud quite coolly: 'You had better help him.'

"Monsieur and Madame de Merret were silent all the time while Gorenflot was walling up the door. This silence was intentional on the husband's part; he did not wish to give his wife the opportunity of saying anything with a double meaning. On Madame de Merret's side it was pride or prudence. When the wall was half built up the cunning mason took advantage of his master's back being turned to break one of the two panes in the top of the door with a blow of his pick. By this Madame de Merret understood that Rosalie had spoken to Gorenflot. They all three then saw the face of a dark, gloomy-looking man,

with black hair and flaming eyes.

"Before her husband turned round again the poor woman had nodded to the stranger, to whom the signal was meant to convey, 'Hope.'

"At four o'clock, as the day was dawning, for it was the month of September, the work was done. The mason was placed in charge of Jean, and Monsieur de Merret slept in his wife's room.

"Next morning when he got up he said with apparent carelessness, 'Oh, by the way, I must go to the Maire for the passport.' He put on his hat, took two or three steps towards the door, paused, and took the crucifix. His wife was trembling with joy.

"'He will go to Duvivier's,' thought she.

"As soon as he had left, Madame de Merret rang for Rosalie, and then in a terrible voice she cried: 'The pick! Bring the pick! and set to work. I saw how Gorenflot did it yesterday; we shall have time to make a gap and build it up again.'

"In an instant Rosalie had brought her mistress a sort of cleaver; she, with a vehemence of which no words can give an idea, set to work to demolish the wall. She had already got out a few bricks, when, turning to deal a stronger blow than before, she saw behind her Monsieur de Merret. She fainted away.

"'Lay madame on her bed,' said he coldly.

"Foreseeing what would certainly happen in his absence, he had laid this trap for his wife; he had merely written to the Maire and sent for Duvivier. The jeweler arrived just as the disorder in the room had been repaired.

"'Duvivier,' asked Monsieur de Merret, 'did not you buy some crucifixes of the Spaniards who passed through the town?'

"'No, monsieur.'

"'Very good; thank you,' said he, flashing a tiger's glare at his wife. 'Jean,' he added, turning to his confidential valet, 'you can serve my meals here in Madame de Merret's room. She is ill, and I shall not leave her till she recovers.'

"The cruel man remained in his wife's room for twenty days. During the earlier time, when there was some little noise in the closet, and Josephine wanted to intercede for the dying man, he said, without allowing her to utter a word, 'You swore on the Cross that there was no one there.'"

After this story all the ladies rose from table, and thus the spell under which Bianchon had held them was broken. But there were some among them who had almost shivered at the last words.

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ALBERT SAVARUS

One of the few drawing-rooms where, under the Restoration, the Archbishop of Besancon was sometimes to be seen, was that of the Baronne de Watteville, to whom he was particularly attached on account of her religious sentiments.

A word as to this lady, the most important lady of Besancon.

Monsieur de Watteville, a descendant of the famous Watteville, the most successful and illustrious of murderers and renegades—his extraordinary adventures are too much a part of history to be related here—this nineteenth century Monsieur de Watteville was as gentle and peaceable as his ancestor of the Grand Siecle had been passionate and turbulent. After living in the Comte (La Franche Comte) like a wood-louse in the crack of a wainscot, he had married the heiress of the celebrated house of Rupt. Mademoiselle de Rupt brought twenty thousand francs a year in the funds to add to the ten thousand francs a year in real estate of the Baron de Watteville. The Swiss gentleman's coat-of-arms (the Wattevilles are Swiss) was then borne as an escutcheon of pretence on the old shield of the Rupts. The marriage, arranged in 1802, was solemnized in 1815 after the second Restoration. Within three years of the birth of a daughter all Madame de Watteville's grandparents were dead, and their estates wound up. Monsieur de Watteville's house was then sold, and they settled in the Rue de la Prefecture in the fine old mansion of the Rupts, with an immense garden stretching to the Rue du Perron. Madame de Watteville, devout as a girl, became even more so after her marriage. She is one of the queens of the saintly brotherhood which gives the upper circles of Besancon a solemn air and prudish manners in harmony with the character of the town.

Monsieur le Baron de Watteville, a dry, lean man devoid of intelligence, looked worn out without any one knowing whereby, for he enjoyed the profoundest ignorance; but as his wife was a red-haired woman, and of a stern nature that became proverbial (we still say "as sharp as Madame de Watteville"), some wits of the legal profession declared that he had been worn against that rock—Rupt is obviously derived from rupes. Scientific students of social phenomena will not fail to have observed that Rosalie was the only offspring of the union between the Wattevilles and the Rupts.

Monsieur de Watteville spent his existence in a handsome workshop with a lathe; he was a turner! As subsidiary to this pursuit, he took up a fancy for

making collections. Philosophical doctors, devoted to the study of madness, regard this tendency towards collecting as a first degree of mental aberration when it is set on small things. The Baron de Watteville treasured shells and geological fragments of the neighborhood of Besancon. Some contradictory folk, especially women, would say of Monsieur de Watteville, "He has a noble soul! He perceived from the first days of his married life that he would never be his wife's master, so he threw himself into a mechanical occupation and good living."

The house of the Rupts was not devoid of a certain magnificence worthy of Louis XIV., and bore traces of the nobility of the two families who had mingled in 1815. The chandeliers of glass cut in the shape of leaves, the brocades, the damask, the carpets, the gilt furniture, were all in harmony with the old liveries and the old servants. Though served in blackened family plate, round a looking-glass tray furnished with Dresden china, the food was exquisite. The wines selected by Monsieur de Watteville, who, to occupy his time and vary his employments, was his own butler, enjoyed a sort of fame throughout the department. Madame de Watteville's fortune was a fine one; while her husband's, which consisted only of the estate of Rouxey, worth about ten thousand francs a year, was not increased by inheritance. It is needless to add that in consequence of Madame de Watteville's close intimacy with the Archbishop, the three or four clever or remarkable Abbes of the diocese who were not averse to good feeding were very much at home at her house.

At a ceremonial dinner given in honor of I know not whose wedding, at the beginning of September 1834, when the women were standing in a circle round the drawing-room fire, and the men in groups by the windows, every one exclaimed with pleasure at the entrance of Monsieur l'Abbe de Grancey, who was announced.

"Well, and the lawsuit?" they all cried.

"Won!" replied the Vicar-General. "The verdict of the Court, from which we had no hope, you know why——"

This was an allusion to the members of the First Court of Appeal of 1830; the Legitimists had almost all withdrawn.

"The verdict is in our favor on every point, and reverses the decision of the Lower Court."

"Everybody thought you were done for."

"And we should have been, but for me. I told our advocate to be off to Paris, and at the crucial moment I was able to secure a new pleader, to whom we owe our victory, a wonderful man—"

"At Besancon?" said Monsieur de Watteville, guilelessly.

"At Besancon," replied the Abbe de Grancey.

"Oh yes, Savaron," said a handsome young man sitting near the Baroness, and named de Soulas.

"He spent five or six nights over it; he devoured documents and briefs; he had seven or eight interviews of several hours with me," continued Monsieur de Grancey, who had just reappeared at the Hotel de Rupt for the first time in three weeks. "In short, Monsieur Savaron has just completely beaten the celebrated lawyer whom our adversaries had sent for from Paris. This young man is wonderful, the bigwigs say. Thus the chapter is twice victorious; it has triumphed in law and also in politics, since it has vanquished Liberalism in the person of the Counsel of our Municipality.—'Our adversaries,' so our advocate said, 'must not expect to find readiness on all sides to ruin the Archbishoprics.'—The President was obliged to enforce silence. All the townsfolk of Besancon applauded. Thus the possession of the buildings of the old convent remains with the Chapter of the Cathedral of Besancon. Monsieur Savaron, however, invited his Parisian opponent to dine with him as they came out of court. He accepted, saying, 'Honor to every conqueror,' and complimented him on his success without bitterness."

"And where did you unearth this lawyer?" said Madame de Watteville. "I never heard his name before."

"Why, you can see his windows from hence," replied the Vicar-General. "Monsieur Savaron lives in the Rue du Perron; the garden of his house joins on to yours."

"But he is not a native of the Comte," said Monsieur de Watteville.

"So little is he a native of any place, that no one knows where he comes from," said Madame de Chavoncourt.

"But who is he?" asked Madame de Watteville, taking the Abbe's arm to go into the dining-room. "If he is a stranger, by what chance has he settled at Besancon? It is a strange fancy for a barrister."

"Very strange!" echoed Amedee de Soulas, whose biography is here necessary to the understanding of this tale.

In all ages France and England have carried on an exchange of trifles, which is all the more constant because it evades the tyranny of the Custom-house. The fashion that is called English in Paris is called French in London, and this is reciprocal. The hostility of the two nations is suspended on two points—the uses of words and the fashions of dress. God Save the King, the national air of England, is a tune written by Lulli for the Chorus of Esther or

of Athalie. Hoops, introduced at Paris by an Englishwoman, were invented in London, it is known why, by a Frenchwoman, the notorious Duchess of Portsmouth. They were at first so jeered at that the first Englishwoman who appeared in them at the Tuileries narrowly escaped being crushed by the crowd; but they were adopted. This fashion tyrannized over the ladies of Europe for half a century. At the peace of 1815, for a year, the long waists of the English were a standing jest; all Paris went to see Pothier and Brunet in Les Anglaises pour rire; but in 1816 and 1817 the belt of the Frenchwoman, which in 1814 cut her across the bosom, gradually descended till it reached the hips.

Within ten years England has made two little gifts to our language. The Incroyable, the Merveilleux, the Elegant, the three successes of the petit-maitre of discreditable etymology, have made way for the "dandy" and the "lion." The lion is not the parent of the lionne. The lionne is due to the famous song by Alfred de Musset:

Avez vous vu dans Barcelone

.... C'est ma maitresse et ma lionne.

There has been a fusion—or, if you prefer it, a confusion—of the two words and the leading ideas. When an absurdity can amuse Paris, which devours as many masterpieces as absurdities, the provinces can hardly be deprived of them. So, as soon as the lion paraded Paris with his mane, his beard and moustaches, his waistcoats and his eyeglass, maintained in its place, without the help of his hands, by the contraction of his cheek, and eye-socket, the chief towns of some departments had their sub-lions, who protested by the smartness of their trouser-straps against the untidiness of their fellow-townsmen.

Thus, in 1834, Besancon could boast of a lion, in the person of Monsieur Amedee-Sylvain de Soulas, spelt Souleyas at the time of the Spanish occupation. Amedee de Soulas is perhaps the only man in Besancon descended from a Spanish family. Spain sent men to manage her business in the Comte, but very few Spaniards settled there. The Soulas remained in consequence of their connection with Cardinal Granvelle. Young Monsieur de Soulas was always talking of leaving Besancon, a dull town, church-going, and not literary, a military centre and garrison town, of which the manners and customs and physiognomy are worth describing. This opinion allowed of his lodging, like a man uncertain of the future, in three very scantily furnished rooms at the end of the Rue Neuve, just where it opens into the Rue de la Prefecture.

Young Monsieur de Soulas could not possibly live without a tiger. This tiger was the son of one of his farmers, a small servant aged fourteen, thick-

set, and named Babylas. The lion dressed his tiger very smartly—a short tunic-coat of iron-gray cloth, belted with patent leather, bright blue plush breeches, a red waistcoat, polished leather top-boots, a shiny hat with black lacing, and brass buttons with the arms of Soulas. Amedee gave this boy white cotton gloves and his washing, and thirty-six francs a month to keep himself—a sum that seemed enormous to the grisettes of Besancon: four hundred and twenty francs a year to a child of fifteen, without counting extras! The extras consisted in the price for which he could sell his turned clothes, a present when Soulas exchanged one of his horses, and the perquisite of the manure. The two horses, treated with sordid economy, cost, one with another, eight hundred francs a year. His bills for articles received from Paris, such as perfumery, cravats, jewelry, patent blacking, and clothes, ran to another twelve hundred francs. Add to this the groom, or tiger, the horses, a very superior style of dress, and six hundred francs a year for rent, and you will see a grand total of three thousand francs.

Now, Monsieur de Soulas' father had left him only four thousand francs a year, the income from some cottage farms which lent painful uncertainty to the rents. The lion had hardly three francs a day left for food, amusements, and gambling. He very often dined out, and breakfasted with remarkable frugality. When he was positively obliged to dine at his own cost, he sent his tiger to fetch a couple of dishes from a cookshop, never spending more than twenty-five sous.

Young Monsieur de Soulas was supposed to be a spendthrift, recklessly extravagant, whereas the poor man made the two ends meet in the year with a keenness and skill which would have done honor to a thrifty housewife. At Besancon in those days no one knew how great a tax on a man's capital were six francs spent in polish to spread on his boots or shoes, yellow gloves at fifty sous a pair, cleaned in the deepest secrecy to make them three times renewed, cravats costing ten francs, and lasting three months, four waistcoats at twenty-five francs, and trousers fitting close to the boots. How could he do otherwise, since we see women in Paris bestowing their special attention on simpletons who visit them, and cut out the most remarkable men by means of these frivolous advantages, which a man can buy for fifteen louis, and get his hair curled and a fine linen shirt into the bargain?

If this unhappy youth should seem to you to have become a lion on very cheap terms, you must know that Amedee de Soulas had been three times to Switzerland, by coach and in short stages, twice to Paris, and once from Paris to England. He passed as a well-informed traveler, and could say, "In England, where I went..." The dowagers of the town would say to him, "You, who have been in England..." He had been as far as Lombardy, and seen the shores of the Italian lakes. He read new books. Finally, when he was cleaning his gloves,

the tiger Babylas replied to callers, "Monsieur is very busy." An attempt had been made to withdraw Monsieur Amedee de Soulas from circulation by pronouncing him "A man of advanced ideas." Amedee had the gift of uttering with the gravity of a native the commonplaces that were in fashion, which gave him the credit of being one of the most enlightened of the nobility. His person was garnished with fashionable trinkets, and his head furnished with ideas hall-marked by the press.

In 1834 Amedee was a young man of five-and-twenty, of medium height, dark, with a very prominent thorax, well-made shoulders, rather plump legs, feet already fat, white dimpled hands, a beard under his chin, moustaches worthy of the garrison, a good-natured, fat, rubicund face, a flat nose, and brown expressionless eyes; nothing Spanish about him. He was progressing rapidly in the direction of obesity, which would be fatal to his pretensions. His nails were well kept, his beard trimmed, the smallest details of his dress attended to with English precision. Hence Amedee de Soulas was looked upon as the finest man in Besancon. A hairdresser who waited upon him at a fixed hour—another luxury, costing sixty francs a year—held him up as the sovereign authority in matters of fashion and elegance.

Amedee slept late, dressed and went out towards noon, to go to one of his farms and practise pistol-shooting. He attached as much importance to this exercise as Lord Byron did in his later days. Then, at three o'clock he came home, admired on horseback by the grisettes and the ladies who happened to be at their windows. After an affectation of study or business, which seemed to engage him till four, he dressed to dine out, spent the evening in the drawing-rooms of the aristocracy of Besancon playing whist, and went home to bed at eleven. No life could be more above board, more prudent, or more irreproachable, for he punctually attended the services at church on Sundays and holy days.

To enable you to understand how exceptional is such a life, it is necessary to devote a few words to an account of Besancon. No town ever offered more deaf and dumb resistance to progress. At Besancon the officials, the employes, the military, in short, every one engaged in governing it, sent thither from Paris to fill a post of any kind, are all spoken of by the expressive general name of the Colony. The colony is neutral ground, the only ground where, as in church, the upper rank and the townsfolk of the place can meet. Here, fired by a word, a look, or gesture, are started those feuds between house and house, between a woman of rank and a citizen's wife, which endure till death, and widen the impassable gulf which parts the two classes of society. With the exception of the Clermont-Mont-Saint-Jean, the Beauffremont, the de Scey, and the Gramont families, with a few others who come only to stay on their estates in the Comte, the aristocracy of Besancon dates no further back than a

couple of centuries, the time of the conquest by Louis XIV. This little world is essentially of the parlement, and arrogant, stiff, solemn, uncompromising, haughty beyond all comparison, even with the Court of Vienna, for in this the nobility of Besancon would put the Viennese drawing-rooms to shame. As to Victor Hugo, Nodier, Fourier, the glories of the town, they are never mentioned, no one thinks about them. The marriages in these families are arranged in the cradle, so rigidly are the greatest things settled as well as the smallest. No stranger, no intruder, ever finds his way into one of these houses, and to obtain an introduction for the colonels or officers of title belonging to the first families in France when quartered there, requires efforts of diplomacy which Prince Talleyrand would gladly have mastered to use at a congress.

In 1834 Amedee was the only man in Besancon who wore trouser-straps; this will account for the young man's being regarded as a lion. And a little anecdote will enable you to understand the city of Besancon.

Some time before the opening of this story, the need arose at the prefecture for bringing an editor from Paris for the official newspaper, to enable it to hold its own against the little Gazette, dropped at Besancon by the great Gazette, and the Patriot, which frisked in the hands of the Republicans. Paris sent them a young man, knowing nothing about la Franche Comte, who began by writing them a leading article of the school of the Charivari. The chief of the moderate party, a member of the municipal council, sent for the journalist and said to him, "You must understand, monsieur, that we are serious, more than serious —tiresome; we resent being amused, and are furious at having been made to laugh. Be as hard of digestion as the toughest disquisitions in the Revue des Deux Mondes, and you will hardly reach the level of Besancon."

The editor took the hint, and thenceforth spoke the most incomprehensible philosophical lingo. His success was complete.

If young Monsieur de Soulas did not fall in the esteem of Besancon society, it was out of pure vanity on its part; the aristocracy were happy to affect a modern air, and to be able to show any Parisians of rank who visited the Comte a young man who bore some likeness to them.

All this hidden labor, all this dust thrown in people's eyes, this display of folly and latent prudence, had an object, or the lion of Besancon would have been no son of the soil. Amedee wanted to achieve a good marriage by proving some day that his farms were not mortgaged, and that he had some savings. He wanted to be the talk of the town, to be the finest and best-dressed man there, in order to win first the attention, and then the hand, of Mademoiselle Rosalie de Watteville.

In 1830, at the time when young Monsieur de Soulas was setting up in business as a dandy, Rosalie was but fourteen. Hence, in 1834, Mademoiselle

de Watteville had reached the age when young persons are easily struck by the peculiarities which attracted the attention of the town to Amedee. There are so many lions who become lions out of self-interest and speculation. The Wattevilles, who for twelve years had been drawing an income of fifty thousand francs a year, did not spend more than four-and-twenty thousand francs a year, while receiving all the upper circle of Besancon every Monday and Friday. On Monday they gave a dinner, on Friday an evening party. Thus, in twelve years, what a sum must have accumulated from twenty-six thousand francs a year, saved and invested with the judgment that distinguishes those old families! It was very generally supposed that Madame de Watteville, thinking she had land enough, had placed her savings in the three per cents, in 1830. Rosalie's dowry would therefore, as the best informed opined, amount to about twenty thousand francs a year. So for the last five years Amedee had worked like a mole to get into the highest favor of the severe Baroness, while laying himself out to flatter Mademoiselle de Watteville's conceit.

Madame de Watteville was in the secret of the devices by which Amedee succeeded in keeping up his rank in Besancon, and esteemed him highly for it. Soulas had placed himself under her wing when she was thirty, and at that time had dared to admire her and make her his idol; he had got so far as to be allowed—he alone in the world—to pour out to her all the unseemly gossip which almost all very precise women love to hear, being authorized by their superior virtue to look into the gulf without falling, and into the devil's snares without being caught. Do you understand why the lion did not allow himself the very smallest intrigue? He lived a public life, in the street so to speak, on purpose to play the part of a lover sacrificed to duty by the Baroness, and to feast her mind with the sins she had forbidden to her senses. A man who is so privileged as to be allowed to pour light stories into the ear of a bigot is in her eyes a charming man. If this exemplary youth had better known the human heart, he might without risk have allowed himself some flirtations among the grisettes of Besancon who looked up to him as a king; his affairs might perhaps have been all the more hopeful with the strict and prudish Baroness. To Rosalie our Cato affected prodigality; he professed a life of elegance, showing her in perspective the splendid part played by a woman of fashion in Paris, whither he meant to go as Depute.

All these manoeuvres were crowned with complete success. In 1834 the mothers of the forty noble families composing the high society of Besancon quoted Monsieur Amedee de Soulas as the most charming young man in the town; no one would have dared to dispute his place as cock of the walk at the Hotel de Rupt, and all Besancon regarded him as Rosalie de Watteville's future husband. There had even been some exchange of ideas on the subject between the Baroness and Amedee, to which the Baron's apparent nonentity gave some certainty.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, to whom her enormous prospective fortune at that time lent considerable importance, had been brought up exclusively within the precincts of the Hotel de Rupt—which her mother rarely quitted, so devoted was she to her dear Archbishop—and severely repressed by an exclusively religious education, and by her mother's despotism, which held her rigidly to principles. Rosalie knew absolutely nothing. Is it knowledge to have learned geography from Guthrie, sacred history, ancient history, the history of France, and the four rules all passed through the sieve of an old Jesuit? Dancing and music were forbidden, as being more likely to corrupt life than to grace it. The Baroness taught her daughter every conceivable stitch in tapestry and women's work—plain sewing, embroidery, netting. At seventeen Rosalie had never read anything but the Lettres edifiantes and some works on heraldry. No newspaper had ever defiled her sight. She attended mass at the Cathedral every morning, taken there by her mother, came back to breakfast, did needlework after a little walk in the garden, and received visitors, sitting with the baroness until dinner-time. Then, after dinner, excepting on Mondays and Fridays, she accompanied Madame de Watteville to other houses to spend the evening, without being allowed to talk more than the maternal rule permitted.

At eighteen Mademoiselle de Watteville was a slight, thin girl with a flat figure, fair, colorless, and insignificant to the last degree. Her eyes, of a very light blue, borrowed beauty from their lashes, which, when downcast, threw a shadow on her cheeks. A few freckles marred the whiteness of her forehead, which was shapely enough. Her face was exactly like those of Albert Durer's saints, or those of the painters before Perugino; the same plump, though slender modeling, the same delicacy saddened by ecstasy, the same severe guilelessness. Everything about her, even to her attitude, was suggestive of those virgins, whose beauty is only revealed in its mystical radiance to the eyes of the studious connoisseur. She had fine hands though red, and a pretty foot, the foot of an aristocrat.

She habitually wore simple checked cotton dresses; but on Sundays and in the evening her mother allowed her silk. The cut of her frocks, made at Besancon, almost made her ugly, while her mother tried to borrow grace, beauty, and elegance from Paris fashions; for through Monsieur de Soulas she procured the smallest trifles of her dress from thence. Rosalie had never worn a pair of silk stockings or thin boots, but always cotton stockings and leather shoes. On high days she was dressed in a muslin frock, her hair plainly dressed, and had bronze kid shoes.

This education, and her own modest demeanor, hid in Rosalie a spirit of iron. Physiologists and profound observers will tell you, perhaps to your astonishment, that tempers, characteristics, wit, or genius reappear in families at long intervals, precisely like what are known as hereditary diseases. Thus

talent, like the gout, sometimes skips over two generations. We have an illustrious example of this phenomenon in George Sand, in whom are resuscitated the force, the power, and the imaginative faculty of the Marechal de Saxe, whose natural granddaughter she is.

The decisive character and romantic daring of the famous Watteville had reappeared in the soul of his grand-niece, reinforced by the tenacity and pride of blood of the Rupts. But these qualities—or faults, if you will have it so—were as deeply buried in this young girlish soul, apparently so weak and yielding, as the seething lavas within a hill before it becomes a volcano. Madame de Watteville alone, perhaps, suspected this inheritance from two strains. She was so severe to her Rosalie, that she replied one day to the Archbishop, who blamed her for being too hard on the child, "Leave me to manage her, monseigneur. I know her! She has more than one Beelzebub in her skin!"

The Baroness kept all the keener watch over her daughter, because she considered her honor as a mother to be at stake. After all, she had nothing else to do. Clotilde de Rupt, at this time five-and-thirty, and as good as widowed, with a husband who turned egg-cups in every variety of wood, who set his mind on making wheels with six spokes out of iron-wood, and manufactured snuff-boxes for everyone of his acquaintance, flirted in strict propriety with Amedee de Soulas. When this young man was in the house, she alternately dismissed and recalled her daughter, and tried to detect symptoms of jealousy in that youthful soul, so as to have occasion to repress them. She imitated the police in its dealings with the republicans; but she labored in vain. Rosalie showed no symptoms of rebellion. Then the arid bigot accused her daughter of perfect insensibility. Rosalie knew her mother well enough to be sure that if she had thought young Monsieur de Soulas nice, she would have drawn down on herself a smart reproof. Thus, to all her mother's incitement she replied merely by such phrases as are wrongly called Jesuitical—wrongly, because the Jesuits were strong, and such reservations are the chevaux de frise behind which weakness takes refuge. Then the mother regarded the girl as a dissembler. If by mischance a spark of the true nature of the Wattevilles and the Rupts blazed out, the mother armed herself with the respect due from children to their parents to reduce Rosalie to passive obedience.

This covert battle was carried on in the most secret seclusion of domestic life, with closed doors. The Vicar-General, the dear Abbe Grancey, the friend of the late Archbishop, clever as he was in his capacity of the chief Father Confessor of the diocese, could not discover whether the struggle had stirred up some hatred between the mother and daughter, whether the mother were jealous in anticipation, or whether the court Amedee was paying to the girl through her mother had not overstepped its due limits. Being a friend of the

family, neither mother nor daughter, confessed to him. Rosalie, a little too much harried, morally, about young de Soulas, could not abide him, to use a homely phrase, and when he spoke to her, trying to take her heart by surprise, she received him but coldly. This aversion, discerned only by her mother's eyes, was a constant subject of admonition.

"Rosalie, I cannot imagine why you affect such coldness towards Amedee. Is it because he is a friend of the family, and because we like him—your father and I?"

"Well, mamma," replied the poor child one day, "if I made him welcome, should I not be still more in the wrong?"

"What do you mean by that?" cried Madame de Watteville. "What is the meaning of such words? Your mother is unjust, no doubt, and according to you, would be so in any case! Never let such an answer pass your lips again to your mother—" and so forth.

This quarrel lasted three hours and three-quarters. Rosalie noted the time. Her mother, pale with fury, sent her to her room, where Rosalie pondered on the meaning of this scene without discovering it, so guileless was she. Thus young Monsieur de Soulas, who was supposed by every one to be very near the end he was aiming at, all neckcloths set, and by dint of pots of patent blacking—an end which required so much waxing of his moustaches, so many smart waistcoats, wore out so many horseshoes and stays—for he wore a leather vest, the stays of the lion—Amedee, I say, was further away than any chance comer, although he had on his side the worthy and noble Abbe de Grancey.

"Madame," said Monsieur de Soulas, addressing the Baroness, while waiting till his soup was cool enough to swallow, and affecting to give a romantic turn to his narrative, "one fine morning the mail coach dropped at the Hotel National a gentleman from Paris, who, after seeking apartments, made up his mind in favor of the first floor in Mademoiselle Galard's house, Rue du Perron. Then the stranger went straight to the Mairie, and had himself registered as a resident with all political qualifications. Finally, he had his name entered on the list of the barristers to the Court, showing his title in due form, and he left his card on all his new colleagues, the Ministerial officials, the Councillors of the Court, and the members of the bench, with the name, 'ALBERT SAVARON.'"

"The name of Savaron is famous," said Mademoiselle de Watteville, who was strong in heraldic information. "The Savarons of Savarus are one of the oldest, noblest, and richest families in Belgium."

"He is a Frenchman, and no man's son," replied Amedee de Soulas. "If he

wishes to bear the arms of the Savarons of Savarus, he must add a bar-sinister. There is no one left of the Brabant family but a Mademoiselle de Savarus, a rich heiress, and unmarried."

"The bar-sinister is, of course, the badge of a bastard; but the bastard of a Comte de Savarus is noble," answered Rosalie.

"Enough, that will do, mademoiselle!" said the Baroness.

"You insisted on her learning heraldry," said Monsieur de Watteville, "and she knows it very well."

"Go on, I beg, Monsieur de Soulas."

"You may suppose that in a town where everything is classified, known, pigeon-holed, ticketed, and numbered, as in Besancon, Albert Savaron was received without hesitation by the lawyers of the town. They were satisfied to say, 'Here is a man who does not know his Besancon. Who the devil can have sent him here? What can he hope to do? Sending his card to the Judges instead of calling in person! What a blunder!' And so, three days after, Savaron had ceased to exist. He took as his servant old Monsieur Galard's man—Galard being dead—Jerome, who can cook a little. Albert Savaron was all the more completely forgotten, because no one had seen him or met him anywhere."

"Then, does he not go to mass?" asked Madame de Chavoncourt.

"He goes on Sundays to Saint-Pierre, but to the early service at eight in the morning. He rises every night between one and two in the morning, works till eight, has his breakfast, and then goes on working. He walks in his garden, going round fifty, or perhaps sixty times; then he goes in, dines, and goes to bed between six and seven."

"How did you learn all that?" Madame de Chavoncourt asked Monsieur de Soulas.

"In the first place, madame, I live in the Rue Neuve, at the corner of the Rue du Perron; I look out on the house where this mysterious personage lodges; then, of course, there are communications between my tiger and Jerome."

"And you gossip with Babylas?"

"What would you have me do out riding?"

"Well—and how was it that you engaged a stranger for your defence?" asked the Baroness, thus placing the conversation in the hands of the Vicar-General.

"The President of the Court played this pleader a trick by appointing him to defend at the Assizes a half-witted peasant accused of forgery. But

Monsieur Savaron procured the poor man's acquittal by proving his innocence and showing that he had been a tool in the hands of the real culprits. Not only did his line of defence succeed, but it led to the arrest of two of the witnesses, who were proved guilty and condemned. His speech struck the Court and the jury. One of these, a merchant, placed a difficult case next day in the hands of Monsieur Savaron, and he won it. In the position in which we found ourselves, Monsieur Berryer finding it impossible to come to Besancon, Monsieur de Garcenault advised him to employ this Monsieur Albert Savaron, foretelling our success. As soon as I saw him and heard him, I felt faith in him, and I was not wrong."

"Is he then so extraordinary?" asked Madame de Chavoncourt.

"Certainly, madame," replied the Vicar-General.

"Well, tell us about it," said Madame de Watteville.

"The first time I saw him," said the Abbe de Grancey, "he received me in his outer room next the ante-room—old Galard's drawing-room—which he has had painted like old oak, and which I found entirely lined with law-books, arranged on shelves also painted as old oak. The painting and the books are the sole decoration of the room, for the furniture consists of an old writing table of carved wood, six old armchairs covered with tapestry, window curtains of gray stuff bordered with green, and a green carpet over the floor. The ante-room stove heats this library as well. As I waited there I did not picture my advocate as a young man. But this singular setting is in perfect harmony with his person; for Monsieur Savaron came out in a black merino dressing-gown tied with a red cord, red slippers, a red flannel waistcoat, and a red smoking-cap."

"The devil's colors!" exclaimed Madame de Watteville.

"Yes," said the Abbe; "but a magnificent head. Black hair already streaked with a little gray, hair like that of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in pictures, with thick shining curls, hair as stiff as horse-hair; a round white throat like a woman's; a splendid forehead, furrowed by the strong median line which great schemes, great thoughts, deep meditations stamp on a great man's brow; an olive complexion marbled with red, a square nose, eyes of flame, hollow cheeks, with two long lines, betraying much suffering, a mouth with a sardonic smile, and a small chin, narrow, and too short; crow's feet on his temples; deep-set eyes, moving in their sockets like burning balls; but, in spite of all these indications of a violently passionate nature, his manner was calm, deeply resigned, and his voice of penetrating sweetness, which surprised me in Court by its easy flow; a true orator's voice, now clear and appealing, sometimes insinuating, but a voice of thunder when needful, and lending itself to sarcasm to become incisive.

"Monsieur Albert Savaron is of middle height, neither stout nor thin. And his hands are those of a prelate.

"The second time I called on him he received me in his bed-room, adjoining the library, and smiled at my astonishment when I saw there a wretched chest of drawers, a shabby carpet, a camp-bed, and cotton window-curtains. He came out of his private room, to which no one is admitted, as Jerome informed me; the man did not go in, but merely knocked at the door.

"The third time he was breakfasting in his library on the most frugal fare; but on this occasion, as he had spent the night studying our documents, as I had my attorney with me, and as that worthy Monsieur Girardet is long-winded, I had leisure to study the stranger. He certainly is no ordinary man. There is more than one secret behind that face, at once so terrible and so gentle, patient and yet impatient, broad and yet hollow. I saw, too, that he stooped a little, like all men who have some heavy burden to bear."

"Why did so eloquent a man leave Paris? For what purpose did he come to Besancon?" asked pretty Madame de Chavoncourt. "Could no one tell him how little chance a stranger has of succeeding here? The good folks of Besancon will make use of him, but they will not allow him to make use of them. Why, having come, did he make so little effort that it needed a freak of the President's to bring him forward?"

"After carefully studying that fine head," said the Abbe, looking keenly at the lady who had interrupted him, in such a way as to suggest that there was something he would not tell, "and especially after hearing him this morning reply to one of the bigwigs of the Paris Bar, I believe that this man, who may be five-and-thirty, will by and by make a great sensation."

"Why should we discuss him? You have gained your action, and paid him," said Madame de Watteville, watching her daughter, who, all the time the Vicar-General had been speaking, seemed to hang on his lips.

The conversation changed, and no more was heard of Albert Savaron.

The portrait sketched by the cleverest of the Vicars-General of the diocese had all the greater charm for Rosalie because there was a romance behind it. For the first time in her life she had come across the marvelous, the exceptional, which smiles on every youthful imagination, and which curiosity, so eager at Rosalie's age, goes forth to meet half-way. What an ideal being was this Albert—gloomy, unhappy, eloquent, laborious, as compared by Mademoiselle de Watteville to that chubby fat Count, bursting with health, paying compliments, and talking of the fashions in the very face of the splendor of the old counts of Rupt. Amedee had cost her many quarrels and scoldings, and, indeed, she knew him only too well; while this Albert Savaron

offered many enigmas to be solved.

"Albert Savaron de Savarus," she repeated to herself.

Now, to see him, to catch sight of him! This was the desire of the girl to whom desire was hitherto unknown. She pondered in her heart, in her fancy, in her brain, the least phrases used by the Abbe de Grancey, for all his words had told.

"A fine forehead!" said she to herself, looking at the head of every man seated at the table; "I do not see one fine one.—Monsieur de Soulas' is too prominent; Monsieur de Grancey's is fine, but he is seventy, and has no hair, it is impossible to see where his forehead ends."

"What is the matter, Rosalie; you are eating nothing?"

"I am not hungry, mamma," said she. "A prelate's hands——" she went on to herself. "I cannot remember our handsome Archbishop's hands, though he confirmed me."

Finally, in the midst of her coming and going in the labyrinth of her meditations, she remembered a lighted window she had seen from her bed, gleaming through the trees of the two adjoining gardens, when she had happened to wake in the night.... "Then that was his light!" thought she. "I might see him!—I will see him."

"Monsieur de Grancey, is the Chapter's lawsuit quite settled?" said Rosalie point-blank to the Vicar-General, during a moment of silence.

Madame de Watteville exchanged rapid glances with the Vicar-General.

"What can that matter to you, my dear child?" she said to Rosalie, with an affected sweetness which made her daughter cautious for the rest of her days.

"It might be carried to the Court of Appeal, but our adversaries will think twice about that," replied the Abbe.

"I never could have believed that Rosalie would think about a lawsuit all through a dinner," remarked Madame de Watteville.

"Nor I either," said Rosalie, in a dreamy way that made every one laugh. "But Monsieur de Grancey was so full of it, that I was interested."

The company rose from table and returned to the drawing-room. All through the evening Rosalie listened in case Albert Savaron should be mentioned again; but beyond the congratulations offered by each newcomer to the Abbe on having gained his suit, to which no one added any praise of the advocate, no more was said about it. Mademoiselle de Watteville impatiently looked forward to bedtime. She had promised herself to wake at between two and three in the morning, and to look at Albert's dressing-room windows.

When the hour came, she felt almost pleasure in gazing at the glimmer from the lawyer's candles that shone through the trees, now almost bare of their leaves. By the help of the strong sight of a young girl, which curiosity seems to make longer, she saw Albert writing, and fancied she could distinguish the color of the furniture, which she thought was red. From the chimney above the roof rose a thick column of smoke.

"While all the world is sleeping, he is awake—like God!" thought she.

The education of girls brings with it such serious problems—for the future of a nation is in the mother—that the University of France long since set itself the task of having nothing to do with it. Here is one of these problems: Ought girls to be informed on all points? Ought their minds to be under restraint? It need not be said that the religious system is one of restraint. If you enlighten them, you make them demons before their time; if you keep them from thinking, you end in the sudden explosion so well shown by Moliere in the character of Agnes, and you leave this suppressed mind, so fresh and clear-seeing, as swift and as logical as that of a savage, at the mercy of an accident. This inevitable crisis was brought on in Mademoiselle de Watteville by the portrait which one of the most prudent Abbes of the Chapter of Besancon imprudently allowed himself to sketch at a dinner party.

Next morning, Mademoiselle de Watteville, while dressing, necessarily looked out at Albert Savaron walking in the garden adjoining that of the Hotel de Rupt.

"What would have become of me," thought she, "if he had lived anywhere else? Here I can, at any rate, see him.—What is he thinking about?"

Having seen this extraordinary man, though at a distance, the only man whose countenance stood forth in contrast with crowds of Besancon faces she had hitherto met with, Rosalie at once jumped at the idea of getting into his house, of ascertaining the reason of so much mystery, of hearing that eloquent voice, of winning a glance from those fine eyes. All this she set her heart on, but how could she achieve it?

All that day she drew her needle through her embroidery with the obtuse concentration of a girl who, like Agnes, seems to be thinking of nothing, but who is reflecting on things in general so deeply, that her artifice is unfailing. As a result of this profound meditation, Rosalie thought she would go to confession. Next morning, after Mass, she had a brief interview with the Abbe Giroud at Saint-Pierre, and managed so ingeniously that the hour of her confession was fixed for Sunday morning at half-past seven, before the eight o'clock Mass. She committed herself to a dozen fibs in order to find herself, just for once, in the church at the hour when the lawyer came to Mass. Then she was seized with an impulse of extreme affection for her father; she went to

see him in his workroom, and asked him for all sorts of information on the art of turning, ending by advising him to turn larger pieces, columns. After persuading her father to set to work on some twisted pillars, one of the difficulties of the turner's art, she suggested that he should make use of a large heap of stones that lay in the middle of the garden to construct a sort of grotto on which he might erect a little temple or Belvedere in which his twisted pillars could be used and shown off to all the world.

At the climax of the pleasure the poor unoccupied man derived from this scheme, Rosalie said, as she kissed him, "Above all, do not tell mamma who gave you the notion; she would scold me."

"Do not be afraid!" replied Monsieur de Watteville, who groaned as bitterly as his daughter under the tyranny of the terrible descendant of the Rupts.

So Rosalie had a certain prospect of seeing ere long a charming observatory built, whence her eye would command the lawyer's private room. And there are men for whose sake young girls can carry out such masterstrokes of diplomacy, while, for the most part, like Albert Savaron, they know it not.

The Sunday so impatiently looked for arrived, and Rosalie dressed with such carefulness as made Mariette, the ladies'-maid, smile.

"It is the first time I ever knew mademoiselle to be so fidgety," said Mariette.

"It strikes me," said Rosalie, with a glance at Mariette, which brought poppies to her cheeks, "that you too are more particular on some days than on others."

As she went down the steps, across the courtyard, and through the gates, Rosalie's heart beat, as everybody's does in anticipation of a great event. Hitherto, she had never known what it was to walk in the streets; for a moment she had felt as though her mother must read her schemes on her brow, and forbid her going to confession, and she now felt new blood in her feet, she lifted them as though she trod on fire. She had, of course, arranged to be with her confessor at a quarter-past eight, telling her mother eight, so as to have about a quarter of an hour near Albert. She got to church before Mass, and after a short prayer, went to see if the Abbe Giroud were in his confessional, simply to pass the time; and she thus placed herself in such a way as to see Albert as he came into church.

The man must have been atrociously ugly who did not seem handsome to Mademoiselle de Watteville in the frame of mind produced by her curiosity. And Albert Savaron, who was really very striking, made all the more

impression on Rosalie because his mien, his walk, his carriage, everything down to his clothing, had the indescribable stamp which can only be expressed by the word Mystery.

He came in. The church, till now gloomy, seemed to Rosalie to be illuminated. The girl was fascinated by his slow and solemn demeanor, as of a man who bears a world on his shoulders and whose deep gaze, whose very gestures, combine to express a devastating or absorbing thought. Rosalie now understood the Vicar-General's words in their fullest extent. Yes, those eyes of tawny brown, shot with golden lights, covered ardor which revealed itself in sudden flashes. Rosalie, with a recklessness which Mariette noted, stood in the lawyer's way, so as to exchange glances with him; and this glance turned her blood, for it seethed and boiled as though its warmth were doubled.

As soon as Albert had taken a seat, Mademoiselle de Watteville quickly found a place whence she could see him perfectly during all the time the Abbe might leave her. When Mariette said, "Here is Monsieur Giroud," it seemed to Rosalie that the interview had lasted no more than a few minutes. By the time she came out from the confessional, Mass was over. Albert had left the church.

"The Vicar-General was right," thought she. "He is unhappy. Why should this eagle—for he has the eyes of an eagle—swoop down on Besancon? Oh, I must know everything! But how?"

Under the smart of this new desire Rosalie set the stitches of her worsted-work with exquisite precision, and hid her meditations under a little innocent air, which shammed simplicity to deceive Madame de Watteville.

From that Sunday, when Mademoiselle de Watteville had met that look, or, if you please, received this baptism of fire—a fine expression of Napoleon's which may be well applied to love—she eagerly promoted the plan for the Belvedere.

"Mamma," said she one day when two columns were turned, "my father has taken a singular idea into his head; he is turning columns for a Belvedere he intends to erect on the heap of stones in the middle of the garden. Do you approve of it? It seems to me—"

"I approve of everything your father does," said Madame de Watteville drily, "and it is a wife's duty to submit to her husband even if she does not approve of his ideas. Why should I object to a thing which is of no importance in itself, if only it amuses Monsieur de Watteville?"

"Well, because from thence we shall see into Monsieur de Soulas' rooms, and Monsieur de Soulas will see us when we are there. Perhaps remarks may be made—"

"Do you presume, Rosalie, to guide your parents, and think you know more than they do of life and the proprieties?"

"I say no more, mamma. Besides, my father said that there would be a room in the grotto, where it would be cool, and where we can take coffee."

"Your father has had an excellent idea," said Madame de Watteville, who forthwith went to look at the columns.

She gave her entire approbation to the Baron de Watteville's design, while choosing for the erection of this monument a spot at the bottom of the garden, which could not be seen from Monsieur de Soulas' windows, but whence they could perfectly see into Albert Savaron's rooms. A builder was sent for, who undertook to construct a grotto, of which the top should be reached by a path three feet wide through the rock-work, where periwinkles would grow, iris, clematis, ivy, honeysuckle, and Virginia creeper. The Baroness desired that the inside should be lined with rustic wood-work, such as was then the fashion for flower-stands, with a looking-glass against the wall, an ottoman forming a box, and a table of inlaid bark. Monsieur de Soulas proposed that the floor should be of asphalt. Rosalie suggested a hanging chandelier of rustic wood.

"The Wattevilles are having something charming done in their garden," was rumored in Besancon.

"They are rich, and can afford a thousand crowns for a whim—"

"A thousand crowns!" exclaimed Madame de Chavoncourt.

"Yes, a thousand crowns," cried young Monsieur de Soulas. "A man has been sent for from Paris to rusticate the interior but it will be very pretty. Monsieur de Watteville himself is making the chandelier, and has begun to carve the wood."

"Berquet is to make a cellar under it," said an Abbe.

"No," replied young Monsieur de Soulas, "he is raising the kiosk on a concrete foundation, that it may not be damp."

"You know the very least things that are done in that house," said Madame de Chavoncourt sourly, as she looked at one of her great girls waiting to be married for a year past.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, with a little flush of pride in thinking of the success of her Belvedere, discerned in herself a vast superiority over every one about her. No one guessed that a little girl, supposed to be a witless goose, had simply made up her mind to get a closer view of the lawyer Savaron's private study.

Albert Savaron's brilliant defence of the Cathedral Chapter was all the

sooner forgotten because the envy of the other lawyers was aroused. Also, Savaron, faithful to his seclusion, went nowhere. Having no friends to cry him up, and seeing no one, he increased the chances of being forgotten which are common to strangers in Besancon. Nevertheless, he pleaded three times at the Commercial Tribunal in three knotty cases which had to be carried to the superior Court. He thus gained as clients four of the chief merchants of the place, who discerned in him so much good sense and sound legal purview that they placed their claims in his hands.

On the day when the Watteville family inaugurated the Belvedere, Savaron also was founding a monument. Thanks to the connections he had obscurely formed among the upper class of merchants in Besancon, he was starting a fortnightly paper, called the Eastern Review, with the help of forty shares of five hundred francs each, taken up by his first ten clients, on whom he had impressed the necessity for promoting the interests of Besancon, the town where the traffic should meet between Mulhouse and Lyons, and the chief centre between Mulhouse and Rhone.

To compete with Strasbourg, was it not needful that Besancon should become a focus of enlightenment as well as of trade? The leading questions relating to the interests of Eastern France could only be dealt with in a review. What a glorious task to rob Strasbourg and Dijon of their literary importance, to bring light to the East of France, and compete with the centralizing influence of Paris! These reflections, put forward by Albert, were repeated by the ten merchants, who believed them to be their own.

Monsieur Savaron did not commit the blunder of putting his name in front; he left the finance of the concern to his chief client, Monsieur Boucher, connected by marriage with one of the great publishers of important ecclesiastical works; but he kept the editorship, with a share of the profits as founder. The commercial interest appealed to Dole, to Dijon, to Salins, to Neufchatel, to the Jura, Bourg, Nantua, Lous-le-Saulnier. The concurrence was invited of the learning and energy of every scientific student in the districts of le Bugey, la Bresse, and Franche Comte. By the influence of commercial interests and common feeling, five hundred subscribers were booked in consideration of the low price; the Review cost eight francs a quarter.

To avoid hurting the conceit of the provincials by refusing their articles, the lawyer hit on the good idea of suggesting a desire for the literary management of this Review to Monsieur Boucher's eldest son, a young man of two-and-twenty, very eager for fame, to whom the snares and woes of literary responsibilities were utterly unknown. Albert quietly kept the upper hand and made Alfred Boucher his devoted adherent. Alfred was the only man in Besancon with whom the king of the bar was on familiar terms. Alfred came in the morning to discuss the articles for the next number with Albert in the

garden. It is needless to say that the trial number contained a "Meditation" by Alfred, which Savaron approved. In his conversations with Alfred, Albert would let drop some great ideas, subjects for articles of which Alfred availed himself. And thus the merchant's son fancied he was making capital out of the great man. To Alfred, Albert was a man of genius, of profound politics. The commercial world, enchanted at the success of the Review, had to pay up only three-tenths of their shares. Two hundred more subscribers, and the periodical would pay a dividend to the share-holders of five per cent, the editor remaining unpaid. This editing, indeed, was beyond price.

After the third number the Review was recognized for exchange by all the papers published in France, which Albert henceforth read at home. This third number included a tale signed "A. S.," and attributed to the famous lawyer. In spite of the small attention paid by the higher circle of Besancon to the Review which was accused of Liberal views, this, the first novel produced in the county, came under discussion that mid-winter at Madame de Chavoncourt's.

"Papa," said Rosalie, "a Review is published in Besancon; you ought to take it in; and keep it in your room, for mamma would not let me read it, but you will lend it to me."

Monsieur de Watteville, eager to obey his dear Rosalie, who for the last five months had given him so many proofs of filial affection,—Monsieur de Watteville went in person to subscribe for a year to the Eastern Review, and lent the four numbers already out to his daughter. In the course of the night Rosalie devoured the tale—the first she had ever read in her life—but she had only known life for two months past. Hence the effect produced on her by this work must not be judged by ordinary rules. Without prejudice of any kind as to the greater or less merit of this composition from the pen of a Parisian who had thus imported into the province the manner, the brilliancy, if you will, of the new literary school, it could not fail to be a masterpiece to a young girl abandoning all her intelligence and her innocent heart to her first reading of this kind.

Also, from what she had heard said, Rosalie had by intuition conceived a notion of it which strangely enhanced the interest of this novel. She hoped to find in it the sentiments, and perhaps something of the life of Albert. From the first pages this opinion took so strong a hold on her, that after reading the fragment to the end she was certain that it was no mistake. Here, then, is this confession, in which, according to the critics of Madame de Chavoncourt's drawing-room, Albert had imitated some modern writers who, for lack of inventiveness, relate their private joys, their private griefs, or the mysterious events of their own life.

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AMBITION FOR LOVE'S SAKE

In 1823 two young men, having agreed as a plan for a holiday to make a tour through Switzerland, set out from Lucerne one fine morning in the month of July in a boat pulled by three oarsmen. They started for Fluelen, intending to stop at every notable spot on the lake of the Four Cantons. The views which shut in the waters on the way from Lucerne to Fluelen offer every combination that the most exacting fancy can demand of mountains and rivers, lakes and rocks, brooks and pastures, trees and torrents. Here are austere solitudes and charming headlands, smiling and trimly kept meadows, forests crowning perpendicular granite cliffs, like plumes, deserted but verdant reaches opening out, and valleys whose beauty seems the lovelier in the dreamy distance.

As they passed the pretty hamlet of Gersau, one of the friends looked for a long time at a wooden house which seemed to have been recently built, enclosed by a paling, and standing on a promontory, almost bathed by the waters. As the boat rowed past, a woman's head was raised against the background of the room on the upper story of this house, to admire the effect of the boat on the lake. One of the young men met the glance thus indifferently given by the unknown fair.

"Let us stop here," said he to his friend. "We meant to make Lucerne our headquarters for seeing Switzerland; you will not take it amiss, Leopold, if I change my mind and stay here to take charge of our possessions. Then you can go where you please; my journey is ended. Pull to land, men, and put us out at this village; we will breakfast here. I will go back to Lucerne to fetch all our luggage, and before you leave you will know in which house I take a lodging, where you will find me on your return."

"Here or at Lucerne," replied Leopold, "the difference is not so great that I need hinder you from following your whim."

These two youths were friends in the truest sense of the word. They were of the same age; they had learned at the same school; and after studying the law, they were spending their holiday in the classical tour in Switzerland. Leopold, by his father's determination, was already pledged to a place in a notary's office in Paris. His spirit of rectitude, his gentleness, and the coolness of his senses and his brain, guaranteed him to be a docile pupil. Leopold could see himself a notary in Paris; his life lay before him like one of the highroads that cross the plains of France, and he looked along its whole length with philosophical resignation.

The character of his companion, whom we will call Rodolphe, presented a strong contrast with Leopold's, and their antagonism had no doubt had the result of tightening the bond that united them. Rodolphe was the natural son of a man of rank, who was carried off by a premature death before he could make any arrangements for securing the means of existence to a woman he fondly loved and to Rodolphe. Thus cheated by a stroke of fate, Rodolphe's mother had recourse to a heroic measure. She sold everything she owed to the munificence of her child's father for a sum of more than a hundred thousand francs, bought with it a life annuity for herself at a high rate, and thus acquired an income of about fifteen thousand francs, resolving to devote the whole of it to the education of her son, so as to give him all the personal advantages that might help to make his fortune, while saving, by strict economy, a small capital to be his when he came of age. It was bold; it was counting on her own life; but without this boldness the good mother would certainly have found it impossible to live and to bring her child up suitably, and he was her only hope, her future, the spring of all her joys.

Rodolphe, the son of a most charming Parisian woman, and a man of mark, a nobleman of Brabant, was cursed with extreme sensitiveness. From his infancy he had in everything shown a most ardent nature. In him mere desire became a guiding force and the motive power of his whole being, the stimulus to his imagination, the reason of his actions. Notwithstanding the pains taken by a clever mother, who was alarmed when she detected this predisposition, Rodolphe wished for things as a poet imagines, as a mathematician calculates, as a painter sketches, as a musician creates melodies. Tender-hearted, like his mother, he dashed with inconceivable violence and impetus of thought after the object of his desires; he annihilated time. While dreaming of the fulfilment of his schemes, he always overlooked the means of attainment. "When my son has children," said his other, "he will want them born grown up."

This fine frenzy, carefully directed, enabled Rodolphe to achieve his studies with brilliant results, and to become what the English call an accomplished gentleman. His mother was then proud of him, though still fearing a catastrophe if ever a passion should possess a heart at once so tender and so susceptible, so vehement and so kind. Therefore, the judicious mother had encouraged the friendship which bound Leopold to Rodolphe and Rodolphe to Leopold, since she saw in the cold and faithful young notary, a guardian, a comrade, who might to a certain extent take her place if by some misfortune she should be lost to her son. Rodolphe's mother, still handsome at three-and-forty, had inspired Leopold with an ardent passion. This circumstance made the two young men even more intimate.

So Leopold, knowing Rodolphe well, was not surprised to find him stopping at a village and giving up the projected journey to Saint-Gothard, on

the strength of a single glance at the upper window of a house. While breakfast was prepared for them at the Swan Inn, the friends walked round the hamlet and came to the neighborhood of the pretty new house; here, while gazing about him and talking to the inhabitants, Rodolphe discovered the residence of some decent folk, who were willing to take him as a boarder, a very frequent custom in Switzerland. They offered him a bedroom looking over the lake and the mountains, and from whence he had a view of one of those immense sweeping reaches which, in this lake, are the admiration of every traveler. This house was divided by a roadway and a little creek from the new house, where Rodolphe had caught sight of the unknown fair one's face.

For a hundred francs a month Rodolphe was relieved of all thought for the necessaries of life. But, in consideration of the outlay the Stopfer couple expected to make, they bargained for three months' residence and a month's payment in advance. Rub a Swiss ever so little, and you find the usurer. After breakfast, Rodolphe at once made himself at home by depositing in his room such property as he had brought with him for the journey to the Saint-Gothard, and he watched Leopold as he set out, moved by the spirit of routine, to carry out the excursion for himself and his friend. When Rodolphe, sitting on a fallen rock on the shore, could no longer see Leopold's boat, he turned to examine the new house with stolen glances, hoping to see the fair unknown. Alas! he went in without its having given a sign of life. During dinner, in the company of Monsieur and Madame Stopfer, retired coopers from Neufchatel, he questioned them as to the neighborhood, and ended by learning all he wanted to know about the lady, thanks to his hosts' loquacity; for they were ready to pour out their budget of gossip without any pressing.

The fair stranger's name was Fanny Lovelace. This name (pronounced Loveless) is that of an old English family, but Richardson has given it to a creation whose fame eclipses all others! Miss Lovelace had come to settle by the lake for her father's health, the physicians having recommended him the air of Lucerne. These two English people had arrived with no other servant than a little girl of fourteen, a dumb child, much attached to Miss Fanny, on whom she waited very intelligently, and had settled, two winters since, with monsieur and Madame Bergmann, the retired head-gardeners of His Excellency Count Borromeo of Isola Bella and Isola Madre in the Lago Maggiore. These Swiss, who were possessed of an income of about a thousand crowns a year, had let the top story of their house to the Lovelaces for three years, at a rent of two hundred francs a year. Old Lovelace, a man of ninety, and much broken, was too poor to allow himself any gratifications, and very rarely went out; his daughter worked to maintain him, translating English books, and writing some herself, it was said. The Lovelaces could not afford to hire boats to row on the lake, or horses and guides to explore the neighborhood.

Poverty demanding such privation as this excites all the greater compassion among the Swiss, because it deprives them of a chance of profit. The cook of the establishment fed the three English boarders for a hundred francs a month inclusive. In Gersau it was generally believed, however, that the gardener and his wife, in spite of their pretensions, used the cook's name as a screen to net the little profits of this bargain. The Bergmanns had made beautiful gardens round their house, and had built a hothouse. The flowers, the fruit, and the botanical rarities of this spot were what had induced the young lady to settle on it as she passed through Gersau. Miss Fanny was said to be nineteen years old; she was the old man's youngest child, and the object of his adulation. About two months ago she had hired a piano from Lucerne, for she seemed to be crazy about music.

"She loves flowers and music, and she is unmarried!" thought Rodolphe; "what good luck!"

The next day Rodolphe went to ask leave to visit the hothouses and gardens, which were beginning to be somewhat famous. The permission was not immediately granted. The retired gardeners asked, strangely enough, to see Rodolphe's passport; it was sent to them at once. The paper was not returned to him till next morning, by the hands of the cook, who expressed her master's pleasure in showing him their place. Rodolphe went to the Bergmanns', not without a certain trepidation, known only to persons of strong feelings, who go through as much passion in a moment as some men experience in a whole lifetime.

After dressing himself carefully to gratify the old gardeners of the Borromean Islands, whom he regarded as the warders of his treasure, he went all over the grounds, looking at the house now and again, but with much caution; the old couple treated him with evident distrust. But his attention was soon attracted by the little English deaf-mute, in whom his discernment, though young as yet, enabled him to recognize a girl of African, or at least of Sicilian, origin. The child had the golden-brown color of a Havana cigar, eyes of fire, Armenian eyelids with lashes of very un-British length, hair blacker than black; and under this almost olive skin, sinews of extraordinary strength and feverish alertness. She looked at Rodolphe with amazing curiosity and effrontery, watching his every movement.

"To whom does that little Moresco belong?" he asked worthy Madame Bergmann.

"To the English," Monsieur Bergmann replied.

"But she never was born in England!"

"They may have brought her from the Indies," said Madame Bergmann.

"I have been told that Miss Lovelace is fond of music. I should be delighted if, during my residence by the lake to which I am condemned by my doctor's orders, she would allow me to join her."

"They receive no one, and will not see anybody," said the old gardener.

Rodolphe bit his lips and went away, without having been invited into the house, or taken into the part of the garden that lay between the front of the house and the shore of the little promontory. On that side the house had a balcony above the first floor, made of wood, and covered by the roof, which projected deeply like the roof of a chalet on all four sides of the building, in the Swiss fashion. Rodolphe had loudly praised the elegance of this arrangement, and talked of the view from that balcony, but all in vain. When he had taken leave of the Bergmanns it struck him that he was a simpleton, like any man of spirit and imagination disappointed of the results of a plan which he had believed would succeed.

In the evening he, of course, went out in a boat on the lake, round and about the spit of land, to Brunnen and to Schwytz, and came in at nightfall. From afar he saw the window open and brightly lighted; he heard the sound of a piano and the tones of an exquisite voice. He made the boatman stop, and gave himself up to the pleasure of listening to an Italian air delightfully sung. When the singing ceased, Rodolphe landed and sent away the boat and rowers. At the cost of wetting his feet, he went to sit down under the water-worn granite shelf crowned by a thick hedge of thorny acacia, by the side of which ran a long lime avenue in the Bergmanns' garden. By the end of an hour he heard steps and voices just above him, but the words that reached his ears were all Italian, and spoken by two women.

He took advantage of the moment when the two speakers were at one end of the walk to slip noiselessly to the other. After half an hour of struggling he got to the end of the avenue, and there took up a position whence, without being seen or heard, he could watch the two women without being observed by them as they came towards him. What was Rodolphe's amazement on recognizing the deaf-mute as one of them; she was talking to Miss Lovelace in Italian.

It was now eleven o'clock at night. The stillness was so perfect on the lake and around the dwelling, that the two women must have thought themselves safe; in all Gersau there could be no eyes open but theirs. Rodolphe supposed that the girl's dumbness must be a necessary deception. From the way in which they both spoke Italian, Rodolphe suspected that it was the mother tongue of both girls, and concluded that the name of English also hid some disguise.

"They are Italian refugees," said he to himself, "outlaws in fear of the Austrian or Sardinian police. The young lady waits till it is dark to walk and

talk in security."

He lay down by the side of the hedge, and crawled like a snake to find a way between two acacia shrubs. At the risk of leaving his coat behind him, or tearing deep scratches in his back, he got through the hedge when the so-called Miss Fanny and her pretended deaf-and-dumb maid were at the other end of the path; then, when they had come within twenty yards of him without seeing him, for he was in the shadow of the hedge, and the moon was shining brightly, he suddenly rose.

"Fear nothing," said he in French to the Italian girl, "I am not a spy. You are refugees, I have guessed that. I am a Frenchman whom one look from you has fixed at Gersau."

Rodolphe, startled by the acute pain caused by some steel instrument piercing his side, fell like a log.

"Nel lago con pietra!" said the terrible dumb girl.

"Oh, Gina!" exclaimed the Italian.

"She has missed me," said Rodolphe, pulling from his wound a stiletto, which had been turned by one of the false ribs. "But a little higher up it would have been deep in my heart.—I was wrong, Francesca," he went on, remembering the name he had heard little Gina repeat several times; "I owe her no grudge, do not scold her. The happiness of speaking to you is well worth the prick of a stiletto. Only show me the way out; I must get back to the Stopfers' house. Be easy; I shall tell nothing."

Francesca, recovering from her astonishment, helped Rodolphe to rise, and said a few words to Gina, whose eyes filled with tears. The two girls made him sit down on a bench and take off his coat, his waistcoat and cravat. Then Gina opened his shirt and sucked the wound strongly. Francesca, who had left them, returned with a large piece of sticking-plaster, which she applied to the wound.

"You can now walk as far as your house," she said.

Each took an arm, and Rodolphe was conducted to a side gate, of which the key was in Francesca's apron pocket.

"Does Gina speak French?" said Rodolphe to Francesca.

"No. But do not excite yourself," replied Francesca with some impatience.

"Let me look at you," said Rodolphe pathetically, "for it may be long before I am able to come again—-"

He leaned against one of the gate-posts contemplating the beautiful Italian, who allowed him to gaze at her for a moment under the sweetest silence and

the sweetest night which ever, perhaps, shone on this lake, the king of Swiss lakes.

Francesca was quite of the Italian type, and such as imagination supposes or pictures, or, if you will, dreams, that Italian women are. What first struck Rodolphe was the grace and elegance of a figure evidently powerful, though so slender as to appear fragile. An amber paleness overspread her face, betraying sudden interest, but it did not dim the voluptuous glance of her liquid eyes of velvety blackness. A pair of hands as beautiful as ever a Greek sculptor added to the polished arms of a statue grasped Rodolphe's arm, and their whiteness gleamed against his black coat. The rash Frenchman could but just discern the long, oval shape of her face, and a melancholy mouth showing brilliant teeth between the parted lips, full, fresh, and brightly red. The exquisite lines of this face guaranteed to Francesca permanent beauty; but what most struck Rodolphe was the adorable freedom, the Italian frankness of this woman, wholly absorbed as she was in her pity for him.

Francesca said a word to Gina, who gave Rodolphe her arm as far as the Stopfers' door, and fled like a swallow as soon as she had rung.

"These patriots do not play at killing!" said Rodolphe to himself as he felt his sufferings when he found himself in his bed. "'Nel lago!' Gina would have pitched me into the lake with a stone tied to my neck."

Next day he sent to Lucerne for the best surgeon there, and when he came, enjoined on him absolute secrecy, giving him to understand that his honor depended on it.

Leopold returned from his excursion on the day when his friend first got out of bed. Rodolphe made up a story, and begged him to go to Lucerne to fetch their luggage and letters. Leopold brought back the most fatal, the most dreadful news: Rodolphe's mother was dead. While the two friends were on their way from Bale to Lucerne, the fatal letter, written by Leopold's father, had reached Lucerne the day they left for Fluelen.

In spite of Leopold's utmost precautions, Rodolphe fell ill of a nervous fever. As soon as Leopold saw his friend out of danger, he set out for France with a power of attorney, and Rodolphe could thus remain at Gersau, the only place in the world where his grief could grow calmer. The young Frenchman's position, his despair, the circumstances which made such a loss worse for him than for any other man, were known, and secured him the pity and interest of every one in Gersau. Every morning the pretended dumb girl came to see him and bring him news of her mistress.

As soon as Rodolphe could go out he went to the Bergmanns' house, to thank Miss Fanny Lovelace and her father for the interest they had taken in his

sorrow and his illness. For the first time since he had lodged with the Bergmanns the old Italian admitted a stranger to his room, where Rodolphe was received with the cordiality due to his misfortunes and to his being a Frenchman, which excluded all distrust of him. Francesca looked so lovely by candle-light that first evening that she shed a ray of brightness on his grieving heart. Her smiles flung the roses of hope on his woe. She sang, not indeed gay songs, but grave and solemn melodies suited to the state of Rodolphe's heart, and he observed this touching care.

At about eight o'clock the old man left the young people without any sign of uneasiness, and went to his room. When Francesca was tired of singing, she led Rodolphe on to the balcony, whence they perceived the sublime scenery of the lake, and signed to him to be seated by her on a rustic wooden bench.

"Am I very indiscreet in asking how old you are, cara Francesca?" said Rodolphe.

"Nineteen," said she, "well past."

"If anything in the world could soothe my sorrow," he went on, "it would be the hope of winning you from your father, whatever your fortune may be. So beautiful as you are, you seem to be richer than a prince's daughter. And I tremble as I confess to you the feelings with which you have inspired me; but they are deep—they are eternal."

"Zitto!" said Francesca, laying a finger of her right hand on her lips. "Say no more; I am not free. I have been married these three years."

For a few minutes utter silence reigned. When the Italian girl, alarmed at Rodolphe's stillness, went close to him, she found that he had fainted.

"Povero!" she said to herself. "And I thought him cold."

She fetched him some salts, and revived Rodolphe by making him smell at them.

"Married!" said Rodolphe, looking at Francesca. And then his tears flowed freely.

"Child!" said she. "But there is still hope. My husband is—"

"Eighty?" Rodolphe put in.

"No," said she with a smile, "but sixty-five. He has disguised himself as much older to mislead the police."

"Dearest," said Rodolphe, "a few more shocks of this kind and I shall die. Only when you have known me twenty years will you understand the strength and power of my heart, and the nature of its aspirations for happiness. This plant," he went on, pointing to the yellow jasmine which covered the

balustrade, "does not climb more eagerly to spread itself in the sunbeams than I have clung to you for this month past. I love you with unique passion. That love will be the secret fount of my life—I may possibly die of it."

"Oh! Frenchman, Frenchman!" said she, emphasizing her exclamation with a little incredulous grimace.

"Shall I not be forced to wait, to accept you at the hands of time?" said he gravely. "But know this: if you are in earnest in what you have allowed to escape you, I will wait for you faithfully, without suffering any other attachment to grow up in my heart."

She looked at him doubtfully.

"None," said he, "not even a passing fancy. I have my fortune to make; you must have a splendid one, nature created you a princess——"

At this word Francesca could not repress a faint smile, which gave her face the most bewildering expression, something subtle, like what the great Leonardo has so well depicted in the Gioconda. This smile made Rodolphe pause. "Ah yes!" he went on, "you must suffer much from the destitution to which exile has brought you. Oh, if you would make me happy above all men, and consecrate my love, you would treat me as a friend. Ought I not to be your friend?—My poor mother has left sixty thousand francs of savings; take half."

Francesca looked steadily at him. This piercing gaze went to the bottom of Rodolphe's soul.

"We want nothing; my work amply supplies our luxuries," she replied in a grave voice.

"And can I endure that a Francesca should work?" cried he. "One day you will return to your country and find all you left there." Again the Italian girl looked at Rodolphe. "And you will then repay me what you may have condescended to borrow," he added, with an expression full of delicate feeling.

"Let us drop the subject," said she, with incomparable dignity of gesture, expression, and attitude. "Make a splendid fortune, be one of the remarkable men of your country; that is my desire. Fame is a drawbridge which may serve to cross a deep gulf. Be ambitious if you must. I believe you have great and powerful talents, but use them rather for the happiness of mankind than to deserve me; you will be all the greater in my eyes."

In the course of this conversation, which lasted two hours, Rodolphe discovered that Francesca was an enthusiast for Liberal ideas, and for that worship of liberty which had led to the three revolutions in Naples, Piemont, and Spain. On leaving, he was shown to the door by Gina, the so-called mute. At eleven o'clock no one was astir in the village, there was no fear of listeners;

Rodolphe took Gina into a corner, and asked her in a low voice and bad Italian, "Who are your master and mistress, child? Tell me, I will give you this fine new gold piece."

"Monsieur," said the girl, taking the coin, "my master is the famous bookseller Lamporani of Milan, one of the leaders of the revolution, and the conspirator of all others whom Austria would most like to have in the Spielberg."

"A bookseller's wife! Ah, so much the better," thought he; "we are on an equal footing.—And what is her family?" he added, "for she looks like a queen."

"All Italian women do," replied Gina proudly. "Her father's name is Colonna."

Emboldened by Francesca's modest rank, Rodolphe had an awning fitted to his boat and cushions in the stern. When this was done, the lover came to propose to Francesca to come out on the lake. The Italian accepted, no doubt to carry out her part of a young English Miss in the eyes of the villagers, but she brought Gina with her. Francesca Colonna's lightest actions betrayed a superior education and the highest social rank. By the way in which she took her place at the end of the boat Rodolphe felt himself in some sort cut off from her, and, in the face of a look of pride worthy of an aristocrat, the familiarity he had intended fell dead. By a glance Francesca made herself a princess, with all the prerogatives she might have enjoyed in the Middle Ages. She seemed to have read the thoughts of this vassal who was so audacious as to constitute himself her protector.

Already, in the furniture of the room where Francesca had received him, in her dress, and in the various trifles she made use of, Rodolphe had detected indications of a superior character and a fine fortune. All these observations now recurred to his mind; he became thoughtful after having been trampled on, as it were, by Francesca's dignity. Gina, her half-grown-up confidante, also seemed to have a mocking expression as she gave a covert or a side glance at Rodolphe. This obvious disagreement between the Italian lady's rank and her manners was a fresh puzzle to Rodolphe, who suspected some further trick like Gina's assumed dumbness.

"Where would you go, Signora Lamporani?" he asked.

"Towards Lucerne," replied Francesca in French.

"Good!" said Rodolphe to himself, "she is not startled by hearing me speak her name; she had, no doubt, foreseen that I should ask Gina—she is so cunning.—What is your quarrel with me?" he went on, going at last to sit down by her side, and asking her by a gesture to give him her hand, which she

withdrew. "You are cold and ceremonious; what, in colloquial language, we should call short."

"It is true," she replied with a smile. "I am wrong. It is not good manners; it is vulgar. In French you would call it inartistic. It is better to be frank than to harbor cold or hostile feelings towards a friend, and you have already proved yourself my friend. Perhaps I have gone too far with you. You must take me to be a very ordinary woman."—Rodolphe made many signs of denial.—"Yes," said the bookseller's wife, going on without noticing this pantomime, which, however, she plainly saw. "I have detected that, and naturally I have reconsidered my conduct. Well! I will put an end to everything by a few words of deep truth. Understand this, Rodolphe: I feel in myself the strength to stifle a feeling if it were not in harmony with my ideas or anticipation of what true love is. I could love—as we can love in Italy, but I know my duty. No intoxication can make me forget it. Married without my consent to that poor old man, I might take advantage of the liberty he so generously gives me; but three years of married life imply acceptance of its laws. Hence the most vehement passion would never make me utter, even involuntarily, a wish to find myself free.

"Emilio knows my character. He knows that without my heart, which is my own, and which I might give away, I should never allow anyone to take my hand. That is why I have just refused it to you. I desire to be loved and waited for with fidelity, nobleness, ardor, while all I can give is infinite tenderness of which the expression may not overstep the boundary of the heart, the permitted neutral ground. All this being thoroughly understood—Oh!" she went on with a girlish gesture, "I will be as coquettish, as gay, as glad, as a child which knows nothing of the dangers of familiarity."

This plain and frank declaration was made in a tone, an accent, and supported by a look which gave it the deepest stamp of truth.

"A Princess Colonna could not have spoken better," said Rodolphe, smiling.

"Is that," she answered with some haughtiness, "a reflection on the humbleness of my birth? Must your love flaunt a coat-of-arms? At Milan the noblest names are written over shop-doors: Sforza, Canova, Visconti, Trivulzio, Ursini; there are Archintos apothecaries; but, believe me, though I keep a shop, I have the feelings of a duchess."

"A reflection? Nay, madame, I meant it for praise."

"By a comparison?" she said archly.

"Ah, once for all," said he, "not to torture me if my words should ill express my feelings, understand that my love is perfect; it carries with it

absolute obedience and respect."

She bowed as a woman satisfied, and said, "Then monsieur accepts the treaty?"

"Yes," said he. "I can understand that in a rich and powerful feminine nature the faculty of loving ought not to be wasted, and that you, out of delicacy, wished to restrain it. Ah! Francesca, at my age tenderness requited, and by so sublime, so royally beautiful a creature as you are—why, it is the fulfilment of all my wishes. To love you as you desire to be loved—is not that enough to make a young man guard himself against every evil folly? Is it not to concentrate all his powers in a noble passion, of which in the future he may be proud, and which can leave none but lovely memories? If you could but know with what hues you have clothed the chain of Pilatus, the Rigi, and this superb lake—"

"I want to know," said she, with the Italian artlessness which has always a touch of artfulness.

"Well, this hour will shine on all my life like a diamond on a queen's brow."

Francesca's only reply was to lay her hand on Rodolphe's.

"Oh dearest! for ever dearest!—Tell me, have you never loved?"

"Never."

"And you allow me to love you nobly, looking to heaven for the utmost fulfilment?" he asked.

She gently bent her head. Two large tears rolled down Rodolphe's cheeks.

"Why! what is the matter?" she cried, abandoning her imperial manner.

"I have now no mother whom I can tell of my happiness; she left this earth without seeing what would have mitigated her agony—"

"What?" said she.

"Her tenderness replaced by an equal tenderness——"

"Povero mio!" exclaimed the Italian, much touched. "Believe me," she went on after a pause, "it is a very sweet thing, and to a woman, a strong element of fidelity to know that she is all in all on earth to the man she loves; to find him lonely, with no family, with nothing in his heart but his love—in short, to have him wholly to herself."

When two lovers thus understand each other, the heart feels delicious peace, supreme tranquillity. Certainty is the basis for which human feelings crave, for it is never lacking to religious sentiment; man is always certain of

being fully repaid by God. Love never believes itself secure but by this resemblance to divine love. And the raptures of that moment must have been fully felt to be understood; it is unique in life; it can never return no more, alas! than the emotions of youth. To believe in a woman, to make her your human religion, the fount of life, the secret luminary of all your least thoughts! —is not this a second birth? And a young man mingles with this love a little of the feeling he had for his mother.

Rodolphe and Francesca for some time remained in perfect silence, answering each other by sympathetic glances full of thoughts. They understood each other in the midst of one of the most beautiful scenes of Nature, whose glories, interpreted by the glory in their hearts, helped to stamp on their minds the most fugitive details of that unique hour. There had not been the slightest shade of frivolity in Francesca's conduct. It was noble, large, and without any second thought. This magnanimity struck Rodolphe greatly, for in it he recognized the difference between the Italian and the Frenchwoman. The waters, the land, the sky, the woman, all were grandiose and suave, even their love in the midst of this picture, so vast in its expanse, so rich in detail, where the sternness of the snowy peaks and their hard folds standing clearly out against the blue sky, reminded Rodolphe of the circumstances which limited his happiness; a lovely country shut in by snows.

This delightful intoxication of soul was destined to be disturbed. A boat was approaching from Lucerne; Gina, who had been watching it attentively, gave a joyful start, though faithful to her part as a mute. The bark came nearer; when at length Francesca could distinguish the faces on board, she exclaimed, "Tito!" as she perceived a young man. She stood up, and remained standing at the risk of being drowned. "Tito! Tito!" cried she, waving her handkerchief.

Tito desired the boatmen to slacken, and the two boats pulled side by side. The Italian and Tito talked with such extreme rapidity, and in a dialect unfamiliar to a man who hardly knew even the Italian of books, that Rodolphe could neither hear nor guess the drift of this conversation. But Tito's handsome face, Francesca's familiarity, and Gina's expression of delight, all aggrieved him. And indeed no lover can help being ill pleased at finding himself neglected for another, whoever he may be. Tito tossed a little leather bag to Gina, full of gold no doubt, and a packet of letters to Francesca, who began to read them, with a farewell wave of the hand to Tito.

"Get quickly back to Gersau," she said to the boatmen, "I will not let my poor Emilio pine ten minutes longer than he need."

"What has happened?" asked Rodolphe, as he saw Francesca finish reading the last letter.

"La liberta!" she exclaimed, with an artist's enthusiasm.

"E denaro!" added Gina, like an echo, for she had found her tongue.

"Yes," said Francesca, "no more poverty! For more than eleven months have I been working, and I was beginning to be tired of it. I am certainly not a literary woman."

"Who is this Tito?" asked Rodolphe.

"The Secretary of State to the financial department of the humble shop of the Colonnas, in other words, the son of our ragionato. Poor boy! he could not come by the Saint-Gothard, nor by the Mont-Cenis, nor by the Simplon; he came by sea, by Marseilles, and had to cross France. Well, in three weeks we shall be at Geneva, and living at our ease. Come, Rodolphe," she added, seeing sadness overspread the Parisian's face, "is not the Lake of Geneva quite as good as the Lake of Lucerne?"

"But allow me to bestow a regret on the Bergmanns' delightful house," said Rodolphe, pointing to the little promontory.

"Come and dine with us to add to your associations, povero mio," said she. "This is a great day; we are out of danger. My mother writes that within a year there will be an amnesty. Oh! la cara patria!"

These three words made Gina weep. "Another winter here," said she, "and I should have been dead!"

"Poor little Sicilian kid!" said Francesca, stroking Gina's head with an expression and an affection which made Rodolphe long to be so caressed, even if it were without love.

The boat grounded; Rodolphe sprang on to the sand, offered his hand to the Italian lady, escorted her to the door of the Bergmanns' house, and went to dress and return as soon as possible.

When he joined the librarian and his wife, who were sitting on the balcony, Rodolphe could scarcely repress an exclamation of surprise at seeing the prodigious change which the good news had produced in the old man. He now saw a man of about sixty, extremely well preserved, a lean Italian, as straight as an I, with hair still black, though thin and showing a white skull, with bright eyes, a full set of white teeth, a face like Caesar, and on his diplomatic lips a sardonic smile, the almost false smile under which a man of good breeding hides his real feelings.

"Here is my husband under his natural form," said Francesca gravely.

"He is quite a new acquaintance," replied Rodolphe, bewildered.

"Quite," said the librarian; "I have played many a part, and know well how to make up. Ah! I played one in Paris under the Empire, with Bourrienne,

Madame Murat, Madame d'Abrantis e tutte quanti. Everything we take the trouble to learn in our youth, even the most futile, is of use. If my wife had not received a man's education—an unheard-of thing in Italy—I should have been obliged to chop wood to get my living here. Povera Francesca! who would have told me that she would some day maintain me!"

As he listened to this worthy bookseller, so easy, so affable, so hale, Rodolphe scented some mystification, and preserved the watchful silence of a man who has been duped.

"Che avete, signor?" Francesca asked with simplicity. "Does our happiness sadden you?"

"Your husband is a young man," he whispered in her ear.

She broke into such a frank, infectious laugh that Rodolphe was still more puzzled.

"He is but sixty-five, at your service," said she; "but I can assure you that even that is something—to be thankful for!"

"I do not like to hear you jest about an affection so sacred as this, of which you yourself prescribed the conditions."

"Zitto!" said she, stamping her foot, and looking whether her husband were listening. "Never disturb the peace of mind of that dear man, as simple as a child, and with whom I can do what I please. He is under my protection," she added. "If you could know with what generosity he risked his life and fortune because I was a Liberal! for he does not share my political opinions. Is not that love, Monsieur Frenchman?—But they are like that in his family. Emilio's younger brother was deserted for a handsome youth by the woman he loved. He thrust his sword through his own heart ten minutes after he had said to his servant, 'I could of course kill my rival, but that would grieve the Diva too deeply.'"

This mixture of dignity and banter, of haughtiness and playfulness, made Francesca at this moment the most fascinating creature in the world. The dinner and the evening were full of cheerfulness, justified, indeed, by the relief of the two refugees, but depressing to Rodolphe.

"Can she be fickle?" he asked himself as he returned to the Stopfers' house. "She sympathized in my sorrow, and I cannot take part in her joy!"

He blamed himself, justifying this girl-wife.

"She has no taint of hypocrisy, and is carried away by impulse," thought he, "and I want her to be like a Parisian woman."

Next day and the following days, in fact, for twenty days after, Rodolphe

spent all his time at the Bergmanns', watching Francesca without having determined to watch her. In some souls admiration is not independent of a certain penetration. The young Frenchman discerned in Francesca the imprudence of girlhood, the true nature of a woman as yet unbroken, sometimes struggling against her love, and at other moments yielding and carried away by it. The old man certainly behaved to her as a father to his daughter, and Francesca treated him with a deeply felt gratitude which roused her instinctive nobleness. The situation and the woman were to Rodolphe an impenetrable enigma, of which the solution attracted him more and more.

These last days were full of secret joys, alternating with melancholy moods, with tiffs and quarrels even more delightful than the hours when Rodolphe and Francesca were of one mind. And he was more and more fascinated by this tenderness apart from wit, always and in all things the same, an affection that was jealous of mere nothings—already!

"You care very much for luxury?" said he one evening to Francesca, who was expressing her wish to get away from Gersau, where she missed many things.

"I!" cried she. "I love luxury as I love the arts, as I love a picture by Raphael, a fine horse, a beautiful day, or the Bay of Naples. Emilio," she went on, "have I ever complained here during our days of privation."

"You would not have been yourself if you had," replied the old man gravely.

"After all, is it not in the nature of plain folks to aspire to grandeur?" she asked, with a mischievous glance at Rodolphe and at her husband. "Were my feet made for fatigue?" she added, putting out two pretty little feet. "My hands"—and she held one out to Rodolphe—"were those hands made to work?—Leave us," she said to her husband; "I want to speak to him."

The old man went into the drawing-room with sublime good faith; he was sure of his wife.

"I will not have you come with us to Geneva," she said to Rodolphe. "It is a gossiping town. Though I am far above the nonsense the world talks, I do not choose to be calumniated, not for my own sake, but for his. I make it my pride to be the glory of that old man, who is, after all, my only protector. We are leaving; stay here a few days. When you come on to Geneva, call first on my husband, and let him introduce you to me. Let us hide our great and unchangeable affection from the eyes of the world. I love you; you know it; but this is how I will prove it to you—you shall never discern in my conduct anything whatever that may arouse your jealousy."

She drew him into a corner of the balcony, kissed him on the forehead, and

fled, leaving him in amazement.

Next day Rodolphe heard that the lodgers at the Bergmanns' had left at daybreak. It then seemed to him intolerable to remain at Gersau, and he set out for Vevay by the longest route, starting sooner than was necessary. Attracted to the waters of the lake where the beautiful Italian awaited him, he reached Geneva by the end of October. To avoid the discomforts of the town he took rooms in a house at Eaux-Vives, outside the walls. As soon as he was settled, his first care was to ask his landlord, a retired jeweler, whether some Italian refugees from Milan had not lately come to reside at Geneva.

"Not so far as I know," replied the man. "Prince and Princess Colonna of Rome have taken Monsieur Jeanrenaud's place for three years; it is one of the finest on the lake. It is situated between the Villa Diodati and that of Monsieur Lafin-de-Dieu, let to the Vicomtesse de Beauseant. Prince Colonna has come to see his daughter and his son-in-law Prince Gandolphini, a Neopolitan, or if you like, a Sicilian, an old adherent of King Murat's, and a victim of the last revolution. These are the last arrivals at Geneva, and they are not Milanese. Serious steps had to be taken, and the Pope's interest in the Colonna family was invoked, to obtain permission from the foreign powers and the King of Naples for the Prince and Princess Gandolphini to live here. Geneva is anxious to do nothing to displease the Holy Alliance to which it owes its independence. Our part is not to ruffle foreign courts; there are many foreigners here, Russians and English."

"Even some Gevenese?"

"Yes, monsieur, our lake is so fine! Lord Byron lived here about seven years at the Villa Diodati, which every one goes to see now, like Coppet and Ferney."

"You cannot tell me whether within a week or so a bookseller from Milan has come with his wife—named Lamporani, one of the leaders of the last revolution?"

"I could easily find out by going to the Foreigners' Club," said the jeweler.

Rodolphe's first walk was very naturally to the Villa Diodati, the residence of Lord Byron, whose recent death added to its attractiveness: for is not death the consecration of genius?

The road to Eaux-Vives follows the shore of the lake, and, like all the roads in Switzerland, is very narrow; in some spots, in consequence of the configuration of the hilly ground, there is scarcely space for two carriages to pass each other.

At a few yards from the Jeanrenauds' house, which he was approaching

without knowing it, Rodolphe heard the sound of a carriage behind him, and, finding himself in a sunk road, he climbed to the top of a rock to leave the road free. Of course he looked at the approaching carriage—an elegant English phaeton, with a splendid pair of English horses. He felt quite dizzy as he beheld in this carriage Francesca, beautifully dressed, by the side of an old lady as hard as a cameo. A servant blazing with gold lace stood behind. Francesca recognized Rodolphe, and smiled at seeing him like a statue on a pedestal. The carriage, which the lover followed with his eyes as he climbed the hill, turned in at the gate of a country house, towards which he ran.

"Who lives here?" he asked the gardener.

"Prince and Princess Colonna, and Prince and Princess Gandolphini."

"Have they not just driven in?"

"Yes, sir."

In that instant a veil fell from Rodolphe's eyes; he saw clearly the meaning of the past.

"If only this is her last piece of trickery!" thought the thunder-struck lover to himself.

He trembled lest he should have been the plaything of a whim, for he had heard what a capriccio might mean in an Italian. But what a crime had he committed in the eyes of a woman—in accepting a born princess as a citizen's wife! in believing that a daughter of one of the most illustrious houses of the Middle Ages was the wife of a bookseller! The consciousness of his blunders increased Rodolphe's desire to know whether he would be ignored and repelled. He asked for Prince Gandolphini, sending in his card, and was immediately received by the false Lamporani, who came forward to meet him, welcomed him with the best possible grace, and took him to walk on a terrace whence there was a view of Geneva, the Jura, the hills covered with villas, and below them a wide expanse of the lake.

"My wife is faithful to the lakes, you see," he remarked, after pointing out the details to his visitor. "We have a sort of concert this evening," he added, as they returned to the splendid Villa Jeanrenaud. "I hope you will do me and the Princess the pleasure of seeing you. Two months of poverty endured in intimacy are equal to years of friendship."

Though he was consumed by curiosity, Rodolphe dared not ask to see the Princess; he slowly made his way back to Eaux-Vives, looking forward to the evening. In a few hours his passion, great as it had already been, was augmented by his anxiety and by suspense as to future events. He now understood the necessity for making himself famous, that he might some day

find himself, socially speaking, on a level with his idol. In his eyes Francesca was made really great by the simplicity and ease of her conduct at Gersau. Princess Colonna's haughtiness, so evidently natural to her, alarmed Rodolphe, who would find enemies in Francesca's father and mother—at least so he might expect; and the secrecy which Princess Gandolphini had so strictly enjoined on him now struck him as a wonderful proof of affection. By not choosing to compromise the future, had she not confessed that she loved him?

At last nine o'clock struck; Rodolphe could get into a carriage and say with an emotion that is very intelligible, "To the Villa Jeanrenaud—to Prince Gandolphini's."

At last he saw Francesca, but without being seen by her. The Princess was standing quite near the piano. Her beautiful hair, so thick and long, was bound with a golden fillet. Her face, in the light of wax candles, had the brilliant pallor peculiar to Italians, and which looks its best only by artificial light. She was in full evening dress, showing her fascinating shoulders, the figure of a girl and the arms of an antique statue. Her sublime beauty was beyond all possible rivalry, though there were some charming women of Geneva, and other Italians, among them the dazzling and illustrious Princess Varese, and the famous singer Tinti, who was at that moment singing.

Rodolphe, leaning against the door-post, looked at the Princess, turning on her the fixed, tenacious, attracting gaze, charged with the full, insistent will which is concentrated in the feeling called desire, and thus assumes the nature of a vehement command. Did the flame of that gaze reach Francesca? Was Francesca expecting each instant to see Rodolphe? In a few minutes she stole a glance at the door, as though magnetized by this current of love, and her eyes, without reserve, looked deep into Rodolphe's. A slight thrill quivered through that superb face and beautiful body; the shock to her spirit reacted: Francesca blushed! Rodolphe felt a whole life in this exchange of looks, so swift that it can only be compared to a lightning flash. But to what could his happiness compare? He was loved. The lofty Princess, in the midst of her world, in this handsome villa, kept the pledge given by the disguised exile, the capricious beauty of Bergmanns' lodgings. The intoxication of such a moment enslaves a man for life! A faint smile, refined and subtle, candid and triumphant, curled Princess Gandolphini's lips, and at a moment when she did not feel herself observed she looked at Rodolphe with an expression which seemed to ask his pardon for having deceived him as to her rank.

When the song was ended Rodolphe could make his way to the Prince, who graciously led him to his wife. Rodolphe went through the ceremonial of a formal introduction to Princess and Prince Colonna, and to Francesca. When this was over, the Princess had to take part in the famous quartette, Mi manca la voce, which was sung by her with Tinti, with the famous tenor Genovese,

and with a well-known Italian Prince then in exile, whose voice, if he had not been a Prince, would have made him one of the Princes of Art.

"Take that seat," said Francesca to Rodolphe, pointing to her own chair. "Oime! I think there is some mistake in my name; I have for the last minute been Princess Rodolphini."

It was said with the artless grace which revived, in this avowal hidden beneath a jest, the happy days at Gersau. Rodolphe reveled in the exquisite sensation of listening to the voice of the woman he adored, while sitting so close to her that one cheek was almost touched by the stuff of her dress and the gauze of her scarf. But when, at such a moment, Mi manca la voce is being sung, and by the finest voices in Italy, it is easy to understand what it was that brought the tears to Rodolphe's eyes.

In love, as perhaps in all else, there are certain circumstances, trivial in themselves, but the outcome of a thousand little previous incidents, of which the importance is immense, as an epitome of the past and as a link with the future. A hundred times already we have felt the preciousness of the one we love; but a trifle—the perfect touch of two souls united during a walk perhaps by a single word, by some unlooked-for proof of affection, will carry the feeling to its supremest pitch. In short, to express this truth by an image which has been pre-eminently successful from the earliest ages of the world, there are in a long chain points of attachment needed where the cohesion is stronger than in the intermediate loops of rings. This recognition between Rodolphe and Francesca, at this party, in the face of the world, was one of those intense moments which join the future to the past, and rivet a real attachment more deeply in the heart. It was perhaps of these incidental rivets that Bossuet spoke when he compared to them the rarity of happy moments in our lives—he who had such a living and secret experience of love.

Next to the pleasure of admiring the woman we love, comes that of seeing her admired by every one else. Rodolphe was enjoying both at once. Love is a treasury of memories, and though Rodolphe's was already full, he added to it pearls of great price; smiles shed aside for him alone, stolen glances, tones in her singing which Francesca addressed to him alone, but which made Tinti pale with jealousy, they were so much applauded. All his strength of desire, the special expression of his soul, was thrown over the beautiful Roman, who became unchangeably the beginning and the end of all his thoughts and actions. Rodolphe loved as every woman may dream of being loved, with a force, a constancy, a tenacity, which made Francesca the very substance of his heart; he felt her mingling with his blood as purer blood, with his soul as a more perfect soul; she would henceforth underlie the least efforts of his life as the golden sand of the Mediterranean lies beneath the waves. In short, Rodolphe's lightest aspiration was now a living hope.

At the end of a few days, Francesca understood this boundless love; but it was so natural, and so perfectly shared by her, that it did not surprise her. She was worthy of it.

"What is there that is strange?" said she to Rodolphe, as they walked on the garden terrace, when he had been betrayed into one of those outbursts of conceit which come so naturally to Frenchmen in the expression of their feelings—"what is extraordinary in the fact of your loving a young and beautiful woman, artist enough to be able to earn her living like Tinti, and of giving you some of the pleasures of vanity? What lout but would then become an Amadis? This is not in question between you and me. What is needed is that we both love faithfully, persistently; at a distance from each other for years, with no satisfaction but that of knowing that we are loved."

"Alas!" said Rodolphe, "will you not consider my fidelity as devoid of all merit when you see me absorbed in the efforts of devouring ambition? Do you imagine that I can wish to see you one day exchange the fine name of Gandolphini for that of a man who is a nobody? I want to become one of the most remarkable men of my country, to be rich, great—that you may be as proud of my name as of your own name of Colonna."

"I should be grieved to see you without such sentiments in your heart," she replied, with a bewitching smile. "But do not wear yourself out too soon in your ambitious labors. Remain young. They say that politics soon make a man old."

One of the rarest gifts in women is a certain gaiety which does not detract from tenderness. This combination of deep feeling with the lightness of youth added an enchanting grace at this moment to Francesca's charms. This is the key to her character; she laughs and she is touched; she becomes enthusiastic, and returns to arch raillery with a readiness, a facility, which makes her the charming and exquisite creature she is, and for which her reputation is known outside Italy. Under the graces of a woman she conceals vast learning, thanks to the excessively monotonous and almost monastic life she led in the castle of the old Colonnas.

This rich heiress was at first intended for the cloister, being the fourth child of Prince and Princess Colonna; but the death of her two brothers, and of her elder sister, suddenly brought her out of her retirement, and made her one of the most brilliant matches in the Papal States. Her elder sister had been betrothed to Prince Gandolphini, one of the richest landowners in Sicily; and Francesca was married to him instead, so that nothing might be changed in the position of the family. The Colonnas and Gandolphinis had always intermarried.

From the age of nine till she was sixteen, Francesca, under the direction of

a Cardinal of the family, had read all through the library of the Colonnas, to make weight against her ardent imagination by studying science, art, and letters. But in these studies she acquired the taste for independence and liberal ideas, which threw her, with her husband, into the ranks of the revolution. Rodolphe had not yet learned that, besides five living languages, Francesca knew Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. The charming creature perfectly understood that, for a woman, the first condition of being learned is to keep it deeply hidden.

Rodolphe spent the whole winter at Geneva. This winter passed like a day. When spring returned, notwithstanding the infinite delights of the society of a clever woman, wonderfully well informed, young and lovely, the lover went through cruel sufferings, endured indeed with courage, but which were sometimes legible in his countenance, and betrayed themselves in his manners or speech, perhaps because he believed that Francesca shared them. Now and again it annoyed him to admire her calmness. Like an Englishwoman, she seemed to pride herself on expressing nothing in her face; its serenity defied love; he longed to see her agitated; he accused her of having no feeling, for he believed in the tradition which ascribes to Italian women a feverish excitability.

"I am a Roman!" Francesca gravely replied one day when she took quite seriously some banter on this subject from Rodolphe.

There was a depth of tone in her reply which gave it the appearance of scathing irony, and which set Rodolphe's pulses throbbing. The month of May spread before them the treasures of her fresh verdure; the sun was sometimes as powerful as at midsummer. The two lovers happened to be at a part of the terrace where the rock arises abruptly from the lake, and were leaning over the stone parapet that crowns the wall above a flight of steps leading down to a landing-stage. From the neighboring villa, where there is a similar stairway, a boat presently shot out like a swan, its flag flaming, its crimson awning spread over a lovely woman comfortably reclining on red cushions, her hair wreathed with real flowers; the boatman was a young man dressed like a sailor, and rowing with all the more grace because he was under the lady's eye.

"They are happy!" exclaimed Rodolphe, with bitter emphasis. "Claire de Bourgogne, the last survivor of the only house which can ever vie with the royal family of France—"

"Oh! of a bastard branch, and that a female line."

"At any rate, she is Vicomtesse de Beauseant; and she did not—"

"Did not hesitate, you would say, to bury herself here with Monsieur Gaston de Nueil, you would say," replied the daughter of the Colonnas. "She is

only a Frenchwoman; I am an Italian, my dear sir!"

Francesca turned away from the parapet, leaving Rodolphe, and went to the further end of the terrace, whence there is a wide prospect of the lake. Watching her as she slowly walked away, Rodolphe suspected that he had wounded her soul, at once so simple and so wise, so proud and so humble. It turned him cold; he followed Francesca, who signed to him to leave her to herself. But he did not heed the warning, and detected her wiping away her tears. Tears! in so strong a nature.

"Francesca," said he, taking her hand, "is there a single regret in your heart?"

She was silent, disengaged her hand which held her embroidered handkerchief, and again dried her eyes.

"Forgive me!" he said. And with a rush, he kissed her eyes to wipe away the tears.

Francesca did not seem aware of his passionate impulse, she was so violently agitated. Rodolphe, thinking she consented, grew bolder; he put his arm round her, clasped her to his heart, and snatched a kiss. But she freed herself by a dignified movement of offended modesty, and, standing a yard off, she looked at him without anger, but with firm determination.

"Go this evening," she said. "We meet no more till we meet at Naples."

This order was stern, but it was obeyed, for it was Francesca's will.

On his return to Paris Rodolphe found in his rooms a portrait of Princess Gandolphini painted by Schinner, as Schinner can paint. The artist had passed through Geneva on his way to Italy. As he had positively refused to paint the portraits of several women, Rodolphe did not believe that the Prince, anxious as he was for a portrait of his wife, would be able to conquer the great painter's objections; but Francesca, no doubt, had bewitched him, and obtained from him—which was almost a miracle—an original portrait for Rodolphe, and a duplicate for Emilio. She told him this in a charming and delightful letter, in which the mind indemnified itself for the reserve required by the worship of the proprieties. The lover replied. Thus began, never to cease, a regular correspondence between Rodolphe and Francesca, the only indulgence they allowed themselves.

Rodolphe, possessed by an ambition sanctified by his love, set to work. First he longed to make his fortune, and risked his all in an undertaking to which he devoted all his faculties as well as his capital; but he, an inexperienced youth, had to contend against duplicity, which won the day. Thus three years were lost in a vast enterprise, three years of struggling and

courage.

The Villele ministry fell just when Rodolphe was ruined. The valiant lover thought he would seek in politics what commercial industry had refused him; but before braving the storms of this career, he went, all wounded and sick at heart, to have his bruises healed and his courage revived at Naples, where the Prince and Princess had been reinstated in their place and rights on the King's accession. This, in the midst of his warfare, was a respite full of delights; he spent three months at the Villa Gandolphini, rocked in hope.

Rodolphe then began again to construct his fortune. His talents were already known; he was about to attain the desires of his ambition; a high position was promised him as the reward of his zeal, his devotion, and his past services, when the storm of July 1830 broke, and again his bark was swamped.

She, and God! These are the only witnesses of the brave efforts, the daring attempts of a young man gifted with fine qualities, but to whom, so far, the protection of luck—the god of fools—has been denied. And this indefatigable wrestler, upheld by love, comes back to fresh struggles, lighted on his way by an always friendly eye, an ever faithful heart.

Lovers! Pray for him!

As she finished this narrative, Mademoiselle de Watteville's cheeks were on fire; there was a fever in her blood. She was crying—but with rage. This little novel, inspired by the literary style then in fashion, was the first reading of the kind that Rosalie had ever had the chance of devouring. Love was depicted in it, if not by a master-hand, at any rate by a man who seemed to give his own impressions; and truth, even if unskilled, could not fail to touch a virgin soul. Here lay the secret of Rosalie's terrible agitation, of her fever and her tears; she was jealous of Francesca Colonna.

She never for an instant doubted the sincerity of this poetical flight; Albert had taken pleasure in telling the story of his passion, while changing the names of persons and perhaps of places. Rosalie was possessed by infernal curiosity. What woman but would, like her, have wanted to know her rival's name—for she too loved! As she read these pages, to her really contagious, she had said solemnly to herself, "I love him!"—She loved Albert, and felt in her heart a gnawing desire to fight for him, to snatch him from this unknown rival. She reflected that she knew nothing of music, and that she was not beautiful.

"He will never love me!" thought she.

This conclusion aggravated her anxiety to know whether she might not be mistaken, whether Albert really loved an Italian Princess, and was loved by her. In the course of this fateful night, the power of swift decision, which had

characterized the famous Watteville, was fully developed in his descendant. She devised those whimsical schemes, round which hovers the imagination of most young girls when, in the solitude to which some injudicious mothers confine them, they are roused by some tremendous event which the system of repression to which they are subjected could neither foresee nor prevent. She dreamed of descending by a ladder from the kiosk into the garden of the house occupied by Albert; of taking advantage of the lawyer's being asleep to look through the window into his private room. She thought of writing to him, or of bursting the fetters of Besancon society by introducing Albert to the drawing-room of the Hotel de Rupt. This enterprise, which to the Abbe de Grancey even would have seemed the climax of the impossible, was a mere passing thought.

"Ah!" said she to herself, "my father has a dispute pending as to his land at les Rouxey. I will go there! If there is no lawsuit, I will manage to make one, and he shall come into our drawing-room!" she cried, as she sprang out of bed and to the window to look at the fascinating gleam which shone through Albert's nights. The clock struck one; he was still asleep.

"I shall see him when he gets up; perhaps he will come to his window."

At this instant Mademoiselle de Watteville was witness to an incident which promised to place in her power the means of knowing Albert's secrets. By the light of the moon she saw a pair of arms stretched out from the kiosk to help Jerome, Albert's servant, to get across the coping of the wall and step into the little building. In Jerome's accomplice Rosalie at once recognized Mariette the lady's-maid.

"Mariette and Jerome!" said she to herself. "Mariette, such an ugly girl! Certainly they must be ashamed of themselves."

Though Mariette was horribly ugly and six-and-thirty, she had inherited several plots of land. She had been seventeen years with Madame de Watteville, who valued her highly for her bigotry, her honesty, and long service, and she had no doubt saved money and invested her wages and perquisites. Hence, earning about ten louis a year, she probably had by this time, including compound interest and her little inheritance, not less than ten thousand francs.

In Jerome's eyes ten thousand francs could alter the laws of optics; he saw in Mariette a neat figure; he did not perceive the pits and seams which virulent smallpox had left on her flat, parched face; to him the crooked mouth was straight; and ever since Savaron, by taking him into his service, had brought him so near to the Wattevilles' house, he had laid siege systematically to the maid, who was as prim and sanctimonious as her mistress, and who, like every ugly old maid, was far more exacting than the handsomest.

If the night-scene in the kiosk is thus fully accounted for to all perspicacious readers, it was not so to Rosalie, though she derived from it the most dangerous lesson that can be given, that of a bad example. A mother brings her daughter up strictly, keeps her under her wing for seventeen years, and then, in one hour, a servant girl destroys the long and painful work, sometimes by a word, often indeed by a gesture! Rosalie got into bed again, not without considering how she might take advantage of her discovery.

Next morning, as she went to Mass accompanied by Mariette—her mother was not well—Rosalie took the maid's arm, which surprised the country wench not a little.

"Mariette," said she, "is Jerome in his master's confidence?"

"I do not know, mademoiselle."

"Do not play the innocent with me," said Mademoiselle de Watteville drily. "You let him kiss you last night under the kiosk; I no longer wonder that you so warmly approved of my mother's ideas for the improvements she planned."

Rosalie could feel how Mariette was trembling by the shaking of her arm.

"I wish you no ill," Rosalie went on. "Be quite easy; I shall not say a word to my mother, and you can meet Jerome as often as you please."

"But, mademoiselle," said Mariette, "it is perfectly respectable; Jerome honestly means to marry me—"

"But then," said Rosalie, "why meet at night?"

Mariette was dumfounded, and could make no reply.

"Listen, Mariette; I am in love too! In secret and without any return. I am, after all, my father's and mother's only child. You have more to hope for from me than from any one else in the world—"

"Certainly, mademoiselle, and you may count on us for life or death," exclaimed Mariette, rejoiced at the unexpected turn of affairs.

"In the first place, silence for silence," said Rosalie. "I will not marry Monsieur de Soulas; but one thing I will have, and must have; my help and favor are yours on one condition only."

"What is that?"

"I must see the letters which Monsieur Savaron sends to the post by Jerome."

"But what for?" said Mariette in alarm.

"Oh! merely to read them, and you yourself shall post them afterwards. It

will cause a little delay; that is all."

At this moment they went into church, and each of them, instead of reading the order of Mass, fell into her own train of thought.

"Dear, dear, how many sins are there in all that?" thought Mariette.

Rosalie, whose soul, brain, and heart were completely upset by reading the story, by this time regarded it as history, written for her rival. By dint of thinking of nothing else, like a child, she ended by believing that the Eastern Review was no doubt forwarded to Albert's lady-love.

"Oh!" said she to herself, her head buried in her hands in the attitude of a person lost in prayer; "oh! how can I get my father to look through the list of people to whom the Review is sent?"

After breakfast she took a turn in the garden with her father, coaxing and cajoling him, and brought him to the kiosk.

"Do you suppose, my dear little papa, that our Review is ever read abroad?"

"It is but just started—"

"Well, I will wager that it is."

"It is hardly possible."

"Just go and find out, and note the names of any subscribers out of France."

Two hours later Monsieur de Watteville said to his daughter:

"I was right; there is not one foreign subscriber as yet. They hope to get some at Neufchatel, at Berne, and at Geneva. One copy, is in fact, sent to Italy, but it is not paid for—to a Milanese lady at her country house at Belgirate, on Lago Maggiore.

"What is her name?"

"The Duchesse d'Argaiolo."

"Do you know her, papa?"

"I have heard about her. She was by birth a Princess Soderini, a Florentine, a very great lady, and quite as rich as her husband, who has one of the largest fortunes in Lombardy. Their villa on the Lago Maggiore is one of the sights of Italy."

Two days after, Mariette placed the following letter in Mademoiselle de Watteville's hand:—

Albert Savaron to Leopold Hannequin.

"Yes, 'tis so, my dear friend; I am at Besancon, while you thought I was traveling. I would not tell you anything till success should begin, and now it is dawning. Yes, my dear Leopold, after so many abortive undertakings, over which I have shed the best of my blood, have wasted so many efforts, spent so much courage, I have made up my mind to do as you have done—to start on a beaten path, on the highroad, as the longest but the safest. I can see you jump with surprise in your lawyer's chair!

"But do not suppose that anything is changed in my personal life, of which you alone in the world know the secret, and that under the reservations she insists on. I did not tell you, my friend; but I was horribly weary of Paris. The outcome of the first enterprise, on which I had founded all my hopes, and which came to a bad end in consequence of the utter rascality of my two partners, who combined to cheat and fleece me—me, though everything was done by my energy—made me give up the pursuit of a fortune after the loss of three years of my life. One of these years was spent in the law courts, and perhaps I should have come worse out of the scrape if I had not been made to study law when I was twenty.

"I made up my mind to go into politics solely, to the end that I may some day find my name on a list for promotion to the Senate under the title of Comte Albert Savaron de Savarus, and so revive in France a good name now extinct in Belgium—though indeed I am neither legitimate nor legitimized."

"Ah! I knew it! He is of noble birth!" exclaimed Rosalie, dropping the letter.

"You know how conscientiously I studied, how faithful and useful I was as an obscure journalist, and how excellent a secretary to the statesman who, on his part, was true to me in 1829. Flung to the depths once more by the revolution of July just when my name was becoming known, at the very moment when, as Master of Appeals, I was about to find my place as a necessary wheel in the political machine, I committed the blunder of remaining faithful to the fallen, and fighting for them, without them. Oh! why was I but three-and-thirty, and why did I not apply to you to make me eligible? I concealed from you all my devotedness and my dangers. What would you have? I was full of faith. We should not have agreed.

"Ten months ago, when you saw me so gay and contented, writing my political articles, I was in despair; I foresaw my fate, at the age of thirty-seven, with two thousand francs for my whole fortune, without the smallest fame, just having failed in a noble undertaking, the founding, namely, of a daily paper answering only to a need of the future instead of appealing to the passions of the moment. I did not know which way to turn, and I felt my own value! I

wandered about, gloomy and hurt, through the lonely places of Paris—Paris which had slipped through my fingers —thinking of my crushed ambitions, but never giving them up. Oh, what frantic letters I wrote at that time to her, my second conscience, my other self! Sometimes I would say to myself, 'Why did I sketch so vast a programme of life? Why demand everything? Why not wait for happiness while devoting myself to some mechanical employment.'

"I then looked about me for some modest appointment by which I might live. I was about to get the editorship of a paper under a manager who did not know much about it, a man of wealth and ambition, when I took fright. 'Would she ever accept as her husband a man who had stooped so low?' I wondered.

"This reflection made me two-and-twenty again. But, oh, my dear Leopold, how the soul is worn by these perplexities! What must not the caged eagles suffer, and imprisoned lions!—They suffer what Napoleon suffered, not at Saint Helena, but on the Quay of the Tuileries, on the 10th of August, when he saw Louis XVI. defending himself so badly while he could have quelled the insurrection; as he actually did, on the same spot, a little later, in Vendemiaire. Well, my life has been a torment of that kind, extending over four years. How many a speech to the Chamber have I not delivered in the deserted alleys of the Bois de Boulogne! These wasted harangues have at any rate sharpened my tongue and accustomed my mind to formulate its ideas in words. And while I was undergoing this secret torture, you were getting married, you had paid for your business, you were made law-clerk to the Maire of your district, after gaining a cross for a wound at Saint-Merri.

"Now, listen. When I was a small boy and tortured cock-chafers, the poor insects had one form of struggle which used almost to put me in a fever. It was when I saw them making repeated efforts to fly but without getting away, though they could spread their wings. We used to say, 'They are marking time.' Now was this sympathy? Was it a vision of my own future?—Oh! to spread my wings and yet be unable to fly! That has been my predicament since that fine undertaking by which I was disgusted, but which has now made four families rich.

"At last, seven months ago, I determined to make myself a name at the Paris Bar, seeing how many vacancies had been left by the promotion of several lawyers to eminent positions. But when I remembered the rivalry I had seen among men of the press, and how difficult it is to achieve anything of any kind in Paris, the arena where so many champions meet, I came to a determination painful to myself, but certain in its results, and perhaps quicker than any other. In the course of our conversations you had given me a picture of the society of Besancon, of the impossibility for a stranger to get on there, to produce the smallest effect, to get into society, or to succeed in any way whatever. It was there that I determined to set up my flag, thinking, and

rightly, that I should meet with no opposition, but find myself alone to canvass for the election. The people of the Comte will not meet the outsider? The outsider will meet them! They refuse to admit him to their drawing-rooms, he will never go there! He never shows himself anywhere, not even in the streets! But there is one class that elects the deputies—the commercial class. I am going especially to study commercial questions, with which I am already familiar; I will gain their lawsuits, I will effect compromises, I will be the greatest pleader in Besancon. By and by I will start a Review, in which I will defend the interests of the country, will create them, or preserve them, or resuscitate them. When I shall have won a sufficient number of votes, my name will come out of the urn. For a long time the unknown barrister will be treated with contempt, but some circumstance will arise to bring him to the front—some unpaid defence, or a case which no other pleader will undertake.

"Well, my dear Leopold, I packed up my books in eleven cases, I bought such law-books as might prove useful, and I sent everything off, furniture and all, by carrier to Besancon. I collected my diplomas, and I went to bid you good-bye. The mail coach dropped me at Besancon, where, in three days' time, I chose a little set of rooms looking out over some gardens. I sumptuously arranged the mysterious private room where I spend my nights and days, and where the portrait of my divinity reigns—of her to whom my life is dedicate, who fills it wholly, who is the mainspring of my efforts, the secret of my courage, the cause of my talents. Then, as soon as the furniture and books had come, I engaged an intelligent man-servant, and there I sat for five months like a hibernating marmot.

"My name had, however, been entered on the list of lawyers in the town. At last I was called one day to defend an unhappy wretch at the Assizes, no doubt in order to hear me speak for once! One of the most influential merchants of Besancon was on the jury; he had a difficult task to fulfil; I did my utmost for the man, and my success was absolute and complete. My client was innocent; I very dramatically secured the arrest of the real criminals, who had come forward as witnesses. In short, the Court and the public were united in their admiration. I managed to save the examining magistrate's pride by pointing out the impossibility of detecting a plot so skilfully planned.

"Then I had to fight a case for my merchant, and won his suit. The Cathedral Chapter next chose me to defend a tremendous action against the town, which had been going on for four years; I won that. Thus, after three trials, I had become the most famous advocate of Franche-Comte.

"But I bury my life in the deepest mystery, and so hide my aims. I have adopted habits which prevent my accepting any invitations. I am only to be consulted between six and eight in the morning; I go to bed after my dinner, and work at night. The Vicar-General, a man of parts, and very influential,

who placed the Chapter's case in my hands after they had lost it in the lower Court, of course professed their gratitude. 'Monsieur,' said I, 'I will win your suit, but I want no fee; I want more' (start of alarm on the Abbe's part). 'You must know that I am a great loser by putting myself forward in antagonism to the town. I came here only to leave the place as deputy. I mean to engage only in commercial cases, because commercial men return the members; they will distrust me if I defend "the priests"—for to them you are simply priests. If I undertake your defence, it is because I was, in 1828, private secretary to such a Minister' (again a start of surprise on the part of my Abbe), 'and Master of Appeals, under the name of Albert de Savarus' (another start). 'I have remained faithful to monarchical opinions; but, as you have not the majority of votes in Besanon, I must gain votes among the citizens. So the fee I ask of you is the votes you may be able secretly to secure for me at the opportune moment. Let us each keep our own counsel, and I will defend, for nothing, every case to which a priest of this diocese may be a party. Not a word about my previous life, and we will be true to each other.'

"When he came to thank me afterwards, he gave me a note for five hundred francs, and said in my ear, 'The votes are a bargain all the same.'—I have in the course of five interviews made a friend, I think, of this Vicar-General.

"Now I am overwhelmed with business, and I undertake no cases but those brought to me by merchants, saying that commercial questions are my specialty. This line of conduct attaches business men to me, and allows me to make friends with influential persons. So all goes well. Within a few months I shall have found a house to purchase in Besancon, so as to secure a qualification. I count on your lending me the necessary capital for this investment. If I should die, if I should fail, the loss would be too small to be any consideration between you and me. You will get the interest out of the rental, and I shall take good care to look out for something cheap, so that you may lose nothing by this mortgage, which is indispensable.

"Oh! my dear Leopold, no gambler with the last remains of his fortune in his pocket, bent on staking it at the Cercle des Etrangers for the last time one night, when he must come away rich or ruined, ever felt such a perpetual ringing in his ears, such a nervous moisture on his palms, such a fevered tumult in his brain, such inward qualms in his body as I go through every day now that I am playing my last card in the game of ambition. Alas! my dear and only friend, for nearly ten years now I have been struggling. This battle with men and things, in which I have unceasingly poured out my strength and energy, and so constantly worn the springs of desire, has, so to speak, undermined my vitality. With all the appearance of a strong man of good health, I feel myself a wreck. Every day carries with it a shred of my inmost

life. At every fresh effort I feel that I should never be able to begin again. I have no power, no vigor left but for happiness; and if it should never come to crown my head with roses, the me that is really me would cease to exist, I should be a ruined thing. I should wish for nothing more in the world. I should want to cease from living. You know that power and fame, the vast moral empire that I crave, is but secondary; it is to me only a means to happiness, the pedestal for my idol.

"To reach the goal and die, like the runner of antiquity! To see fortune and death stand on the threshold hand in hand! To win the beloved woman just when love is extinct! To lose the faculty of enjoyment after earning the right to be happy!—Of how many men has this been the fate!

"But there surely is a moment when Tantalus rebels, crosses his arms, and defies hell, throwing up his part of the eternal dupe. That is what I shall come to if anything should thwart my plan; if, after stooping to the dust of provincial life, prowling like a starving tiger round these tradesmen, these electors, to secure their votes; if, after wrangling in these squalid cases, and giving them my time—the time I might have spent on Lago Maggiore, seeing the waters she sees, basking in her gaze, hearing her voice —if, after all, I failed to scale the tribune and conquer the glory that should surround the name that is to succeed to that of Argaiolo! Nay, more than this, Leopold; there are days when I feel a heady languor; deep disgust surges up from the depths of my soul, especially when, abandoned to long day-dreams, I have lost myself in anticipation of the joys of blissful love! May it not be that our desire has only a certain modicum of power, and that it perishes, perhaps, of a too lavish effusion of its essence? For, after all, at this present, my life is fair, illuminated by faith, work, and love.

"Farewell, my friend; I send love to your children, and beg you to remember me to your excellent wife.—Yours,

"ALBERT."

Rosalie read this letter twice through, and its general purport was stamped on her heart. She suddenly saw the whole of Albert's previous existence, for her quick intelligence threw light on all the details, and enabled her to take it all in. By adding this information to the little novel published in the Review, she now fully understood Albert. Of course, she exaggerated the greatness, remarkable as it was, of this lofty soul and potent will, and her love for Albert thenceforth became a passion, its violence enhanced by all the strength of her youth, the weariness of her solitude, and the unspent energy of her character. Love is in a young girl the effect of a natural law; but when her craving for affection is centered in an exceptional man, it is mingled with the enthusiasm which overflows in a youthful heart. Thus Mademoiselle de Watteville had in

a few days reached a morbid and very dangerous stage of enamored infatuation. The Baroness was much pleased with her daughter, who, being under the spell of her absorbing thoughts, never resisted her will, seemed to be devoted to feminine occupations, and realized her mother's ideal of a docile daughter.

The lawyer was now engaged in Court two or three times a week. Though he was overwhelmed with business, he found time to attend the trials, call on the litigious merchants, and conduct the Review; keeping up his personal mystery, from the conviction that the more covert and hidden was his influence, the more real it would be. But he neglected no means of success, reading up the list of electors of Besancon, and finding out their interests, their characters, their various friendships and antipathies. Did ever a Cardinal hoping to be made Pope give himself more trouble?

One evening Mariette, on coming to dress Rosalie for an evening party, handed to her, not without many groans over this treachery, a letter of which the address made Mademoiselle de Watteville shiver and redden and turn pale again as she read the address:

To Madame la Duchesse d'Argaiolo

(nee Princesse Soderini)

At Belgirate,

Lago Maggiore, Italy.

In her eyes this direction blazed as the words Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, did in the eyes of Belshazzar. After concealing the letter, Rosalie went downstairs to accompany her mother to Madame de Chavoncourt's; and as long as the endless evening lasted, she was tormented by remorse and scruples. She had already felt shame at having violated the secrecy of Albert's letter to Leopold; she had several times asked herself whether, if he knew of her crime, infamous inasmuch as it necessarily goes unpunished, the high-minded Albert could esteem her. Her conscience answered an uncompromising "No."

She had expiated her sin by self-imposed penances; she fasted, she mortified herself by remaining on her knees, her arms outstretched for hours, and repeating prayers all the time. She had compelled Mariette to similar sets of repentance; her passion was mingled with genuine asceticism, and was all the more dangerous.

"Shall I read that letter, shall I not?" she asked herself, while listening to the Chavoncourt girls. One was sixteen, the other seventeen and a half. Rosalie looked upon her two friends as mere children because they were not secretly in love.—"If I read it," she finally decided, after hesitating for an hour

between Yes and No, "it shall, at any rate, be the last. Since I have gone so far as to see what he wrote to his friend, why should I not know what he says to her? If it is a horrible crime, is it not a proof of love? Oh, Albert! am I not your wife?"

When Rosalie was in bed she opened the letter, dated from day to day, so as to give the Duchess a faithful picture of Albert's life and feelings.

"25th.

"My dear Soul, all is well. To my other conquests I have just added an invaluable one: I have done a service to one of the most influential men who work the elections. Like the critics, who make other men's reputations but can never make their own, he makes deputies though he never can become one. The worthy man wanted to show his gratitude without loosening his purse-strings by saying to me, 'Would you care to sit in the Chamber? I can get you returned as deputy.'

"'If I ever make up my mind to enter on a political career,' replied I hypocritically, 'it would be to devote myself to the Comte, which I love, and where I am appreciated.'

"'Well,' he said, 'we will persuade you, and through you we shall have weight in the Chamber, for you will distinguish yourself there.'

"And so, my beloved angel, say what you will, my perseverance will be rewarded. Ere long I shall, from the high place of the French Tribune, come before my country, before Europe. My name will be flung to you by the hundred voices of the French press.

"Yes, as you tell me, I was old when I came to Besancon, and Besancon has aged me more; but, like Sixtus V., I shall be young again the day after my election. I shall enter on my true life, my own sphere. Shall we not then stand in the same line? Count Savaron de Savarus, Ambassador I know not where, may surely marry a Princess Soderini, the widow of the Duc d'Argaiolo! Triumph restores the youth of men who have been preserved by incessant struggles. Oh, my Life! with what gladness did I fly from my library to my private room, to tell your portrait of this progress before writing to you! Yes, the votes I can command, those of the Vicar-General, of the persons I can oblige, and of this client, make my election already sure.

"26th.

"We have entered on the twelfth year since that blest evening when, by a look, the beautiful Duchess sealed the promises made by the exile Francesca. You, dear, are thirty-two, I am thirty-five; the dear Duke is seventy-seven—that is to say, ten years more than yours and mine put together, and he still

keeps well! My patience is almost as great as my love, and indeed I need a few years yet to rise to the level of your name. As you see, I am in good spirits to-day, I can laugh; that is the effect of hope. Sadness or gladness, it all comes to me through you. The hope of success always carries me back to the day following that one on which I saw you for the first time, when my life became one with yours as the earth turns to the light. Qual pianto are these eleven years, for this is the 26th of December, the anniversary of my arrival at your villa on the Lake of Geneva. For eleven years have I been crying to you, while you shine like a star set too high for man to reach it.

"27th.

"No, dearest, do not go to Milan; stay at Belgirate. Milan terrifies me. I do not like that odious Milanese fashion of chatting at the Scala every evening with a dozen persons, among whom it is hard if no one says something sweet. To me solitude is like the lump of amber in whose heart an insect lives forever in unchanging beauty. Thus the heart and soul of a woman remains pure and unaltered in the form of their first youth. Is it the Tedeschi that you regret?

"28th.

"Is your statue never to be finished? I should wish to have you in marble, in painting, in miniature, in every possible form, to beguile my impatience. I still am waiting for the view of Belgirate from the south, and that of the balcony; these are all that I now lack. I am so extremely busy that to-day I can only write you nothing—but that nothing is everything. Was it not of nothing that God made the world? That nothing is a word, God's word: I love you!

"30th.

"Ah! I have received your journal. Thanks for your punctuality. —So you found great pleasure in seeing all the details of our first acquaintance thus set down? Alas! even while disguising them I was sorely afraid of offending you. We had no stories, and a Review without stories is a beauty without hair. Not being inventive by nature, and in sheer despair, I took the only poetry in my soul, the only adventure in my memory, and pitched it in the key in which it would bear telling; nor did I ever cease to think of you while writing the only literary production that will ever come from my heart, I cannot say from my pen. Did not the transformation of your fierce Sormano into Gina make you laugh?

"You ask after my health. Well, it is better than in Paris. Though I work enormously, the peacefulness of the surroundings has its effect on the mind. What really tries and ages me, dear angel, is the anguish of mortified vanity, the perpetual friction of Paris life, the struggle of rival ambitions. This peace is a balm.

"If you could imagine the pleasure your letter gives me!—the long, kind letter in which you tell me the most trivial incidents of your life. No! you women can never know to what a degree a true lover is interested in these trifles. It was an immense pleasure to see the pattern of your new dress. Can it be a matter of indifference to me to know what you wear? If your lofty brow is knit? If our writers amuse you? If Canalis' songs delight you? I read the books you read. Even to your boating on the lake every incident touched me. Your letter is as lovely, as sweet as your soul! Oh! flower of heaven, perpetually adored, could I have lived without those dear letters, which for eleven years have upheld me in my difficult path like a light, like a perfume, like a steady chant, like some divine nourishment, like everything which can soothe and comfort life.

"Do not fail me! If you knew what anxiety I suffer the day before they are due, or the pain a day's delay can give me! Is she ill? Is he? I am midway between hell and paradise.

"O mia cara diva, keep up your music, exercise your voice, practise. I am enchanted with the coincidence of employments and hours by which, though separated by the Alps, we live by precisely the same rule. The thought charms me and gives me courage. The first time I undertook to plead here—I forget to tell you this—I fancied that you were listening to me, and I suddenly felt the flash of inspiration which lifts the poet above mankind. If I am returned to the Chamber—oh! you must come to Paris to be present at my first appearance there!

"30th, Evening.

"Good heavens, how I love you! Alas! I have intrusted too much to my love and my hopes. An accident which should sink that overloaded bark would end my life. For three years now I have not seen you, and at the thought of going to Belgirate my heart beats so wildly that I am forced to stop.—To see you, to hear that girlish caressing voice! To embrace in my gaze that ivory skin, glistening under the candlelight, and through which I can read your noble mind! To admire your fingers playing on the keys, to drink in your whole soul in a look, in the tone of an Oime or an Alberto! To walk by the blossoming orange-trees, to live a few months in the bosom of that glorious scenery!—That is life. What folly it is to run after power, a name, fortune! But at Belgirate there is everything; there is poetry, there is glory! I ought to have made myself your steward, or, as that dear tyrant whom we cannot hate proposed to me, live there as cavaliere servente, only our passion was too fierce to allow of it.

"Farewell, my angel, forgive me my next fit of sadness in consideration of this cheerful mood; it has come as a beam of light from the torch of Hope,

which has hitherto seemed to me a Will-o'-the-wisp."

"How he loves her!" cried Rosalie, dropping the letter, which seemed heavy in her hand. "After eleven years to write like this!"

"Mariette," said Mademoiselle de Watteville to her maid next morning, "go and post this letter. Tell Jerome that I know all I wish to know, and that he is to serve Monsieur Albert faithfully. We will confess our sins, you and I, without saying to whom the letters belonged, nor to whom they were going. I was in the wrong; I alone am guilty."

"Mademoiselle has been crying?" said Mariette.

"Yes, but I do not want that my mother should perceive it; give me some very cold water."

In the midst of the storms of her passion Rosalie often listened to the voice of conscience. Touched by the beautiful fidelity of these two hearts, she had just said her prayers, telling herself that there was nothing left to her but to be resigned, and to respect the happiness of two beings worthy of each other, submissive to fate, looking to God for everything, without allowing themselves any criminal acts or wishes. She felt a better woman, and had a certain sense of satisfaction after coming to this resolution, inspired by the natural rectitude of youth. And she was confirmed in it by a girl's idea: She was sacrificing herself for him.

"She does not know how to love," thought she. "Ah! if it were I—I would give up everything to a man who loved me so.—To be loved!—When, by whom shall I be loved? That little Monsieur de Soulas only loves my money; if I were poor, he would not even look at me."

"Rosalie, my child, what are you thinking about? You are working beyond the outline," said the Baroness to her daughter, who was making worsted-work slippers for the Baron.

Rosalie spent the winter of 1834-35 torn by secret tumults; but in the spring, in the month of April, when she reached the age of nineteen, she sometimes thought that it would be a fine thing to triumph over a Duchesse d'Argaiolo. In silence and solitude the prospect of this struggle had fanned her passion and her evil thoughts. She encouraged her romantic daring by making plan after plan. Although such characters are an exception, there are, unfortunately, too many Rosalies in the world, and this story contains a moral that ought to serve them as a warning.

In the course of this winter Albert de Savarus had quietly made considerable progress in Besancon. Confident of success, he now impatiently awaited the dissolution of the Chamber. Among the men of the moderate party

he had won the suffrages of one of the makers of Besancon, a rich contractor, who had very wide influence.

Wherever they settled the Romans took immense pains, and spent enormous sums to have an unlimited supply of good water in every town of their empire. At Besancon they drank the water from Arcier, a hill at some considerable distance from Besancon. The town stands in a horseshoe circumscribed by the river Doubs. Thus, to restore an aqueduct in order to drink the same water that the Romans drank, in a town watered by the Doubs, is one of those absurdities which only succeed in a country place where the most exemplary gravity prevails. If this whim could be brought home to the hearts of the citizens, it would lead to considerable outlay; and this expenditure would benefit the influential contractor.

Albert Savaron de Savarus opined that the water of the river was good for nothing but to flow under the suspension bridge, and that the only drinkable water was that from Arcier. Articles were printed in the Review which merely expressed the views of the commercial interest of Besancon. The nobility and the citizens, the moderates and the legitimists, the government party and the opposition, everybody, in short, was agreed that they must drink the same water as the Romans, and boast of a suspension bridge. The question of the Arcier water was the order of the day at Besancon. At Besancon—as in the matter of the two railways to Versailles—as for every standing abuse—there were private interests unconfessed which gave vital force to this idea. The reasonable folk in opposition to this scheme, who were indeed but few, were regarded as old women. No one talked of anything but of Savaron's two projects. And thus, after eighteen months of underground labor, the ambitious lawyer had succeeded in stirring to its depths the most stagnant town in France, the most unyielding to foreign influence, in finding the length of its foot, to use a vulgar phrase, and exerting a preponderant influence without stirring from his own room. He had solved the singular problem of how to be powerful without being popular.

In the course of this winter he won seven lawsuits for various priests of Besancon. At moments he could breathe freely at the thought of his coming triumph. This intense desire, which made him work so many interests and devise so many springs, absorbed the last strength of his terribly overstrung soul. His disinterestedness was lauded, and he took his clients' fees without comment. But this disinterestedness was, in truth, moral usury; he counted on a reward far greater to him than all the gold in the world.

In the month of October 1834 he had brought, ostensibly to serve a merchant who was in difficulties, with money lent him by Leopold Hannequin, a house which gave him a qualification for election. He had not seemed to seek or desire this advantageous bargain.

"You are really a remarkable man," said the Abbe de Grancey, who, of course, had watched and understood the lawyer. The Vicar-General had come to introduce to him a Canon who needed his professional advice. "You are a priest who has taken the wrong turning." This observation struck Savarus.

Rosalie, on her part, had made up her mind, in her strong girl's head, to get Monsieur de Savarus into the drawing-room and acquainted with the society of the Hotel de Rupt. So far she had limited her desires to seeing and hearing Albert. She had compounded, so to speak, and a composition is often no more than a truce.

Les Rouxey, the inherited estate of the Watteville, was worth just ten thousand francs a year; but in other hands it would have yielded a great deal more. The Baron in his indifference—for his wife was to have, and in fact had, forty thousand francs a year—left the management of les Rouxey to a sort of factotum, an old servant of the Watteville named Modinier. Nevertheless, whenever the Baron and his wife wished to go out of the town, they went to les Rouxey, which is very picturesquely situated. The chateau and the park were, in fact, created by the famous Watteville, who in his active old age was passionately attached to this magnificent spot.

Between two precipitous hills—little peaks with bare summits known as the great and the little Rouxey—in the heart of a ravine where the torrents from the heights, with the Dent de Vilard at their head, come tumbling to join the lovely upper waters of the Doubs, Watteville had a huge dam constructed, leaving two cuttings for the overflow. Above this dam he made a beautiful lake, and below it two cascades; and these, uniting a few yards below the falls, formed a lovely little river to irrigate the barren, uncultivated valley, and these two hills he enclosed in a ring fence, and built himself a retreat on the dam, which he widened to two acres by accumulating above it all the soil which had to be removed to make a channel for the river and the irrigation canals.

When the Baron de Watteville thus obtained the lake above his dam he was owner of the two hills, but not of the upper valley thus flooded, through which there had been at all times a right-of-way to where it ends in a horseshoe under the Dent de Vilard. But this ferocious old man was so widely dreaded, that so long as he lived no claim was urged by the inhabitants of Riceys, the little village on the further side of the Dent de Vilard. When the Baron died, he left the slopes of the two Rouxey hills joined by a strong wall, to protect from inundation the two lateral valleys opening into the valley of Rouxey, to the right and left at the foot of the Dent de Vilard. Thus he died the master of the Dent de Vilard.

His heirs asserted their protectorate of the village of Riceys, and so maintained the usurpation. The old assassin, the old renegade, the old Abbe

Watteville, ended his career by planting trees and making a fine road over the shoulder of one of the Rouxey hills to join the highroad. The estate belonging to this park and house was extensive, but badly cultivated; there were chalets on both hills and neglected forests of timber. It was all wild and deserted, left to the care of nature, abandoned to chance growths, but full of sublime and unexpected beauty. You may now imagine les Rouxey.

It is unnecessary to complicate this story by relating all the prodigious trouble and the inventiveness stamped with genius, by which Rosalie achieved her end without allowing it to be suspected. It is enough to say that it was in obedience to her mother that she left Besancon in the month of May 1835, in an antique traveling carriage drawn by a pair of sturdy hired horses, and accompanied her father to les Rouxey.

To a young girl love lurks in everything. When she rose, the morning after her arrival, Mademoiselle de Watteville saw from her bedroom window the fine expanse of water, from which the light mists rose like smoke, and were caught in the firs and larches, rolling up and along the hills till they reached the heights, and she gave a cry of admiration.

"They loved by the lakes! She lives by a lake! A lake is certainly full of love!" she thought.

A lake fed by snows has opalescent colors and a translucency that makes it one huge diamond; but when it is shut in like that of les Rouxey, between two granite masses covered with pines, when silence broods over it like that of the Savannas or the Steppes, then every one must exclaim as Rosalie did.

"We owe that," said her father, "to the notorious Watteville."

"On my word," said the girl, "he did his best to earn forgiveness. Let us go in a boat to the further end; it will give us an appetite for breakfast."

The Baron called two gardener lads who knew how to row, and took with him his prime minister Modinier. The lake was about six acres in breadth, in some places ten or twelve, and four hundred in length. Rosalie soon found herself at the upper end shut in by the Dent de Vilard, the Jungfrau of that little Switzerland.

"Here we are, Monsieur le Baron," said Modinier, signing to the gardeners to tie up the boat; "will you come and look?"

"Look at what?" asked Rosalie.

"Oh, nothing!" exclaimed the Baron. "But you are a sensible girl; we have some little secrets between us, and I may tell you what ruffles my mind. Some difficulties have arisen since 1830 between the village authorities of Riceys and me, on account of this very Dent de Vilard, and I want to settle the matter

without your mother's knowing anything about it, for she is stubborn; she is capable of flinging fire and flames broadcast, particularly if she should hear that the Mayor of Riceys, a republican, got up this action as a sop to his people."

Rosalie had presence of mind enough to disguise her delight, so as to work more effectually on her father.

"What action?" said she.

"Mademoiselle, the people of Riceys," said Modinier, "have long enjoyed the right of grazing and cutting fodder on their side of the Dent de Vilard. Now Monsieur Chantonnit, the Maire since 1830, declares that the whole Dent belongs to his district, and maintains that a hundred years ago, or more, there was a way through our grounds. You understand that in that case we should no longer have them to ourselves. Then this barbarian would end by saying, what the old men in the village say, that the ground occupied by the lake was appropriated by the Abbe de Watteville. That would be the end of les Rouxey; what next?"

"Indeed, my child, between ourselves, it is the truth," said Monsieur de Watteville simply. "The land is an usurpation, with no title-deed but lapse of time. And, therefore, to avoid all worry, I should wish to come to a friendly understanding as to my border line on this side of the Dent de Vilard, and I will then raise a wall."

"If you give way to the municipality, it will swallow you up. You ought to have threatened Riceys."

"That is just what I told the master last evening," said Modinier. "But in confirmation of that view I proposed that he should come to see whether, on this side of the Dent or on the other, there may not be, high or low, some traces of an enclosure."

For a century the Dent de Vilard had been used by both parties without coming to extremities; it stood as a sort of party wall between the communes of Riceys and les Rouxey, yielding little profit. Indeed, the object in dispute, being covered with snow for six months in the year, was of a nature to cool their ardor. Thus it required all the hot blast by which the revolution of 1830 inflamed the advocates of the people, to stir up this matter, by which Monsieur Chantonnit, the Maire of Riceys, hoped to give a dramatic turn to his career on the peaceful frontier of Switzerland, and to immortalize his term of office. Chantonnit, as his name shows, was a native of Neuchatel.

"My dear father," said Rosalie, as they got into the boat again, "I agree with Modinier. If you wish to secure the joint possession of the Dent de Vilard, you must act with decision, and get a legal opinion which will protect you

against this enterprising Chantonnit. Why should you be afraid? Get the famous lawyer Savaron—engage him at once, lest Chantonnit should place the interests of the village in his hands. The man who won the case for the Chapter against the town can certainly win that of Watteville versus Riceys! Besides," she added, "les Rouxey will some day be mine—not for a long time yet, I trust.—Well, then do not leave me with a lawsuit on my hands. I like this place, I shall often live here, and add to it as much as possible. On those banks," and she pointed to the feet of the two hills, "I shall cut flowerbeds and make the loveliest English gardens. Let us go to Besancon and bring back with us the Abbe de Grancey, Monsieur Savaron, and my mother, if she cares to come. You can then make up your mind; but in your place I should have done so already. Your name is Watteville, and you are afraid of a fight! If you should lose your case—well, I will never reproach you by a word!"

"Oh, if that is the way you take it," said the Baron, "I am quite ready; I will see the lawyer."

"Besides a lawsuit is really great fun. It brings some interest into life, with coming and going and raging over it. You will have a great deal to do before you can get hold of the judges.—We did not see the Abbe de Grancey for three weeks, he was so busy!"

"But the very existence of the Chapter was involved," said Monsieur de Watteville; "and then the Archbishop's pride, his conscience, everything that makes up the life of the priesthood, was at stake. That Savaron does not know what he did for the Chapter! He saved it!"

"Listen to me," said his daughter in his ear, "if you secure Monsieur de Savaron, you will gain your suit, won't you? Well, then, let me advise you. You cannot get at Monsieur Savaron excepting through Monsieur de Grancey. Take my word for it, and let us together talk to the dear Abbe without my mother's presence at the interview, for I know a way of persuading him to bring the lawyer to us."

"It will be very difficult to avoid mentioning it to your mother!"

"The Abbe de Grancey will settle that afterwards. But just make up your mind to promise your vote to Monsieur Savaron at the next election, and you will see!"

"Go to the election! take the oath?" cried the Baron de Watteville.

"What then!" said she.

"And what will your mother say?"

"She may even desire you to do it," replied Rosalie, knowing as she did from Albert's letter to Leopold how deeply the Vicar-General had pledged

himself.

Four days after, the Abbe de Grancey called very early one morning on Albert de Savarus, having announced his visit the day before. The old priest had come to win over the great lawyer to the house of the Wattevilles, a proceeding which shows how much tact and subtlety Rosalie must have employed in an underhand way.

"What can I do for you, Monsieur le Vicaire-General?" asked Savarus.

The Abbe, who told his story with admirable frankness, was coldly heard by Albert.

"Monsieur l'Abbe," said he, "it is out of the question that I should defend the interests of the Wattevilles, and you shall understand why. My part in this town is to remain perfectly neutral. I will display no colors; I must remain a mystery till the eve of my election. Now, to plead for the Wattevilles would mean nothing in Paris, but here!—Here, where everything is discussed, I should be supposed by every one to be an ally of your Faubourg Saint-Germain."

"What! do you suppose that you can remain unknown on the day of the election, when the candidates must oppose each other? It must then become known that your name is Savaron de Savarus, that you have held the appointment of Master of Appeals, that you are a man of the Restoration!"

"On the day of the election," said Savarus, "I will be all I am expected to be; and I intend to speak at the preliminary meetings."

"If you have the support of Monsieur de Watteville and his party, you will get a hundred votes in a mass, and far more to be trusted than those on which you rely. It is always possible to produce division of interests; convictions are inseparable."

"The deuce is in it!" said Savarus. "I am attached to you, and I could do a great deal for you, Father! Perhaps we may compound with the Devil. Whatever Monsieur de Watteville's business may be, by engaging Girardet, and prompting him, it will be possible to drag the proceedings out till the elections are over. I will not undertake to plead till the day after I am returned."

"Do this one thing," said the Abbe. "Come to the Hotel de Rupt: there is a young person of nineteen there who, one of these days, will have a hundred thousand francs a year, and you can seem to be paying your court to her—"

"Ah! the young lady I sometimes see in the kiosk?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle Rosalie," replied the Abbe de Grancey. "You are ambitious. If she takes a fancy to you, you may be everything an ambitious

man can wish—who knows? A Minister perhaps. A man can always be a Minister who adds a hundred thousand francs a year to your amazing talents."

"Monsieur l'Abbe, if Mademoiselle de Watteville had three times her fortune, and adored me into the bargain, it would be impossible that I should marry her—"

"You are married?" exclaimed the Abbe.

"Not in church nor before the Maire, but morally speaking," said Savarus.

"That is even worse when a man cares about it as you seem to care," replied the Abbe. "Everything that is not done, can be undone. Do not stake your fortune and your prospects on a woman's liking, any more than a wise man counts on a dead man's shoes before starting on his way."

"Let us say no more about Mademoiselle de Watteville," said Albert gravely, "and agree as to the facts. At your desire—for I have a regard and respect for you—I will appear for Monsieur de Watteville, but after the elections. Until then Girardet must conduct the case under my instructions. That is the most I can do."

"But there are questions involved which can only be settled after inspection of the localities," said the Vicar-General.

"Girardet can go," said Savarus. "I cannot allow myself, in the face of a town I know so well, to take any step which might compromise the supreme interests that lie beyond my election."

The Abbe left Savarus after giving him a keen look, in which he seemed to be laughing at the young athlete's uncompromising politics, while admiring his firmness.

"Ah! I would have dragged my father into a lawsuit—I would have done anything to get him here!" cried Rosalie to herself, standing in the kiosk and looking at the lawyer in his room, the day after Albert's interview with the Abbe, who had reported the result to her father. "I would have committed any mortal sin, and you will not enter the Wattevilles' drawing-room; I may not hear your fine voice! You make conditions when your help is required by the Wattevilles and the Rupts!—Well, God knows, I meant to be content with these small joys; with seeing you, hearing you speak, going with you to les Rouxey, that your presence might to me make the place sacred. That was all I asked. But now—now I mean to be your wife.—Yes, yes; look at her portrait, at her drawing-room, her bedroom, at the four sides of her villa, the points of view from her gardens. You expect her statue? I will make her marble herself towards you!—After all, the woman does not love. Art, science, books, singing, music, have absorbed half her senses and her intelligence. She is old,

too; she is past thirty; my Albert will not be happy!"

"What is the matter that you stay here, Rosalie?" asked her mother, interrupting her reflections. "Monsieur de Soulas is in the drawing-room, and he observed your attitude, which certainly betrays more thoughtfulness than is due at your age."

"Then, is Monsieur de Soulas a foe to thought?" asked Rosalie.

"Then you were thinking?" said Madame de Watteville.

"Why, yes, mamma."

"Why, no! you were not thinking. You were staring at that lawyer's window with an attention that is neither becoming, nor decent, and which Monsieur de Soulas, of all men, ought never to have observed."

"Why?" said Rosalie.

"It is time," said the Baroness, "that you should know what our intentions are. Amedee likes you, and you will not be unhappy as Comtesse de Soulas."

Rosalie, as white as a lily, made no reply, so completely was she stupefied by contending feelings. And yet in the presence of the man she had this instant begun to hate vehemently, she forced the kind of smile which a ballet-dancer puts on for the public. Nay, she could even laugh; she had the strength to conceal her rage, which presently subsided, for she was determined to make use of this fat simpleton to further her designs.

"Monsieur Amedee," said she, at the moment when her mother was walking ahead of them in the garden, affecting to leave the young people together, "were you not aware that Monsieur Albert Savaron de Savarus is a Legitimist?"

"A Legitimist?"

"Until 1830 he was Master of Appeals to the Council of State, attached to the supreme Ministerial Council, and in favor with the Dauphin and Dauphiness. It would be very good of you to say nothing against him, but it would be better still if you would attend the election this year, carry the day, and hinder that poor Monsieur de Chavoncourt from representing the town of Besancon."

"What sudden interest have you in this Savaron?"

"Monsieur Albert Savaron de Savarus, the natural son of the Comte de Savarus—pray keep the secret of my indiscretion—if he is returned deputy, will be our advocate in the suit about les Rouxey. Les Rouxey, my father tells me, will be my property; I intend to live there, it is a lovely place! I should be broken-hearted at seeing that fine piece of the great de Watteville's work

destroyed."

"The devil!" thought Amedee, as he left the house. "The heiress is not such a fool as her mother thinks her."

Monsieur de Chavoncourt is a Royalist, of the famous 221. Hence, from the day after the revolution of July, he always preached the salutary doctrine of taking the oaths and resisting the present order of things, after the pattern of the Tories against the Whigs in England. This doctrine was not acceptable to the Legitimists, who, in their defeat, had the wit to divide in their opinions, and to trust to the force of inertia and to Providence. Monsieur de Chavoncourt was not wholly trusted by his own party, but seemed to the Moderates the best man to choose; they preferred the triumph of his half-hearted opinions to the acclamation of a Republican who should combine the votes of the enthusiasts and the patriots. Monsieur de Chavoncourt, highly respected in Besancon, was the representative of an old parliamentary family; his fortune, of about fifteen thousand francs a year, was not an offence to anybody, especially as he had a son and three daughters. With such a family, fifteen thousand francs a year are a mere nothing. Now when, under these circumstances, the father of the family is above bribery, it would be hard if the electors did not esteem him. Electors wax enthusiastic over a beau ideal of parliamentary virtue, just as the audience in the pit do at the representation of the generous sentiments they so little practise.

Madame de Chavoncourt, at this time a woman of forty, was one of the beauties of Besancon. While the Chamber was sitting, she lived meagrely in one of their country places to recoup herself by economy for Monsieur de Chavoncourt's expenses in Paris. In the winter she received very creditably once a week, on Tuesdays, understanding her business as mistress of the house. Young Chavoncourt, a youth of two-and-twenty, and another young gentleman, named Monsieur de Vauchelles, no richer than Amedee and his school-friend, were his intimate allies. They made excursions together to Granvelle, and sometimes went out shooting; they were so well known to be inseparable that they were invited to the country together.

Rosalie, who was intimate with the Chavoncourt girls, knew that the three young men had no secrets from each other. She reflected that if Monsieur de Soulas should repeat her words, it would be to his two companions. Now, Monsieur de Vauchelles had his matrimonial plans, as Amedee had his; he wished to marry Victoire, the eldest of the Chavoncourts, on whom an old aunt was to settle an estate worth seven thousand francs a year, and a hundred thousand francs in hard cash, when the contract was to be signed. Victoire was this aunt's god-daughter and favorite niece. Consequently, young Chavoncourt and his friend Vauchelles would be sure to warn Monsieur de Chavoncourt of the danger he was in from Albert's candidature.

But this did not satisfy Rosalie. She sent the Prefet of the department a letter written with her left hand, signed "A friend to Louis Philippe," in which she informed him of the secret intentions of Monsieur Albert de Savarus, pointing out the serious support a Royalist orator might give to Berryer, and revealing to him the deeply artful course pursued by the lawyer during his two years' residence at Besancon. The Prefet was a capable man, a personal enemy of the Royalist party, devoted by conviction to the Government of July—in short, one of those men of whom, in the Rue de Grenelle, the Minister of the Interior could say, "We have a capital Prefet at Besancon."—The Prefet read the letter, and, in obedience to its instructions, he burnt it.

Rosalie aimed at preventing Albert's election, so as to keep him five years longer at Besancon.

At that time an election was a fight between parties, and in order to win, the Ministry chose its ground by choosing the moment when it would give battle. The elections were therefore not to take place for three months yet. When a man's whole life depends on an election, the period that elapses between the issuing of the writs for convening the electoral bodies, and the day fixed for their meetings, is an interval during which ordinary vitality is suspended. Rosalie fully understood how much latitude Albert's absorbed state would leave her during these three months. By promising Mariette—as she afterwards confessed—to take both her and Jerome into her service, she induced the maid to bring her all the letters Albert might sent to Italy, and those addressed to him from that country. And all the time she was pondering these machinations, the extraordinary girl was working slippers for her father with the most innocent air in the world. She even made a greater display than ever of candor and simplicity, quite understanding how valuable that candor and innocence would be to her ends.

"My daughter grows quite charming!" said Madame de Watteville.

Two months before the election a meeting was held at the house of Monsieur Boucher senior, composed of the contractor who expected to get the work for the aqueduct for the Arcier waters; of Monsieur Boucher's father-in-law; of Monsieur Granet, the influential man to whom Savarus had done a service, and who was to nominate him as a candidate; of Girardet the lawyer; of the printer of the Eastern Review; and of the President of the Chamber of Commerce. In fact, the assembly consisted of twenty-seven persons in all, men who in the provinces are regarded as bigwigs. Each man represented on an average six votes, but in estimating their values they said ten, for men always begin by exaggerating their own influence. Among these twenty-seven was one who was wholly devoted to the Prefet, one false brother who secretly looked for some favor from the Ministry, either for himself or for some one belonging to him.

At this preliminary meeting, it was agreed that Savaron the lawyer should be named as candidate, a motion received with such enthusiasm as no one looked for from Besancon. Albert, waiting at home for Alfred Boucher to fetch him, was chatting with the Abbe de Grancey, who was interested in this absorbing ambition. Albert had appreciated the priest's vast political capacities; and the priest, touched by the young man's entreaties, had been willing to become his guide and adviser in this culminating struggle. The Chapter did not love Monsieur de Chavoncourt, for it was his wife's brother-in-law, as President of the Tribunal, who had lost the famous suit for them in the lower Court.

"You are betrayed, my dear fellow," said the shrewd and worthy Abbe, in that gentle, calm voice which old priests acquire.

"Betrayed!" cried the lover, struck to the heart.

"By whom I know not at all," the priest replied. "But at the Prefecture your plans are known, and your hand read like a book. At this moment I have no advice to give you. Such affairs need consideration. As for this evening, take the bull by the horns, anticipate the blow. Tell them all your previous life, and thus you will mitigate the effect of the discovery on the good folks of Besancon."

"Oh, I was prepared for it," said Albert in a broken voice.

"You would not benefit by my advice; you had the opportunity of making an impression at the Hotel de Rupt; you do not know the advantage you would have gained—"

"What?"

"The unanimous support of the Royalists, an immediate readiness to go to the election—in short, above a hundred votes. Adding to these what, among ourselves, we call the ecclesiastical vote, though you were not yet nominated, you were master of the votes by ballot. Under such circumstances, a man may temporize, may make his way—"

Alfred Boucher when he came in, full of enthusiasm, to announce the decision of the preliminary meeting, found the Vicar-General and the lawyer cold, calm, and grave.

"Good-night, Monsieur l'Abbe," said Albert. "We will talk of your business at greater length when the elections are over."

And he took Alfred's arm, after pressing Monsieur de Grancey's hand with meaning. The priest looked at the ambitious man, whose face at that moment wore the lofty expression which a general may have when he hears the first gun fired for a battle. He raised his eyes to heaven, and left the room, saying to

himself, "What a priest he would make!"

Eloquence is not at the Bar. The pleader rarely puts forth the real powers of his soul; if he did, he would die of it in a few years. Eloquence is, nowadays, rarely in the pulpit; but it is found on certain occasions in the Chamber of Deputies, when an ambitious man stakes all to win all, or, stung by a myriad darts, at a given moment bursts into speech. But it is still more certainly found in some privileged beings, at the inevitable hour when their claims must either triumph or be wrecked, and when they are forced to speak. Thus at this meeting, Albert Savarus, feeling the necessity of winning himself some supporters, displayed all the faculties of his soul and the resources of his intellect. He entered the room well, without awkwardness or arrogance, without weakness, without cowardice, quite gravely, and was not dismayed at finding himself among twenty or thirty men. The news of the meeting and of its determination had already brought a few docile sheep to follow the bell.

Before listening to Monsieur Boucher, who was about to deluge him with a speech announcing the decision of the Boucher Committee, Albert begged for silence, and, as he shook hands with Monsieur Boucher, tried to warn him, by a sign, of an unexpected danger.

"My young friend, Alfred Boucher, has just announced to me the honor you have done me. But before that decision is irrevocable," said the lawyer, "I think that I ought to explain to you who and what your candidate is, so as to leave you free to take back your word if my declaration should disturb your conscience!"

This exordium was followed by profound silence. Some of the men thought it showed a noble impulse.

Albert gave a sketch of his previous career, telling them his real name, his action under the Restoration, and revealing himself as a new man since his arrival at Besancon, while pledging himself for the future. This address held his hearers breathless, it was said. These men, all with different interests, were spellbound by the brilliant eloquence that flowed at boiling heat from the heart and soul of this ambitious spirit. Admiration silenced reflection. Only one thing was clear—the thing which Albert wished to get into their heads:

Was it not far better for the town to have one of those men who are born to govern society at large than a mere voting-machine? A statesman carries power with him. A commonplace deputy, however incorruptible, is but a conscience. What a glory for Provence to have found a Mirabeau, to return the only statesman since 1830 that the revolution of July had produced!

Under the pressure of this eloquence, all the audience believed it great enough to become a splendid political instrument in the hands of their

representative. They all saw in Albert Savaron, Savarus the great Minister. And, reading the secret calculations of his constituents, the clever candidate gave them to understand that they would be the first to enjoy the right of profiting by his influence.

This confession of faith, this ambitious programme, this retrospect of his life and character was, according to the only man present who was capable of judging of Savarus (he has since become one of the leading men of Besancon), a masterpiece of skill and of feeling, of fervor, interest, and fascination. This whirlwind carried away the electors. Never had any man had such a triumph. But, unfortunately, speech, a weapon only for close warfare, has only an immediate effect. Reflection kills the word when the word ceases to overpower reflection. If the votes had then been taken, Albert's name would undoubtedly have come out of the ballot-box. At the moment, he was conqueror. But he must conquer every day for two months.

Albert went home quivering. The townsfolk had applauded him, and he had achieved the great point of silencing beforehand the malignant talk to which his early career might give rise. The commercial interest of Besancon had nominated the lawyer, Albert Savaron de Savarus, as its candidate.

Alfred Boucher's enthusiasm, at first infectious, presently became blundering.

The Prefet, alarmed by this success, set to work to count the Ministerial votes, and contrived to have a secret interview with Monsieur de Chavoncourt, so as to effect a coalition in their common interests. Every day, without Albert's being able to discover how, the voters in the Boucher committee diminished in number.

Nothing could resist the slow grinding of the Prefecture. Three of four clever men would say to Albert's clients, "Will the deputy defend you and win your lawsuits? Will he give you advice, draw up your contracts, arrange your compromises?—He will be your slave for five years longer, if, instead of returning him to the Chamber, you only hold out the hope of his going there five years hence."

This calculation did Savarus all the more mischief, because the wives of some of the merchants had already made it. The parties interested in the matter of the bridge and that of the water from Arcier could not hold out against a talking-to from a clever Ministerialist, who proved to them that their safety lay at the Prefecture, and not in the hands of an ambitious man. Each day was a check for Savarus, though each day the battle was led by him and fought by his lieutenants—a battle of words, speeches, and proceedings. He dared not go to the Vicar-General, and the Vicar-General never showed himself. Albert rose and went to bed in a fever, his brain on fire.

At last the day dawned of the first struggle, practically the show of hands; the votes are counted, the candidates estimate their chances, and clever men can prophesy their failure or success. It is a decent hustings, without the mob, but formidable; agitation, though it is not allowed any physical display, as it is in England, is not the less profound. The English fight these battles with their fists, the French with hard words. Our neighbors have a scrimmage, the French try their fate by cold combinations calmly worked out. This particular political business is carried out in opposition to the character of the two nations.

The Radical party named their candidate; Monsieur de Chavoncourt came forward; then Albert appeared, and was accused by the Chavoncourt committee and the Radicals of being an uncompromising man of the Right, a second Berryer. The Ministry had their candidate, a stalking-horse, useful only to receive the purely Ministerial votes. The votes, thus divided, gave no result. The Republican candidate had twenty, the Ministry got fifty, Albert had seventy, Monsieur de Chavoncourt obtained sixty-seven. But the Prefet's party had perfidiously made thirty of its most devoted adherents vote for Albert, so as to deceive the enemy. The votes for Monsieur de Chavoncourt, added to the eighty votes—the real number—at the disposal of the Prefecture, would carry the election, if only the Prefet could succeed in gaining over a few of the Radicals. A hundred and sixty votes were not recorded: those of Monsieur de Grancey's following and the Legitimists.

The show of hands at an election, like a dress rehearsal at a theatre, is the most deceptive thing in the world. Albert Savarus came home, putting a brave face on the matter, but half dead. He had had the wit, the genius, or the good luck to gain, within the last fortnight, two staunch supporters—Girardet's father-in-law and a very shrewd old merchant to whom Monsieur de Grancey had sent him. These two worthy men, his self-appointed spies, affected to be Albert's most ardent opponents in the hostile camp. Towards the end of the show of hands they informed Savarus, through the medium of Monsieur Boucher, that thirty voters, unknown, were working against him in his party, playing the same trick that they were playing for his benefit on the other side.

A criminal marching to execution could not suffer as Albert suffered as he went home from the hall where his fate was at stake. The despairing lover could endure no companionship. He walked through the streets alone, between eleven o'clock and midnight. At one in the morning, Albert, to whom sleep had been unknown for the past three days, was sitting in his library in a deep armchair, his face as pale as if he were dying, his hands hanging limp, in a forlorn attitude worthy of the Magdalen. Tears hung on his long lashes, tears that dim the eyes, but do not fall; fierce thought drinks them up, the fire of the soul consumes them. Alone, he might weep. And then, under the kiosk, he saw

a white figure, which reminded him of Francesca.

"And for three months I have had no letter from her! What has become of her? I have not written for two months, but I warned her. Is she ill? Oh, my love! My life! Will you ever know what I have gone through? What a wretched constitution is mine! Have I an aneurism?" he asked himself, feeling his heart beat so violently that its pulses seemed audible in the silence like little grains of sand dropping on a big drum.

At this moment three distinct taps sounded on his door; Albert hastened to open it, and almost fainted with joy at seeing the Vicar-General's cheerful and triumphant mien. Without a word, he threw his arms round the Abbe de Grancey, held him fast, and clasped him closely, letting his head fall on the old man's shoulder. He was a child again; he cried as he had cried on hearing that Francesca Soderini was a married woman. He betrayed his weakness to no one but to this priest, on whose face shone the light of hope. The priest had been sublime, and as shrewd as he was sublime.

"Forgive me, dear Abbe, but you come at one of those moments when the man vanishes, for you are not to think me vulgarly ambitious."

"Oh! I know," replied the Abbe. "You wrote 'Ambition for love's sake!'—Ah! my son, it was love in despair that made me a priest in 1786, at the age of two-and-twenty. In 1788 I was in charge of a parish. I know life.—I have refused three bishoprics already; I mean to die at Besancon."

"Come and see her!" cried Savarus, seizing a candle, and leading the Abbe into the handsome room where hung the portrait of the Duchesse d'Argaiolo, which he lighted up.

"She is one of those women who are born to reign!" said the Vicar-General, understanding how great an affection Albert showed him by this mark of confidence. "But there is pride on that brow; it is implacable; she would never forgive an insult! It is the Archangel Michael, the angel of Execution, the inexorable angel—'All or nothing' is the motto of this type of angel. There is something divinely pitiless in that head."

"You have guessed well," cried Savarus. "But, my dear Abbe, for more than twelve years now she had reigned over my life, and I have not a thought for which to blame myself—"

"Ah! if you could only say the same of God!" said the priest with simplicity. "Now, to talk of your affairs. For ten days I have been at work for you. If you are a real politician, this time you will follow my advice. You would not be where you are now if you would have gone to the Wattevilles when I first told you. But you must go there to-morrow; I will take you in the evening. The Rouxey estates are in danger; the case must be defended within

three days. The election will not be over in three days. They will take good care not to appoint examiners the first day. There will be several voting days, and you will be elected by ballot—"

"How can that be?" asked Savarus.

"By winning the Rouxey lawsuit you will gain eighty Legitimist votes; add them to the thirty I can command, and you have a hundred and ten. Then, as twenty remain to you of the Boucher committee, you will have a hundred and thirty in all."

"Well," said Albert, "we must get seventy-five more."

"Yes," said the priest, "since all the rest are Ministerial. But, my son, you have two hundred votes, and the Prefecture no more than a hundred and eighty."

"I have two hundred votes?" said Albert, standing stupid with amazement, after starting to his feet as if shot up by a spring.

"You have those of Monsieur de Chavoncourt," said the Abbe.

"How?" said Albert.

"You will marry Mademoiselle Sidonie de Chavoncourt."

"Never!"

"You will marry Mademoiselle Sidonie de Chavoncourt," the priest repeated coldly.

"But you see—she is inexorable," said Albert, pointing to Francesca.

"You will marry Mademoiselle Sidonie de Chavoncourt," said the Abbe calmly for the third time.

This time Albert understood. The Vicar-General would not be implicated in a scheme which at last smiled on the despairing politician. A word more would have compromised the priest's dignity and honor.

"To-morrow evening at the Hotel de Rupt you will meet Madame de Chavoncourt and her second daughter. You can thank her beforehand for what she is going to do for you, and tell her that your gratitude is unbounded, that you are hers body and soul, that henceforth your future is that of her family. You are quite disinterested, for you have so much confidence in yourself that you regard the nomination as deputy as a sufficient fortune.

"You will have a struggle with Madame de Chavoncourt; she will want you to pledge your word. All your future life, my son, lies in that evening. But, understand clearly, I have nothing to do with it. I am answerable only for Legitimist voters; I have secured Madame de Watteville, and that means all the

aristocracy of Besancon. Amedee de Soulas and Vauchelles, who will both vote for you, have won over the young men; Madame de Watteville will get the old ones. As to my electors, they are infallible."

"And who on earth has gained over Madame de Chavoncourt?" asked Savarus.

"Ask me no questions," replied the Abbe. "Monsieur de Chavoncourt, who has three daughters to marry, is not capable of increasing his wealth. Though Vauchelles marries the eldest without anything from her father, because her old aunt is to settle something on her, what is to become of the two others? Sidonie is sixteen, and your ambition is as good as a gold mine. Some one has told Madame de Chavoncourt that she will do better by getting her daughter married than by sending her husband to waste his money in Paris. That some one manages Madame de Chavoncourt, and Madame de Chavoncourt manages her husband."

"That is enough, my dear Abbe. I understand. When once I am returned as deputy, I have somebody's fortune to make, and by making it large enough I shall be released from my promise. In me you have a son, a man who will owe his happiness to you. Great heavens! what have I done to deserve so true a friend?"

"You won a triumph for the Chapter," said the Vicar-General, smiling. "Now, as to all this, be as secret as the tomb. We are nothing, we have done nothing. If we were known to have meddled in election matters, we should be eaten up alive by the Puritans of the Left—who do worse—and blamed by some of our own party, who want everything. Madame de Chavoncourt has no suspicion of my share in all this. I have confided in no one but Madame de Watteville, whom we may trust as we trust ourselves."

"I will bring the Duchess to you to be blessed!" cried Savarus.

After seeing out the old priest, Albert went to bed in the swaddling clothes of power.

Next evening, as may well be supposed, by nine o'clock Madame la Baronne de Watteville's rooms were crowded by the aristocracy of Besancon in convocation extraordinary. They were discussing the exceptional step of going to the poll, to oblige the daughter of the Rupts. It was known that the former Master of Appeals, the secretary of one of the most faithful ministers under the Elder Branch, was to be presented that evening. Madame de Chavoncourt was there with her second daughter Sidonie, exquisitely dressed, while her elder sister, secure of her lover, had not indulged in any of the arts of the toilet. In country towns these little things are remarked. The Abbe de Grancey's fine and clever head was to be seen moving from group to group,

listening to everything, seeming to be apart from it all, but uttering those incisive phrases which sum up a question and direct the issue.

"If the Elder Branch were to return," said he to an old statesman of seventy, "what politicians would they find?"—"Berryer, alone on his bench, does not know which way to turn; if he had sixty votes, he would often scotch the wheels of the Government and upset Ministries!"—"The Duc de Fitz-James is to be nominated at Toulouse."—"You will enable Monsieur de Watteville to win his lawsuit."—"If you vote for Monsieur Savarus, the Republicans will vote with you rather than with the Moderates!" etc., etc.

At nine o'clock Albert had not arrived. Madame de Watteville was disposed to regard such delay as an impertinence.

"My dear Baroness," said Madame de Chavoncourt, "do not let such serious issues turn on such a trifle. The varnish on his boots is not dry—or a consultation, perhaps, detains Monsieur de Savarus."

Rosalie shot a side glance at Madame de Chavoncourt.

"She is very lenient to Monsieur de Savarus," she whispered to her mother.

"You see," said the Baroness with a smile, "there is a question of a marriage between Sidonie and Monsieur de Savarus."

Mademoiselle de Watteville hastily went to a window looking out over the garden.

At ten o'clock Albert de Savarus had not yet appeared. The storm that threatened now burst. Some of the gentlemen sat down to cards, finding the thing intolerable. The Abbe de Grancey, who did not know what to think, went to the window where Rosalie was hidden, and exclaimed aloud in his amazement, "He must be dead!"

The Vicar-General stepped out into the garden, followed by Monsieur de Watteville and his daughter, and they all three went up to the kiosk. In Albert's rooms all was dark; not a light was to be seen.

"Jerome!" cried Rosalie, seeing the servant in the yard below. The Abbe looked at her with astonishment. "Where in the world is your master?" she asked the man, who came to the foot of the wall.

"Gone—in a post-chaise, mademoiselle."

"He is ruined!" exclaimed the Abbe de Grancey, "or he is happy!"

The joy of triumph was not so effectually concealed on Rosalie's face that the Vicar-General could not detect it. He affected to see nothing.

"What can this girl have had to do with this business?" he asked himself.

They all three returned to the drawing-room, where Monsieur de Watteville announced the strange, the extraordinary, the prodigious news of the lawyer's departure, without any reason assigned for his evasion. By half-past eleven only fifteen persons remained, among them Madame de Chavoncourt and the Abbe de Godenars, another Vicar-General, a man of about forty, who hoped for a bishopric, the two Chavoncourt girls, and Monsieur de Vauchelles, the Abbe de Grancey, Rosalie, Amedee de Soulas, and a retired magistrate, one of the most influential members of the upper circle of Besancon, who had been very eager for Albert's election. The Abbe de Grancey sat down by the Baroness in such a position as to watch Rosalie, whose face, usually pale, wore a feverish flush.

"What can have happened to Monsieur de Savarus?" said Madame de Chavoncourt.

At this moment a servant in livery brought in a letter for the Abbe de Grancey on a silver tray.

"Pray read it," said the Baroness.

The Vicar-General read the letter; he saw Rosalie suddenly turn as white as her kerchief.

"She recognizes the writing," said he to himself, after glancing at the girl over his spectacles. He folded up the letter, and calmly put it in his pocket without a word. In three minutes he had met three looks from Rosalie which were enough to make him guess everything.

"She is in love with Albert Savarus!" thought the Vicar-General.

He rose and took leave. He was going towards the door when, in the next room, he was overtaken by Rosalie, who said:

"Monsieur de Grancey, it was from Albert!"

"How do you know that it was his writing, to recognize it from so far?"

The girl's reply, caught as she was in the toils of her impatience and rage, seemed to the Abbe sublime.

"I love him!—What is the matter?" she said after a pause.

"He gives up the election."

Rosalie put her finger to her lip.

"I ask you to be as secret as if it were a confession," said she before returning to the drawing-room. "If there is an end of the election, there is an end of the marriage with Sidonie."

In the morning, on her way to Mass, Mademoiselle de Watteville heard

from Mariette some of the circumstances which had prompted Albert's disappearance at the most critical moment of his life.

"Mademoiselle, an old gentleman from Paris arrived yesterday morning at the Hotel National; he came in his own carriage with four horses, and a courier in front, and a servant. Indeed, Jerome, who saw the carriage returning, declares he could only be a prince or a milord."

"Was there a coronet on the carriage?" asked Rosalie.

"I do not know," said Mariette. "Just as two was striking he came to call on Monsieur Savarus, and sent in his card; and when he saw it, Jerome says Monsieur turned as pale as a sheet, and said he was to be shown in. As he himself locked the door, it is impossible to tell what the old gentleman and the lawyer said to each other; but they were together above an hour, and then the old gentleman, with the lawyer, called up his servant. Jerome saw the servant go out again with an immense package, four feet long, which looked like a great painting on canvas. The old gentleman had in his hand a large parcel of papers. Monsieur Savaron was paler than death, and he, so proud, so dignified, was in a state to be pitied. But he treated the old gentleman so respectfully that he could not have been politer to the King himself. Jerome and Monsieur Albert Savaron escorted the gentleman to his carriage, which was standing with the horses in. The courier started on the stroke of three.

"Monsieur Savaron went straight to the Prefecture, and from that to Monsieur Gentillet, who sold him the old traveling carriage that used to belong to Madame de Saint-Vier before she died; then he ordered post horses for six o'clock. He went home to pack; no doubt he wrote a lot of letters; finally, he settled everything with Monsieur Girardet, who went to him and stayed till seven. Jerome carried a note to Monsieur Boucher, with whom his master was to have dined; and then, at half-past seven, the lawyer set out, leaving Jerome with three months' wages, and telling him to find another place.

"He left his keys with Monsieur Girardet, whom he took home, and at his house, Jerome says, he took a plate of soup, for at half-past seven Monsieur Girardet had not yet dined. When Monsieur Savaron got into the carriage he looked like death. Jerome, who, of course, saw his master off, heard him tell the postilion 'The Geneva Road!'"

"Did Jerome ask the name of the stranger at the Hotel National?"

"As the old gentleman did not mean to stay, he was not asked for it. The servant, by his orders no doubt, pretended not to speak French."

"And the letter which came so late to Abbe de Grancey?" said Rosalie.

"It was Monsieur Girardet, no doubt, who ought to have delivered it; but Jerome says that poor Monsieur Girardet, who was much attached to lawyer Savaron, was as much upset as he was. So he who came so mysteriously, as Mademoiselle Galard says, is gone away just as mysteriously."

After hearing this narrative, Mademoiselle de Watteville fell into a brooding and absent mood, which everybody could see. It is useless to say anything of the commotion that arose in Besancon on the disappearance of Monsieur Savaron. It was understood that the Prefect had obliged him with the greatest readiness by giving him at once a passport across the frontier, for he was thus quit of his only opponent. Next day Monsieur de Chavoncourt was carried to the top by a majority of a hundred and forty votes.

"Jack is gone by the way he came," said an elector on hearing of Albert Savaron's flight.

This event lent weight to the prevailing prejudice at Besancon against strangers; indeed, two years previously they had received confirmation from the affair of the Republican newspaper. Ten days later Albert de Savarus was never spoken of again. Only three persons—Girardet the attorney, the Vicar-General, and Rosalie—were seriously affected by his disappearance. Girardet knew that the white-haired stranger was Prince Soderini, for he had seen his card, and he told the Vicar-General; but Rosalie, better informed than either of them, had known for three months past that the Duc d'Argaiolo was dead.

In the month of April 1836 no one had had any news from or of Albert de Savarus. Jerome and Mariette were to be married, but the Baroness confidentially desired her maid to wait till her daughter was married, saying that the two weddings might take place at the same time.

"It is time that Rosalie should be married," said the Baroness one day to Monsieur de Watteville. "She is nineteen, and she is fearfully altered in these last months."

"I do not know what ails her," said the Baron.

"When fathers do not know what ails their daughters, mothers can guess," said the Baroness; "we must get her married."

"I am quite willing," said the Baron. "I shall give her les Rouxey now that the Court has settled our quarrel with the authorities of Riceys by fixing the boundary line at three hundred feet up the side of the Dent de Vilard. I am having a trench made to collect all the water and carry it into the lake. The village did not appeal, so the decision is final."

"It has never occurred to you," said Madame de Watteville, "that this decision cost me thirty thousand francs handed over to Chantonnit. That

peasant would take nothing else; he sold us peace.—If you give away les Rouxey, you will have nothing left," said the Baroness.

"I do not need much," said the Baron; "I am breaking up."

"You eat like an ogre!"

"Just so. But however much I may eat, I feel my legs get weaker and weaker—"

"It is from working the lathe," said his wife.

"I do not know," said he.

"We will marry Rosalie to Monsieur de Soulas; if you give her les Rouxey, keep the life interest. I will give them fifteen thousand francs a year in the funds. Our children can live here; I do not see that they are much to be pitied."

"No. I shall give them les Rouxey out and out. Rosalie is fond of les Rouxey."

"You are a queer man with your daughter! It does not occur to you to ask me if I am fond of les Rouxey."

Rosalie, at once sent for, was informed that she was to marry Monsieur de Soulas one day early in the month of May.

"I am very much obliged to you, mother, and to you too, father, for having thought of settling me; but I do not mean to marry; I am very happy with you."

"Mere speeches!" said the Baroness. "You are not in love with Monsieur de Soulas, that is all."

"If you insist on the plain truth, I will never marry Monsieur de Soulas—"

"Oh! the never of a girl of nineteen!" retorted her mother, with a bitter smile.

"The never of Mademoiselle de Watteville," said Rosalie with firm decision. "My father, I imagine, has no intention of making me marry against my wishes?"

"No, indeed no!" said the poor Baron, looking affectionately at his daughter.

"Very well!" said the Baroness, sternly controlling the rage of a bigot startled at finding herself unexpectedly defied, "you yourself, Monsieur de Watteville, may take the responsibility of settling your daughter. Consider well, mademoiselle, for if you do not marry to my mind you will get nothing out of me!"

The quarrel thus begun between Madame de Watteville and her husband,

who took his daughter's part, went so far that Rosalie and her father were obliged to spend the summer at les Rouxey; life at the Hotel de Rupt was unendurable. It thus became known in Besancon that Mademoiselle de Watteville had positively refused the Comte de Soulas.

After their marriage Mariette and Jerome came to les Rouxey to succeed to Modinier in due time. The Baron restored and repaired the house to suit his daughter's taste. When she heard that these improvements had cost about sixty thousand francs, and that Rosalie and her father were building a conservatory, the Baroness understood that there was a leaven of spite in her daughter. The Baron purchased various outlying plots, and a little estate worth thirty thousand francs. Madame de Watteville was told that, away from her, Rosalie showed masterly qualities, that she was taking steps to improve the value of les Rouxey, that she had treated herself to a riding habit and rode about; her father, whom she made very happy, who no longer complained of his health, and who was growing fat, accompanied her in her expeditions. As the Baroness' name-day grew near—her name was Louise—the Vicar-General came one day to les Rouxey, deputed, no doubt, by Madame de Watteville and Monsieur de Soulas, to negotiate a peace between mother and daughter.

"That little Rosalie has a head on her shoulders," said the folk of Besancon.

After handsomely paying up the ninety thousand francs spent on les Rouxey, the Baroness allowed her husband a thousand francs a month to live on; she would not put herself in the wrong. The father and daughter were perfectly willing to return to Besancon for the 15th of August, and to remain there till the end of the month.

When, after dinner, the Vicar-General took Mademoiselle de Watteville apart, to open the question of the marriage, by explaining to her that it was vain to think any more of Albert, of whom they had had no news for a year past, he was stopped at once by a sign from Rosalie. The strange girl took Monsieur de Grancey by the arm, and led him to a seat under a clump of rhododendrons, whence there was a view of the lake.

"Listen, dear Abbe," said she. "You whom I love as much as my father, for you had an affection for my Albert, I must at last confess that I committed crimes to become his wife, and he must be my husband.—Here; read this."

She held out to him a number of the Gazette which she had in her apron pocket, pointing out the following paragraph under the date of Florence, May 25th:—

"The wedding of Monsieur le Duc de Rhetore, eldest son of the Duc de Chaulieu, the former Ambassador, to Madame la Duchesse d'Argaiolo, nee Princess Soderini, was solemnized with great splendor. Numerous

entertainments given in honor of the marriage are making Florence gay. The Duchess' fortune is one of the finest in Italy, for the late Duke left her everything."

"The woman he loved is married," said she. "I divided them."

"You? How?" asked the Abbe.

Rosalie was about to reply, when she was interrupted by a loud cry from two of the gardeners, following on the sound of a body falling into the water; she started, and ran off screaming, "Oh! father!"—The Baron had disappeared.

In trying to reach a piece of granite on which he fancied he saw the impression of a shell, a circumstance which would have contradicted some system of geology, Monsieur de Watteville had gone down the slope, lost his balance, and slipped into the lake, which, of course, was deepest close under the roadway. The men had the greatest difficulty in enabling the Baron to catch hold of a pole pushed down at the place where the water was bubbling, but at last they pulled him out, covered with mud, in which he had sunk; he was getting deeper and deeper in, by dint of struggling. Monsieur de Watteville had dined heavily, digestion was in progress, and was thus checked.

When he had been undressed, washed, and put to bed, he was in such evident danger that two servants at once set out on horseback: one to ride to Besancon, and the other to fetch the nearest doctor and surgeon. When Madame de Watteville arrived, eight hours later, with the first medical aid from Besancon, they found Monsieur de Watteville past all hope, in spite of the intelligent treatment of the Rouxey doctor. The fright had produced serious effusion on the brain, and the shock to the digestion was helping to kill the poor man.

This death, which would never have happened, said Madame de Watteville, if her husband had stayed at Besancon, was ascribed by her to her daughter's obstinacy. She took an aversion for Rosalie, abandoning herself to grief and regrets that were evidently exaggerated. She spoke of the Baron as "her dear lamb!"

The last of the Wattevilles was buried on an island in the lake at les Rouxey, where the Baroness had a little Gothic monument erected of white marble, like that called the tomb of Heloise at Pere-Lachaise.

A month after this catastrophe the mother and daughter had settled in the Hotel de Rupt, where they lived in savage silence. Rosalie was suffering from real sorrow, which had no visible outlet; she accused herself of her father's death, and she feared another disaster, much greater in her eyes, and very certainly her own work; neither Girardet the attorney nor the Abbe de Grancey could obtain any information concerning Albert. This silence was appalling. In

a paroxysm of repentance she felt that she must confess to the Vicar-General the horrible machinations by which she had separated Francesca and Albert. They had been simple, but formidable. Mademoiselle de Watteville had intercepted Albert's letters to the Duchess as well as that in which Francesca announced her husband's illness, warning her lover that she could write to him no more during the time while she was devoted, as was her duty, to the care of the dying man. Thus, while Albert was wholly occupied with election matters, the Duchess had written him only two letters; one in which she told him that the Duc d'Argaiolo was in danger, and one announcing her widowhood—two noble and beautiful letters which Rosalie kept back.

After several nights' labor she succeeded in imitating Albert's writing very perfectly. She had substituted three letters of her own writing for three of Albert's, and the rough copies which she showed to the old priest made him shudder—the genius of evil was revealed in them to such perfection. Rosalie, writing in Albert's name, had prepared the Duchess for a change in the Frenchman's feelings, falsely representing him as faithless, and she had answered the news of the Duc d'Argaiolo's death by announcing the marriage ere long of Albert and Mademoiselle de Watteville. The two letters, intended to cross on the road, had, in fact, done so. The infernal cleverness with which the letters were written so much astonished the Vicar-General that he read them a second time. Francesca, stabbed to the heart by a girl who wanted to kill love in her rival, had answered the last in these four words: "You are free. Farewell."

"Purely moral crimes, which give no hold to human justice, are the most atrocious and detestable," said the Abbe severely. "God often punishes them on earth; herein lies the reason of the terrible catastrophes which to us seem inexplicable. Of all secret crimes buried in the mystery of private life, the most disgraceful is that of breaking the seal of a letter, or of reading it surreptitiously. Every one, whoever it may be, and urged by whatever reason, who is guilty of such an act has stained his honor beyond retrieving.

"Do you not feel all that is touching, that is heavenly in the story of the youthful page, falsely accused, and carrying the letter containing the order for his execution, who sets out without a thought of ill, and whom Providence protects and saves—miraculously, we say! But do you know wherein the miracle lies? Virtue has a glory as potent as that of innocent childhood.

"I say these things not meaning to admonish you," said the old priest, with deep grief. "I, alas! am not your spiritual director; you are not kneeling at the feet of God; I am your friend, appalled by dread of what your punishment may be. What has become of that unhappy Albert? Has he, perhaps, killed himself? There was tremendous passion under his assumption of calm. I understand now that old Prince Soderini, the father of the Duchess d'Argaiolo, came here

to take back his daughter's letters and portraits. This was the thunderbolt that fell on Albert's head, and he went off, no doubt, to try to justify himself. But how is it that in fourteen months he has given us no news of himself?"

"Oh! if I marry him, he will be so happy!"

"Happy?—He does not love you. Besides, you have no great fortune to give him. Your mother detests you; you made her a fierce reply which rankles, and which will be your ruin. When she told you yesterday that obedience was the only way to repair your errors, and reminded you of the need for marrying, mentioning Amedee—'If you are so fond of him, marry him yourself, mother!'—Did you, or did you not, fling these words in her teeth?"

"Yes," said Rosalie.

"Well, I know her," Monsieur de Grancey went on. "In a few months she will be Comtesse de Soulas! She will be sure to have children; she will give Monsieur de Soulas forty thousand francs a year; she will benefit him in other ways, and reduce your share of her fortune as much as possible. You will be poor as long as she lives, and she is but eight-and-thirty! Your whole estate will be the land of les Rouxey, and the small share left to you after your father's legal debts are settled, if, indeed, your mother should consent to forego her claims on les Rouxey. From the point of view of material advantages, you have done badly for yourself; from the point of view of feeling, I imagine you have wrecked your life. Instead of going to your mother—" Rosalie shook her head fiercely.

"To your mother," the priest went on, "and to religion, where you would, at the first impulse of your heart, have found enlightenment, counsel, and guidance, you chose to act in your own way, knowing nothing of life, and listening only to passion!"

These words of wisdom terrified Mademoiselle de Watteville.

"And what ought I to do now?" she asked after a pause.

"To repair your wrong-doing, you must ascertain its extent," said the Abbe.

"Well, I will write to the only man who can know anything of Albert's fate, Monsieur Leopold Hannequin, a notary in Paris, his friend since childhood."

"Write no more, unless to do honor to truth," said the Vicar-General. "Place the real and the false letters in my hands, confess everything in detail as though I were the keeper of your conscience, asking me how you may expiate your sins, and doing as I bid you. I shall see—for, above all things, restore this unfortunate man to his innocence in the eyes of the woman he had made his divinity on earth. Though he has lost his happiness, Albert must still hope for justification."

Rosalie promised to obey the Abbe, hoping that the steps he might take would perhaps end in bringing Albert back to her.

Not long after Mademoiselle de Watteville's confession a clerk came to Besancon from Monsieur Leopold Hannequin, armed with a power of attorney from Albert; he called first on Monsieur Girardet, begging his assistance in selling the house belonging to Monsieur Savaron. The attorney undertook to do this out of friendship for Albert. The clerk from Paris sold the furniture, and with the proceeds could repay some money owed by Savaron to Girardet, who on the occasion of his inexplicable departure had lent him five thousand francs while undertaking to collect his assets. When Girardet asked what had become of the handsome and noble pleader, to whom he had been so much attached, the clerk replied that no one knew but his master, and that the notary had seemed greatly distressed by the contents of the last letter he had received from Monsieur Albert de Savarus.

On hearing this, the Vicar-General wrote to Leopold. This was the worthy notary's reply:—

"To Monsieur l'Abbe de Grancey,

Vicar-General of the Diocese of Besancon.

"PARIS.

"Alas, monsieur, it is in nobody's power to restore Albert to the life of the world; he has renounced it. He is a novice in the monastery of the Grand Chartreuse near Grenoble. You know, better than I who have but just learned it, that on the threshold of that cloister everything dies. Albert, foreseeing that I should go to him, placed the General of the Order between my utmost efforts and himself. I know his noble soul well enough to be sure that he is the victim of some odious plot unknown to us; but everything is at an end. The Duchesse d'Argaiolo, now Duchesse de Rhetore, seems to me to have carried severity to an extreme. At Belgirate, which she had left when Albert flew thither, she had left instructions leading him to believe that she was living in London. From London Albert went in search of her to Naples, and from Naples to Rome, where she was now engaged to the Duc de Rhetore. When Albert succeeded in seeing Madame d'Argaiolo, at Florence, it was at the ceremony of her marriage.

"Our poor friend swooned in the church, and even when he was in danger of death he could never obtain any explanation from this woman, who must have had I know not what in her heart. For seven months Albert had traveled in pursuit of a cruel creature who thought it sport to escape him; he knew not where or how to catch her.

"I saw him on his way through Paris; and if you had seen him, as I did, you

would have felt that not a word might be spoken about the Duchess, at the risk of bringing on an attack which might have wrecked his reason. If he had known what his crime was, he might have found means to justify himself; but being falsely accused of being married!—what could he do? Albert is dead, quite dead to the world. He longed for rest; let us hope that the deep silence and prayer into which he has thrown himself may give him happiness in another guise. You, monsieur, who have known him, must greatly pity him; and pity his friends also.

"Yours, etc."

As soon as he received this letter the good Vicar-General wrote to the General of the Carthusian order, and this was the letter he received from Albert Savarus:—

"Brother Albert to Monsieur l'Abbe de Grancey,

Vicar-General of the Diocese of Besancon.

"LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE.

"I recognized your tender soul, dear and well-beloved Vicar-General, and your still youthful heart, in all that the Reverend Father General of our Order has just told me. You have understood the only wish that lurks in the depths of my heart so far as the things of the world are concerned—to get justice done to my feelings by her who has treated me so badly! But before leaving me at liberty to avail myself of your offer, the General wanted to know that my vocation was sincere; he was so kind as to tell me his idea, on finding that I was determined to preserve absolute silence on this point. If I had yielded to the temptation to rehabilitate the man of the world, the friar would have been rejected by this monastery. Grace has certainly done her work, but, though short, the struggle was not the less keen or the less painful. Is not this enough to show you that I could never return to the world?

"Hence my forgiveness, which you ask for the author of so much woe, is entire and without a thought of vindictiveness. I will pray to God to forgive that young lady as I forgive her, and as I shall beseech Him to give Madame de Rhetore a life of happiness.

Ah! whether it be death, or the obstinate hand of a young girl madly bent on being loved, or one of the blows ascribed to chance, must we not all obey God? Sorrow in some souls makes a vast void through which the Divine Voice rings. I learned too late the bearings of this life on that which awaits us; all in me is worn out; I could not serve in the ranks of the Church Militant, and I lay the remains of an almost extinct life at the foot of the altar.

"This is the last time I shall ever write. You alone, who loved me, and

whom I loved so well, could make me break the law of oblivion I imposed on myself when I entered these headquarters of Saint Bruno, but you are always especially named in the prayers of

"BROTHER ALBERT.

"November 1836."

"Everything is for the best perhaps," thought the Abbe de Grancey.

When he showed this letter to Rosalie, who, with a pious impulse, kissed the lines which contained her forgiveness, he said to her:

"Well, now that he is lost to you, will you not be reconciled to your mother and marry the Comte de Soulas?"

"Only if Albert should order it," said she.

"But you see it is impossible to consult him. The General of the Order would not allow it."

"If I were to go to see him?"

"No Carthusian sees any visitor. Besides, no woman but the Queen of France may enter a Carthusian monastery," said the Abbe. "So you have no longer any excuse for not marrying young Monsieur de Soulas."

"I do not wish to destroy my mother's happiness," retorted Rosalie.

"Satan!" exclaimed the Vicar-General.

Towards the end of that winter the worthy Abbe de Grancey died. This good friend no longer stood between Madame de Watteville and her daughter, to soften the impact of those two iron wills.

The event he had foretold took place. In the month of August 1837 Madame de Watteville was married to Monsieur de Soulas in Paris, whither she went by Rosalie's advice, the girl making a show of kindness and sweetness to her mother. Madame de Watteville believed in this affection on the part of her daughter, who simply desired to go to Paris to give herself the luxury of a bitter revenge; she thought of nothing but avenging Savarus by torturing her rival.

Mademoiselle de Watteville had been declared legally of age; she was, in fact, not far from one-and-twenty. Her mother, to settle with her finally, had resigned her claims on les Rouxey, and the daughter had signed a release for all the inheritance of the Baron de Watteville. Rosalie encouraged her mother to marry the Comte de Soulas and settle all her own fortune on him.

"Let us each be perfectly free," she said.

Madame de Soulas, who had been uneasy as to her daughter's intentions, was touched by this liberality, and made her a present of six thousand francs a year in the funds as conscience money. As the Comtesse de Soulas had an income of forty-eight thousand francs from her own lands, and was quite incapable of alienating them in order to diminish Rosalie's share, Mademoiselle de Watteville was still a fortune to marry, of eighteen hundred thousand francs; les Rouxey, with the Baron's additions, and certain improvements, might yield twenty thousand francs a year, besides the value of the house, rents, and preserves. So Rosalie and her mother, who soon adopted the Paris style and fashions, easily obtained introductions to the best society. The golden key—eighteen hundred thousand francs—embroidered on Mademoiselle de Watteville's stomacher, did more for the Comtesse de Soulas than her pretensions a la de Rupt, her inappropriate pride, or even her rather distant great connections.

In the month of February 1838 Rosalie, who was eagerly courted by many young men, achieved the purpose which had brought her to Paris. This was to meet the Duchesse de Rhetore, to see this wonderful woman, and to overwhelm her with perennial remorse. Rosalie gave herself up to the most bewildering elegance and vanities in order to face the Duchess on an equal footing.

They first met at a ball given annually after 1830 for the benefit of the pensioners on the old Civil List. A young man, prompted by Rosalie, pointed her out to the Duchess, saying:

"There is a very remarkable young person, a strong-minded young lady too! She drove a clever man into a monastery—the Grand Chartreuse—a man of immense capabilities, Albert de Savarus, whose career she wrecked. She is Mademoiselle de Watteville, the famous Besancon heiress——"

The Duchess turned pale. Rosalie's eyes met hers with one of those flashes which, between woman and woman, are more fatal than the pistol shots of a duel. Francesca Soderini, who had suspected that Albert might be innocent, hastily quitted the ballroom, leaving the speaker at his wits' end to guess what terrible blow he had inflicted on the beautiful Duchesse de Rhetore.

"If you want to hear more about Albert, come to the Opera ball on Tuesday with a marigold in your hand."

This anonymous note, sent by Rosalie to the Duchess, brought the unhappy Italian to the ball, where Mademoiselle de Watteville placed in her hand all Albert's letters, with that written to Leopold Hannequin by the Vicar-General, and the notary's reply, and even that in which she had written her confession to the Abbe de Grancey.

"I do not choose to be the only sufferer," she said to her rival, "for one has been as ruthless as the other."

After enjoying the dismay stamped on the Duchess' beautiful face, Rosalie went away; she went out no more, and returned to Besancon with her mother.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, who lived alone on her estate of les Rouxey, riding, hunting, refusing two or three offers a year, going to Besancon four or five times in the course of the winter, and busying herself with improving her land, was regarded as a very eccentric personage. She was one of the celebrities of the Eastern provinces.

Madame de Soulas has two children, a boy and a girl, and she has grown younger; but Monsieur de Soulas has aged a good deal.

"My fortune has cost me dear," said he to young Chavoncourt. "Really to know a bigot it is unfortunately necessary to marry her!"

Mademoiselle de Watteville behaves in the most extraordinary manner. "She has vagaries," people say. Every year she goes to gaze at the walls of the Grande Chartreuse. Perhaps she dreams of imitating her grand-uncle by forcing the walls of the monastery to find a husband, as Watteville broke through those of his monastery to recover his liberty.

She left Besancon in 1841, intending, it was said, to get married; but the real reason of this expedition is still unknown, for she returned home in a state which forbids her ever appearing in society again. By one of those chances of which the Abbe de Grancey had spoken, she happened to be on the Loire in a steamboat of which the boiler burst. Mademoiselle de Watteville was so severely injured that she lost her right arm and her left leg; her face is marked with fearful scars, which have bereft her of her beauty; her health, cruelly upset, leaves her few days free from suffering. In short, she now never leaves the Chartreuse of les Rouxey, where she leads a life wholly devoted to religious practices.

PARIS, May 1842.

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THE DESERTED WOMAN

In the early spring of 1822, the Paris doctors sent to Lower Normandy a young man just recovering from an inflammatory complaint, brought on by overstudy, or perhaps by excess of some other kind. His convalescence demanded complete rest, a light diet, bracing air, and freedom from

excitement of every kind, and the fat lands of Bessin seemed to offer all these conditions of recovery. To Bayeux, a picturesque place about six miles from the sea, the patient therefore betook himself, and was received with the cordiality characteristic of relatives who lead very retired lives, and regard a new arrival as a godsend.

All little towns are alike, save for a few local customs. When M. le Baron Gaston de Nueil, the young Parisian in question, had spent two or three evenings in his cousin's house, or with the friends who made up Mme. de Sainte-Severe's circle, he very soon had made the acquaintance of the persons whom this exclusive society considered to be "the whole town." Gaston de Nueil recognized in them the invariable stock characters which every observer finds in every one of the many capitals of the little States which made up the France of an older day.

First of all comes the family whose claims to nobility are regarded as incontestable, and of the highest antiquity in the department, though no one has so much as heard of them a bare fifty leagues away. This species of royal family on a small scale is distantly, but unmistakably, connected with the Navarreins and the Grandlieu family, and related to the Cadignans, and the Blamont-Chauvrys. The head of the illustrious house is invariably a determined sportsman. He has no manners, crushes everybody else with his nominal superiority, tolerates the sub-prefect much as he submits to the taxes, and declines to acknowledge any of the novel powers created by the nineteenth century, pointing out to you as a political monstrosity the fact that the prime minister is a man of no birth. His wife takes a decided tone, and talks in a loud voice. She has had adorers in her time, but takes the sacrament regularly at Easter. She brings up her daughters badly, and is of the opinion that they will always be rich enough with their name.

Neither husband nor wife has the remotest idea of modern luxury. They retain a livery only seen elsewhere on the stage, and cling to old fashions in plate, furniture, and equipages, as in language and manner of life. This is a kind of ancient state, moreover, that suits passably well with provincial thrift. The good folk are, in fact, the lords of the manor of a bygone age, minus the quitrents and heriots, the pack of hounds and the laced coats; full of honor among themselves, and one and all loyally devoted to princes whom they only see at a distance. The historical house incognito is as quaint a survival as a piece of ancient tapestry. Vegetating somewhere among them there is sure to be an uncle or a brother, a lieutenant-general, an old courtier of the Kings's, who wears the red ribbon of the order of Saint-Louis, and went to Hanover with the Marechal de Richelieu: and here you will find him like a stray leaf out of some old pamphlet of the time of Louis Quinze.

This fossil greatness finds a rival in another house, wealthier, though of

less ancient lineage. Husband and wife spend a couple of months of every winter in Paris, bringing back with them its frivolous tone and short-lived contemporary crazes. Madame is a woman of fashion, though she looks rather conscious of her clothes, and is always behind the mode. She scoffs, however, at the ignorance affected by her neighbors. Her plate is of modern fashion; she has "grooms," Negroes, a valet-de-chambre, and what-not. Her oldest son drives a tilbury, and does nothing (the estate is entailed upon him), his younger brother is auditor to a Council of State. The father is well posted up in official scandals, and tells you anecdotes of Louis XVIII. and Madame du Cayla. He invests his money in the five per cents, and is careful to avoid the topic of cider, but has been known occasionally to fall a victim to the craze for rectifying the conjectural sums-total of the various fortunes of the department. He is a member of the Departmental Council, has his clothes from Paris, and wears the Cross of the Legion of Honor. In short, he is a country gentleman who has fully grasped the significance of the Restoration, and is coining money at the Chamber, but his Royalism is less pure than that of the rival house; he takes the Gazette and the Debats, the other family only read the Quotidienne.

His lordship the Bishop, a sometime Vicar-General, fluctuates between the two powers, who pay him the respect due to religion, but at times they bring home to him the moral appended by the worthy Lafontaine to the fable of the Ass laden with Relics. The good man's origin is distinctly plebeian.

Then come stars of the second magnitude, men of family with ten or twelve hundred livres a year, captains in the navy or cavalry regiments, or nothing at all. Out on the roads, on horseback, they rank half-way between the cure bearing the sacraments and the tax collector on his rounds. Pretty nearly all of them have been in the Pages or in the Household Troops, and now are peaceably ending their days in a faisance-valoir, more interested in felling timber and the cider prospects than in the Monarchy.

Still they talk of the Charter and the Liberals while the cards are making, or over a game at backgammon, when they have exhausted the usual stock of dots, and have married everybody off according to the genealogies which they all know by heart. Their womenkind are haughty dames, who assume the airs of Court ladies in their basket chaises. They huddle themselves up in shawls and caps by way of full dress; and twice a year, after ripe deliberation, have a new bonnet from Paris, brought as opportunity offers. Exemplary wives are they for the most part, and garrulous.

These are the principal elements of aristocratic gentility, with a few outlying old maids of good family, spinsters who have solved the problem: given a human being, to remain absolutely stationary. They might be sealed up in the houses where you see them; their faces and their dresses are literally

part of the fixtures of the town, and the province in which they dwell. They are its tradition, its memory, its quintessence, the genius loci incarnate. There is something frigid and monumental about these ladies; they know exactly when to laugh and when to shake their heads, and every now and then give out some utterance which passes current as a witticism.

A few rich townspeople have crept into the miniature Faubourg Saint-Germain, thanks to their money or their aristocratic leanings. But despite their forty years, the circle still say of them, "Young So-and-so has sound opinions," and of such do they make deputies. As a rule, the elderly spinsters are their patronesses, not without comment.

Finally, in this exclusive little set include two or three ecclesiastics, admitted for the sake of their cloth, or for their wit; for these great nobles find their own society rather dull, and introduce the bourgeois element into their drawing-rooms, as a baker puts leaven into his dough.

The sum-total contained by all heads put together consists of a certain quantity of antiquated notions; a few new inflections brewed in company of an evening being added from time to time to the common stock. Like sea-water in a little creek, the phrases which represent these ideas surge up daily, punctually obeying the tidal laws of conversation in their flow and ebb; you hear the hollow echo of yesterday, to-day, to-morrow, a year hence, and for evermore. On all things here below they pass immutable judgments, which go to make up a body of tradition into which no power of mortal man can infuse one drop of wit or sense. The lives of these persons revolve with the regularity of clockwork in an orbit of use and wont which admits of no more deviation or change than their opinions on matters religious, political, moral, or literary.

If a stranger is admitted to the cenacle, every member of it in turn will say (not without a trace of irony), "You will not find the brilliancy of your Parisian society here," and proceed forthwith to criticise the life led by his neighbors, as if he himself were an exception who had striven, and vainly striven, to enlighten the rest. But any stranger so ill advised as to concur in any of their freely expressed criticism of each other, is pronounced at once to be an ill-natured person, a heathen, an outlaw, a reprobate Parisian "as Parisians mostly are."

Before Gaston de Nueil made his appearance in this little world of strictly observed etiquette, where every detail of life is an integrant part of a whole, and everything is known; where the values of personalty and real estate is quoted like stocks on the vast sheet of the newspaper—before his arrival he had been weighed in the unerring scales of Bayeusaine judgment.

His cousin, Mme. de Sainte-Severe, had already given out the amount of his fortune, and the sum of his expectations, had produced the family tree, and

expatiated on the talents, breeding, and modesty of this particular branch. So he received the precise amount of attentions to which he was entitled; he was accepted as a worthy scion of a good stock; and, for he was but twenty-three, was made welcome without ceremony, though certain young ladies and mothers of daughters looked not unkindly upon him.

He had an income of eighteen thousand livres from land in the valley of the Auge; and sooner or later his father, as in duty bound, would leave him the chateau of Manerville, with the lands thereunto belonging. As for his education, political career, personal qualities, and qualifications—no one so much as thought of raising the questions. His land was undeniable, his rentals steady; excellent plantations had been made; the tenants paid for repairs, rates, and taxes; the apple-trees were thirty-eight years old; and, to crown all, his father was in treaty for two hundred acres of woodland just outside the paternal park, which he intended to enclose with walls. No hopes of a political career, no fame on earth, can compare with such advantages as these.

Whether out of malice or design, Mme. de Sainte-Severe omitted to mention that Gaston had an elder brother; nor did Gaston himself say a word about him. But, at the same time, it is true that the brother was consumptive, and to all appearance would shortly be laid in earth, lamented and forgotten.

At first Gaston de Nueil amused himself at the expense of the circle. He drew, as it were, for his mental album, a series of portraits of these folk, with their angular, wrinkled faces, and hooked noses, their crotchets and ludicrous eccentricities of dress, portraits which possessed all the racy flavor of truth. He delighted in their "Normanisms," in the primitive quaintness of their ideas and characters. For a short time he flung himself into their squirrel's life of busy gyrations in a cage. Then he began to feel the want of variety, and grew tired of it. It was like the life of the cloister, cut short before it had well begun. He drifted on till he reached a crisis, which is neither spleen nor disgust, but combines all the symptoms of both. When a human being is transplanted into an uncongenial soil, to lead a starved, stunted existence, there is always a little discomfort over the transition. Then, gradually, if nothing removes him from his surroundings, he grows accustomed to them, and adapts himself to the vacuity which grows upon him and renders him powerless. Even now, Gaston's lungs were accustomed to the air; and he was willing to discern a kind of vegetable happiness in days that brought no mental exertion and no responsibilities. The constant stirring of the sap of life, the fertilizing influences of mind on mind, after which he had sought so eagerly in Paris, were beginning to fade from his memory, and he was in a fair way of becoming a fossil with these fossils, and ending his days among them, content, like the companions of Ulysses, in his gross envelope.

One evening Gaston de Nueil was seated between a dowager and one of

the vicars-general of the diocese, in a gray-paneled drawing-room, floored with large white tiles. The family portraits which adorned the walls looked down upon four card-tables, and some sixteen persons gathered about them, chattering over their whist. Gaston, thinking of nothing, digesting one of those exquisite dinners to which the provincial looks forward all through the day, found himself justifying the customs of the country.

He began to understand why these good folk continued to play with yesterday's pack of cards and shuffle them on a threadbare tablecloth, and how it was that they had ceased to dress for themselves or others. He saw the glimmerings of something like a philosophy in the even tenor of their perpetual round, in the calm of their methodical monotony, in their ignorance of the refinements of luxury. Indeed, he almost came to think that luxury profited nothing; and even now, the city of Paris, with its passions, storms, and pleasures, was scarcely more than a memory of childhood.

He admired in all sincerity the red hands, and shy, bashful manner of some young lady who at first struck him as an awkward simpleton, unattractive to the last degree, and surprisingly ridiculous. His doom was sealed. He had gone from the provinces to Paris; he had led the feverish life of Paris; and now he would have sunk back into the lifeless life of the provinces, but for a chance remark which reached his ear—a few words that called up a swift rush of such emotion as he might have felt when a strain of really good music mingles with the accompaniment of some tedious opera.

"You went to call on Mme. de Beauseant yesterday, did you not?" The speaker was an elderly lady, and she addressed the head of the local royal family.

"I went this morning. She was so poorly and depressed, that I could not persuade her to dine with us to-morrow."

"With Mme. de Champignelles?" exclaimed the dowager with something like astonishment in her manner.

"With my wife," calmly assented the noble. "Mme. de Beauseant is descended from the House of Burgundy, on the spindle side, 'tis true, but the name atones for everything. My wife is very much attached to the Vicomtesse, and the poor lady has lived alone for such a long while, that——"

The Marquis de Champignelles looked round about him while he spoke with an air of cool unconcern, so that it was almost impossible to guess whether he made a concession to Mme. de Beauseant's misfortunes, or paid homage to her noble birth; whether he felt flattered to receive her in his house, or, on the contrary, sheer pride was the motive that led him to try to force the country families to meet the Vicomtesse.

The women appeared to take counsel of each other by a glance; there was a sudden silence in the room, and it was felt that their attitude was one of disapproval.

"Does this Mme. de Beauseant happen to be the lady whose adventure with M. d'Ajuda-Pinto made so much noise?" asked Gaston of his neighbor.

"The very same," he was told. "She came to Courcelles after the marriage of the Marquis d'Ajuda; nobody visits her. She has, besides, too much sense not to see that she is in a false position, so she has made no attempt to see any one. M. de Champignelles and a few gentlemen went to call upon her, but she would see no one but M. de Champignelles, perhaps because he is a connection of the family. They are related through the Beauseants; the father of the present Vicomte married a Mlle. de Champignelles of the older branch. But though the Vicomtesse de Beauseant is supposed to be a descendant of the House of Burgundy, you can understand that we could not admit a wife separated from her husband into our society here. We are foolish enough still to cling to these old-fashioned ideas. There was the less excuse for the Vicomtesse, because M. de Beauseant is a well-bred man of the world, who would have been quite ready to listen to reason. But his wife is quite mad ——" and so forth and so forth.

M. de Nueil, still listening to the speaker's voice, gathered nothing of the sense of the words; his brain was too full of thick-coming fancies. Fancies? What other name can you give to the alluring charms of an adventure that tempts the imagination and sets vague hopes springing up in the soul; to the sense of coming events and mysterious felicity and fear at hand, while as yet there is no substance of fact on which these phantoms of caprice can fix and feed? Over these fancies thought hovers, conceiving impossible projects, giving in the germ all the joys of love. Perhaps, indeed, all passion is contained in that thought-germ, as the beauty, and fragrance, and rich color of the flower is all packed in the seed.

M. de Nueil did not know that Mme. de Beauseant had taken refuge in Normandy, after a notoriety which women for the most part envy and condemn, especially when youth and beauty in some sort excuse the transgression. Any sort of celebrity bestows an inconceivable prestige. Apparently for women, as for families, the glory of the crime effaces the stain; and if such and such a noble house is proud of its tale of heads that have fallen on the scaffold, a young and pretty woman becomes more interesting for the dubious renown of a happy love or a scandalous desertion, and the more she is to be pitied, the more she excites our sympathies. We are only pitiless to the commonplace. If, moreover, we attract all eyes, we are to all intents and purposes great; how, indeed, are we to be seen unless we raise ourselves above other people's heads? The common herd of humanity feels an involuntary

respect for any person who can rise above it, and is not over-particular as to the means by which they rise.

It may have been that some such motives influenced Gaston de Nueil at unawares, or perhaps it was curiosity, or a craving for some interest in his life, or, in a word, that crowd of inexplicable impulses which, for want of a better name, we are wont to call "fatality," that drew him to Mme. de Beauseant.

The figure of the Vicomtesse de Beauseant rose up suddenly before him with gracious thronging associations. She was a new world for him, a world of fears and hopes, a world to fight for and to conquer. Inevitably he felt the contrast between this vision and the human beings in the shabby room; and then, in truth, she was a woman; what woman had he seen so far in this dull, little world, where calculation replaced thought and feeling, where courtesy was a cut-and-dried formality, and ideas of the very simplest were too alarming to be received or to pass current? The sound of Mme. de Beauseant's name revived a young man's dreams and wakened urgent desires that had lain dormant for a little.

Gaston de Nueil was absent-minded and preoccupied for the rest of the evening. He was pondering how he might gain access to Mme. de Beauseant, and truly it was no very easy matter. She was believed to be extremely clever. But if men and women of parts may be captivated by something subtle or eccentric, they are also exacting, and can read all that lies below the surface; and after the first step has been taken, the chances of failure and success in the difficult task of pleasing them are about even. In this particular case, moreover, the Vicomtesse, besides the pride of her position, had all the dignity of her name. Her utter seclusion was the least of the barriers raised between her and the world. For which reasons it was well-nigh impossible that a stranger, however well born, could hope for admittance; and yet, the next morning found M. de Nueil taking his walks abroad in the direction of Courcelles, a dupe of illusions natural at his age. Several times he made the circuit of the garden walls, looking earnestly through every gap at the closed shutters or open windows, hoping for some romantic chance, on which he founded schemes for introducing himself into this unknown lady's presence, without a thought of their impracticability. Morning after morning was spent in this way to mighty purpose; but with each day's walk, that vision of a woman living apart from the world, of love's martyr buried in solitude, loomed larger in his thoughts, and was enshrined in his soul. So Gaston de Nueil walked under the walls of Courcelles, and some gardener's heavy footstep would set his heart beating high with hope.

He thought of writing to Mme. de Beauseant, but on mature consideration, what can you say to a woman whom you have never seen, a complete stranger? And Gaston had little self-confidence. Like most young persons with

a plentiful crop of illusions still standing, he dreaded the mortifying contempt of silence more than death itself, and shuddered at the thought of sending his first tender epistle forth to face so many chances of being thrown on the fire. He was distracted by innumerable conflicting ideas. But by dint of inventing chimeras, weaving romances, and cudgeling his brains, he hit at last upon one of the hopeful stratagems that are sure to occur to your mind if you persevere long enough, a stratagem which must make clear to the most inexperienced woman that here was a man who took a fervent interest in her. The caprice of social conventions puts as many barriers between lovers as any Oriental imagination can devise in the most delightfully fantastic tale; indeed, the most extravagant pictures are seldom exaggerations. In real life, as in the fairy tales, the woman belongs to him who can reach her and set her free from the position in which she languishes. The poorest of calenders that ever fell in love with the daughter of the Khalif is in truth scarcely further from his lady than Gaston de Nueil from Mme. de Beauseant. The Vicomtesse knew absolutely nothing of M. de Nueil's wanderings round her house; Gaston de Nueil's love grew to the height of the obstacles to overleap; and the distance set between him and his extemporized lady-love produced the usual effect of distance, in lending enchantment.

One day, confident in his inspiration, he hoped everything from the love that must pour forth from his eyes. Spoken words, in his opinion, were more eloquent than the most passionate letter; and, besides, he would engage feminine curiosity to plead for him. He went, therefore, to M. de Champignelles, proposing to employ that gentleman for the better success of his enterprise. He informed the Marquis that he had been entrusted with a delicate and important commission which concerned the Vicomtesse de Beauseant, that he felt doubtful whether she would read a letter written in an unknown handwriting, or put confidence in a stranger. Would M. de Champignelles, on his next visit, ask the Vicomtesse if she would consent to receive him—Gaston de Nueil? While he asked the Marquis to keep his secret in case of a refusal, he very ingeniously insinuated sufficient reasons for his own admittance, to be duly passed on to the Vicomtesse. Was not M. de Champignelles a man of honor, a loyal gentleman incapable of lending himself to any transaction in bad taste, nay, the merest suspicion of bad taste! Love lends a young man all the self-possession and astute craft of an old ambassador; all the Marquis' harmless vanities were gratified, and the haughty grandee was completely duped. He tried hard to fathom Gaston's secret; but the latter, who would have been greatly perplexed to tell it, turned off M. de Champignelles' adroit questioning with a Norman's shrewdness, till the Marquis, as a gallant Frenchman, complimented his young visitor upon his discretion.

M. de Champignelles hurried off at once to Courcelles, with that eagerness

to serve a pretty woman which belongs to his time of life. In the Vicomtesse de Beauseant's position, such a message was likely to arouse keen curiosity; so, although her memory supplied no reason at all that could bring M. de Nueil to her house, she saw no objection to his visit—after some prudent inquiries as to his family and condition. At the same time, she began by a refusal. Then she discussed the propriety of the matter with M. de Champignelles, directing her questions so as to discover, if possible, whether he knew the motives for the visit, and finally revoked her negative answer. The discussion and the discretion shown perforce by the Marquis had piqued her curiosity.

M. de Champignelles had no mind to cut a ridiculous figure. He said, with the air of a man who can keep another's counsel, that the Vicomtesse must know the purpose of this visit perfectly well; while the Vicomtesse, in all sincerity, had no notion what it could be. Mme. de Beauseant, in perplexity, connected Gaston with people whom he had never met, went astray after various wild conjectures, and asked herself if she had seen this M. de Nueil before. In truth, no love-letter, however sincere or skilfully indited, could have produced so much effect as this riddle. Again and again Mme. de Beauseant puzzled over it.

When Gaston heard that he might call upon the Vicomtesse, his rapture at so soon obtaining the ardently longed-for good fortune was mingled with singular embarrassment. How was he to contrive a suitable sequel to this stratagem?

"Bah! I shall see her," he said over and over again to himself as he dressed. "See her, and that is everything!"

He fell to hoping that once across the threshold of Courcelles he should find an expedient for unfastening this Gordian knot of his own tying. There are believers in the omnipotence of necessity who never turn back; the close presence of danger is an inspiration that calls out all their powers for victory. Gaston de Nueil was one of these.

He took particular pains with his dress, imagining, as youth is apt to imagine, that success or failure hangs on the position of a curl, and ignorant of the fact that anything is charming in youth. And, in any case, such women as Mme. de Beauseant are only attracted by the charms of wit or character of an unusual order. Greatness of character flatters their vanity, promises a great passion, seems to imply a comprehension of the requirements of their hearts. Wit amuses them, responds to the subtlety of their natures, and they think that they are understood. And what do all women wish but to be amused, understood, or adored? It is only after much reflection on the things of life that we understand the consummate coquetry of neglect of dress and reserve at a first interview; and by the time we have gained sufficient astuteness for

successful strategy, we are too old to profit by our experience.

While Gaston's lack of confidence in his mental equipment drove him to borrow charms from his clothes, Madame de Beauseant herself was instinctively giving more attention to her toilette.

"I would rather not frighten people, at all events," she said to herself as she arranged her hair.

In M. de Nueil's character, person, and manner there was that touch of unconscious originality which gives a kind of flavor to things that any one might say or do, and absolves everything that they may choose to do or say. He was highly cultivated, he had a keen brain, and a face, mobile as his own nature, which won the goodwill of others. The promise of passion and tenderness in the bright eyes was fulfilled by an essentially kindly heart. The resolution which he made as he entered the house at Courcelles was in keeping with his frank nature and ardent imagination. But, bold has he was with love, his heart beat violently when he had crossed the great court, laid out like an English garden, and the man-servant, who had taken his name to the Vicomtesse, returned to say that she would receive him.

"M. le Baron de Nueil."

Gaston came in slowly, but with sufficient ease of manner; and it is a more difficult thing, be it said, to enter a room where there is but one woman, than a room that holds a score.

A great fire was burning on the hearth in spite of the mild weather, and by the soft light of the candles in the sconces he saw a young woman sitting on a high-backed bergere in the angle by the hearth. The seat was so low that she could move her head freely; every turn of it was full of grace and delicate charm, whether she bent, leaning forward, or raised and held it erect, slowly and languidly, as though it were a heavy burden, so low that she could cross her feet and let them appear, or draw them back under the folds of a long black dress.

The Vicomtesse made as if she would lay the book that she was reading on a small, round stand; but as she did so, she turned towards M. de Nueil, and the volume, insecurely laid upon the edge, fell to the ground between the stand and the sofa. This did not seem to disconcert her. She looked up, bowing almost imperceptibly in response to his greeting, without rising from the depths of the low chair in which she lay. Bending forwards, she stirred the fire briskly, and stooped to pick up a fallen glove, drawing it mechanically over her left hand, while her eyes wandered in search of its fellow. The glance was instantly checked, however, for she stretched out a thin, white, all-but-transparent right hand, with flawless ovals of rose-colored nail at the tips of

the slender, ringless fingers, and pointed to a chair as if to bid Gaston be seated. He sat down, and she turned her face questioningly towards him. Words cannot describe the subtlety of the winning charm and inquiry in that gesture; deliberate in its kindliness, gracious yet accurate in expression, it was the outcome of early education and of a constant use and wont of the graciousness of life. These movements of hers, so swift, so deft, succeeded each other by the blending of a pretty woman's fastidious carelessness with the high-bred manner of a great lady.

Mme. de Beauseant stood out in such strong contrast against the automatons among whom he had spent two months of exile in that out-of-the-world district of Normandy, that he could not but find in her the realization of his romantic dreams; and, on the other hand, he could not compare her perfections with those of other women whom he had formerly admired. Here in her presence, in a drawing-room like some salon in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, full of costly trifles lying about upon the tables, and flowers and books, he felt as if he were back in Paris. It was a real Parisian carpet beneath his feet, he saw once more the high-bred type of Parisienne, the fragile outlines of her form, her exquisite charm, her disdain of the studied effects which did so much to spoil provincial women.

Mme. de Beauseant had fair hair and dark eyes, and the pale complexion that belongs to fair hair. She held up her brow nobly like some fallen angel, grown proud through the fall, disdainful of pardon. Her way of gathering her thick hair into a crown of plaits above the broad, curving lines of the bandeaux upon her forehead, added to the queenliness of her face. Imagination could discover the ducal coronet of Burgundy in the spiral threads of her golden hair; all the courage of her house seemed to gleam from the great lady's brilliant eyes, such courage as women use to repel audacity or scorn, for they were full of tenderness for gentleness. The outline of that little head, so admirably poised above the long, white throat, the delicate, fine features, the subtle curves of the lips, the mobile face itself, wore an expression of delicate discretion, a faint semblance of irony suggestive of craft and insolence. Yet it would have been difficult to refuse forgiveness to those two feminine failings in her; for the lines that came out in her forehead whenever her face was not in repose, like her upward glances (that pathetic trick of manner), told unmistakably of unhappiness, of a passion that had all but cost her her life. A woman, sitting in the great, silent salon, a woman cut off from the rest of the world in this remote little valley, alone, with the memories of her brilliant, happy, and impassioned youth, of continual gaiety and homage paid on all sides, now replaced by the horrors of the void—was there not something in the sight to strike awe that deepened with reflection? Consciousness of her own value lurked in her smile. She was neither wife nor mother, she was an outlaw; she had lost the one heart that could set her pulses beating without shame; she

had nothing from without to support her reeling soul; she must even look for strength from within, live her own life, cherish no hope save that of forsaken love, which looks forward to Death's coming, and hastens his lagging footsteps. And this while life was in its prime. Oh! to feel destined for happiness and to die—never having given nor received it! A woman too! What pain was this! These thoughts flashing across M. de Nueil's mind like lightning, left him very humble in the presence of the greatest charm with which woman can be invested. The triple aureole of beauty, nobleness, and misfortune dazzled him; he stood in dreamy, almost open-mouthed admiration of the Vicomtesse. But he found nothing to say to her.

Mme. de Beauseant, by no means displeased, no doubt, by his surprise, held out her hand with a kindly but imperious gesture; then, summoning a smile to her pale lips, as if obeying, even yet, the woman's impulse to be gracious:

"I have heard from M. de Champignelles of a message which you have kindly undertaken to deliver, monsieur," she said. "Can it be from——"

With that terrible phrase Gaston understood, even more clearly than before, his own ridiculous position, the bad taste and bad faith of his behavior towards a woman so noble and so unfortunate. He reddened. The thoughts that crowded in upon him could be read in his troubled eyes; but suddenly, with the courage which youth draws from a sense of its own wrongdoing, he gained confidence, and very humbly interrupted Mme. de Beauseant.

"Madame," he faltered out, "I do not deserve the happiness of seeing you. I have deceived you basely. However strong the motive may have been, it can never excuse the pitiful subterfuge which I used to gain my end. But, madame, if your goodness will permit me to tell you——"

The Vicomtesse glanced at M. de Nueil, haughty disdain in her whole manner. She stretched her hand to the bell and rang it.

"Jacques," she said, "light this gentleman to the door," and she looked with dignity at the visitor.

She rose proudly, bowed to Gaston, and then stooped for the fallen volume. If all her movements on his entrance had been caressingly dainty and gracious, her every gesture now was no less severely frigid. M. de Nueil rose to his feet, but he stood waiting. Mme. de Beauseant flung another glance at him. "Well, why do you not go?" she seemed to say.

There was such cutting irony in that glance that Gaston grew white as if he were about to faint. Tears came into his eyes, but he would not let them fall, and scorching shame and despair dried them. He looked back at Madame de Beauseant, and a certain pride and consciousness of his own worth was

mingled with his humility; the Vicomtesse had a right to punish him, but ought she to use her right? Then he went out.

As he crossed the ante-chamber, a clear head, and wits sharpened by passion, were not slow to grasp the danger of his situation.

"If I leave this house, I can never come back to it again," he said to himself. "The Vicomtesse will always think of me as a fool. It is impossible that a woman, and such a woman, should not guess the love that she has called forth. Perhaps she feels a little, vague, involuntary regret for dismissing me so abruptly.—But she could not do otherwise, and she cannot recall her sentence. It rests with me to understand her."

At that thought Gaston stopped short on the flight of steps with an exclamation; he turned sharply, saying, "I have forgotten something," and went back to the salon. The lackey, all respect for a baron and the rights of property, was completely deceived by the natural utterance, and followed him. Gaston returned quietly and unannounced. The Vicomtesse, thinking that the intruder was the servant, looked up and beheld M. de Nueil.

"Jacques lighted me to the door," he said, with a half-sad smile which dispelled any suspicion of jest in those words, while the tone in which they were spoken went to the heart. Mme. de Beauseant was disarmed.

"Very well, take a seat," she said.

Gaston eagerly took possession of a chair. His eyes were shining with happiness; the Vicomtesse, unable to endure the brilliant light in them, looked down at the book. She was enjoying a delicious, ever new sensation; the sense of a man's delight in her presence is an unfailing feminine instinct. And then, besides, he had divined her, and a woman is so grateful to the man who has mastered the apparently capricious, yet logical, reasoning of her heart; who can track her thought through the seemingly contradictory workings of her mind, and read the sensations, shy or bold, written in fleeting red, a bewildering maze of coquetry and self-revelation.

"Madame," Gaston exclaimed in a low voice, "my blunder you know, but you do not know how much I am to blame. If you only knew what joy it was to——"

"Ah! take care," she said, holding up one finger with an air of mystery, as she put out her hand towards the bell.

The charming gesture, the gracious threat, no doubt called up some sad thought, some memory of the old happy time when she could be wholly charming and gentle without an afterthought; when the gladness of her heart justified every caprice, and put charm into every least movement. The lines in

her forehead gathered between her brows, and the expression of her face grew dark in the soft candle-light. Then looking across at M. de Nueil gravely but not unkindly, she spoke like a woman who deeply feels the meaning of every word.

"This is all very ridiculous! Once upon a time, monsieur, when thoughtless high spirits were my privilege, I should have laughed fearlessly over your visit with you. But now my life is very much changed. I cannot do as I like, I am obliged to think. What brings you here? Is it curiosity? In that case I am paying dearly for a little fleeting pleasure. Have you fallen passionately in love already with a woman whom you have never seen, a woman with whose name slander has, of course, been busy? If so, your motive in making this visit is based on disrespect, on an error which accident brought into notoriety."

She flung her book down scornfully upon the table, then, with a terrible look at Gaston, she went on: "Because I once was weak, must it be supposed that I am always weak? This is horrible, degrading. Or have you come here to pity me? You are very young to offer sympathy with heart troubles. Understand this clearly, sir, that I would rather have scorn than pity. I will not endure compassion from any one."

There was a brief pause.

"Well, sir," she continued (and the face that she turned to him was gentle and sad), "whatever motive induced this rash intrusion upon my solitude, it is very painful to me, you see. You are too young to be totally without good feeling, so surely you will feel that this behavior of yours is improper. I forgive you for it, and, as you see, I am speaking of it to you without bitterness. You will not come here again, will you? I am entreating when I might command. If you come to see me again, neither you nor I can prevent the whole place from believing that you are my lover, and you would cause me great additional annoyance. You do not mean to do that, I think."

She said no more, but looked at him with a great dignity which abashed him.

"I have done wrong, madame," he said, with deep feeling in his voice, "but it was through enthusiasm and thoughtlessness and eager desire of happiness, the qualities and defects of my age. Now, I understand that I ought not to have tried to see you," he added; "but, at the same time, the desire was a very natural one"—and, making an appeal to feeling rather than to the intellect, he described the weariness of his enforced exile. He drew a portrait of a young man in whom the fires of life were burning themselves out, conveying the impression that here was a heart worthy of tender love, a heart which, notwithstanding, had never known the joys of love for a young and beautiful woman of refinement and taste. He explained, without attempting to justify,

his unusual conduct. He flattered Mme. de Beauseant by showing that she had realized for him the ideal lady of a young man's dream, the ideal sought by so many, and so often sought in vain. Then he touched upon his morning prowlings under the walls of Courcelles, and his wild thoughts at the first sight of the house, till he excited that vague feeling of indulgence which a woman can find in her heart for the follies committed for her sake.

An impassioned voice was speaking in the chill solitude; the speaker brought with him a warm breath of youth and the charms of a carefully cultivated mind. It was so long since Mme. de Beauseant had felt stirred by real feeling delicately expressed, that it affected her very strongly now. In spite of herself, she watched M. de Nueil's expressive face, and admired the noble countenance of a soul, unbroken as yet by the cruel discipline of the life of the world, unfretted by continual scheming to gratify personal ambition and vanity. Gaston was in the flower of his youth, he impressed her as a man with something in him, unaware as yet of the great career that lay before him. So both these two made reflections most dangerous for their peace of mind, and both strove to conceal their thoughts. M. de Nueil saw in the Vicomtesse a rare type of woman, always the victim of her perfections and tenderness; her graceful beauty is the least of her charms for those who are privileged to know the infinite of feeling and thought and goodness in the soul within; a woman whose instinctive feeling for beauty runs through all the most varied expressions of love, purifying its transports, turning them to something almost holy; wonderful secret of womanhood, the exquisite gift that Nature so seldom bestows. And the Vicomtesse, on her side, listening to the ring of sincerity in Gaston's voice, while he told of his youthful troubles, began to understand all that grown children of five-and-twenty suffer from diffidence, when hard work has kept them alike from corrupting influences and intercourse with men and women of the world whose sophistical reasoning and experience destroys the fair qualities of youth. Here was the ideal of a woman's dreams, a man unspoiled as yet by the egoism of family or success, or by that narrow selfishness which blights the first impulses of honor, devotion, self-sacrifice, and high demands of self; all the flowers so soon wither that enrich at first the life of delicate but strong emotions, and keep alive the loyalty of the heart.

But these two, once launched forth into the vast of sentiment, went far indeed in theory, sounding the depths in either soul, testing the sincerity of their expressions; only, whereas Gaston's experiments were made unconsciously, Mme. de Beauseant had a purpose in all that she said. Bringing her natural and acquired subtlety to the work, she sought to learn M. de Nueil's opinions by advancing, as far as she could do so, views diametrically opposed to her own. So witty and so gracious was she, so much herself with this stranger, with whom she felt completely at ease, because she felt sure that they should never meet again, that, after some delicious epigram of hers, Gaston

exclaimed unthinkingly:

"Oh! madame, how could any man have left you?"

The Vicomtesse was silent. Gaston reddened, he thought that he had offended her; but she was not angry. The first deep thrill of delight since the day of her calamity had taken her by surprise. The skill of the cleverest roue could not have made the impression that M. de Nueil made with that cry from the heart. That verdict wrung from a young man's candor gave her back innocence in her own eyes, condemned the world, laid the blame upon the lover who had left her, and justified her subsequent solitary drooping life. The world's absolution, the heartfelt sympathy, the social esteem so longed for, and so harshly refused, nay, all her secret desires were given her to the full in that exclamation, made fairer yet by the heart's sweetest flatteries and the admiration that women always relish eagerly. He understood her, understood all, and he had given her, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, the opportunity of rising higher through her fall. She looked at the clock.

"Ah! madame, do not punish me for my heedlessness. If you grant me but one evening, vouchsafe not to shorten it."

She smiled at the pretty speech.

"Well, as we must never meet again," she said, "what signifies a moment more or less? If you were to care for me, it would be a pity."

"It is too late now," he said.

"Do not tell me that," she answered gravely. "Under any other circumstances I should be very glad to see you. I will speak frankly, and you will understand how it is that I do not choose to see you again, and ought not to do so. You have too much magnanimity not to feel that if I were so much as suspected of a second trespass, every one would think of me as a contemptible and vulgar woman; I should be like other women. A pure and blameless life will bring my character into relief. I am too proud not to endeavor to live like one apart in the world, a victim of the law through my marriage, man's victim through my love. If I were not faithful to the position which I have taken up, then I should deserve all the reproach that is heaped upon me; I should be lowered in my own eyes. I had not enough lofty social virtue to remain with a man whom I did not love. I have snapped the bonds of marriage in spite of the law; it was wrong, it was a crime, it was anything you like, but for me the bonds meant death. I meant to live. Perhaps if I had been a mother I could have endured the torture of a forced marriage of suitability. At eighteen we scarcely know what is done with us, poor girls that we are! I have broken the laws of the world, and the world has punished me; we both did rightly. I sought happiness. Is it not a law of our nature to seek for happiness? I was

young, I was beautiful... I thought that I had found a nature as loving, as apparently passionate. I was loved indeed; for a little while..."

She paused.

"I used to think," she said, "that no one could leave a woman in such a position as mine. I have been forsaken; I must have offended in some way. Yes, in some way, no doubt, I failed to keep some law of our nature, was too loving, too devoted, too exacting—I do not know. Evil days have brought light with them! For a long while I blamed another, now I am content to bear the whole blame. At my own expense, I have absolved that other of whom I once thought I had a right to complain. I had not the art to keep him; fate has punished me heavily for my lack of skill. I only knew how to love; how can one keep oneself in mind when one loves? So I was a slave when I should have sought to be a tyrant. Those who know me may condemn me, but they will respect me too. Pain has taught me that I must not lay myself open to this a second time. I cannot understand how it is that I am living yet, after the anguish of that first week of the most fearful crisis in a woman's life. Only from three years of loneliness would it be possible to draw strength to speak of that time as I am speaking now. Such agony, monsieur, usually ends in death; but this—well, it was the agony of death with no tomb to end it. Oh! I have known pain indeed!"

The Vicomtesse raised her beautiful eyes to the ceiling; and the cornice, no doubt, received all the confidences which a stranger might not hear. When a woman is afraid to look at her interlocutor, there is in truth no gentler, meeker, more accommodating confidant than the cornice. The cornice is quite an institution in the boudoir; what is it but the confessional, minus the priest?

Mme. de Beauseant was eloquent and beautiful at that moment; nay, "coquettish," if the word were not too heavy. By justifying herself and love, she was stimulating every sentiment in the man before her; nay, more, the higher she set the goal, the more conspicuous it grew. At last, when her eyes had lost the too eloquent expression given to them by painful memories, she let them fall on Gaston.

"You acknowledge, do you not, that I am bound to lead a solitary, self-contained life?" she said quietly.

So sublime was she in her reasoning and her madness, that M. de Nueil felt a wild longing to throw himself at her feet; but he was afraid of making himself ridiculous, so he held his enthusiasm and his thoughts in check. He was afraid, too, that he might totally fail to express them, and in no less terror of some awful rejection on her part, or of her mockery, an apprehension which strikes like ice to the most fervid soul. The revulsion which led him to crush down every feeling as it sprang up in his heart cost him the intense pain that

diffident and ambitious natures experience in the frequent crises when they are compelled to stifle their longings. And yet, in spite of himself, he broke the silence to say in a faltering voice:

"Madame, permit me to give way to one of the strongest emotions of my life, and own to all that you have made me feel. You set the heart in me swelling high! I feel within me a longing to make you forget your mortifications, to devote my life to this, to give you love for all who ever have given you wounds or hate. But this is a very sudden outpouring of the heart, nothing can justify it to-day, and I ought not——"

"Enough, monsieur," said Mme. de Beauseant; "we have both of us gone too far. By giving you the sad reasons for a refusal which I am compelled to give, I meant to soften it and not to elicit homage. Coquetry only suits a happy woman. Believe me, we must remain strangers to each other. At a later day you will know that ties which must inevitably be broken ought not to be formed at all."

She sighed lightly, and her brows contracted, but almost immediately grew clear again.

"How painful it is for a woman to be powerless to follow the man she loves through all the phases of his life! And if that man loves her truly, his heart must surely vibrate with pain to the deep trouble in hers. Are they not twice unhappy?"

There was a short pause. Then she rose smiling.

"You little suspected, when you came to Courcelles, that you were to hear a sermon, did you?"

Gaston felt even further than at first from this extraordinary woman. Was the charm of that delightful hour due after all to the coquetry of the mistress of the house? She had been anxious to display her wit. He bowed stiffly to the Vicomtesse, and went away in desperation.

On the way home he tried to detect the real character of a creature supple and hard as a steel spring; but he had seen her pass through so many phases, that he could not make up his mind about her. The tones of her voice, too, were ringing in his ears; her gestures, the little movements of her head, and the varying expression of her eyes grew more gracious in memory, more fascinating as he thought of them. The Vicomtesse's beauty shone out again for him in the darkness; his reviving impressions called up yet others, and he was enthralled anew by womanly charm and wit, which at first he had not perceived. He fell to wandering musings, in which the most lucid thoughts grow refractory and flatly contradict each other, and the soul passes through a brief frenzy fit. Youth only can understand all that lies in the dithyrambic

outpourings of youth when, after a stormy siege, of the most frantic folly and coolest common-sense, the heart finally yields to the assault of the latest comer, be it hope, or despair, as some mysterious power determines.

At three-and-twenty, diffidence nearly always rules a man's conduct; he is perplexed with a young girl's shyness, a girl's trouble; he is afraid lest he should express his love ill, sees nothing but difficulties, and takes alarm at them; he would be bolder if he loved less, for he has no confidence in himself, and with a growing sense of the cost of happiness comes a conviction that the woman he loves cannot easily be won; perhaps, too, he is giving himself up too entirely to his own pleasure, and fears that he can give none; and when, for his misfortune, his idol inspires him with awe, he worships in secret and afar, and unless his love is guessed, it dies away. Then it often happens that one of these dead early loves lingers on, bright with illusions in many a young heart. What man is there but keeps within him these virgin memories that grow fairer every time they rise before him, memories that hold up to him the ideal of perfect bliss? Such recollections are like children who die in the flower of childhood, before their parents have known anything of them but their smiles.

So M. de Nueil came home from Courcelles, the victim of a mood fraught with desperate resolutions. Even now he felt that Mme. de Beauseant was one of the conditions of his existence, and that death would be preferable to life without her. He was still young enough to feel the tyrannous fascination which fully-developed womanhood exerts over immature and impassioned natures; and, consequently, he was to spend one of those stormy nights when a young man's thoughts travel from happiness to suicide and back again—nights in which youth rushes through a lifetime of bliss and falls asleep from sheer exhaustion. Fateful nights are they, and the worst misfortune that can happen is to awake a philosopher afterwards. M. de Nueil was far too deeply in love to sleep; he rose and betook to inditing letters, but none of them were satisfactory, and he burned them all.

The next day he went to Courcelles to make the circuit of her garden walls, but he waited till nightfall; he was afraid that she might see him. The instinct that led him to act in this way arose out of so obscure a mood of the soul, that none but a young man, or a man in like case, can fully understand its mute ecstasies and its vagaries, matter to set those people who are lucky enough to see life only in its matter-of-fact aspect shrugging their shoulders. After painful hesitation, Gaston wrote to Mme. de Beauseant. Here is the letter, which may serve as a sample of the epistolary style peculiar to lovers, a performance which, like the drawings prepared with great secrecy by children for the birthdays of father or mother, is found insufferable by every mortal except the recipients:—

"MADAME,—Your power over my heart, my soul, myself, is so great

that my fate depends wholly upon you to-day. Do not throw this letter into the fire; be so kind as to read it through. Perhaps you may pardon the opening sentence when you see that it is no commonplace, selfish declaration, but that it expresses a simple fact. Perhaps you may feel moved, because I ask for so little, by the submission of one who feels himself so much beneath you, by the influence that your decision will exercise upon my life. At my age, madame, I only know how to love, I am utterly ignorant of ways of attracting and winning a woman's love, but in my own heart I know raptures of adoration of her. I am irresistibly drawn to you by the great happiness that I feel through you; my thoughts turn to you with the selfish instinct which bids us draw nearer to the fire of life when we find it. I do not imagine that I am worthy of you; it seems impossible that I, young, ignorant, and shy, could bring you one-thousandth part of the happiness that I drink in at the sound of your voice and the sight of you. For me you are the only woman in the world. I cannot imagine life without you, so I have made up my mind to leave France, and to risk my life till I lose it in some desperate enterprise, in the Indies, in Africa, I care not where. How can I quell a love that knows no limits save by opposing to it something as infinite? Yet, if you will allow me to hope, not to be yours, but to win your friendship, I will stay. Let me come, not so very often, if you require it, to spend a few such hours with you as those stolen hours of yesterday. The keen delight of that brief happiness to be cut short at the least over-ardent word from me, will suffice to enable me to endure the boiling torrent in my veins. Have I presumed too much upon your generosity by this entreaty to suffer an intercourse in which all the gain is mine alone? You could find ways of showing the world, to which you sacrifice so much, that I am nothing to you; you are so clever and so proud! What have you to fear? If I could only lay bare my heart to you at this moment, to convince you that it is with no lurking afterthought that I make this humble request! Should I have told you that my love was boundless, while I prayed you to grant me friendship, if I had any hope of your sharing this feeling in the depths of my soul? No, while I am with you, I will be whatever you will, if only I may be with you. If you refuse (as you have the power to refuse), I will not utter one murmur, I will go. And if, at a later day, any other woman should enter into my life, you will have proof that you were right; but if I am faithful till death, you may feel some regret perhaps. The hope of causing you a regret will soothe my agony, and that thought shall be the sole revenge of a slighted heart...."

Only those who have passed through all the exceeding tribulations of youth, who have seized on all the chimeras with two white pinions, the nightmare fancies at the disposal of a fervid imagination, can realize the horrors that seized upon Gaston de Nueil when he had reason to suppose that his ultimatum was in Mme. de Beauseant's hands. He saw the Vicomtesse,

wholly untouched, laughing at his letter and his love, as those can laugh who have ceased to believe in love. He could have wished to have his letter back again. It was an absurd letter. There were a thousand and one things, now that he came to think of it, that he might have said, things infinitely better and more moving than those stilted phrases of his, those accursed, sophisticated, pretentious, fine-spun phrases, though, luckily, the punctuation had been pretty bad and the lines shockingly crooked. He tried not to think, not to feel; but he felt and thought, and was wretched. If he had been thirty years old, he might have got drunk, but the innocence of three-and-twenty knew nothing of the resources of opium nor of the expedients of advanced civilization. Nor had he at hand one of those good friends of the Parisian pattern who understand so well how to say Poete, non dolet! by producing a bottle of champagne, or alleviate the agony of suspense by carrying you off somewhere to make a night of it. Capital fellows are they, always in low water when you are in funds, always off to some watering-place when you go to look them up, always with some bad bargain in horse-flesh to sell you; it is true, that when you want to borrow of them, they have always just lost their last louis at play; but in all other respects they are the best fellows on earth, always ready to embark with you on one of the steep down-grades where you lose your time, your soul, and your life!

At length M. de Nueil received a missive through the instrumentality of Jacques, a letter that bore the arms of Burgundy on the scented seal, a letter written on vellum notepaper.

He rushed away at once to lock himself in, and read and re-read her letter: —

"You are punishing me very severely, monsieur, both for the friendliness of my effort to spare you a rebuff, and for the attraction which intellect always has for me. I put confidence in the generosity of youth, and you have disappointed me. And yet, if I did not speak unreservedly (which would have been perfectly ridiculous), at any rate I spoke frankly of my position, so that you might imagine that I was not to be touched by a young soul. My distress is the keener for my interest in you. I am naturally tender-hearted and kindly, but circumstances force me to act unkindly. Another woman would have flung your letter, unread, into the fire; I read it, and I am answering it. My answer will make it clear to you that while I am not untouched by the expression of this feeling which I have inspired, albeit unconsciously, I am still far from sharing it, and the step which I am about to take will show you still more plainly that I mean what I say. I wish besides, to use, for your welfare, that authority, as it were, which you give me over your life; and I desire to exercise it this once to draw aside the veil from your eyes.

"I am nearly thirty years old, monsieur; you are barely two-and-twenty.

You yourself cannot know what your thoughts will be at my age. The vows that you make so lightly to-day may seem a very heavy burden to you then. I am quite willing to believe that at this moment you would give me your whole life without a regret, you would even be ready to die for a little brief happiness; but at the age of thirty experience will take from you the very power of making daily sacrifices for my sake, and I myself should feel deeply humiliated if I accepted them. A day would come when everything, even Nature, would bid you leave me, and I have already told you that death is preferable to desertion. Misfortune has taught me to calculate; as you see, I am arguing perfectly dispassionately. You force me to tell you that I have no love for you; I ought not to love, I cannot, and I will not. It is too late to yield, as women yield, to a blind unreasoning impulse of the heart, too late to be the mistress whom you seek. My consolations spring from God, not from earth. Ah, and besides, with the melancholy insight of disappointed love, I read hearts too clearly to accept your proffered friendship. It is only instinct. I forgive the boyish ruse, for which you are not responsible as yet. In the name of this passing fancy of yours, for the sake of your career and my own peace of mind, I bid you stay in your own country; you must not spoil a fair and honorable life for an illusion which, by its very nature, cannot last. At a later day, when you have accomplished your real destiny, in the fully developed manhood that awaits you, you will appreciate this answer of mine, though to-day it may be that you blame its hardness. You will turn with pleasure to an old woman whose friendship will certainly be sweet and precious to you then; a friendship untried by the extremes of passion and the disenchanting processes of life; a friendship which noble thoughts and thoughts of religion will keep pure and sacred. Farewell; do my bidding with the thought that your success will bring a gleam of pleasure into my solitude, and only think of me as we think of absent friends."

Gaston de Nueil read the letter, and wrote the following lines:—

"MADAME,—If I could cease to love you, to take the chances of becoming an ordinary man which you hold out to me, you must admit that I should thoroughly deserve my fate. No, I shall not do as you bid me; the oath of fidelity which I swear to you shall only be absolved by death. Ah! take my life, unless indeed you do not fear to carry a remorse all through your own ——"

When the man returned from his errand, M. de Nueil asked him with whom he left the note?

"I gave it to Mme. la Vicomtesse herself, sir; she was in her carriage and just about to start."

"For the town?"

"I don't think so, sir. Mme. la Vicomtesse had post-horses."

"Ah! then she is going away," said the Baron.

"Yes, sir," the man answered.

Gaston de Nueil at once prepared to follow Mme. de Beauseant. She led the way as far as Geneva, without a suspicion that he followed. And he? Amid the many thoughts that assailed him during that journey, one all-absorbing problem filled his mind—"Why did she go away?" Theories grew thickly on such ground for supposition, and naturally he inclined to the one that flattered his hopes—"If the Vicomtesse cares for me, a clever woman would, of course, choose Switzerland, where nobody knows either of us, in preference to France, where she would find censorious critics."

An impassioned lover of a certain stamp would not feel attracted to a woman clever enough to choose her own ground; such women are too clever. However, there is nothing to prove that there was any truth in Gaston's supposition.

The Vicomtesse took a small house by the side of the lake. As soon as she was installed in it, Gaston came one summer evening in the twilight. Jacques, that flunkey in grain, showed no sign of surprise, and announced M. le Baron de Nueil like a discreet domestic well acquainted with good society. At the sound of the name, at the sight of its owner, Mme. de Beauseant let her book fall from her hands; her surprise gave him time to come close to her, and to say in tones that sounded like music in her ears:

"What a joy it was to me to take the horses that brought you on this journey!"

To have the inmost desires of the heart so fulfilled! Where is the woman who could resist such happiness as this? An Italian woman, one of those divine creatures who, psychologically, are as far removed from the Parisian as if they lived at the Antipodes, a being who would be regarded as profoundly immoral on this side of the Alps, an Italian (to resume) made the following comment on some French novels which she had been reading. "I cannot see," she remarked, "why these poor lovers take such a time over coming to an arrangement which ought to be the affair of a single morning." Why should not the novelist take a hint from this worthy lady, and refrain from exhausting the theme and the reader? Some few passages of coquetry it would certainly be pleasant to give in outline; the story of Mme. de Beauseant's demurs and sweet delayings, that, like the vestal virgins of antiquity, she might fall gracefully, and by lingering over the innocent raptures of first love draw from it its utmost strength and sweetness. M. de Nueil was at an age when a man is the dupe of these caprices, of the fence which women delight to prolong;

either to dictate their own terms, or to enjoy the sense of their power yet longer, knowing instinctively as they do that it must soon grow less. But, after all, these little boudoir protocols, less numerous than those of the Congress of London, are too small to be worth mention in the history of this passion.

For three years Mme. de Beauseant and M. de Nueil lived in the villa on the lake of Geneva. They lived quite alone, received no visitors, caused no talk, rose late, went out together upon the lake, knew, in short, the happiness of which we all of us dream. It was a simple little house, with green shutters, and broad balconies shaded with awnings, a house contrived of set purpose for lovers, with its white couches, soundless carpets, and fresh hangings, everything within it reflecting their joy. Every window looked out on some new view of the lake; in the far distance lay the mountains, fantastic visions of changing color and evanescent cloud; above them spread the sunny sky, before them stretched the broad sheet of water, never the same in its fitful changes. All their surroundings seemed to dream for them, all things smiled upon them.

Then weighty matters recalled M. de Nueil to France. His father and brother died, and he was obliged to leave Geneva. The lovers bought the house; and if they could have had their way, they would have removed the hills piecemeal, drawn off the lake with a siphon, and taken everything away with them.

Mme. de Beauseant followed M. de Nueil. She realized her property, and bought a considerable estate near Manerville, adjoining Gaston's lands, and here they lived together; Gaston very graciously giving up Manerville to his mother for the present in consideration of the bachelor freedom in which she left him.

Mme. de Beauseant's estate was close to a little town in one of the most picturesque spots in the valley of the Auge. Here the lovers raised barriers between themselves and social intercourse, barriers which no creature could overleap, and here the happy days of Switzerland were lived over again. For nine whole years they knew happiness which it serves no purpose to describe; happiness which may be divined from the outcome of the story by those whose souls can comprehend poetry and prayer in their infinite manifestations.

All this time Mme. de Beauseant's husband, the present Marquis (his father and elder brother having died), enjoyed the soundest health. There is no better aid to life than a certain knowledge that our demise would confer a benefit on some fellow-creature. M. de Beauseant was one of those ironical and wayward beings who, like holders of life-annuities, wake with an additional sense of relish every morning to a consciousness of good health. For the rest, he was a man of the world, somewhat methodical and ceremonious, and a calculator of consequences, who could make a declaration of love as quietly as a lackey

announces that "Madame is served."

This brief biographical notice of his lordship the Marquis de Beauseant is given to explain the reasons why it was impossible for the Marquise to marry M. de Nueil.

So, after a nine years' lease of happiness, the sweetest agreement to which a woman ever put her hand, M. de Nueil and Mme. de Beauseant were still in a position quite as natural and quite as false as at the beginning of their adventure. And yet they had reached a fatal crisis, which may be stated as clearly as any problem in mathematics.

Mme. la Comtesse de Nueil, Gaston's mother, a strait-laced and virtuous person, who had made the late Baron happy in strictly legal fashion would never consent to meet Mme. de Beauseant. Mme. de Beauseant quite understood that the worthy dowager must of necessity be her enemy, and that she would try to draw Gaston from his unhallowed and immoral way of life. The Marquise de Beauseant would willingly have sold her property and gone back to Geneva, but she could not bring herself to do it; it would mean that she distrusted M. de Nueil. Moreover, he had taken a great fancy to this very Valleroy estate, where he was making plantations and improvements. She would not deprive him of a piece of pleasurable routine-work, such as women always wish for their husbands, and even for their lovers.

A Mlle. de la Rodiere, twenty-two years of age, an heiress with a rent-roll of forty thousand livres, had come to live in the neighborhood. Gaston always met her at Manerville whenever he was obliged to go thither. These various personages being to each other as the terms of a proportion sum, the following letter will throw light on the appalling problem which Mme. de Beauseant had been trying for the past month to solve:—

"My beloved angel, it seems like nonsense, does it not, to write to you when there is nothing to keep us apart, when a caress so often takes the place of words, and words too are caresses? Ah, well, no, love. There are some things that a woman cannot say when she is face to face with the man she loves; at the bare thought of them her voice fails her, and the blood goes back to her heart; she has no strength, no intelligence left. It hurts me to feel like this when you are near me, and it happens often. I feel that my heart should be wholly sincere for you; that I should disguise no thought, however transient, in my heart; and I love the sweet carelessness, which suits me so well, too much to endure this embarrassment and constraint any longer. So I will tell you about my anguish—yes, it is anguish. Listen to me! do not begin with the little 'Tut, tut, tut,' that you use to silence me, an impertinence that I love, because anything from you pleases me. Dear soul from heaven, wedded to mine, let me first tell you that you have effaced all memory of the pain that once was

crushing the life out of me. I did not know what love was before I knew you. Only the candor of your beautiful young life, only the purity of that great soul of yours, could satisfy the requirements of an exacting woman's heart. Dear love, how very often I have thrilled with joy to think that in these nine long, swift years, my jealousy has not been once awakened. All the flowers of your soul have been mine, all your thoughts. There has not been the faintest cloud in our heaven; we have not known what sacrifice is; we have always acted on the impulses of our hearts. I have known happiness, infinite for a woman. Will the tears that drench this sheet tell you all my gratitude? I could wish that I had knelt to write the words!—Well, out of this felicity has arisen torture more terrible than the pain of desertion. Dear, there are very deep recesses in a woman's heart; how deep in my own heart, I did not know myself until to-day, as I did not know the whole extent of love. The greatest misery which could overwhelm us is a light burden compared with the mere thought of harm for him whom we love. And how if we cause the harm, is it not enough to make one die?... This is the thought that is weighing upon me. But it brings in its train another thought that is heavier far, a thought that tarnishes the glory of love, and slays it, and turns it into a humiliation which sullies life as long as it lasts. You are thirty years old; I am forty. What dread this difference in age calls up in a woman who loves! It is possible that, first of all unconsciously, afterwards in earnest, you have felt the sacrifices that you have made by renouncing all in the world for me. Perhaps you have thought of your future from the social point of view, of the marriage which would, of course, increase your fortune, and give you avowed happiness and children who would inherit your wealth; perhaps you have thought of reappearing in the world, and filling your place there honorably. And then, if so, you must have repressed those thoughts, and felt glad to sacrifice heiress and fortune and a fair future to me without my knowledge. In your young man's generosity, you must have resolved to be faithful to the vows which bind us each to each in the sight of God. My past pain has risen up before your mind, and the misery from which you rescued me has been my protection. To owe your love to your pity! The thought is even more painful to me than the fear of spoiling your life for you. The man who can bring himself to stab his mistress is very charitable if he gives her her deathblow while she is happy and ignorant of evil, while illusions are in full blossom.... Yes, death is preferable to the two thoughts which have secretly saddened the hours for several days. To-day, when you asked 'What ails you?' so tenderly, the sound of your voice made me shiver. I thought that, after your wont, you were reading my very soul, and I waited for your confidence to come, thinking that my presentiments had come true, and that I had guessed all that was going on in your mind. Then I began to think over certain little things that you always do for me, and I thought I could see in you the sort of affection by which a man betrays a consciousness that his

loyalty is becoming a burden. And in that moment I paid very dear for my happiness. I felt that Nature always demands the price for the treasure called love.

Briefly, has not fate separated us? Can you have said, 'Sooner or later I must leave poor Claire; why not separate in time?' I read that thought in the depths of your eyes, and went away to cry by myself. Hiding my tears from you! the first tears that I have shed for sorrow for these ten years; I am too proud to let you see them, but I did not reproach you in the least.

"Yes, you are right. I ought not to be so selfish as to bind your long and brilliant career to my so-soon out-worn life.... And yet—how if I have been mistaken? How if I have taken your love melancholy for a deliberation? Oh, my love, do not leave me in suspense; punish this jealous wife of yours, but give her back the sense of her love and yours; the whole woman lies in that—that consciousness sanctifies everything.

"Since your mother came, since you paid a visit to Mlle. de Rodiere, I have been gnawed by doubts dishonoring to us both. Make me suffer for this, but do not deceive me; I want to know everything that your mother said and that you think! If you have hesitated between some alternative and me, I give you back your liberty.... I will not let you know what happens to me; I will not shed tears for you to see; only—I will not see you again....Ah! I cannot go on, my heart is breaking... I have been sitting benumbed and stupid for some moments. Dear love, I do not find that any feeling of pride rises against you; you are so kind-hearted, so open; you would find it impossible to hurt me or to deceive me; and you will tell me the truth, however cruel it may be. Do you wish me to encourage your confession? Well, then, heart of mine, I shall find comfort in a woman's thought. Has not the youth of your being been mine, your sensitive, wholly gracious, beautiful, and delicate youth? No woman shall find henceforth the Gaston whom I have known, nor the delicious happiness that he has given me.... No; you will never love again as you have loved, as you love me now; no, I shall never have a rival, it is impossible. There will be no bitterness in my memories of our love, and I shall think of nothing else. It is out of your power to enchant any woman henceforth by the childish provocations, the charming ways of a young heart, the soul's winning charm, the body's grace, the swift communion of rapture, the whole divine cortege of young love, in fine.

"Oh, you are a man now, you will obey your destiny, weighing and considering all things. You will have cares, and anxieties, and ambitions, and concerns that will rob her of the unchanging smile that made your lips fair for me. The tones that were always so sweet for me will be troubled at times; and your eyes that lighted up with radiance from heaven at the sight of me, will often be lustreless for her. And besides, as it is impossible to love you as I love

you, you will never care for that woman as you have cared for me. She will never keep a constant watch over herself as I have done; she will never study your happiness at every moment with an intuition which has never failed me. Ah, yes, the man, the heart and soul, which I shall have known will exist no longer. I shall bury him deep in my memory, that I may have the joy of him still; I shall live happy in that fair past life of ours, a life hidden from all but our inmost selves.

"Dear treasure of mine, if all the while no least thought of liberty has risen in your mind, if my love is no burden on you, if my fears are chimerical, if I am still your Eve—the one woman in the world for you—come to me as soon as you have read this letter, come quickly! Ah, in one moment I will love you more than I have ever loved you, I think, in these nine years. After enduring the needless torture of these doubts of which I am accusing myself, every added day of love, yes, every single day, will be a whole lifetime of bliss. So speak, and speak openly; do not deceive me, it would be a crime. Tell me, do you wish for your liberty? Have you thought of all that a man's life means? Is there any regret in your mind? That I should cause you a regret! I should die of it. I have said it: I love you enough to set your happiness above mine, your life before my own. Leave on one side, if you can, the wealth of memories of our nine years' happiness, that they may not influence your decision, but speak! I submit myself to you as to God, the one Consoler who remains if you forsake me."

When Mme. de Beauseant knew that her letter was in M. de Nueil's hands, she sank in such utter prostration, the over-pressure of many thoughts so numbed her faculties, that she seemed almost drowsy. At any rate, she was suffering from a pain not always proportioned in its intensity to a woman's strength; pain which women alone know. And while the unhappy Marquise awaited her doom, M. de Nueil, reading her letter, felt that he was "in a very difficult position," to use the expression that young men apply to a crisis of this kind.

By this time he had all but yielded to his mother's importunities and to the attractions of Mlle. de la Rodiere, a somewhat insignificant, pink-and-white young person, as straight as a poplar. It is true that, in accordance with the rules laid down for marriageable young ladies, she scarcely opened her mouth, but her rent-roll of forty thousand livres spoke quite sufficiently for her. Mme. de Nueil, with a mother's sincere affection, tried to entangle her son in virtuous courses. She called his attention to the fact that it was a flattering distinction to be preferred by Mlle. de la Rodiere, who had refused so many great matches; it was quite time, she urged, that he should think of his future, such a good opportunity might not repeat itself, some day he would have eighty thousand livres of income from land; money made everything bearable;

if Mme. de Beauseant loved him for his own sake, she ought to be the first to urge him to marry. In short, the well-intentioned mother forgot no arguments which the feminine intellect can bring to bear upon the masculine mind, and by these means she had brought her son into a wavering condition.

Mme. de Beauseant's letter arrived just as Gaston's love of her was holding out against the temptations of a settled life conformable to received ideas. That letter decided the day. He made up his mind to break off with the Marquise and to marry.

"One must live a man's life," said he to himself.

Then followed some inkling of the pain that this decision would give to Mme. de Beauseant. The man's vanity and the lover's conscience further exaggerated this pain, and a sincere pity for her seized upon him. All at once the immensity of the misery became apparent to him, and he thought it necessary and charitable to deaden the deadly blow. He hoped to bring Mme. de Beauseant to a calm frame of mind by gradually reconciling her to the idea of separation; while Mlle. de la Rodiere, always like a shadowy third between them, should be sacrificed to her at first, only to be imposed upon her later. His marriage should take place later, in obedience to Mme. de Beauseant's expressed wish. He went so far as to enlist the Marquise's nobleness and pride and all the great qualities of her nature to help him to succeed in this compassionate design. He would write a letter at once to allay her suspicions. A letter! For a woman with the most exquisite feminine perception, as well as the intuition of passionate love, a letter in itself was a sentence of death.

So when Jacques came and brought Mme. de Beauseant a sheet of paper folded in a triangle, she trembled, poor woman, like a snared swallow. A mysterious sensation of physical cold spread from head to foot, wrapping her about in an icy winding sheet. If he did not rush to her feet, if he did not come to her in tears, and pale, and like a lover, she knew that all was lost. And yet, so many hopes are there in the heart of a woman who loves, that she is only slain by stab after stab, and loves on till the last drop of life-blood drains away.

"Does madame need anything?" Jacques asked gently, as he went away.

"No," she said.

"Poor fellow!" she thought, brushing a tear from her eyes, "he guesses my feelings, servant though he is!"

She read: "My beloved, you are inventing idle terrors for yourself..." The Marquise gazed at the words, and a thick mist spread before her eyes. A voice in her heart cried, "He lies!"—Then she glanced down the page with the clairvoyant eagerness of passion, and read these words at the foot, "Nothing has been decided as yet..." Turning to the other side with convulsive

quickness, she saw the mind of the writer distinctly through the intricacies of the wording; this was no spontaneous outburst of love. She crushed it in her fingers, twisted it, tore it with her teeth, flung it in the fire, and cried aloud, "Ah! base that he is! I was his, and he had ceased to love me!"

She sank half dead upon the couch.

M. de Nueil went out as soon as he had written his letter. When he came back, Jacques met him on the threshold with a note. "Madame la Marquise has left the chateau," said the man.

M. de Nueil, in amazement, broke the seal and read:—

"MADAME,—If I could cease to love you, to take the chances of becoming an ordinary man which you hold out to me, you must admit that I should thoroughly deserve my fate. No, I shall not do as you bid me; the oath of fidelity which I swear to you shall only be absolved by death. Ah! take my life, unless indeed you do not fear to carry a remorse all through your own..."

It was his own letter, written to the Marquise as she set out for Geneva nine years before. At the foot of it Claire de Bourgogne had written, "Monsieur, you are free."

M. de Nueil went to his mother at Manerville. In less than three weeks he married Mlle. Stephanie de la Rodiere.

If this commonplace story of real life ended here, it would be to some extent a sort of mystification. The first man you meet can tell you a better. But the widespread fame of the catastrophe (for, unhappily, this is a true tale), and all the memories which it may arouse in those who have known the divine delights of infinite passion, and lost them by their own deed, or through the cruelty of fate,—these things may perhaps shelter the story from criticism.

Mme. la Marquise de Beauseant never left Valleroy after her parting from M. de Nueil. After his marriage she still continued to live there, for some inscrutable woman's reason; any woman is at liberty to assign the one which most appeals to her. Claire de Bourgogne lived in such complete retirement that none of the servants, save Jacques and her own woman, ever saw their mistress. She required absolute silence all about her, and only left her room to go to the chapel on the Valleroy estate, whither a neighboring priest came to say mass every morning.

The Comte de Nueil sank a few days after his marriage into something like conjugal apathy, which might be interpreted to mean happiness or unhappiness equally easily.

"My son is perfectly happy," his mother said everywhere.

Mme. Gaston de Nueil, like a great many young women, was a rather

colorless character, sweet and passive. A month after her marriage she had expectations of becoming a mother. All this was quite in accordance with ordinary views. M. de Nueil was very nice to her; but two months after his separation from the Marquise, he grew notably thoughtful and abstracted. But then he always had been serious, his mother said.

After seven months of this tepid happiness, a little thing occurred, one of those seemingly small matters which imply such great development of thought and such widespread trouble of the soul, that only the bare fact can be recorded; the interpretation of it must be left to the fancy of each individual mind. One day, when M. de Nueil had been shooting over the lands of Manerville and Valleroy, he crossed Mme. de Beauseant's park on his way home, summoned Jacques, and when the man came, asked him, "Whether the Marquise was as fond of game as ever?"

Jacques answering in the affirmative, Gaston offered him a good round sum (accompanied by plenty of specious reasoning) for a very little service. Would he set aside for the Marquise the game that the Count would bring? It seemed to Jacques to be a matter of no great importance whether the partridge on which his mistress dined had been shot by her keeper or by M. de Nueil, especially since the latter particularly wished that the Marquise should know nothing about it.

"It was killed on her land," said the Count, and for some days Jacques lent himself to the harmless deceit. Day after day M. de Nueil went shooting, and came back at dinner-time with an empty bag. A whole week went by in this way. Gaston grew bold enough to write a long letter to the Marquise, and had it conveyed to her. It was returned to him unopened. The Marquise's servant brought it back about nightfall. The Count, sitting in the drawing-room listening, while his wife at the piano mangled a Caprice of Herold's, suddenly sprang up and rushed out to the Marquise, as if he were flying to an assignation. He dashed through a well-known gap into the park, and went slowly along the avenues, stopping now and again for a little to still the loud beating of his heart. Smothered sounds as he came nearer the chateau told him that the servants must be at supper, and he went straight to Mme. de Beauseant's room.

Mme. de Beauseant never left her bedroom. M. de Nueil could gain the doorway without making the slightest sound. There, by the light of two wax candles, he saw the thin, white Marquise in a great armchair; her head was bowed, her hands hung listlessly, her eyes gazing fixedly at some object which she did not seem to see. Her whole attitude spoke of hopeless pain. There was a vague something like hope in her bearing, but it was impossible to say whither Claire de Bourgogne was looking—forwards to the tomb or backwards into the past. Perhaps M. de Nueil's tears glittered in the deep

shadows; perhaps his breathing sounded faintly; perhaps unconsciously he trembled, or again it may have been impossible that he should stand there, his presence unfelt by that quick sense which grows to be an instinct, the glory, the delight, the proof of perfect love. However it was, Mme. de Beauseant slowly turned her face towards the doorway, and beheld her lover of bygone days. Then Gaston de Nueil came forward a few paces.

"If you come any further, sir," exclaimed the Marquise, growing paler, "I shall fling myself out of the window!"

She sprang to the window, flung it open, and stood with one foot on the ledge, her hand upon the iron balustrade, her face turned towards Gaston.

"Go out! go out!" she cried, "or I will throw myself over."

At that dreadful cry the servants began to stir, and M. de Nueil fled like a criminal.

When he reached his home again he wrote a few lines and gave them to his own man, telling him to give the letter himself into Mme. de Beauseant's hands, and to say that it was a matter of life and death for his master. The messenger went. M. de Nueil went back to the drawing-room where his wife was still murdering the Caprice, and sat down to wait till the answer came. An hour later, when the Caprice had come to an end, and the husband and wife sat in silence on opposite sides of the hearth, the man came back from Valleroy and gave his master his own letter, unopened.

M. de Nueil went into a small room beyond the drawing-room, where he had left his rifle, and shot himself.

The swift and fatal ending of the drama, contrary as it is to all the habits of young France, is only what might have been expected. Those who have closely observed, or known for themselves by delicious experience, all that is meant by the perfect union of two beings, will understand Gaston de Nueil's suicide perfectly well. A woman does not bend and form herself in a day to the caprices of passion. The pleasure of loving, like some rare flower, needs the most careful ingenuity of culture. Time alone, and two souls attuned each to each, can discover all its resources, and call into being all the tender and delicate delights for which we are steeped in a thousand superstitions, imagining them to be inherent in the heart that lavishes them upon us. It is this wonderful response of one nature to another, this religious belief, this certainty of finding peculiar or excessive happiness in the presence of one we love, that accounts in part for perdurable attachments and long-lived passion. If a woman possesses the genius of her sex, love never comes to be a matter of use and wont. She brings all her heart and brain to love, clothes her tenderness in forms so varied, there is such art in her most natural moments, or so much

nature in her art, that in absence her memory is almost as potent as her presence. All other women are as shadows compared with her. Not until we have lost or known the dread of losing a love so vast and glorious, do we prize it at its just worth. And if a man who has once possessed this love shuts himself out from it by his own act and deed, and sinks to some loveless marriage; if by some incident, hidden in the obscurity of married life, the woman with whom he hoped to know the same felicity makes it clear that it will never be revived for him; if, with the sweetness of divine love still on his lips, he has dealt a deadly wound to her, his wife in truth, whom he forsook for a social chimera,—then he must either die or take refuge in a materialistic, selfish, and heartless philosophy, from which impassioned souls shrink in horror.

As for Mme. de Beauseant, she doubtless did not imagine that her friend's despair could drive him to suicide, when he had drunk deep of love for nine years. Possibly she may have thought that she alone was to suffer. At any rate, she did quite rightly to refuse the most humiliating of all positions; a wife may stoop for weighty social reasons to a kind of compromise which a mistress is bound to hold in abhorrence, for in the purity of her passion lies all its justification.

ANGOULEME, September 1832.

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LA GRENADIERE

La Grenadiere is a little house on the right bank of the Loire as you go down stream, about a mile below the bridge of Tours. At this point the river, broad as a lake, and covered with scattered green islands, flows between two lines of cliff, where country houses built uniformly of white stone stand among their gardens and vineyards. The finest fruit in the world ripens there with a southern exposure. The patient toil of many generations has cut terraces in the cliff, so that the face of the rock reflects the rays of the sun, and the produce of hot climates may be grown out of doors in an artificially high temperature.

A church spire, rising out of one of the shallower dips in the line of cliffs, marks the little village of Saint-Cyr, to which the scattered houses all belong. And yet a little further the Choisille flows into the Loire, through a fertile valley cut in the long low downs.

La Grenadiere itself, half-way up the hillside, and about a hundred paces

from the church, is one of those old-fashioned houses dating back some two or three hundred years, which you find in every picturesque spot in Touraine. A fissure in the rock affords convenient space for a flight of steps descending gradually to the "dike"—the local name for the embankment made at the foot of the cliffs to keep the Loire in its bed, and serve as a causeway for the highroad from Paris to Nantes. At the top of the steps a gate opens upon a narrow stony footpath between two terraces, for here the soil is banked up, and walls are built to prevent landslips. These earthworks, as it were, are crowned with trellises and espaliers, so that the steep path that lies at the foot of the upper wall is almost hidden by the trees that grow on the top of the lower, upon which it lies. The view of the river widens out before you at every step as you climb to the house.

At the end you come to a second gateway, a Gothic archway covered with simple ornament, now crumbling into ruin and overgrown with wildflowers—moss and ivy, wallflowers and pellitory. Every stone wall on the hillside is decked with this ineradicable plant-life, which springs up along the cracks afresh with new wreaths for every time of year.

The worm-eaten gate gives into a little garden, a strip of turf, a few trees, and a wilderness of flowers and rose bushes—a garden won from the rock on the highest terrace of all, with the dark, old balustrade along its edge. Opposite the gateway, a wooden summer-house stands against the neighboring wall, the posts are covered with jessamine and honeysuckle, vines and clematis.

The house itself stands in the middle of this highest garden, above a vine-covered flight of steps, with an arched doorway beneath that leads to vast cellars hollowed out in the rock. All about the dwelling trellised vines and pomegranate-trees (the grenadiers, which give the name to the little close) are growing out in the open air. The front of the house consists of two large windows on either side of a very rustic-looking house door, and three dormer windows in the roof—a slate roof with two gables, prodigiously high-pitched in proportion to the low ground-floor. The house walls are washed with yellow color; and door, and first-floor shutters, all the Venetian shutters of the attic windows, all are painted green.

Entering the house, you find yourself in a little lobby with a crooked staircase straight in front of you. It is a crazy wooden structure, the spiral balusters are brown with age, and the steps themselves take a new angle at every turn. The great old-fashioned paneled dining-room, floored with square white tiles from Chateau-Regnault, is on your right; to the left is the sitting-room, equally large, but here the walls are not paneled; they have been covered instead with a saffron-colored paper, bordered with green. The walnut-wood rafters are left visible, and the intervening spaces filled with a kind of white plaster.

The first story consists of two large whitewashed bedrooms with stone chimney-pieces, less elaborately carved than those in the rooms beneath. Every door and window is on the south side of the house, save a single door to the north, contrived behind the staircase to give access to the vineyard. Against the western wall stands a supplementary timber-framed structure, all the woodwork exposed to the weather being fledged with slates, so that the walls are checkered with bluish lines. This shed (for it is little more) is the kitchen of the establishment. You can pass from it into the house without going outside; but, nevertheless, it boasts an entrance door of its own, and a short flight of steps that brings you to a deep well, and a very rustical-looking pump, half hidden by water-plants and savin bushes and tall grasses. The kitchen is a modern addition, proving beyond doubt that La Grenadiere was originally nothing but a simple vendangeoir—a vintage-house belonging to townsfolk in Tours, from which Saint-Cyr is separated by the vast river-bed of the Loire. The owners only came over for the day for a picnic, or at the vintage-time, sending provisions across in the morning, and scarcely ever spent the night there except during the grape harvest; but the English settled down on Touraine like a cloud of locusts, and La Grenadiere must, of course, be completed if it was to find tenants. Luckily, however, this recent appendage is hidden from sight by the first two trees of a lime-tree avenue planted in a gully below the vineyards.

There are only two acres of vineyard at most, the ground rising at the back of the house so steeply that it is no very easy matter to scramble up among the vines. The slope, covered with green trailing shoots, ends within about five feet of the house wall in a ditch-like passage always damp and cold and full of strong growing green things, fed by the drainage of the highly cultivated ground above, for rainy weather washes down the manure into the garden on the terrace.

A vinedresser's cottage also leans against the western gable, and is in some sort a continuation of the kitchen. Stone walls or espaliers surround the property, and all sorts of fruit-trees are planted among the vines; in short, not an inch of this precious soil is wasted. If by chance man overlooks some dry cranny in the rocks, Nature puts in a fig-tree, or sows wildflowers or strawberries in sheltered nooks among the stones.

Nowhere else in all the world will you find a human dwelling so humble and yet so imposing, so rich in fruit, and fragrant scents, and wide views of country. Here is a miniature Touraine in the heart of Touraine—all its flowers and fruits and all the characteristic beauty of the land are fully represented. Here are grapes of every district, figs and peaches and pears of every kind; melons are grown out of doors as easily as licorice plants, Spanish broom, Italian oleanders, and jessamines from the Azores. The Loire lies at your feet.

You look down from the terrace upon the ever-changing river nearly two hundred feet below; and in the evening the breeze brings a fresh scent of the sea, with the fragrance of far-off flowers gathered upon its way. Some cloud wandering in space, changing its color and form at every moment as it crosses the pure blue of the sky, can alter every detail in the widespread wonderful landscape in a thousand ways, from every point of view. The eye embraces first of all the south bank of the Loire, stretching away as far as Amboise, then Tours with its suburbs and buildings, and the Plessis rising out of the fertile plain; further away, between Vouvray and Saint-Symphorien, you see a sort of crescent of gray cliff full of sunny vineyards; the only limits to your view are the low, rich hills along the Cher, a bluish line of horizon broken by many a chateau and the wooded masses of many a park. Out to the west you lose yourself in the immense river, where vessels come and go, spreading their white sails to the winds which seldom fail them in the wide Loire basin. A prince might build a summer palace at La Grenadiere, but certainly it will always be the home of a poet's desire, and the sweetest of retreats for two young lovers—for this vintage house, which belongs to a substantial burgess of Tours, has charms for every imagination, for the humblest and dullest as well as for the most impassioned and lofty. No one can dwell there without feeling that happiness is in the air, without a glimpse of all that is meant by a peaceful life without care or ambition. There is that in the air and the sound of the river that sets you dreaming; the sands have a language, and are joyous or dreary, golden or wan; and the owner of the vineyard may sit motionless amid perennial flowers and tempting fruit, and feel all the stir of the world about him.

If an Englishman takes the house for the summer, he is asked a thousand francs for six months, the produce of the vineyard not included. If the tenant wishes for the orchard fruit, the rent is doubled; for the vintage, it is doubled again. What can La Grenadiere be worth, you wonder; La Grenadiere, with its stone staircase, its beaten path and triple terrace, its two acres of vineyard, its flowering roses about the balustrades, its worn steps, well-head, rampant clematis, and cosmopolitan trees? It is idle to make a bid! La Grenadiere will never be in the market; it was brought once and sold, but that was in 1690; and the owner parted with it for forty thousand francs, reluctant as any Arab of the desert to relinquish a favorite horse. Since then it has remained in the same family, its pride, its patrimonial jewel, its Regent diamond. "While you behold, you have and hold," says the bard. And from La Grenadiere you behold three valleys of Touraine and the cathedral towers aloft in air like a bit of filigree work. How can one pay for such treasures? Could one ever pay for the health recovered there under the linden-trees?

In the spring of one of the brightest years of the Restoration, a lady with her housekeeper and her two children (the oldest a boy thirteen years old, the

youngest apparently about eight) came to Tours to look for a house. She saw La Grenadiere and took it. Perhaps the distance from the town was an inducement to live there.

She made a bedroom of the drawing-room, gave the children the two rooms above, and the housekeeper slept in a closet behind the kitchen. The dining-room was sitting-room and drawing-room all in one for the little family. The house was furnished very simply but tastefully; there was nothing superfluous in it, and no trace of luxury. The walnut-wood furniture chosen by the stranger lady was perfectly plain, and the whole charm of the house consisted in its neatness and harmony with its surroundings.

It was rather difficult, therefore, to say whether the strange lady (Mme. Willemsens, as she styled herself) belonged to the upper middle or higher classes, or to an equivocal, unclassified feminine species. Her plain dress gave rise to the most contradictory suppositions, but her manners might be held to confirm those favorable to her. She had not lived at Saint-Cyr, moreover, for very long before her reserve excited the curiosity of idle people, who always, and especially in the country, watch anybody or anything that promises to bring some interest into their narrow lives.

Mme. Willemsens was rather tall; she was thin and slender, but delicately shaped. She had pretty feet, more remarkable for the grace of her instep and ankle than for the more ordinary merit of slenderness; her gloved hands, too, were shapely. There were flitting patches of deep red in a pale face, which must have been fresh and softly colored once. Premature wrinkles had withered the delicately modeled forehead beneath the coronet of soft, well-set chestnut hair, invariably wound about her head in two plaits, a girlish coiffure which suited the melancholy face. There was a deceptive look of calm in the dark eyes, with the hollow, shadowy circles about them; sometimes, when she was off her guard, their expression told of secret anguish. The oval of her face was somewhat long; but happiness and health had perhaps filled and perfected the outlines. A forced smile, full of quiet sadness, hovered continually on her pale lips; but when the children, who were always with her, looked up at their mother, or asked one of the incessant idle questions which convey so much to a mother's ears, then the smile brightened, and expressed the joys of a mother's love. Her gait was slow and dignified. Her dress never varied; evidently she had made up her mind to think no more of her toilette, and to forget a world by which she meant no doubt to be forgotten. She wore a long, black gown, confined at the waist by a watered-silk ribbon, and by way of scarf a lawn handkerchief with a broad hem, the two ends passed carelessly through her waistband. The instinct of dress showed itself in that she was daintily shod, and gray silk stockings carried out the suggestion of mourning in this unvarying costume. Lastly, she always wore a bonnet after the English

fashion, always of the same shape and the same gray material, and a black veil. Her health apparently was extremely weak; she looked very ill. On fine evenings she would take her only walk, down to the bridge of Tours, bringing the two children with her to breathe the fresh, cool air along the Loire, and to watch the sunset effects on a landscape as wide as the Bay of Naples or the Lake of Geneva.

During the whole time of her stay at La Grenadiere she went but twice into Tours; once to call on the headmaster of the school, to ask him to give her the names of the best masters of Latin, drawing, and mathematics; and a second time to make arrangements for the children's lessons. But her appearance on the bridge of an evening, once or twice a week, was quite enough to excite the interest of almost all the inhabitants of Tours, who make a regular promenade of the bridge. Still, in spite of a kind of spy system, by which no harm is meant, a provincial habit bred of want of occupation and the restless inquisitiveness of the principal society, nothing was known for certain of the newcomer's rank, fortune, or real condition. Only, the owner of La Grenadiere told one or two of his friends that the name under which the stranger had signed the lease (her real name, therefore, in all probability) was Augusta Willemsens, Countess of Brandon. This, of course, must be her husband's name. Events, which will be narrated in their place, confirmed this revelation; but it went no further than the little world of men of business known to the landlord.

So Madame Willemsens was a continual mystery to people of condition. Hers was no ordinary nature; her manners were simple and delightfully natural, the tones of her voice were divinely sweet,—this was all that she suffered others to discover. In her complete seclusion, her sadness, her beauty so passionately obscured, nay, almost blighted, there was so much to charm, that several young gentlemen fell in love; but the more sincere the lover, the more timid he became; and besides, the lady inspired awe, and it was a difficult matter to find enough courage to speak to her. Finally, if a few of the bolder sort wrote to her, their letters must have been burned unread. It was Mme. Willemsens' practice to throw all the letters which she received into the fire, as if she meant that the time spent in Touraine should be untroubled by any outside cares even of the slightest. She might have come to the enchanting retreat to give herself up wholly to the joy of living.

The three masters whose presence was allowed at La Grenadiere spoke with something like admiring reverence of the touching picture that they saw there of the close, unclouded intimacy of the life led by this woman and the children.

The two little boys also aroused no small interest. Mothers could not see them without a feeling of envy. Both children were like Mme. Willemsens,

who was, in fact, their mother. They had the transparent complexion and bright color, the clear, liquid eyes, the long lashes, the fresh outlines, the dazzling characteristics of childish beauty.

The elder, Louis-Gaston, had dark hair and fearless eyes. Everything about him spoke as plainly of robust, physical health as his broad, high brow, with its gracious curves, spoke of energy of character. He was quick and alert in his movements, and strong of limb, without a trace of awkwardness. Nothing took him unawares, and he seemed to think about everything that he saw.

Marie-Gaston, the other child, had hair that was almost golden, though a lock here and there had deepened to the mother's chestnut tint. Marie-Gaston was slender; he had the delicate features and the subtle grace so charming in Mme. Willemsens. He did not look strong. There was a gentle look in his gray eyes; his face was pale, there was something feminine about the child. He still wore his hair in long, wavy curls, and his mother would not have him give up embroidered collars, and little jackets fastened with frogs and spindle-shaped buttons; evidently she took a thoroughly feminine pleasure in the costume, a source of as much interest to the mother as to the child. The elder boy's plain white collar, turned down over a closely fitting jacket, made a contrast with his brother's clothing, but the color and material were the same; the two brothers were otherwise dressed alike, and looked alike.

No one could see them without feeling touched by the way in which Louis took care of Marie. There was an almost fatherly look in the older boy's eyes; and Marie, child though he was, seemed to be full of gratitude to Louis. They were like two buds, scarcely separated from the stem that bore them, swayed by the same breeze, lying in the same ray of sunlight; but the one was a brightly colored flower, the other somewhat bleached and pale. At a glance, a word, an inflection in their mother's voice, they grew heedful, turned to look at her and listened, and did at once what they were bidden, or asked, or recommended to do. Mme. Willemsens had so accustomed them to understand her wishes and desires, that the three seemed to have their thoughts in common. When they went for a walk, and the children, absorbed in their play, ran away to gather a flower or to look at some insect, she watched them with such deep tenderness in her eyes, that the most indifferent passer-by would feel moved, and stop and smile at the children, and give the mother a glance of friendly greeting. Who would not have admired the dainty neatness of their dress, their sweet, childish voices, the grace of their movements, the promise in their faces, the innate something that told of careful training from the cradle? They seemed as if they had never shed tears nor wailed like other children. Their mother knew, as it were, by electrically swift intuition, the desires and the pains which she anticipated and relieved. She seemed to dread a complaint from one of them more than the loss of her soul. Everything in her

children did honor to their mother's training. Their threefold life, seemingly one life, called up vague, fond thoughts; it was like a vision of the dreamed-of bliss of a better world. And the three, so attuned to each other, lived in truth such a life as one might picture for them at first sight—the ordered, simple, and regular life best suited for a child's education.

Both children rose an hour after daybreak and repeated a short prayer, a habit learned in their babyhood. For seven years the sincere petition had been put up every morning on their mother's bed, and begun and ended by a kiss. Then the two brothers went through their morning toilet as scrupulously as any pretty woman; doubtless they had been trained in habits of minute attention to the person, so necessary to health of body and mind, habits in some sort conducive to a sense of wellbeing. Conscientiously they went through their duties, so afraid were they lest their mother should say when she kissed them at breakfast-time, "My darling children, where can you have been to have such black finger-nails already?" Then the two went out into the garden and shook off the dreams of the night in the morning air and dew, until sweeping and dusting operations were completed, and they could learn their lessons in the sitting-room until their mother joined them. But although it was understood that they must not go to their mother's room before a certain hour, they peeped in at the door continually; and these morning inroads, made in defiance of the original compact, were delicious moments for all three. Marie sprang upon the bed to put his arms around his idolized mother, and Louis, kneeling by the pillow, took her hand in his. Then came inquiries, anxious as a lover's, followed by angelic laughter, passionate childish kisses, eloquent silences, lisping words, and the little ones' stories interrupted and resumed by a kiss, stories seldom finished, though the listener's interest never failed.

"Have you been industrious?" their mother would ask, but in tones so sweet and so kindly that she seemed ready to pity laziness as a misfortune, and to glance through tears at the child who was satisfied with himself.

She knew that the thought of pleasing her put energy into the children's work; and they knew that their mother lived for them, and that all her thoughts and her time were given to them. A wonderful instinct, neither selfishness nor reason, perhaps the first innocent beginnings of sentiment teaches children to know whether or not they are the first and sole thought, to find out those who love to think of them and for them. If you really love children, the dear little ones, with open hearts and unerring sense of justice, are marvelously ready to respond to love. Their love knows passion and jealousy and the most gracious delicacy of feeling; they find the tenderest words of expression; they trust you—put an entire belief in you. Perhaps there are no undutiful children without undutiful mothers, for a child's affection is always in proportion to the affection that it receives—in early care, in the first words that it hears, in the

response of the eyes to which a child first looks for love and life. All these things draw them closer to the mother or drive them apart. God lays the child under the mother's heart, that she may learn that for a long time to come her heart must be its home. And yet—there are mothers cruelly slighted, mothers whose sublime, pathetic tenderness meets only a harsh return, a hideous ingratitude which shows how difficult it is to lay down hard-and-fast rules in matters of feeling.

Here, not one of all the thousand heart ties that bind child and mother had been broken. The three were alone in the world; they lived one life, a life of close sympathy. If Mme. Willemsens was silent in the morning, Louis and Marie would not speak, respecting everything in her, even those thoughts which they did not share. But the older boy, with a precocious power of thought, would not rest satisfied with his mother's assertion that she was perfectly well. He scanned her face with uneasy forebodings; the exact danger he did not know, but dimly he felt it threatening in those purple rings about her eyes, in the deepening hollows under them, and the feverish red that deepened in her face. If Marie's play began to tire her, his sensitive tact was quick to discover this, and he would call to his brother:

"Come, Marie! let us run in to breakfast, I am hungry!"

But when they reached the door, he would look back to catch the expression on his mother's face. She still could find a smile for him, nay, often there were tears in her eyes when some little thing revealed her child's exquisite feeling, a too early comprehension of sorrow.

Mme. Willemsens dressed during the children's early breakfast and game of play; she was coquettish for her darlings; she wished to be pleasing in their eyes; for them she would fain be in all things lovely, a gracious vision, with the charm of some sweet perfume of which one can never have enough.

She was always dressed in time to hear their lessons, which lasted from ten till three, with an interval at noon for lunch, the three taking the meal together in the summer-house. After lunch the children played for an hour, while she—poor woman and happy mother—lay on a long sofa in the summer-house, so placed that she could look out over the soft, ever-changing country of Touraine, a land that you learn to see afresh in all the thousand chance effects produced by daylight and sky and the time of year.

The children scampered through the orchard, scrambled about the terraces, chased the lizards, scarcely less nimble than they; investigating flowers and seeds and insects, continually referring all questions to their mother, running to and fro between the garden and the summer-house. Children have no need of toys in the country, everything amuses them.

Mme. Willemsens sat at her embroidery during their lessons. She never spoke, nor did she look at masters or pupils; but she followed attentively all that was said, striving to gather the sense of the words to gain a general idea of Louis' progress. If Louis asked a question that puzzled his master, his mother's eyes suddenly lighted up, and she would smile and glance at him with hope in her eyes. Of Marie she asked little. Her desire was with her eldest son. Already she treated him, as it were, respectfully, using all a woman's, all a mother's tact to arouse the spirit of high endeavor in the boy, to teach him to think of himself as capable of great things. She did this with a secret purpose, which Louis was to understand in the future; nay, he understood it already.

Always, the lesson over, she went as far as the gate with the master, and asked strict account of Louis' progress. So kindly and so winning was her manner, that his tutors told her the truth, pointing out where Louis was weak, so that she might help him in his lessons. Then came dinner, and play after dinner, then a walk, and lessons were learned till bedtime.

So their days went. It was a uniform but full life; work and amusements left them not a dull hour in the day. Discouragement and quarreling were impossible. The mother's boundless love made everything smooth. She taught her little sons moderation by refusing them nothing, and submission by making them see underlying Necessity in its many forms; she put heart into them with timely praise; developing and strengthening all that was best in their natures with the care of a good fairy. Tears sometimes rose to her burning eyes as she watched them play, and thought how they had never caused her the slightest vexation. Happiness so far-reaching and complete brings such tears, because for us it represents the dim imaginings of Heaven which we all of us form in our minds.

Those were delicious hours spent on that sofa in the garden-house, in looking out on sunny days over the wide stretches of river and the picturesque landscape, listening to the sound of her children's voices as they laughed at their own laughter, to the little quarrels that told most plainly of their union of heart, of Louis' paternal care of Marie, of the love that both of them felt for her. They spoke English and French equally well (they had had an English nurse since their babyhood), so their mother talked to them in both languages; directing the bent of their childish minds with admirable skill, admitting no fallacious reasoning, no bad principle. She ruled by kindness, concealing nothing, explaining everything. If Louis wished for books, she was careful to give him interesting yet accurate books—books of biography, the lives of great seamen, great captains, and famous men, for little incidents in their history gave her numberless opportunities of explaining the world and life to her children. She would point out the ways in which men, really great in themselves, had risen from obscurity; how they had started from the lowest

ranks of society, with no one to look to but themselves, and achieved noble destinies.

These readings, and they were not the least useful of Louis' lessons, took place while little Marie slept on his mother's knee in the quiet of the summer night, and the Loire reflected the sky; but when they ended, this adorable woman's sadness always seemed to be doubled; she would cease to speak, and sit motionless and pensive, and her eyes would fill with tears.

"Mother, why are you crying?" Louis asked one balmy June evening, just as the twilight of a soft-lit night succeeded to a hot day.

Deeply moved by his trouble, she put her arm about the child's neck and drew him to her.

"Because, my boy, the lot of Jameray Duval, the poor and friendless lad who succeeded at last, will be your lot, yours and your brother's, and I have brought it upon you. Before very long, dear child, you will be alone in the world, with no one to help or befriend you. While you are still children, I shall leave you, and yet, if only I could wait till you are big enough and know enough to be Marie's guardian! But I shall not live so long. I love you so much that it makes me very unhappy to think of it. Dear children, if only you do not curse me some day!——"

"But why should I curse you some day, mother?"

"Some day," she said, kissing him on the forehead, "you will find out that I have wronged you. I am going to leave you, here, without money, without"—and she hesitated—"without a father," she added, and at the word she burst into tears and put the boy from her gently. A sort of intuition told Louis that his mother wished to be alone, and he carried off Marie, now half awake. An hour later, when his brother was in bed, he stole down and out to the summer-house where his mother was sitting.

"Louis! come here."

The words were spoken in tones delicious to his heart. The boy sprang to his mother's arms, and the two held each other in an almost convulsive embrace.

"Cherie," he said at last, the name by which he often called her, finding that even loving words were too weak to express his feeling, "cherie, why are you afraid that you are going to die?"

"I am ill, my poor darling; every day I am losing strength, and there is no cure for my illness; I know that."

"What is the matter with you?"

"Something that I ought to forget; something that you must never know.—You must not know what caused my death."

The boy was silent for a while. He stole a glance now and again at his mother; and she, with her eyes raised to the sky, was watching the clouds. It was a sad, sweet moment. Louis could not believe that his mother would die soon, but instinctively he felt trouble which he could not guess. He respected her long musings. If he had been rather older, he would have read happy memories blended with thoughts of repentance, the whole story of a woman's life in that sublime face—the careless childhood, the loveless marriage, a terrible passion, flowers springing up in storm and struck down by the thunderbolt into an abyss from which there is no return.

"Darling mother," Louis said at last, "why do you hide your pain from me?"

"My boy, we ought to hide our troubles from strangers," she said; "we should show them a smiling face, never speak of ourselves to them, nor think about ourselves; and these rules, put in practice in family life, conduce to its happiness. You will have much to bear one day! Ah me! then think of your poor mother who died smiling before your eyes, hiding her sufferings from you, and you will take courage to endure the ills of life."

She choked back her tears, and tried to make the boy understand the mechanism of existence, the value of money, the standing and consideration that it gives, and its bearing on social position; the honorable means of gaining a livelihood, and the necessity of a training. Then she told him that one of the chief causes of her sadness and her tears was the thought that, on the morrow of her death, he and Marie would be left almost resourceless, with but a slender stock of money, and no friend but God.

"How quick I must be about learning!" cried Louis, giving her a piteous, searching look.

"Oh! how happy I am!" she said, showering kisses and tears on her son. "He understands me!—Louis," she went on, "you will be your brother's guardian, will you not? You promise me that? You are no longer a child!"

"Yes, I promise," he said; "but you are not going to die yet—say that you are not going to die!"

"Poor little ones!" she replied, "love for you keeps the life in me. And this country is so sunny, the air is so bracing, perhaps——"

"You make me love Touraine more than ever," said the child.

From that day, when Mme. Willemsens, foreseeing the approach of death, spoke to Louis of his future, he concentrated his attention on his work, grew

more industrious, and less inclined to play than heretofore. When he had coaxed Marie to read a book and to give up boisterous games, there was less noise in the hollow pathways and gardens and terraced walks of La Grenadiere. They adapted their lives to their mother's melancholy. Day by day her face was growing pale and wan, there were hollows now in her temples, the lines in her forehead grew deeper night after night.

August came. The little family had been five months at La Grenadiere, and their whole life was changed. The old servant grew anxious and gloomy as she watched the almost imperceptible symptoms of slow decline in the mistress, who seemed to be kept in life by an impassioned soul and intense love of her children. Old Annette seemed to see that death was very near. That mistress, beautiful still, was more careful of her appearance than she had ever been; she was at pains to adorn her wasted self, and wore paint on her cheeks; but often while she walked on the upper terrace with the children, Annette's wrinkled face would peer out from between the savin trees by the pump. The old woman would forget her work, and stand with wet linen in her hands, scarce able to keep back her tears at the sight of Mme. Willemsens, so little like the enchanting woman she once had been.

The pretty house itself, once so gay and bright, looked melancholy; it was a very quiet house now, and the family seldom left it, for the walk to the bridge was too great an effort for Mme. Willemsens. Louis had almost identified himself, as it were, with his mother, and with his suddenly developed powers of imagination he saw the weariness and exhaustion under the red color, and constantly found reasons for taking some shorter walk.

So happy couples coming to Saint-Cyr, then the Petite Courtille of Tours, and knots of folk out for their evening walk along the "dike," saw a pale, thin figure dressed in black, a woman with a worn yet bright face, gliding like a shadow along the terraces. Great suffering cannot be concealed. The vinedresser's household had grown quiet also. Sometimes the laborer and his wife and children were gathered about the door of their cottage, while Annette was washing linen at the well-head, and Mme. Willemsens and the children sat in the summer-house, and there was not the faintest sound in those gardens gay with flowers. Unknown to Mme. Willemsens, all eyes grew pitiful at the sight of her, she was so good, so thoughtful, so dignified with those with whom she came in contact.

And as for her.—When the autumn days came on, days so sunny and bright in Touraine, bringing with them grapes and ripe fruits and healthful influences which must surely prolong life in spite of the ravages of mysterious disease—she saw no one but her children, taking the utmost that the hour could give her, as if each hour had been her last.

Louis had worked at night, unknown to his mother, and made immense progress between June and September. In algebra he had come as far as equations with two unknown quantities; he had studied descriptive geometry, and drew admirably well; in fact, he was prepared to pass the entrance examination of the Ecole polytechnique.

Sometimes of an evening he went down to the bridge of Tours. There was a lieutenant there on half-pay, an Imperial naval officer, whose manly face, medal, and gait had made an impression on the boy's imagination, and the officer on his side had taken a liking to the lad, whose eyes sparkled with energy. Louis, hungering for tales of adventure, and eager for information, used to follow in the lieutenant's wake for the chance of a chat with him. It so happened that the sailor had a friend and comrade in the colonel of a regiment of infantry, struck off the rolls like himself; and young Louis-Gaston had a chance of learning what life was like in camp or on board a man-of-war. Of course, he plied the veterans with questions; and when he had made up his mind to the hardships of their rough callings, he asked his mother's leave to take country walks by way of amusement. Mme. Willemsens was beyond measure glad that he should ask; the boy's astonished masters had told her that he was overworking himself. So Louis went for long walks. He tried to inure himself to fatigue, climbed the tallest trees with incredible quickness, learned to swim, watched through the night. He was not like the same boy; he was a young man already, with a sunburned face, and a something in his expression that told of deep purpose.

When October came, Mme. Willemsens could only rise at noon. The sunshine, reflected by the surface of the Loire, and stored up by the rocks, raised the temperature of the air till it was almost as warm and soft as the atmosphere of the Bay of Naples, for which reason the faculty recommend the place of abode. At mid-day she came out to sit under the shade of green leaves with the two boys, who never wandered from her now. Lessons had come to an end. Mother and children wished to live the life of heart and heart together, with no disturbing element, no outside cares. No tears now, no joyous outcries. The elder boy, lying in the grass at his mother's side, basked in her eyes like a lover and kissed her feet. Marie, the restless one, gathered flowers for her, and brought them with a subdued look, standing on tiptoe to put a girlish kiss on her lips. And the pale woman, with the great tired eyes and languid movements, never uttered a word of complaint, and smiled upon her children, so full of life and health—it was a sublime picture, lacking no melancholy autumn pomp of yellow leaves and half-despoiled branches, nor the softened sunlight and pale clouds of the skies of Touraine.

At last the doctor forbade Mme. Willemsens to leave her room. Every day it was brightened by the flowers that she loved, and her children were always

with her. One day, early in November, she sat at the piano for the last time. A picture—a Swiss landscape—hung above the instrument; and at the window she could see her children standing with their heads close together. Again and again she looked from the children to the landscape, and then again at the children. Her face flushed, her fingers flew with passionate feeling over the ivory keys. This was her last great day, an unmarked day of festival, held in her own soul by the spirit of her memories. When the doctor came, he ordered her to stay in bed. The alarming dictum was received with bewildered silence.

When the doctor had gone, she turned to the older boy.

"Louis," she said, "take me out on the terrace, so that I may see my country once more."

The boy gave his arm at those simply uttered words, and brought his mother out upon the terrace; but her eyes turned, perhaps unconsciously, to heaven rather than to the earth, and indeed, it would have been hard to say whether heaven or earth was the fairer—for the clouds traced shadowy outlines, like the grandest Alpine glaciers, against the sky. Mme. Willemsens' brows contracted vehemently; there was a look of anguish and remorse in her eyes. She caught the children's hands, and clutched them to a heavily-throbbing heart.

"'Parentage unknown!'" she cried, with a look that went to their hearts. "Poor angels, what will become of you? And when you are twenty years old, what strict account may you not require of my life and your own?"

She put the children from her, and leaning her arms upon the balustrade, stood for a while hiding her face, alone with herself, fearful of all eyes. When she recovered from the paroxysm, she saw Louis and Marie kneeling on either side of her, like two angels; they watched the expression of her face, and smiled lovingly at her.

"If only I could take that smile with me!" she said, drying her eyes.

Then she went into the house and took to the bed, which she would only leave for her coffin.

A week went by, one day exactly like another. Old Annette and Louis took it in turns to sit up with Mme. Willemsens, never taking their eyes from the invalid. It was the deeply tragical hour that comes in all our lives, the hour of listening in terror to every deep breath lest it should be the last, a dark hour protracted over many days. On the fifth day of that fatal week the doctor interdicted flowers in the room. The illusions of life were going one by one.

Then Marie and his brother felt their mother's lips hot as fire beneath their kisses; and at last, on the Saturday evening, Mme. Willemsens was too ill to

bear the slightest sound, and her room was left in disorder. This neglect for a woman of refined taste, who clung so persistently to the graces of life, meant the beginning of the death-agony. After this, Louis refused to leave his mother. On Sunday night, in the midst of the deepest silence, when Louis thought that she had grown drowsy, he saw a white, moist hand move the curtain in the lamplight.

"My son!" she said. There was something so solemn in the dying woman's tones, that the power of her wrought-up soul produced a violent reaction on the boy; he felt an intense heat pass through the marrow of his bones.

"What is it, mother?"

"Listen! To-morrow all will be over for me. We shall see each other no more. To-morrow you will be a man, my child. So I am obliged to make some arrangements, which must remain a secret, known only to us. Take the key of my little table. That is it. Now open the drawer. You will find two sealed papers to the left. There is the name of LOUIS on one, and on the other MARIE."

"Here they are, mother."

"Those are your certificates of birth, darling; you will want them. Give them to our poor, old Annette to keep for you; ask her for them when you need them. Now," she continued, "is there not another paper as well, something in my handwriting?"

"Yes, mother," and Louis began to read, "Marie Willemsens, born at——"

"That is enough," she broke in quickly, "do not go on. When I am dead, give that paper, too, to Annette, and tell her to send it to the registrar at Saint-Cyr; it will be wanted if my certificate of death is to be made out in due form. Now find writing materials for a letter which I will dictate to you."

When she saw that he was ready to begin, and turned towards her for the words, they came from her quietly:—

"Monsieur le Comte, your wife, Lady Brandon, died at Saint-Cyr, near Tours, in the department of Indre-et-Loire. She forgave you."

"Sign yourself——" she stopped, hesitating and perturbed.

"Are you feeling worse?" asked Louis.

"Put 'Louis-Gaston,'" she went on.

She sighed, then she went on.

"Seal the letter, and direct it. To Lord Brandon, Brandon Square, Hyde Park, London, Angleterre.—That is right. When I am dead, post the letter in

Tours, and prepay the postage.—Now," she added, after a pause, "take the little pocketbook that you know, and come here, my dear child.... There are twelve thousand francs in it," she said, when Louis had returned to her side. "That is all your own. Oh me! you would have been better off if your father ——"

"My father," cried the boy, "where is he?"

"He is dead," she said, laying her finger on her lips; "he died to save my honor and my life."

She looked upwards. If any tears had been left to her, she would have wept for pain.

"Louis," she continued, "swear to me, as I lie here, that you will forget all that you have written, all that I have told you."

"Yes, mother."

"Kiss me, dear angel."

She was silent for a long while, she seemed to be drawing strength from God, and to be measuring her words by the life that remained in her.

"Listen," she began. "Those twelve thousand francs are all that you have in the world. You must keep the money upon you, because when I am dead the lawyers will come and seal everything up. Nothing will be yours then, not even your mother. All that remains for you to do will be to go out, poor orphan children, God knows where. I have made Annette's future secure. She will have an annuity of a hundred crowns, and she will stay at Tours no doubt. But what will you do for yourself and your brother?"

She raised herself, and looked at the brave child, standing by her bedside. There were drops of perspiration on his forehead, he was pale with emotion, and his eyes were dim with tears.

"I have thought it over, mother," he answered in a deep voice. "I will take Marie to the school here in Tours. I will give ten thousand francs to our old Annette, and ask her to take care of them, and to look after Marie. Then, with the remaining two thousand francs, I will go to Brest, and go to sea as an apprentice. While Marie is at school, I will rise to be a lieutenant on board a man-of-war. There, after all, die in peace, my mother; I shall come back again a rich man, and our little one shall go to the Ecole polytechnique, and I will find a career to suit his bent."

A gleam of joy shone in the dying woman's eyes. Two tears brimmed over, and fell over her fevered cheeks; then a deep sigh escaped between her lips. The sudden joy of finding the father's spirit in the son, who had grown all at once to be a man, almost killed her.

"Angel of heaven," she cried, weeping, "by one word you have effaced all my sorrows. Ah! I can bear them.—This is my son," she said, "I bore, I reared this man," and she raised her hands above her, and clasped them as if in ecstasy, then she lay back on the pillow.

"Mother, your face is growing pale!" cried the lad.

"Some one must go for a priest," she answered, with a dying voice.

Louis wakened Annette, and the terrified old woman hurried to the parsonage at Saint-Cyr.

When morning came, Mme. Willemsens received the sacrament amid the most touching surroundings. Her children were kneeling in the room, with Annette and the vinedresser's family, simple folk, who had already become part of the household. The silver crucifix, carried by a chorister, a peasant child from the village, was lifted up, and the dying mother received the Viaticum from an aged priest. The Viaticum! sublime word, containing an idea yet more sublime, an idea only possessed by the apostolic religion of the Roman church.

"This woman has suffered greatly!" the old cure said in his simple way.

Marie Willemsens heard no voices now, but her eyes were still fixed upon her children. Those about her listened in terror to her breathing in the deep silence; already it came more slowly, though at intervals a deep sigh told them that she still lived, and of a struggle within her; then at last it ceased. Every one burst into tears except Marie. He, poor child, was still too young to know what death meant.

Annette and the vinedresser's wife closed the eyes of the adorable woman, whose beauty shone out in all its radiance after death. Then the women took possession of the chamber of death, removed the furniture, wrapped the dead in her winding-sheet, and laid her upon the couch. They lit tapers about her, and arranged everything—the crucifix, the sprigs of box, and the holy-water stoup—after the custom of the countryside, bolting the shutters and drawing the curtains. Later the curate came to pass the night in prayer with Louis, who refused to leave his mother. On Tuesday morning an old woman and two children and a vinedresser's wife followed the dead to her grave. These were the only mourners. Yet this was a woman whose wit and beauty and charm had won a European reputation, a woman whose funeral, if it had taken place in London, would have been recorded in pompous newspaper paragraphs, as a sort of aristocratic rite, if she had not committed the sweetest of crimes, a crime always expiated in this world, so that the pardoned spirit may enter heaven. Marie cried when they threw the earth on his mother's coffin; he understood that he should see her no more.

A simple, wooden cross, set up to mark her grave, bore this inscription, due to the cure of Saint-Cyr:—

HERE LIES

AN UNHAPPY WOMAN,

WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-SIX.

KNOWN IN HEAVEN BY THE NAME OF AUGUSTA.

Pray for her!

When all was over, the children came back to La Grenadiere to take a last look at their home; then, hand in hand, they turned to go with Annette, leaving the vinedresser in charge, with directions to hand over everything duly to the proper authorities.

At this moment, Annette called to Louis from the steps by the kitchen door, and took him aside with, "Here is madame's ring, Monsieur Louis."

The sight of this vivid remembrance of his dead mother moved him so deeply that he wept. In his fortitude, he had not even thought of this supreme piety; and he flung his arms round the old woman's neck. Then the three set out down the beaten path, and the stone staircase, and so to Tours, without turning their heads.

"Mamma used to come there!" Marie said when they reached the bridge.

Annette had a relative, a retired dressmaker, who lived in the Rue de la Guerche. She took the two children to this cousin's house, meaning that they should live together thenceforth. But Louis told her of his plans, gave Marie's certificate of birth and the ten thousand francs into her keeping, and the two went the next morning to take Marie to school.

Louis very briefly explained his position to the headmaster, and went. Marie came with him as far as the gateway. There Louis gave solemn parting words of the tenderest counsel, telling Marie that he would now be left alone in the world. He looked at his brother for a moment, and put his arms about him, took one more long look, brushed a tear from his eyes, and went, turning again and again till the very last to see his brother standing there in the gateway of the school.

A month later Louis-Gaston, now an apprentice on board a man-of-war, left the harbor of Rochefort. Leaning over the bulwarks of the corvette Iris, he watched the coast of France receding swiftly till it became indistinguishable from the faint blue horizon line. In a little while he felt that he was really alone, and lost in the wide ocean, lost and alone in the world and in life.

"There is no need to cry, lad; there is a God for us all," said an old sailor,

with rough kindliness in his thick voice.

The boy thanked him with pride in his eyes. Then he bowed his head, and resigned himself to a sailor's life. He was a father.

ANGOULEME, August, 1832.