The Human Comedy
Philosophical Studies III

By

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GAMBARA

New Year's Day of 1831 was pouring out its packets of sugared almonds, four o'clock was striking, there was a mob in the Palais-Royal, and the eating-houses were beginning to fill. At this moment a coupe drew up at the perron and a young man stepped out; a man of haughty appearance, and no doubt a foreigner; otherwise he would not have displayed the aristocratic chasseur who attended him in a plumed hat, nor the coat of arms which the heroes of July still attacked.

This gentleman went into the Palais-Royal, and followed the crowd round the galleries, unamazed at the slowness to which the throng of loungers reduced his pace; he seemed accustomed to the stately step which is ironically nicknamed the ambassador's strut; still, his dignity had a touch of the theatrical. Though his features were handsome and imposing, his hat, from beneath which thick black curls stood out, was perhaps tilted a little too much over the right ear, and belied his gravity by a too rakish effect. His eyes, inattentive and half closed, looked down disdainfully on the crowd.

"There goes a remarkably good-looking young man," said a girl in a low voice, as she made way for him to pass.

"And who is only too well aware of it!" replied her companion aloud—who was very plain.

After walking all round the arcades, the young man looked by turns at the sky and at his watch, and with a shrug of impatience went into a tobacconist's shop, lighted a cigar, and placed himself in front of a looking-glass to glance at his costume, which was rather more ornate than the rules of French taste allow. He pulled down his collar and his black velvet waistcoat, over which hung many festoons of the thick gold chain that is made at Venice; then, having arranged the folds of his cloak by a single jerk of his left shoulder, draping it gracefully so as to show the velvet lining, he started again on parade, indifferent to the glances of the vulgar.

As soon as the shops were lighted up and the dusk seemed to him black enough, he went out into the square in front of the Palais-Royal, but as a man anxious not to be recognized; for he kept close under the houses as far as the fountain, screened by the hackney-cab stand, till he reached the Rue Froid-Manteau, a dirty, poky, disreputable street—a sort of sewer tolerated by the police close to the purified purlieus of the Palais-Royal, as an Italian major-domo allows a careless servant to leave the sweepings of the rooms in a corner of the staircase.

The young man hesitated. He might have been a bedizened citizen's wife craning her neck over a gutter swollen by the rain. But the hour was not unpropitious for the indulgence of some discreditable whim. Earlier, he might have been detected; later, he might find himself cut out. Tempted by a glance which is encouraging without being inviting, to have followed a young and pretty woman for an hour, or perhaps for a day, thinking of her as a divinity and excusing her light conduct by a thousand reasons to her advantage; to have allowed oneself to believe in a sudden and irresistible affinity; to have pictured, under the promptings of transient excitement, a love-adventure in an age when romances are written precisely because they never happen; to have dreamed of balconies, guitars, stratagems, and bolts, enwrapped in Almaviva's cloak; and, after inditing a poem in fancy, to stop at the door of a house of ill-fame, and, crowning all, to discern in Rosina's bashfulness a reticence imposed by the police—is not all this, I say, an experience familiar to many a man who would not own it?

The most natural feelings are those we are least willing to confess, and among them is fatuity. When the lesson is carried no further, the Parisian profits by it, or forgets it, and no great harm is done. But this would hardly be the case with this foreigner, who was beginning to think he might pay too dearly for his Paris education.

This personage was a Milanese of good family, exiled from his native country, where some "liberal" pranks had made him an object of suspicion to the Austrian Government. Count Andrea Marcosini had been welcomed in Paris with the cordiality, essentially French, that a man always finds there, when he has a pleasant wit, a sounding name, two hundred thousand francs a year, and a prepossessing person. To such a man banishment could but be a pleasure tour; his property was simply sequestrated, and his friends let him know that after an absence of two years he might return to his native land without danger.

After rhyming crudeli affanni with i miei tiranni in a dozen or so of sonnets, and maintaining as many hapless Italian refugees out of his own purse, Count Andrea, who was so unlucky as to be a poet, thought himself released from patriotic obligations. So, ever since his arrival, he had given himself up recklessly to the pleasures of every kind which Paris offers gratis to those who can pay for them. His talents and his handsome person won him success among women, whom he adored collectively as beseemed his years, but among whom he had not as yet distinguished a chosen one. And indeed this taste was, in him, subordinate to those for music and poetry which he had cultivated from his childhood; and he thought success in these both more difficult and more glorious to achieve than in affairs of gallantry, since nature had not inflicted on him the obstacles men take most pride in defying.

A man, like many another, of complex nature, he was easily fascinated by the comfort of luxury, without which he could hardly have lived; and, in the same way, he clung to the social distinctions which his principles contemned. Thus his theories as an artist, a thinker, and a poet were in frequent antagonism with his tastes, his feelings, and his habits as a man of rank and wealth; but he comforted himself for his inconsistencies by recognizing them in many Parisians, like himself liberal by policy and aristocrats by nature.

Hence it was not without some uneasiness that he found himself, on December 31, 1830, under a Paris thaw, following at the heels of a woman whose dress betrayed the most abject, inveterate, and long-accustomed poverty, who was no handsomer than a hundred others to be seen any evening at the play, at the opera, in the world of fashion, and who was certainly not so young as Madame de Manerville, from whom he had obtained an assignation for that very day, and who was perhaps waiting for him at that very hour.

But in the glance at once tender and wild, swift and deep, which that woman’s black eyes had shot at him by stealth, there was such a world of buried sorrows and promised joys! And she had colored so fiercely when, on coming out of a shop where she had lingered a quarter of an hour, her look frankly met the Count’s, who had been waiting for her hard by! In fact, there were so many buts and ifs, that, possessed by one of those mad temptations for which there is no word in any language, not even in that of the orgy, he had set out in pursuit of this woman, hunting her down like a hardened Parisian.

On the way, whether he kept behind or ahead of this damsel, he studied every detail of her person and her dress, hoping to dislodge the insane and ridiculous fancy that had taken up an abode in his brain; but he presently found in his examination a keener pleasure than he had felt only the day before in gazing at the perfect shape of a woman he loved, as she took her bath. Now and again, the unknown fair, bending her head, gave him a look like that of a kid tethered with its head to the ground, and finding herself still the object of his pursuit, she hurried on as if to fly. Nevertheless, each time that a block of carriages, or any other delay, brought Andrea to her side, he saw her turn away from his gaze without any signs of annoyance. These signals of restrained feelings spurred the frenzied dreams that had run away with him, and he gave them the rein as far as the Rue Froid-Manteau, down which, after many windings, the damsel vanished, thinking she had thus spoilt the scent of her pursuer, who was, in fact, startled by this move.

It was now quite dark. Two women, tattooed with rouge, who were drinking black-currant liqueur at a grocer’s counter, saw the young woman and called her. She paused at the door of the shop, replied in a few soft words to the cordial greeting offered her, and went on her way. Andrea, who was behind her, saw her turn into one of the darkest yards out of this street, of which he

did not know the name. The repulsive appearance of the house where the heroine of his romance had been swallowed up made him feel sick. He drew back a step to study the neighborhood, and finding an ill-looking man at his elbow, he asked him for information. The man, who held a knotted stick in his right hand, placed the left on his hip and replied in a single word:

“Scoundrel!”

But on looking at the Italian, who stood in the light of a street-lamp, he assumed a servile expression.

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said he, suddenly changing his tone. “There is a restaurant near this, a sort of table-d’hote, where the cooking is pretty bad and they serve cheese in the soup. Monsieur is in search of the place, perhaps, for it is easy to see that he is an Italian—Italians are fond of velvet and of cheese. But if monsieur would like to know of a better eating-house, an aunt of mine, who lives a few steps off, is very fond of foreigners.”

Andrea raised his cloak as high as his moustache, and fled from the street, spurred by the disgust he felt at this foul person, whose clothes and manner were in harmony with the squalid house into which the fair unknown had vanished. He returned with rapture to the thousand luxuries of his own rooms, and spent the evening at the Marquise d’Espard’s to cleanse himself, if possible, of the smirch left by the fancy that had driven him so relentlessly during the day.

And yet, when he was in bed, the vision came back to him, but clearer and brighter than the reality. The girl was walking in front of him; now and again as she stepped across a gutter her skirts revealed a round calf; her shapely hips swayed as she walked. Again Andrea longed to speak to her—and he dared not, he, Marcosini, a Milanese nobleman! Then he saw her turn into the dark passage where she had eluded him, and blamed himself for not having followed her.

“For, after all,” said he to himself, “if she really wished to avoid me and put me off her track, it is because she loves me. With women of that stamp, coyness is a proof of love. Well, if I had carried the adventure any further, it would, perhaps, have ended in disgust. I will sleep in peace.”

The Count was in the habit of analyzing his keenest sensations, as men do involuntarily when they have as much brains as heart, and he was surprised when he saw the strange damsel of the Rue Froid-Manteau once more, not in the pictured splendor of his dream but in the bare reality of dreary fact. And, in spite of it all, if fancy had stripped the woman of her livery of misery, it would have spoilt her for him; for he wanted her, he longed for her, he loved her—with her muddy stockings, her slipshod feet, her straw bonnet! He

wanted her in the very house where he had seen her go in.

“Am I bewitched by vice, then?” he asked himself in dismay. “Nay, I have not yet reached that point. I am but three-and-twenty, and there is nothing of the senile fop about me.”

The very vehemence of the whim that held possession of him to some extent reassured him. This strange struggle, these reflections, and this love in pursuit may perhaps puzzle some persons who are accustomed to the ways of Paris life; but they may be reminded that Count Andrea Marcosini was not a Frenchman.

Brought up by two abbes, who, in obedience to a very pious father, had rarely let him out of their sight, Andrea had not fallen in love with a cousin at the age of eleven, or seduced his mother’s maid by the time he was twelve; he had not studied at school, where a lad does not learn only, or best, the subjects prescribed by the State; he had lived in Paris but a few years, and he was still open to those sudden but deep impressions against which French education and manners are so strong a protection. In southern lands a great passion is often born of a glance. A gentleman of Gascony who had tempered strong feelings by much reflection had fortified himself by many little recipes against sudden apoplexies of taste and heart, and he advised the Count to indulge at least once a month in a wild orgy to avert those storms of the soul which, but for such precautions, are apt to break out at inappropriate moments. Andrea now remembered this advice.

“Well,” thought he, “I will begin to-morrow, January 1st.”

This explains why Count Andrea Marcosini hovered so shyly before turning down the Rue Froid-Manteau. The man of fashion hampered the lover, and he hesitated for some time; but after a final appeal to his courage he went on with a firm step as far as the house, which he recognized without difficulty.

There he stopped once more. Was the woman really what he fancied her? Was he not on the verge of some false move?

At this juncture he remembered the Italian table d’hote, and at once jumped at the middle course, which would serve the ends alike of his curiosity and of his reputation. He went in to dine, and made his way down the passage; at the bottom, after feeling about for some time, he found a staircase with damp, slippery steps, such as to an Italian nobleman could only seem a ladder.

Invited to the first floor by the glimmer of a lamp and a strong smell of cooking, he pushed a door which stood ajar and saw a room dingy with dirt and smoke, where a wench was busy laying a table for about twenty customers. None of the guests had yet arrived.

After looking round the dimly lighted room where the paper was dropping in rags from the walls, the gentleman seated himself by a stove which was roaring and smoking in the corner.

Attracted by the noise the Count made in coming in and disposing of his cloak, the major-domo presently appeared. Picture to yourself a lean, dried-up cook, very tall, with a nose of extravagant dimensions, casting about him from time to time, with feverish keenness, a glance that he meant to be cautious. On seeing Andrea, whose attire bespoke considerable affluence, Signor Giardini bowed respectfully.

The Count expressed his intention of taking his meals as a rule in the society of some of his fellow-countrymen; he paid in advance for a certain number of tickets, and ingenuously gave the conversation a familiar bent to enable him to achieve his purpose quickly.

Hardly had he mentioned the woman he was seeking when Signor Giardini, with a grotesque shrug, looked knowingly at his customer, a bland smile on his lips.

“Basta!” he exclaimed. “Capisco. Your Excellency has come spurred by two appetites. La Signora Gambara will not have wasted her time if she has gained the interest of a gentleman so generous as you appear to be. I can tell you in a few words all we know of the woman, who is really to be pitied.

“The husband is, I believe, a native of Cremona and has just come here from Germany. He was hoping to get the Tedeschi to try some new music and some new instruments. Isn’t it pitiable?” said Giardini, shrugging his shoulders. “Signor Gambara, who thinks himself a great composer, does not seem to me very clever in other ways. An excellent fellow with some sense and wit, and sometimes very agreeable, especially when he has had a few glasses of wine—which does not often happen, for he is desperately poor; night and day he toils at imaginary symphonies and operas instead of trying to earn an honest living. His poor wife is reduced to working for all sorts of people—the women on the streets! What is to be said? She loves her husband like a father, and takes care of him like a child.

“Many a young man has dined here to pay his court to madame; but not one has succeeded,” said he, emphasizing the word. “La Signora Marianna is an honest woman, monsieur, much too honest, worse luck for her! Men give nothing for nothing nowadays. So the poor soul will die in harness.

“And do you suppose that her husband rewards her for her devotion? Pooh, my lord never gives her a smile! And all their cooking is done at the baker’s; for not only does the wretched man never earn a sou; he spends all his wife can make on instruments which he carves, and lengthens, and shortens, and

sets up and takes to pieces again till they produce sounds that will scare a cat; then he is happy. And yet you will find him the mildest, the gentlest of men. And, he is not idle; he is always at it. What is to be said? He is crazy and does not know his business. I have seen him, monsieur, filing and forging his instruments and eating black bread with an appetite that I envied him—I, who have the best table in Paris.

"Yes, Excellenza, in a quarter of an hour you shall know the man I am. I have introduced certain refinements into Italian cookery that will amaze you! Excellenza, I am a Neapolitan—that is to say, a born cook. But of what use is instinct without knowledge? Knowledge! I have spent thirty years in acquiring it, and you see where it has left me. My history is that of every man of talent. My attempts, my experiments, have ruined three restaurants in succession at Naples, Parma, and Rome. To this day, when I am reduced to make a trade of my art, I more often than not give way to my ruling passion. I give these poor refugees some of my choicest dishes. I ruin myself! Folly! you will say? I know it; but how can I help it? Genius carries me away, and I cannot resist concocting a dish which smiles on my fancy.

"And they always know it, the rascals! They know, I can promise you, whether I or my wife has stood over the fire. And what is the consequence? Of sixty-odd customers whom I used to see at my table every day when I first started in this wretched place, I now see twenty on an average, and give them credit for the most part. The Piedmontese, the Savoyards, have deserted, but the connoisseurs, the true Italians, remain. And there is no sacrifice that I would not make for them. I often give them a dinner for five and twenty sous which has cost me double."

Signore Giardini's speech had such a full flavor of Neapolitan cunning that the Count was delighted, and could have fancied himself at Gerolamo's.

"Since that is the case, my good friend," said he familiarly to the cook, "and since chance and your confidence have let me into the secret of your daily sacrifices, allow me to pay double."

As he spoke Andrea spun a forty-franc piece on the stove, out of which Giardini solemnly gave him two francs and fifty centimes in change, not without a certain ceremonious mystery that amused him hugely.

"In a few minutes now," the man added, "you will see your donnina. I will seat you next the husband, and if you wish to stand in his good graces, talk about music. I have invited every one for the evening, poor things. Being New Year's Day, I am treating the company to a dish in which I believe I have surpassed myself."

Signor Giardini's voice was drowned by the noisy greetings of the guests,

who streamed in two and two, or one at a time, after the manner of tables-d'hote. Giardini stayed by the Count, playing the showman by telling him who the company were. He tried by his witticisms to bring a smile to the lips of a man who, as his Neapolitan instinct told him, might be a wealthy patron to turn to good account.

"This one," said he, "is a poor composer who would like to rise from song-writing to opera, and cannot. He blames the managers, music-sellers,—everybody, in fact, but himself, and he has no worse enemy. You can see—what a florid complexion, what self-conceit, how little firmness in his features! he is made to write ballads. The man who is with him and looks like a match-hawker, is a great music celebrity—Gigelmi, the greatest Italian conductor known; but he has gone deaf, and is ending his days in penury, deprived of all that made it tolerable. Ah! here comes our great Ottoboni, the most guileless old fellow on earth; but he is suspected of being the most vindictive of all who are plotting for the regeneration of Italy. I cannot think how they can bear to banish such a good man."

And here Giardini looked narrowly at the Count, who, feeling himself under inquisition as to his politics, entrenched himself in Italian impassibility.

"A man whose business it is to cook for all comers can have no political opinions, Excellenza," Giardini went on. "But to see that worthy man, who looks more like a lamb than a lion, everybody would say what I say, were it before the Austrian ambassador himself. Besides, in these times liberty is no longer proscribed; it is going its rounds again. At least, so these good people think," said he, leaning over to speak in the Count's ear, "and why should I thwart their hopes? I, for my part, do not hate an absolute government. Excellenza, every man of talent is for depotism!

"Well, though full of genius, Ottoboni takes no end of pains to educate Italy; he writes little books to enlighten the intelligence of the children and the common people, and he smuggles them very cleverly into Italy. He takes immense trouble to reform the moral sense of our luckless country, which, after all, prefers pleasure to freedom,—and perhaps it is right."

The Count preserved such an impenetrable attitude that the cook could discover nothing of his political views.

"Ottoboni," he ran on, "is a saint; very kind-hearted; all the refugees are fond of him; for, Excellenza, a liberal may have his virtues. Oho! Here comes a journalist," said Giardini, as a man came in dressed in the absurd way which used to be attributed to a poet in a garret; his coat was threadbare, his boots split, his hat shiny, and his overcoat deplorably ancient. "Excellenza, that poor man is full of talent, and incorruptibly honest. He was born into the wrong times, for he tells the truth to everybody; no one can endure him. He writes

theatrical articles for two small papers, though he is clever enough to work for the great dailies. Poor fellow!

“The rest are not worth mentioning, and Your Excellency will find them out,” he concluded, seeing that on the entrance of the musician’s wife the Count had ceased to listen to him.

On seeing Andrea here, Signora Marianna started visibly and a bright flush tinged her cheeks.

“Here he is!” said Giardini, in an undertone, clutching the Count’s arm and nodding to a tall man. “How pale and grave he is poor man! His hobby has not trotted to his mind to-day, I fancy.”

Andrea’s prepossession for Marianna was crossed by the captivating charm which Gambara could not fail to exert over every genuine artist. The composer was now forty; but although his high brow was bald and lined with a few parallel, but not deep, wrinkles; in spite, too, of hollow temples where the blue veins showed through the smooth, transparent skin, and of the deep sockets in which his black eyes were sunk, with their large lids and light lashes, the lower part of his face made him still look young, so calm was its outline, so soft the modeling. It could be seen at a glance that in this man passion had been curbed to the advantage of the intellect; that the brain alone had grown old in some great struggle.

Andrea shot a swift look at Marianna, who was watching him. And he noted the beautiful Italian head, the exquisite proportion and rich coloring that revealed one of those organizations in which every human power is harmoniously balanced, he sounded the gulf that divided this couple, brought together by fate. Well content with the promise he inferred from this dissimilarity between the husband and wife, he made no attempt to control a liking which ought to have raised a barrier between the fair Marianna and himself. He was already conscious of feeling a sort of respectful pity for this man, whose only joy she was, as he understood the dignified and serene acceptance of ill fortune that was expressed in Gambara’s mild and melancholy gaze.

After expecting to see one of the grotesque figures so often set before us by German novelists and writers of libretti, he beheld a simple, unpretentious man, whose manners and demeanor were in nothing strange and did not lack dignity. Without the faintest trace of luxury, his dress was more decent than might have been expected from his extreme poverty, and his linen bore witness to the tender care which watched over every detail of his existence. Andrea looked at Marianna with moistened eyes; and she did not color, but half smiled, in a way that betrayed, perhaps, some pride at this speechless homage. The Count, too thoroughly fascinated to miss the smallest indication

of complaisance, fancied that she must love him, since she understood him so well.

From this moment he set himself to conquer the husband rather than the wife, turning all his batteries against the poor Gambara, who quite guilelessly went on eating Signor Giardini's bocconi, without thinking of their flavor.

The Count opened the conversation on some trivial subject, but at the first words he perceived that this brain, supposed to be infatuated on one point, was remarkably clear on all others, and saw that it would be far more important to enter into this very clever man's ideas than to flatter his conceits.

The rest of the company, a hungry crew whose brain only responded to the sight of a more or less good meal, showed much animosity to the luckless Gambara, and waited only till the end of the first course, to give free vent to their satire. A refugee, whose frequent leer betrayed ambitious schemes on Marianna, and who fancied he could establish himself in her good graces by trying to make her husband ridiculous, opened fire to show the newcomer how the land lay at the table-d'hote.

"It is a very long time since we have heard anything about the opera on 'Mahomet'!" cried he, with a smile at Marianna. "Can it be that Paolo Gambara, wholly given up to domestic cares, absorbed by the charms of the chimney-corner, is neglecting his superhuman genius, leaving his talents to get cold and his imagination to go flat?"

Gambara knew all the company; he dwelt in a sphere so far above them all that he no longer cared to repel an attack. He made no reply.

"It is not given to everybody," said the journalist, "to have an intellect that can understand Monsieur Gambara's musical efforts, and that, no doubt, is why our divine maestro hesitates to come before the worthy Parisian public."

"And yet," said the ballad-monger, who had not opened his mouth but to swallow everything that came within his reach, "I know some men of talent who think highly of the judgments of Parisian critics. I myself have a pretty reputation as a musician," he went on, with an air of diffidence. "I owe it solely to my little songs in vaudevilles, and the success of my dance music in drawing-rooms; but I propose ere long to bring out a mass composed for the anniversary of Beethoven's death, and I expect to be better appreciated in Paris than anywhere else. You will perhaps do me the honor of hearing it?" he said, turning to Andrea.

"Thank you," said the Count. "But I do not conceive that I am gifted with the organs needful for the appreciation of French music. If you were dead, monsieur, and Beethoven had composed the mass, I would not have failed to attend the performance."

This retort put an end to the tactics of those who wanted to set Gambara off on his high horse to amuse the new guest. Andrea was already conscious of an unwillingness to expose so noble and pathetic a mania as a spectacle for so much vulgar shrewdness. It was with no base reservation that he kept up a desultory conversation, in the course of which Signor Giardini's nose not infrequently interposed between two remarks. Whenever Gambara uttered some elegant repartee or some paradoxical aphorism, the cook put his head forward, to glance with pity at the musician and with meaning at the Count, muttering in his ear, "E matto!"

Then came a moment when the chef interrupted the flow of his judicial observations to devote himself to the second course, which he considered highly important. During his absence, which was brief, Gambara leaned across to address Andrea.

"Our worthy host," said he, in an undertone, "threatens to regale us to-day with a dish of his own concocting, which I recommend you to avoid, though his wife has had an eye on him. The good man has a mania for innovations. He ruined himself by experiments, the last of which compelled him to fly from Rome without a passport—a circumstance he does not talk about. After purchasing the good-will of a popular restaurant he was trusted to prepare a banquet given by a lately made Cardinal, whose household was not yet complete. Giardini fancied he had an opportunity for distinguishing himself—and he succeeded! for that same evening he was accused of trying to poison the whole conclave, and was obliged to leave Rome and Italy without waiting to pack up. This disaster was the last straw. Now," and Gambara put his finger to his forehead and shook his head.

"He is a good fellow, all the same," he added. "My wife will tell you that we owe him many a good turn."

Giardini now came in carefully bearing a dish which he set in the middle of the table, and he then modestly resumed his seat next to Andrea, whom he served first. As soon as he had tasted the mess, the Count felt that an impassable gulf divided the second mouthful from the first. He was much embarrassed, and very anxious not to annoy the cook, who was watching him narrowly. Though a French restaurateur may care little about seeing a dish scorned if he is sure of being paid for it, it is not so with an Italian, who is not often satiated with praises.

To gain time, Andrea complimented Giardini enthusiastically, but he leaned over to whisper in his ear, and slipping a gold piece into his hand under the table, begged him to go out and buy a few bottles of champagne, leaving him free to take all the credit of the treat.

When the Italian returned, every plate was cleared, and the room rang with

praises of the master-cook. The champagne soon mounted these southern brains, and the conversation, till now subdued in the stranger's presence, overleaped the limits of suspicious reserve to wander far over the wide fields of political and artistic opinions.

Andrea, to whom no form of intoxication was known but those of love and poetry, had soon gained the attention of the company and skilfully led it to a discussion of matters musical.

"Will you tell me, monsieur," said he to the composer of dance-music, "how it is that the Napoleon of these tunes can condescend to usurp the place of Palestrina, Pergolesi, and Mozart,—poor creatures who must pack and vanish at the advent of that tremendous Mass for the Dead?"

"Well, monsieur," replied the composer, "a musician always finds it difficult to reply when the answer needs the cooperation of a hundred skilled executants. Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, without an orchestra would be of no great account."

"Of no great account!" said Marcosini. "Why, all the world knows that the immortal author of Don Giovanni and the Requiem was named Mozart; and I am so unhappy as not to know the name of the inexhaustible writer of quadrilles which are so popular in our drawing-rooms——"

"Music exists independently of execution," said the retired conductor, who, in spite of his deafness, had caught a few words of the conversation. "As he looks through the C-minor symphony by Beethoven, a musician is transported to the world of fancy on the golden wings of the subject in G-natural repeated by the horns in E. He sees a whole realm, by turns glorious in dazzling shafts of light, gloomy under clouds of melancholy, and cheered by heavenly strains."

"The new school has left Beethoven far behind," said the ballad-writer, scornfully.

"Beethoven is not yet understood," said the Count. "How can he be excelled?"

Gambara drank a large glass of champagne, accompanying the draught by a covert smile of approval.

"Beethoven," the Count went on, "extended the limits of instrumental music, and no one followed in his track."

Gambara assented with a nod.

"His work is especially noteworthy for simplicity of construction and for the way the scheme is worked out," the Count went on. "Most composers make use of the orchestral parts in a vague, incoherent way, combining them

for a merely temporary effect; they do not persistently contribute to the whole mass of the movement by their steady and regular progress. Beethoven assigns its part to each tone-quality from the first. Like the various companies which, by their disciplined movements, contribute to winning a battle, the orchestral parts of a symphony by Beethoven obey the plan ordered for the interest of all, and are subordinate to an admirably conceived scheme.

“In this he may be compared to a genius of a different type. In Walter Scott’s splendid historical novels, some personage, who seems to have least to do with the action of the story, intervenes at a given moment and leads up to the climax by some thread woven into the plot.”

“E vero!” remarked Gambara, to whom common sense seemed to return in inverse proportion to sobriety.

Andrea, eager to carry the test further, for a moment forgot all his predilections; he proceeded to attack the European fame of Rossini, disputing the position which the Italian school has taken by storm, night after night for more than thirty years, on a hundred stages in Europe. He had undertaken a hard task. The first words he spoke raised a strong murmur of disapproval; but neither the repeated interruptions, nor exclamations, nor frowns, nor contemptuous looks, could check this determined advocate of Beethoven.

“Compare,” said he, “that sublime composer’s works with what by common consent is called Italian music. What feebleness of ideas, what limpness of style! That monotony of form, those commonplace cadenzas, those endless bravura passages introduced at haphazard irrespective of the dramatic situation, that recurrent crescendo that Rossini brought into vogue, are now an integral part of every composition; those vocal fireworks result in a sort of babbling, chattering, vaporous mucic, of which the sole merit depends on the greater or less fluency of the singer and his rapidity of vocalization.

“The Italian school has lost sight of the high mission of art. Instead of elevating the crowd, it has condescended to the crowd; it has won its success only by accepting the suffrages of all comers, and appealing to the vulgar minds which constitute the majority. Such a success is mere street juggling.

“In short, the compositions of Rossini, in whom this music is personified, with those of the writers who are more or less of his school, to me seem worthy at best to collect a crowd in the street round a grinding organ, as an accompaniment to the capers of a puppet show. I even prefer French music, and I can say no more. Long live German music!” cried he, “when it is tuneful,” he added to a low voice.

This sally was the upshot of a long preliminary discussion, in which, for more than a quarter of an hour, Andrea had divagated in the upper sphere of

metaphysics, with the ease of a somnambulist walking over the roofs.

Gambara, keenly interested in all this transcendentalism, had not lost a word; he took up his parable as soon as Andrea seemed to have ended, and a little stir of revived attention was evident among the guests, of whom several had been about to leave.

“You attack the Italian school with much vigor,” said Gambara, somewhat warmed to his work by the champagne, “and, for my part, you are very welcome. I, thank God, stand outside this more or less melodic frippery. Still, as a man of the world, you are too ungrateful to the classic land whence Germany and France derived their first teaching. While the compositions of Carissimi, Cavalli, Scarlatti, and Rossi were being played throughout Italy, the violin players of the Paris opera house enjoyed the singular privilege of being allowed to play in gloves. Lulli, who extended the realm of harmony, and was the first to classify discords, on arriving in France found but two men—a cook and a mason—whose voice and intelligence were equal to performing his music; he made a tenor of the former, and transformed the latter into a bass. At that time Germany had no musician excepting Sebastian Bach.—But you, monsieur, though you are so young,” Gambara added, in the humble tone of a man who expects to find his remarks received with scorn or ill-nature, “must have given much time to the study of these high matters of art; you could not otherwise explain them so clearly.”

This word made many of the hearers smile, for they had understood nothing of the fine distinctions drawn by Andrea. Giardini, indeed, convinced that the Count had been talking mere rhodomontade, nudged him with a laugh in his sleeve, as at a good joke in which he flattered himself that he was a partner.

“There is a great deal that strikes me as very true in all you have said,” Gambara went on; “but be careful. Your argument, while reflecting on Italian sensuality, seems to me to lean towards German idealism, which is no less fatal heresy. If men of imagination and good sense, like you, desert one camp only to join the other; if they cannot keep to the happy medium between two forms of extravagance, we shall always be exposed to the satire of the sophists, who deny all progress, who compare the genius of man to this tablecloth, which, being too short to cover the whole of Signor Giardini’s table, decks one end at the expense of the other.”

Giardini bounded in his seat as if he had been stung by a horse-fly, but swift reflections restored him to his dignity as a host; he looked up to heaven and again nudged the Count, who was beginning to think the cook more crazy than Gambara.

This serious and pious way of speaking of art interested the Milanese

extremely. Seated between these two distracted brains, one so noble and the other so common, and making game of each other to the great entertainment of the crowd, there was a moment when the Count found himself wavering between the sublime and its parody, the farcical extremes of human life. Ignoring the chain of incredible events which had brought them to this smoky den, he believed himself to be the plaything of some strange hallucination, and thought of Gambara and Giardini as two abstractions.

Meanwhile, after a last piece of buffoonery from the deaf conductor in reply to Gambara, the company had broken up laughing loudly. Giardini went off to make coffee, which he begged the select few to accept, and his wife cleared the table. The Count, sitting near the stove between Marianna and Gambara, was in the very position which the mad musician thought most desirable, with sensuousness on one side and idealism on the other. Gambara finding himself for the first time in the society of a man who did not laugh at him to his face, soon diverged from generalities to talk of himself, of his life, his work, and the musical regeneration of which he believed himself to be the Messiah.

“Listen,” said he, “you who so far have not insulted me. I will tell you the story of my life; not to make a boast of my perseverance, which is no virtue of mine, but to the greater glory of Him who has given me strength. You seem kind and pious; if you do not believe in me at least you will pity me. Pity is human; faith comes from God.”

Andrea turned and drew back under his chair the foot that had been seeking that of the fair Marianna, fixing his eyes on her while listening to Gambara.

“I was born at Cremona, the son of an instrument maker, a fairly good performer and an even better composer,” the musician began. “Thus at an early age I had mastered the laws of musical construction in its twofold aspects, the material and the spiritual; and as an inquisitive child I observed many things which subsequently recurred to the mind of the full-grown man.

“The French turned us out of our own home—my father and me. We were ruined by the war. Thus, at the age of ten I entered on the wandering life to which most men have been condemned whose brains were busy with innovations, whether in art, science, or politics. Fate, or the instincts of their mind which cannot fit into the compartments where the trading class sit, providentially guides them to the spots where they may find teaching. Led by my passion for music I wandered throughout Italy from theatre to theatre, living on very little, as men can live there. Sometimes I played the bass in an orchestra, sometimes I was on the boards in the chorus, sometimes under them with the carpenters. Thus I learned every kind of musical effect, studying the

tones of instruments and of the human voice, wherein they differed and how they harmonized, listening to the score and applying the rules taught me by my father.

“It was hungry work, in a land where the sun always shines, where art is all pervading, but where there is no pay for the artist, since Rome is but nominally the Sovereign of the Christian world. Sometimes made welcome, sometimes scouted for my poverty, I never lost courage. I heard a voice within me promising me fame.

“Music seemed to me in its infancy, and I think so still. All that is left to us of musical effort before the seventeenth century, proves to me that early musicians knew melody only; they were ignorant of harmony and its immense resources. Music is at once a science and an art. It is rooted in physics and mathematics, hence it is a science; inspiration makes it an art, unconsciously utilizing the theorems of science. It is founded in physics by the very nature of the matter it works on. Sound is air in motion. The air is formed of constituents which, in us, no doubt, meet with analogous elements that respond to them, sympathize, and magnify them by the power of the mind. Thus the air must include a vast variety of molecules of various degrees of elasticity, and capable of vibrating in as many different periods as there are tones from all kinds of sonorous bodies; and these molecules, set in motion by the musician and falling on our ear, answer to our ideas, according to each man’s temperament. I myself believe that sound is identical in its nature with light. Sound is light, perceived under another form; each acts through vibrations to which man is sensitive and which he transforms, in the nervous centres, into ideas.

“Music, like painting, makes use of materials which have the property of liberating this or that property from the surrounding medium and so suggesting an image. The instruments in music perform this part, as color does in painting. And whereas each sound produced by a sonorous body is invariably allied with its major third and fifth, whereas it acts on grains of fine sand lying on stretched parchment so as to distribute them in geometrical figures that are always the same, according to the pitch,—quite regular when the combination is a true chord, and indefinite when the sounds are dissonant, —I say that music is an art conceived in the very bowels of nature.

“Music is subject to physical and mathematical laws. Physical laws are but little known, mathematics are well understood; and it is since their relations have been studied, that the harmony has been created to which we owe the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Rossini, grand geniuses, whose music is undoubtedly nearer to perfection than that of their precursors, though their genius, too, is unquestionable. The old masters could sing, but they had not art and science at their command,—a noble alliance which enables us to

merge into one the finest melody and the power of harmony.

“Now, if a knowledge of mathematical laws gave us these four great musicians, what may we not attain to if we can discover the physical laws in virtue of which—grasp this clearly—we may collect, in larger or smaller quantities, according to the proportions we may require, an ethereal substance diffused in the atmosphere which is the medium alike of music and of light, of the phenomena of vegetation and of animal life! Do you follow me? Those new laws would arm the composer with new powers by supplying him with instruments superior of those now in use, and perhaps with a potency of harmony immense as compared with that now at his command. If every modified shade of sound answers to a force, that must be known to enable us to combine all these forces in accordance with their true laws.

“Composers work with substances of which they know nothing. Why should a brass and a wooden instrument—a bassoon and horn—have so little identity of tone, when they act on the same matter, the constituent gases of the air? Their differences proceed from some displacement of those constituents, from the way they act on the elements which are their affinity and which they return, modified by some occult and unknown process. If we knew what the process was, science and art would both be gainers. Whatever extends science enhances art.

“Well, these are the discoveries I have guessed and made. Yes,” said Gambara, with increasing vehemence, “hitherto men have noted effects rather than causes. If they could but master the causes, music would be the greatest of the arts. Is it not the one which strikes deepest to the soul? You see in painting no more than it shows you; in poetry you have only what the poet says; music goes far beyond this. Does it not form your taste, and rouse dormant memories? In a concert-room there may be a thousand souls; a strain is flung out from Pasta’s throat, the execution worthily answering to the ideas that flashed through Rossini’s mind as he wrote the air. That phrase of Rossini’s, transmitted to those attentive souls, is worked out in so many different poems. To one it presents a woman long dreamed of; to another, some distant shore where he wandered long ago. It rises up before him with its drooping willows, its clear waters, and the hopes that then played under its leafy arbors. One woman is reminded of the myriad feelings that tortured her during an hour of jealousy, while another thinks of the unsatisfied cravings of her heart, and paints in the glowing hues of a dream an ideal lover, to whom she abandons herself with the rapture of the woman in the Roman mosaic who embraces a chimera; yet a third is thinking that this very evening some hoped-for joy is to be hers, and rushes by anticipation into the tide of happiness, its dashing waves breaking against her burning bosom. Music alone has this power of throwing us back on ourselves; the other arts give us infinite

pleasure. But I am digressing.

“These were my first ideas, vague indeed; for an inventor at the beginning only catches glimpses of the dawn, as it were. So I kept these glorious ideas at the bottom of my knapsack, and they gave me spirit to eat the dry crust I often dipped in the water of a spring. I worked, I composed airs, and, after playing them on any instrument that came to hand, I went off again on foot across Italy. Finally, at the age of two-and-twenty, I settled in Venice, where for the first time I enjoyed rest and found myself in a decent position. I there made the acquaintance of a Venetian nobleman who liked my ideas, who encouraged me in my investigations, and who got me employment at the Venice theatre.

“Living was cheap, lodging inexpensive. I had a room in that Capello palace from which the famous Bianca came forth one evening to become a Grand Duchess of Tuscany. And I would dream that my unrecognized fame would also emerge from thence one day to be crowned.

“I spent my evenings at the theatre and my days in work. Then came disaster. The performance of an opera in which I had experimented, trying my music, was a failure. No one understood my score for the Martiri. Set Beethoven before the Italians and they are out of their depth. No one had patience enough to wait for the effect to be produced by the different motives given out by each instrument, which were all at last to combine in a grand ensemble.

“I had built some hopes on the success of the Martiri, for we votaries of the blue divinity Hope always discount results. When a man believes himself destined to do great things, it is hard not to fancy them achieved; the bushel always has some cracks through which the light shines.

“My wife’s family lodged in the same house, and the hope of winning Marianna, who often smiled at me from her window, had done much to encourage my efforts. I now fell into the deepest melancholy as I sounded the depths of a life of poverty, a perpetual struggle in which love must die. Marianna acted as genius does; she jumped across every obstacle, both feet at once. I will not speak of the little happiness which shed its gilding on the beginning of my misfortunes. Dismayed at my failure, I decided that Italy was not intelligent enough and too much sunk in the dull round of routine to accept the innovations I conceived of; so I thought of going to Germany.

“I traveled thither by way of Hungary, listening to the myriad voices of nature, and trying to reproduce that sublime harmony by the help of instruments which I constructed or altered for the purpose. These experiments involved me in vast expenses which had soon exhausted my savings. And yet those were our golden days. In Germany I was appreciated. There has been nothing in my life more glorious than that time. I can think of nothing to

compare with the vehement joys I found by the side of Marianna, whose beauty was then of really heavenly radiance and splendor. In short, I was happy.

“During that period of weakness I more than once expressed my passion in the language of earthly harmony. I even wrote some of those airs, just like geometrical patterns, which are so much admired in the world of fashion that you move in. But as soon as I made a little way I met with insuperable obstacles raised by my rivals, all hypercritical or unappreciative.

“I had heard of France as being a country where novelties were favorably received, and I wanted to get there; my wife had a little money and we came to Paris. Till then no one had actually laughed in my face; but in this dreadful city I had to endure that new form of torture, to which abject poverty ere long added its bitter sufferings. Reduced to lodging in this mephitic quarter, for many months we have lived exclusively on Marianna’s sewing, she having found employment for her needle in working for the unhappy prostitutes who make this street their hunting ground. Marianna assures me that among those poor creatures she has met with such consideration and generosity as I, for my part, ascribe to the ascendency of virtue so pure that even vice is compelled to respect it.”

“Hope on,” said Andrea. “Perhaps you have reached the end of your trials. And while waiting for the time when my endeavor, seconding yours, shall set your labors in a true light, allow me, as a fellow-countryman and an artist like yourself, to offer you some little advances on the undoubted success of your score.”

“All that has to do with matters of material existence I leave to my wife,” replied Gambara. “She will decide as to what we may accept without a blush from so thorough a gentleman as you seem to be. For my part,—and it is long since I have allowed myself to indulge such full confidences,—I must now ask you to allow me to leave you. I see a melody beckoning to me, dancing and floating before me, bare and quivering, like a girl entreating her lover for her clothes which he has hidden. Good-night. I must go and dress my mistress. My wife I leave with you.”

He hurried away, as a man who blames himself for the loss of valuable time; and Marianna, somewhat embarrassed, prepared to follow him.

Andrea dared not detain her.

Giardini came to the rescue.

“But you heard, signora,” said he. “Your husband has left you to settle some little matters with the Signor Conte.”

Marianna sat down again, but without raising her eyes to Andrea, who hesitated before speaking.

“And will not Signor Gambara’s confidence entitle me to his wife’s?” he said in agitated tones. “Can the fair Marianna refuse to tell me the story of her life?”

“My life!” said Marianna. “It is the life of the ivy. If you wish to know the story of my heart, you must suppose me equally destitute of pride and of modesty if you can ask me to tell it after what you have just heard.”

“Of whom, then, can I ask it?” cried the Count, in whom passion was blinding his wits.

“Of yourself,” replied Marianna. “Either you understand me by this time, or you never will. Try to ask yourself.”

“I will, but you must listen. And this hand, which I am holding, is to lie in mine as long as my narrative is truthful.”

“I am listening,” said Marianna.

“A woman’s life begins with her first passion,” said Andrea. “And my dear Marianna began to live only on the day when she first saw Paolo Gambara. She needed some deep passion to feed upon, and, above all, some interesting weakness to shelter and uphold. The beautiful woman’s nature with which she is endowed is perhaps not so truly passion as maternal love.

“You sigh, Marianna? I have touched one of the aching wounds in your heart. It was a noble part for you to play, so young as you were,—that of protectress to a noble but wandering intellect. You said to yourself: ‘Paolo will be my genius; I shall be his common sense; between us we shall be that almost divine being called an angel,—the sublime creature that enjoys and understands, reason never stifling love.’

“And then, in the first impetus of youth, you heard the thousand voices of nature which the poet longed to reproduce. Enthusiasm clutched you when Paolo spread before you the treasures of poetry, while seeking to embody them in the sublime but restricted language of music; you admired him when delirious rapture carried him up and away from you, for you liked to believe that all this devious energy would at last come down and alight as love. But you knew not the tyrannous and jealous despotism of the ideal over the minds that fall in love with it. Gambara, before meeting you, had given himself over to the haughty and overbearing mistress, with whom you have struggled for him to this day.

“Once, for an instant, you had a vision of happiness. Paolo, tumbling from the lofty sphere where his spirit was constantly soaring, was amazed to find

reality so sweet; you fancied that his madness would be lulled in the arms of love. But before long Music again clutched her prey. The dazzling mirage which had cheated you into the joys of reciprocal love made the lonely path on which you had started look more desolate and barren.

“In the tale your husband has just told me, I could read, as plainly as in the contrast between your looks and his, all the painful secrets of that ill-assorted union, in which you have accepted the sufferer’s part. Though your conduct has been unfailingly heroical, though your firmness has never once given way in the exercise of your painful duties, perhaps, in the silence of lonely nights, the heart that at this moment is beating so wildly in your breast, may, from time to time, have rebelled. Your husband’s superiority was in itself your worst torment. If he had been less noble, less single-minded, you might have deserted him; but his virtues upheld yours; you wondered, perhaps, whether his heroism or your own would be the first to give way.

“You clung to your really magnanimous task as Paolo clung to his chimera. If you had had nothing but a devotion to duty to guide and sustain you, triumph might have seemed easier; you would only have had to crush your heart, and transfer your life into the world of abstractions; religion would have absorbed all else, and you would have lived for an idea, like those saintly women who kill all the instincts of nature at the foot of the altar. But the all-pervading charm of Paolo, the loftiness of his mind, his rare and touching proofs of tenderness, constantly drag you down from that ideal realm where virtue would fain maintain you; they perennially revive in you the energies you have exhausted in contending with the phantom of love. You never suspected this! The faintest glimmer of hope led you on in pursuit of the sweet vision.

“At last the disappointments of many years have undermined your patience,—an angel would have lost it long since,—and now the apparition so long pursued is no more than a shade without substance. Madness that is so nearly allied to genius can know no cure in this world. When this thought first struck you, you looked back on your past youth, sacrificed, if not wasted; you then bitterly discerned the blunder of nature that had given you a father when you looked for a husband. You asked yourself whether you had not gone beyond the duty of a wife in keeping yourself wholly for a man who was bound up in his science. Marianna, leave your hand in mine; all I have said is true. And you looked about you—but now you were in Paris, not in Italy, where men know how to love——”

“Oh! Let me finish the tale,” cried Marianna. “I would rather say things myself. I will be honest; I feel that I am speaking to my truest friend. Yes, I was in Paris when all you have expressed so clearly took place in my mind; but when I saw you I was saved, for I had never met with the love I had

dreamed of from my childhood. My poor dress and my dwelling-place had hidden me from the eyes of men of your class. A few young men, whose position did not allow of their insulting me, were all the more intolerable for the levity with which they treated me. Some made game of my husband, as if he were merely a ridiculous old man; others basely tried to win his good graces to betray me; one and all talked of getting me away from him, and none understood the devotion I feel for a soul that is so far away from us only because it is so near heaven, for that friend, that brother, whose handmaid I will always be.

"You alone understood, did you not? the tie that binds me to him. Tell me that you feel a sincere and disinterested regard for my Paolo—"

"I gladly accept your praises," Andrea interrupted; "but go no further; do not compel me to contradict you. I love you, Marianna, as we love in the beautiful country where we both were born, I love you with all my soul and with all my strength; but before offering you that love, I will be worthy of yours. I will make a last attempt to give back to you the man you have loved so long and will love forever. Till success or defeat is certain, accept without any shame the modest ease I can give you both. We will go to-morrow and choose a place where he may live.

"Have you such regard for me as will allow you to make me the partner in your guardianship?"

Marianna, surprised at such magnanimity, held out her hand to the Count, who went away, trying to evade the civilities of Giardini and his wife.

On the following day Giardini took the Count up to the room where the Gambaras lodged. Though Marianna fully knew her lover's noble soul,—for there are natures which quickly enter into each other's spirit,—Marianna was too good a housewife not to betray her annoyance at receiving such a fine gentleman in so humble a room. Everything was exquisitely clean. She had spent the morning in dusting her motley furniture, the handiwork of Signor Giardini, who had put it together, at odd moments of leisure, out of the fragments of the instruments rejected by Gambara.

Andrea had never seen anything quite so crazy. To keep a decent countenance he turned away from a grotesque bed, contrived by the ingenious cook in the case of an old harpsichord, and looked at Marianna's narrow couch, of which the single mattress was covered with a white muslin counterpane, a circumstance that gave rise in his mind to some sad but sweet thoughts.

He wished to speak of his plans and of his morning's work; but Gambara, in his enthusiasm, believing that he had at last met with a willing listener, took

possession of him, and compelled him to listen to the opera he had written for Paris.

“In the first place, monsieur,” said the composer, “allow me to explain the subject in a few words. Here, the hearers receiving a musical impression do not work it out in themselves, as religion bids us work out the texts of Scripture in prayer. Hence it is very difficult to make them understand that there is in nature an eternal melody, exquisitely sweet, a perfect harmony, disturbed only by revolutions independent of the divine will, as passions are uncontrolled by the will of men.

“I, therefore, had to seek a vast framework in which effect and cause might both be included; for the aim of my music is to give a picture of the life of nations from the loftiest point of view. My opera, for which I myself wrote the libretto, for a poet would never have fully developed the subject, is the life of Mahomet,—a figure in whom the magic of Sabaeanism combined with the Oriental poetry of the Hebrew Scriptures to result in one of the greatest human epics, the Arab dominion. Mahomet certainly derived from the Hebrews the idea of a despotic government, and from the religion of the shepherd tribes or Sabaeans the spirit of expansion which created the splendid empire of the Khalifs. His destiny was stamped on him in his birth, for his father was a heathen and his mother a Jewess. Ah! my dear Count to be a great musician a man must be very learned. Without knowledge he can get no local color and put no ideas into his music. The composer who sings for singing’s sake is an artisan, not an artist.

“This magnificent opera is the continuation of the great work I projected. My first opera was called The Martyrs, and I intend to write a third on Jerusalem delivered. You perceive the beauty of this trilogy and what a variety of motives it offers,—the Martyrs, Mahomet, the Deliverance of Jerusalem: the God of the West, the God of the East, and the struggle of their worshipers over a tomb. But we will not dwell on my fame, now for ever lost.

“This is the argument of my opera.” He paused. “The first act,” he went on, “shows Mahomet as a porter to Kadijah, a rich widow with whom his uncle placed him. He is in love and ambitious. Driven from Mecca, he escapes to Medina, and dates his era from his flight, the Hegira. In the second act he is a Prophet, founding a militant religion. In the third, disgusted with all things, having exhausted life, Mahomet conceals the manner of his death in the hope of being regarded as a god,—last effort of human pride.

“Now you shall judge of my way of expressing in sound a great idea, for which poetry could find no adequate expression in words.”

Gambara sat down to the piano with an absorbed gaze, and his wife brought him the mass of papers forming his score; but he did not open them.

“The whole opera,” said he, “is founded on a bass, as on a fruitful soil. Mahomet was to have a majestic bass voice, and his wife necessarily had a contralto. Kadijah was quite old—twenty! Attention! This is the overture. It begins with an andante in C major, triple time. Do you hear the sadness of the ambitious man who is not satisfied with love? Then, through his lamentation, by a transition to the key of E flat, allegro, common time, we hear the cries of the epileptic lover, his fury and certain warlike phrases, for the mighty charms of the one and only woman give him the impulse to multiplied loves which strikes us in Don Giovanni. Now, as you hear these themes, do you not catch a glimpse of Mahomet’s Paradise?

“And next we have a cantabile (A flat major, six-eight time), that might expand the soul that is least susceptible to music. Kadijah has understood Mahomet! Then Kadijah announces to the populace the Prophet’s interviews with the Angel Gabriel (maestoso sostenuto in F Major). The magistrates and priests, power and religion, feeling themselves attacked by the innovator, as Christ and Socrates also attacked effete or worn-out powers and religions, persecute Mahomet and drive him out of Mecca (stretto in C major). Then comes my beautiful dominant (G major, common time). Arabia now harkens to the Prophet; horsemen arrive (G major, E flat, B flat, G minor, and still common time). The mass of men gathers like an avalanche; the false Prophet has begun on a tribe the work he will achieve over a world (G major).

“He promises the Arabs universal dominion, and they believe him because he is inspired. The crescendo begins (still in the dominant). Here come some flourishes (in C major) from the brass, founded on the harmony, but strongly marked, and asserting themselves as an expression of the first triumphs. Medina has gone over to the Prophet, and the whole army marches on Mecca (an explosion of sound in C major). The whole power of the orchestra is worked up like a conflagration; every instrument is employed; it is a torrent of harmony.

“Suddenly the tutti is interrupted by a flowing air (on the minor third). You hear the last strain of devoted love. The woman who had upheld the great man dies concealing her despair, dies at the moment of triumph for him in whom love has become too overbearing to be content with one woman; and she worships him enough to sacrifice herself to the greatness of the man who is killing her. What a blaze of love!

“Then the Desert rises to overrun the world (back to C major). The whole strength of the orchestra comes in again, collected in a tremendous quintet grounded on the fundamental bass—and he is dying! Mahomet is world-weary; he has exhausted everything. Now he craves to die a god. Arabia, in fact, worships and prays to him, and we return to the first melancholy strain (C minor) to which the curtain rose.

“Now, do you not discern,” said Gambara, ceasing to play, and turning to the Count, “in this picturesque and vivid music—abrupt, grotesque, or melancholy, but always grand—the complete expression of the life of an epileptic, mad for enjoyment, unable to read or write, using all his defects as stepping-stones, turning every blunder and disaster into a triumph? Did not you feel a sense of his fascination exerted over a greedy and lustful race, in this overture, which is an epitome of the opera?”

At first calm and stern, the maestro’s face, in which Andrea had been trying to read the ideas he was uttering in inspired tones, though the chaotic flood of notes afforded no clue to them, had by degrees glowed with fire and assumed an impassioned force that infected Marianna and the cook. Marianna, too, deeply affected by certain passages in which she recognized a picture of her own position, could not conceal the expression of her eyes from Andrea.

Gambara wiped his brow, and shot a glance at the ceiling of such fierce energy that he seemed to pierce it and soar to the very skies.

“You have seen the vestibule,” said he; “we will now enter the palace. The opera begins:—

“Act I. Mahomet, alone on the stage, begins with an air (F natural, common time), interrupted by a chorus of camel-drivers gathered round a well at the back of the stage (they sing in contrary time—twelve-eight). What majestic woe! It will appeal to the most frivolous women, piercing to their inmost nerves if they have no heart. Is not this the very expression of crushed genius?”

To Andrea’s great astonishment,—for Marianna was accustomed to it,—Gambara contracted his larynx to such a pitch that the only sound was a stifled cry not unlike the bark of a watch-dog that has lost its voice. A slight foam came to the composer’s lips and made Andrea shudder.

“His wife appears (A minor). Such a magnificent duet! In this number I have shown that Mahomet has the will and his wife the brains. Kadijah announces that she is about to devote herself to an enterprise that will rob her of her young husband’s love. Mahomet means to conquer the world; this his wife has guessed, and she supports him by persuading the people of Mecca that her husband’s attacks of epilepsy are the effect of his intercourse with the angels (chorus of the first followers of Mahomet, who come to promise him their aid, C sharp minor, sotto voce). Mahomet goes off to seek the Angel Gabriel (recitative in F major). His wife encourages the disciples (aria, interrupted by the chorus, gusts of chanting support Kadijah’s broad and majestic air, A major).

“Abdallah, the father of Ayesha,—the only maiden Mahomet has found

really innocent, wherefore he changed the name of Abdallah to Abubekir (the father of the virgin),—comes forward with Ayesha and sings against the chorus, in strains which rise above the other voices and supplement the air sung by Kadijah in contrapuntal treatment. Omar, the father of another maiden who is to be Mahomet's concubine, follows Abubekir's example; he and his daughter join in to form a quintette. The girl Ayesha is first soprano, Hafsa second soprano; Abubekir is a bass, Omar a baritone.

"Mahomet returns, inspired. He sings his first bravura air, the beginning of the finale (E major), promising the empire of the world to those who believe in him. The Prophet seeing the two damsels, then, by a gentle transition (from B major to G major), addresses them in amorous tones. Ali, Mahomet's cousin, and Khaled, his greatest general, both tenors, now arrive and announce the persecution; the magistrates, the military, and the authorities have all proscribed the Prophet (recitative). Mahomet declares in an invocation (in C) that the Angel Gabriel is on his side, and points to a pigeon that is seen flying away. The chorus of believers responds in accents of devotion (on a modulation to B major). The soldiers, magistrates, and officials then come on (tempo di marcia, common time, B major). A chorus in two divisions (stretto in E major). Mahomet yields to the storm (in a descending phrase of diminished sevenths) and makes his escape. The fierce and gloomy tone of this finale is relieved by the phrases given to the three women who foretell Mahomet's triumph, and these motives are further developed in the third act in the scene where Mahomet is enjoying his splendor."

The tears rose to Gambara's eyes, and it was only upon controlling his emotion that he went on.

"Act II. The religion is now established. The Arabs are guarding the Prophet's tent while he speaks with God (chorus in A minor). Mahomet appears (a prayer in F). What a majestic and noble strain is this that forms the bass of the voices, in which I have perhaps enlarged the borders of melody. It was needful to express the wonderful energy of this great human movement which created an architecture, a music, a poetry of its own, a costume and manners. As you listen, you are walking under the arcades of the Generalife, the carved vaults of the Alhambra. The runs and trills depict that delicate mauresque decoration, and the gallant and valorous religion which was destined to wage war against the gallant and valorous chivalry of Christendom. A few brass instruments awake in the orchestra, announcing the Prophet's first triumph (in a broken cadenza). The Arabs adore the Prophet (E flat major), and the Khaled, Amru, and Ali arrive (tempo di marcia). The armies of the faithful have taken many towns and subjugated the three Arabias. Such a grand recitative!—Mahomet rewards his generals by presenting them with maidens.

“And here,” said Gambara, sadly, “there is one of those wretched ballets, which interrupt the thread of the finest musical tragedies! But Mahomet elevates it once more by his great prophetic scene, which poor Monsieur Voltaire begins with these words:

“Arabia’s time at last has come!

“He is interrupted by a chorus of triumphant Arabs (twelve-eight time, accelerando). The tribes arrive in crowds; the horns and brass reappear in the orchestra. General rejoicings ensue, all the voices joining in by degrees, and Mahomet announces polygamy. In the midst of all this triumph, the woman who has been of such faithful service to Mahomet sings a magnificent air (in B major). ‘And I,’ says she, ‘am I no longer loved?’ ‘We must part. Thou art but a woman, and I am a Prophet; I may still have slaves but no equal.’ Just listen to this duet (G sharp minor). What anguish! The woman understands the greatness her hands have built up; she loves Mahomet well enough to sacrifice herself to his glory; she worships him as a god, without criticising him,—without murmuring. Poor woman! His first dupe and his first victim!

“What a subject for the finale (in B major) is her grief, brought out in such sombre hues against the acclamations of the chorus, and mingling with Mahomet’s tones as he throws his wife aside as a tool of no further use, still showing her that he can never forget her! What fireworks of triumph! what a rush of glad and rippling song go up from the two young voices (first and second soprano) of Ayesha and Hafsa, supported by Ali and his wife, by Omar and Abubekir! Weep!—rejoice!—Triumph and tears! Such is life.”

Marianna could not control her tears, and Andrea was so deeply moved that his eyes were moist. The Neapolitan cook was startled by the magnetic influence of the ideas expressed by Gambara’s convulsive accents.

The composer looked round, saw the group, and smiled.

“At last you understand me!” said he.

No conqueror, led in pomp to the Capitol under the purple beams of glory, as the crown was placed on his head amid the acclamations of a nation, ever wore such an expression. The composer’s face was radiant, like that of a holy martyr. No one dispelled the error. A terrible smile parted Marianna’s lips. The Count was appalled by the guilelessness of this mania.

“Act III,” said the enchanted musician, reseating himself at the piano. “(Andantino, solo.) Mahomet in his seraglio, surrounded by women, but not happy. Quartette of Houris (A major). What pompous harmony, what trills as of ecstatic nightingales! Modulation (into F sharp minor). The theme is stated (on the dominant E and repeated in F major). Here every delight is grouped and expressed to give effect to the contrast of the gloomy finale of the first act.

After the dancing, Mahomet rises and sings a grand bravura air (in F minor), repelling the perfect and devoted love of his first wife, but confessing himself conquered by polygamy. Never has a musician had so fine a subject! The orchestra and the chorus of female voices express the joys of the Houris, while Mahomet reverts to the melancholy strain of the opening. Where is Beethoven," cried Gambara, "to appreciate this prodigious reaction of my opera on itself? How completely it all rests on the bass.

"It is thus that Beethoven composed his E minor symphony. But his heroic work is purely instrumental, whereas here, my heroic phrase is worked out on a sextette of the finest human voices, and a chorus of the faithful on guard at the door of the sacred dwelling. I have every resource of melody and harmony at my command, an orchestra and voices. Listen to the utterance of all these phases of human life, rich and poor;—battle, triumph, and exhaustion!

"Ali arrives, the Koran prevails in every province (duet in D minor). Mahomet places himself in the hands of his two fathers-in-law; he will abdicate his rule and die in retirement to consolidate his work. A magnificent sextette (B flat major). He takes leave of all (solo in F natural). His two fathers-in-law, constituted his vicars or Khalifs, appeal to the people. A great triumphal march, and a prayer by all the Arabs kneeling before the sacred house, the Kasbah, from which a pigeon is seen to fly away (the same key). This prayer, sung by sixty voices and led by the women (in B flat), crowns the stupendous work expressive of the life of nations and of man. Here you have every emotion, human and divine."

Andrea gazed at Gambara in blank amazement. Though at first he had been struck by the terrible irony of the situation,—this man expressing the feelings of Mahomet's wife without discovering them in Marianna,—the husband's hallucination was as nothing compared with the composer's. There was no hint even of a poetical or musical idea in the hideous cacophony with which he had deluged their ears; the first principles of harmony, the most elementary rules of composition, were absolutely alien to this chaotic structure. Instead of the scientifically compacted music which Gambara described, his fingers produced sequences of fifths, sevenths, and octaves, of major thirds, progressions of fourths with no supporting bass,—a medley of discordant sounds struck out haphazard in such a way as to be excruciating to the least sensitive ear. It is difficult to give any idea of the grotesque performance. New words would be needed to describe this impossible music.

Andrea, painfully affected by this worthy man's madness, colored, and stole a glance at Marianna; while she, turning pale and looking down, could not restrain her tears. In the midst of this chaos of notes, Gambara had every now and then given vent to his rapture in exclamations of delight. He had closed his eyes in ecstasy; had smiled at his piano; had looked at it with a

frown; put out his tongue at it after the fashion of the inspired performer,—in short, was quite intoxicated with the poetry that filled his brain, and that he had vainly striven to utter. The strange discords that clashed under his fingers had obviously sounded in his ears like celestial harmonies.

A deaf man, seeing the inspired gaze of his blue eyes open on another world, the rosy glow that tinged his cheeks, and, above all, the heavenly serenity which ecstasy stamped on his proud and noble countenance, would have supposed that he was looking on at the improvisation of a really great artist. The illusion would have been all the more natural because the performance of this mad music required immense executive skill to achieve such fingering. Gambara must have worked at it for years.

Nor were his hands alone employed; his feet were constantly at work with complicated pedaling; his body swayed to and fro; the perspiration poured down his face while he toiled to produce a great crescendo with the feeble means the thankless instrument placed at his command. He stamped, puffed, shouted; his fingers were as swift as the serpent’s double tongue; and finally, at the last crash on the keys, he fell back in his chair, resting his head on the top of it.

“Per Bacco! I am quite stunned,” said the Count as he left the house. “A child dancing on the keyboard would make better music.”

“Certainly mere chance could not more successfully avoid hitting two notes in concord than that possessed creature has done during the past hour,” said Giardini.

“How is it that the regular beauty of Marianna’s features is not spoiled by incessantly hearing such a hideous medley?” said the Count to himself. “Marianna will certainly grow ugly.”

“Signor, she must be saved from that,” cried Giardini.

“Yes,” said Andrea. “I have thought of that. Still, to be sure that my plans are not based on error, I must confirm my doubts by another experiment. I will return and examine the instruments he has invented. To-morrow, after dinner, we will have a little supper. I will send in some wine and little dishes.”

The cook bowed.

Andrea spent the following day in superintending the arrangement of the rooms where he meant to install the artist in a humble home.

In the evening the Count made his appearance, and found the wine, according to his instructions, set out with some care by Marianna and Giardini. Gambara proudly exhibited the little drums, on which lay the powder by means of which he made his observations on the pitch and quality of the

sounds emitted by his instruments.

“You see,” said he, “by what simple means I can prove the most important propositions. Acoustics thus can show me the analogous effects of sound on every object of its impact. All harmonies start from a common centre and preserve the closest relations among themselves; or rather, harmony, like light, is decomposable by our art as a ray is by a prism.”

He then displayed the instruments constructed in accordance with his laws, explaining the changes he had introduced into their constitution. And finally he announced that to conclude this preliminary inspection, which could only satisfy a superficial curiosity, he would perform on an instrument that contained all the elements of a complete orchestra, and which he called a Panharmonicon.

“If it is the machine in that huge case, which brings down on us the complaints of the neighborhood whenever you work at it, you will not play on it long,” said Giardini. “The police will interfere. Remember that!”

“If that poor idiot stays in the room,” said Gambara in a whisper to the Count, “I cannot possibly play.”

Andrea dismissed the cook, promising a handsome reward if he would keep watch outside and hinder the neighbors or the police from interfering. Giardini, who had not stinted himself while helping Gambara to wine, was quite willing.

Gambara, without being drunk, was in the condition when every power of the brain is over-wrought; when the walls of the room are transparent; when the garret has no roof, and the soul soars in the empyrean of spirits.

Marianna, with some little difficulty, removed the covers from an instrument as large as a grand piano, but with an upper case added. This strange-looking instrument, besides this second body and its keyboard, supported the openings or bells of various wind instruments and the closed funnels of a few organ pipes.

“Will you play me the prayer you say is so fine at the end of your opera?” said the Count.

To the great surprise of both Marianna and the Count, Gambara began with a succession of chords that proclaimed him a master; and their astonishment gave way first to amazed admiration and then to perfect rapture, effacing all thought of the place and the performer. The effects of a real orchestra could not have been finer than the voices of the wind instruments, which were like those of an organ and combined wonderfully with the harmonies of the strings. But the unfinished condition of the machine set limits to the composer’s

execution, and his idea seemed all the greater; for, often, the very perfection of a work of art limits its suggestiveness to the recipient soul. Is not this proved by the preference accorded to a sketch rather than a finished picture when on their trial before those who interpret a work in their own mind rather than accept it rounded off and complete?

The purest and serenest music that Andrea had ever listened to rose up from under Gambara's fingers like the vapor of incense from an altar. The composer's voice grew young again, and, far from marring the noble melody, it elucidated it, supported it, guided it,—just as the feeble and quavering voice of an accomplished reader, such as Andrieux, for instance, can expand the meaning of some great scene by Corneille or Racine by lending personal and poetical feeling.

This really angelic strain showed what treasures lay hidden in that stupendous opera, which, however, would never find comprehension so long as the musician persisted in trying to explain it in his present demented state. His wife and the Count were equally divided between the music and their surprise at this hundred-voiced instrument, inside which a stranger might have fancied an invisible chorus of girls were hidden, so closely did some of the tones resemble the human voice; and they dared not express their ideas by a look or a word. Marianna's face was lighted up by a radiant beam of hope which revived the glories of her youth. This renascence of beauty, co-existent with the luminous glow of her husband's genius, cast a shade of regret on the Count's exquisite pleasure in this mysterious hour.

"You are our good genius!" whispered Marianna. "I am tempted to believe that you actually inspire him; for I, who never am away from him, have never heard anything like this."

"And Kadijah's farewell!" cried Gambara, who sang the cavatina which he had described the day before as sublime, and which now brought tears to the eyes of the lovers, so perfectly did it express the loftiest devotion of love.

"Who can have taught you such strains?" cried the Count.

"The Spirit," said Gambara. "When he appears, all is fire. I see the melodies there before me; lovely, fresh in vivid hues like flowers. They beam on me, they ring out,—and I listen. But it takes a long, long time to reproduce them."

"Some more!" said Marianna.

Gambara, who could not tire, played on without effort or antics. He performed his overture with such skill, bringing out such rich and original musical effects, that the Count was quite dazzled, and at last believed in some magic like that commanded by Paganini and Liszt,—a style of execution

which changes every aspect of music as an art, by giving it a poetic quality far above musical inventions.

“Well, Excellenza, and can you cure him?” asked Giardini, as Andrea came out.

“I shall soon find out,” replied the Count. “This man’s intellect has two windows; one is closed to the world, the other is open to the heavens. The first is music, the second is poetry. Till now he has insisted on sitting in front of the shuttered window; he must be got to the other. It was you, Giardini, who first started me on the right track, by telling me that your client’s mind was clearer after drinking a few glasses of wine.”

“Yes,” cried the cook, “and I can see what your plan is.”

“If it is not too late to make the thunder of poetry audible to his ears, in the midst of the harmonies of some noble music, we must put him into a condition to receive it and appreciate it. Will you help me to intoxicate Gambara, my good fellow? Will you be none the worse for it?”

“What do you mean, Excellenza?”

Andrea went off without answering him, laughing at the acumen still left to this cracked wit.

On the following day he called for Marianna, who had spent the morning in arranging her dress,—a simple but decent outfit, on which she had spent all her little savings. The transformation would have destroyed the illusions of a mere dangler; but Andrea’s caprice had become a passion. Marianna, diverted of her picturesque poverty, and looking like any ordinary woman of modest rank, inspired dreams of wedded life.

He handed her into a hackney coach, and told her of the plans he had in his head; and she approved of everything, happy in finding her admirer more lofty, more generous, more disinterested than she had dared to hope. He took her to a little apartment, where he had allowed himself to remind her of his good offices by some of the elegant trifles which have a charm for the most virtuous women.

“I will never speak to you of love till you give up all hope of your Paolo,” said the Count to Marianna, as he bid her good-bye at the Rue Froid-Manteau. “You will be witness to the sincerity of my attempts. If they succeed. I may find myself unequal to keeping up my part as a friend; but in that case I shall go far away, Marianna. Though I have firmness enough to work for your happiness, I shall not have so much as will enable me to look on at it.”

“Do not say such things. Generosity, too, has its dangers,” said she, swallowing down her tears. “But are you going now?”

“Yes,” said Andrea; “be happy, without any drawbacks.”

If Giardini might be believed, the new treatment was beneficial to both husband and wife. Every evening after his wine, Gambara seemed less self-centered, talked more, and with great lucidity; he even spoke at last of reading the papers. Andrea could not help quaking at his unexpectedly rapid success; but though his distress made him aware of the strength of his passion, it did not make him waver in his virtuous resolve.

One day he called to note the progress of this singular cure. Though the state of the patient at first gave him satisfaction, his joy was dashed by Marianna’s beauty, for an easy life had restored its brilliancy. He called now every evening to enjoy calm and serious conversation, to which he contributed lucid and well considered arguments controverting Gambara’s singular theories. He took advantage of the remarkable acumen of the composer’s mind as to every point not too directly bearing on his manias, to obtain his assent to principles in various branches of art, and apply them subsequently to music. All was well so long as the patient’s brain was heated with the fumes of wine; but as soon as he had recovered—or, rather, lost—his reason, he was a monomaniac once more.

However, Paolo was already more easily diverted by the impression of outside things; his mind was more capable of addressing itself to several points at a time.

Andrea, who took an artistic interest in his semi-medical treatment, thought at last that the time had come for a great experiment. He would give a dinner at his own house, to which he would invite Giardini for the sake of keeping the tragedy and the parody side by side, and afterwards take the party to the first performance of Robert le Diable. He had seen it in rehearsal, and he judged it well fitted to open his patient’s eyes.

By the end of the second course, Gambara was already tipsy, laughing at himself with a very good grace; while Giardini confessed that his culinary innovations were not worth a rush. Andrea had neglected nothing that could contribute to this twofold miracle. The wines of Orvieto and of Montefiascone, conveyed with the peculiar care needed in moving them, Lachrymachristi and Giro,—all the heady liqueurs of la cara Patria,—went to their brains with the intoxication alike of the grape and of fond memory. At dessert the musician and the cook both abjured every heresy; one was humming a cavatina by Rossini, and the other piling delicacies on his plate and washing them down with Maraschino from Zara, to the prosperity of the French cuisine.

The Count took advantage of this happy frame of mind, and Gambara allowed himself to be taken to the opera like a lamb.

At the first introductory notes Gambara's intoxication appeared to clear away and make way for the feverish excitement which sometimes brought his judgment and his imagination into perfect harmony; for it was their habitual disagreement, no doubt, that caused his madness. The ruling idea of that great musical drama appeared to him, no doubt, in its noble simplicity, like a lightning flash, illuminating the utter darkness in which he lived. To his unsealed eyes this music revealed the immense horizons of a world in which he found himself for the first time, though recognizing it as that he had seen in his dreams. He fancied himself transported into the scenery of his native land, where that beautiful Italian landscape begins at what Napoleon so cleverly described as the glacis of the Alps. Carried back by memory to the time when his young and eager brain was as yet untroubled by the ecstasy of his too exuberant imagination he listened with religious awe and would not utter a single word. The Count respected the internal travail of his soul. Till half-past twelve Gambara sat so perfectly motionless that the frequenters of the opera house took him, no doubt, for what he was—a man drunk.

On their return, Andrea began to attack Meyerbeer's work, in order to wake up Gambara, who sat sunk in the half-torpid state common in drunkards.

"What is there in that incoherent score to reduce you to a condition of somnambulism?" asked Andrea, when they got out at his house. "The story of Robert le Diable, to be sure, is not devoid of interest, and Holtei has worked it out with great skill in a drama that is very well written and full of strong and pathetic situations; but the French librettist has contrived to extract from it the most ridiculous farrago of nonsense. The absurdities of the libretti of Vesari and Schikander are not to compare with those of the words of Robert le Diable; it is a dramatic nightmare, which oppresses the hearer without deeply moving him.

"And Meyerbeer has given the devil a too prominent part. Bertram and Alice represent the contest between right and wrong, the spirits of good and evil. This antagonism offered a splendid opportunity to the composer. The sweetest melodies, in juxtaposition with harsh and crude strains, was the natural outcome of the form of the story; but in the German composer's score the demons sing better than the saints. The heavenly airs belie their origin, and when the composer abandons the infernal motives he returns to them as soon as possible, fatigued with the effort of keeping aloof from them. Melody, the golden thread that ought never to be lost throughout so vast a plan, often vanishes from Meyerbeer's work. Feeling counts for nothing, the heart has no part in it. Hence we never come upon those happy inventions, those artless scenes, which captivate all our sympathies and leave a blissful impression on the soul.

"Harmony reigns supreme, instead of being the foundation from which the

melodic groups of the musical picture stand forth. These discordant combinations, far from moving the listener, arouse in him a feeling analogous to that which he would experience on seeing a rope-dancer hanging to a thread and swaying between life and death. Never does a soothing strain come in to mitigate the fatiguing suspense. It really is as though the composer had had no other object in view than to produce a baroque effect without troubling himself about musical truth or unity, or about the capabilities of human voices which are swamped by this flood of instrumental noise."

"Silence, my friend!" cried Gambara. "I am still under the spell of that glorious chorus of hell, made still more terrible by the long trumpets,—a new method of instrumentation. The broken cadenzas which give such force to Robert's scene, the cavatina in the fourth act, the finale of the first, all hold me in the grip of a supernatural power. No, not even Gluck's declamation ever produced so prodigious an effect, and I am amazed by such skill and learning."

"Signor Maestro," said Andrea, smiling, "allow me to contradict you. Gluck, before he wrote, reflected long; he calculated the chances, and he decided on a plan which might be subsequently modified by his inspirations as to detail, but hindered him from ever losing his way. Hence his power of emphasis, his declamatory style thrilling with life and truth. I quite agree with you that Meyerbeer's learning is transcendent; but science is a defect when it evicts inspiration, and it seems to me that we have in this opera the painful toil of a refined craftsman who in his music has but picked up thousands of phrases out of other operas, damned or forgotten, and appropriated them, while extending, modifying, or condensing them. But he has fallen into the error of all selectors of centos,—an abuse of good things. This clever harvester of notes is lavish of discords, which, when too often introduced, fatigue the ear till those great effects pall upon it which a composer should husband with care to make the more effective use of them when the situation requires it. These enharmonic passages recur to satiety, and the abuse of the plagal cadence deprives it of its religious solemnity.

"I know, of course, that every musician has certain forms to which he drifts back in spite of himself; he should watch himself so as to avoid that blunder. A picture in which there were no colors but blue and red would be untrue to nature, and fatigue the eye. And thus the constantly recurring rhythm in the score of Robert le Diable makes the work, as a whole, appear monotonous. As to the effect of the long trumpets, of which you speak, it has long been known in Germany; and what Meyerbeer offers us as a novelty was constantly used by Mozart, who gives just such a chorus to the devils in Don Giovanni."

By plying Gambara, meanwhile, with fresh libations, Andrea thus strove, by his contradictoriness, to bring the musician back to a true sense of music,

by proving to him that his so-called mission was not to try to regenerate an art beyond his powers, but to seek to express himself in another form; namely, that of poetry.

“But, my dear Count, you have understood nothing of that stupendous musical drama,” said Gambara, airily, as standing in front of Andrea’s piano he struck the keys, listened to the tone, and then seated himself, meditating for a few minutes as if to collect his ideas.

“To begin with, you must know,” said he, “that an ear as practised as mine at once detected that labor of choice and setting of which you spoke. Yes, the music has been selected, lovingly, from the storehouse of a rich and fertile imagination wherein learning has squeezed every idea to extract the very essence of music. I will illustrate the process.”

He rose to carry the candles into the adjoining room, and before sitting down again he drank a full glass of Giro, a Sardinian wine, as full of fire as the old wines of Tokay can inspire.

“Now, you see,” said Gambara, “this music is not written for misbelievers, nor for those who know not love. If you have never suffered from the virulent attacks of an evil spirit who shifts your object just as you are taking aim, who puts a fatal end to your highest hopes,—in one word, if you have never felt the devil’s tail whisking over the world, the opera of Robert le Diable must be to you, what the Apocalypse is to those who believe that all things will end with them. But if, persecuted and wretched, you understand that Spirit of Evil,—the monstrous ape who is perpetually employed in destroying the work of God,—if you can conceive of him as having, not indeed loved, but ravished, an almost divine woman, and achieved through her the joy of paternity; as so loving his son that he would rather have him eternally miserable with himself than think of him as eternally happy with God; if, finally, you can imagine the mother’s soul for ever hovering over the child’s head to snatch it from the atrocious temptations offered by its father,—even then you will have but a faint idea of this stupendous drama, which needs but little to make it worthy of comparison with Mozart’s Don Giovanni. Don Giovanni is in its perfection the greater, I grant; Robert le Diable expresses ideas, Don Giovanni arouses sensations. Don Giovanni is as yet the only musical work in which harmony and melody are combined in exactly the right proportions. In this lies its only superiority, for Robert is the richer work. But how vain are such comparisons since each is so beautiful in its own way!

“To me, suffering as I do from the demon’s repeated shocks, Robert spoke with greater power than to you; it struck me as being at the same time vast and concentrated.

“Thanks to you, I have been transported to the glorious land of dreams

where our senses expand, and the world works on a scale which is gigantic as compared with man."

He was silent for a space.

"I am trembling still," said the ill-starred artist, "from the four bars of cymbals which pierced to my marrow as they opened that short, abrupt introduction with its solo for trombone, its flutes, oboes, and clarionet, all suggesting the most fantastic effects of color. The andante in C minor is a foretaste of the subject of the evocation of the ghosts in the abbey, and gives grandeur to the scene by anticipating the spiritual struggle. I shivered."

Gambara pressed the keys with a firm hand and expanded Meyerbeer's theme in a masterly fantasia, a sort of outpouring of his soul after the manner of Liszt. It was no longer the piano, it was a whole orchestra that they heard; the very genius of music rose before them.

"That was worthy of Mozart!" he exclaimed. "See how that German can handle his chords, and through what masterly modulations he raises the image of terror to come to the dominant C. I can hear all hell in it!

"The curtain rises. What do I see? The only scene to which we gave the epithet infernal: an orgy of knights in Sicily. In that chorus in F every human passion is unchained in a bacchanalian allegro. Every thread by which the devil holds us is pulled. Yes, that is the sort of glee that comes over men when they dance on the edge of a precipice; they make themselves giddy. What go there is in that chorus!

"Against that chorus—the reality of life—the simple life of every-day virtue stands out in the air, in G minor, sung by Raimbaut. For a moment it refreshed my spirit to hear the simple fellow, representative of verdurous and fruitful Normandy, which he brings to Robert's mind in the midst of his drunkenness. The sweet influence of his beloved native land lends a touch of tender color to this gloomy opening.

"Then comes the wonderful air in C major, supported by the chorus in C minor, so expressive of the subject. 'Je suis Robert!' he immediately breaks out. The wrath of the prince, insulted by his vassal, is already more than natural anger; but it will die away, for memories of his childhood come to him, with Alice, in the bright and graceful allegro in A major.

"Can you not hear the cries of the innocent dragged into this infernal drama,—a persecuted creature? 'Non, non,'" sang Gambara, who made the consumptive piano sing. "His native land and tender emotions have come back to him; his childhood and its memories have blossomed anew in Robert's heart. And now his mother's shade rises up, bringing with it soothing religious thoughts. It is religion that lives in that beautiful song in E major, with its

wonderful harmonic and melodic progression in the words:

“Car dans les cieux, comme sur la terre,

Sa mere va prier pour lui.

“Here the struggle begins between the unseen powers and the only human being who has the fire of hell in his veins to enable him to resist them; and to make this quite clear, as Bertram comes on, the great musician has given the orchestra a passage introducing a reminiscence of Raimbaut’s ballad. What a stroke of art! What cohesion of all the parts! What solidity of structure!

“The devil is there, in hiding, but restless. The conflict of the antagonistic powers opens with Alice’s terror; she recognizes the devil of the image of Saint Michael in her village. The musical subject is worked out through an endless variety of phases. The antithesis indispensable in opera is emphatically presented in a noble recitative, such as a Gluck might have composed, between Bertram and Robert:

“Tu se sauras jamais a quel exces je t’aime.

“In that diabolical C minor, Bertram, with his terrible bass, begins his work of undermining which will overthrow every effort of the vehement, passionate man.

“Here, everything is appalling. Will the crime get possession of the criminal? Will the executioner seize his victim? Will sorrow consume the artist’s genius? Will the disease kill the patient? or, will the guardian angel save the Christian?

“Then comes the finale, the gambling scene in which Bertram tortures his son by rousing him to tremendous emotions. Robert, beggared, frenzied, searching everything, eager for blood, fire, and sword, is his own son; in this mood he is exactly like his father. What hideous glee we hear in Bertram’s words: ‘Je ris de tes coups!’ And how perfectly the Venetian barcarole comes in here. Through what wonderful transitions the diabolical parent is brought on to the stage once more to make Robert throw the dice.

“This first act is overwhelming to any one capable of working out the subjects in his very heart, and lending them the breadth of development which the composer intended them to call forth.

“Nothing but love could now be contrasted with this noble symphony of song, in which you will detect no monotony, no repetitions of means and effects. It is one, but many; the characteristic of all that is truly great and natural.

“I breathe more freely; I find myself in the elegant circle of a gallant court; I hear Isabella’s charming phrases, fresh, but almost melancholy, and the

female chorus in two divisions, and in imitation, with a suggestion of the Moorish coloring of Spain. Here the terrifying music is softened to gentler hues, like a storm dying away, and ends in the florid prettiness of a duet wholly unlike anything that has come before it. After the turmoil of a camp full of errant heroes, we have a picture of love. Poet! I thank thee! My heart could not have borne much more. If I could not here and there pluck the daisies of a French light opera, if I could not hear the gentle wit of a woman able to love and to charm, I could not endure the terrible deep note on which Bertram comes in, saying to his son: 'Si je la permets!' when Robert had promised the princess he adores that he will conquer with the arms she has bestowed on him.

"The hopes of the gambler cured by love, the love of a most beautiful woman,—did you observe that magnificent Sicilian, with her hawk's eye secure of her prey? (What interpreters that composer has found!) the hopes of the man are mocked at by the hopes of hell in the tremendous cry: 'A toi, Robert de Normandie!'

"And are not you struck by the gloom and horror of those long-held notes, to which the words are set: 'Dans la foret prochaine'? We find here all the sinister spells of Jerusalem Delivered, just as we find all chivalry in the chorus with the Spanish lilt, and in the march tune. How original is the alegro with the modulations of the four cymbals (tuned to C, D, C, G)! How elegant is the call to the lists! The whole movement of the heroic life of the period is there: the mind enters into it; I read in it a romance, a poem of chivalry. The exposition is now finished; the resources of music would seem to be exhausted; you have never heard anything like it before; and yet it is homogeneous. You have had life set before you, and its one and only crux: 'Shall I be happy or unhappy?' is the philosopher's query. 'Shall I be saved or damned?' asks the Christian."

With these words Gambara struck the last chord of the chorus, dwelt on it with a melancholy modulation, and then rose to drink another large glass of Giro. This half-African vintage gave his face a deeper flush, for his passionate and wonderful sketch of Meyerbeer's opera had made him turn a little pale.

"That nothing may be lacking to this composition," he went on, "the great artist has generously added the only buffo duet permissible for a devil: that in which he tempts the unhappy troubadour. The composer has set jocosity side by side with horror—a jocosity in which he mocks at the only realism he had allowed himself amid the sublime imaginings of his work—the pure calm love of Alice and Raimbaut; and their life is overshadowed by the forecast of evil.

"None but a lofty soul can feel the noble style of these buffo airs; they have neither the superabundant frivolity of Italian music nor the vulgar accent

of French commonplace; rather have they the majesty of Olympus. There is the bitter laughter of a divine being mocking the surprise of a troubadour Don-Juanizing himself. But for this dignity we should be too suddenly brought down to the general tone of the opera, here stamped on that terrible fury of diminished sevenths which resolves itself into an infernal waltz, and finally brings us face to face with the demons.

"How emphatically Bertram's couplet stands out in B minor against that diabolical chorus, depicting his paternity, but mingling in fearful despair with these demoniacal strains.

"Then comes the delightful transition of Alice's reappearance, with the ritornel in B flat. I can still hear that air of angelical simplicity—the nightingale after a storm. Thus the grand leading idea of the whole is worked out in the details; for what could be more perfectly in contrast with the tumult of devils tossing in the pit than that wonderful air given to Alice? 'Quand j'ai quitte la Normandie.'

"The golden thread of melody flows on, side by side with the mighty harmony, like a heavenly hope; it is embroidered on it, and with what marvelous skill! Genius never lets go of the science that guides it. Here Alice's song is in B flat leading into F sharp, the key of the demon's chorus. Do you hear the tremolo in the orchestra? The host of devils clamor for Robert.

"Bertram now reappears, and this is the culminating point of musical interest; after a recitative, worthy of comparison with the finest work of the great masters, comes the fierce conflict in E flat between two tremendous forces—one on the words 'Oui, tu me connais!' on a diminished seventh; the other, on that sublime F, 'Le ciel est avec moi.' Hell and the Crucifix have met for battle. Next we have Bertram threatening Alice, the most violent pathos ever heard—the Spirit of Evil expatiating complacently, and, as usual, appealing to personal interest. Robert's arrival gives us the magnificent unaccompanied trio in A flat, the first skirmish between the two rival forces and the man. And note how clearly that is expressed," said Gambara, epitomizing the scene with such passion of expression as startled Andrea.

"All this avalanche of music, from the clash of cymbals in common time, has been gathering up to this contest of three voices. The magic of evil triumphs! Alice flies, and you have the duet in D between Bertram and Robert. The devil sets his talons in the man's heart; he tears it to make it his own; he works on every feeling. Honor, hope, eternal and infinite pleasures—he displays them all. He places him, as he did Jesus, on the pinnacle of the Temple, and shows him all the treasures of the earth, the storehouse of sin. He nettles him to flaunt his courage; and the man's nobler mind is expressed in his exclamation:

“Des chevaliers de ma patrie

L’honneur toujours fut le soutien!

“And finally, to crown the work, the theme comes in which sounded the note of fatality at the beginning. Thus, the leading strain, the magnificent call to the deed:

“Nonnes qui reposez sous cette froide pierre,

M’entendez-vous?

“The career of the music, gloriously worked out, is gloriously finished by the allegro vivace of the bacchanalian chorus in D minor. This, indeed, is the triumph of hell! Roll on, harmony, and wrap us in a thousand folds! Roll on, bewitch us! The powers of darkness have clutched their prey; they hold him while they dance. The great genius, born to conquer and to reign, is lost! The devils rejoice, misery stifles genius, passion will wreck the knight!”

And here Gambara improvised a fantasia of his own on the bacchanalian chorus, with ingenious variations, and humming the air in a melancholy drone as if to express the secret sufferings he had known.

“Do you hear the heavenly lamentations of neglected love?” he said. “Isabella calls to Robert above the grand chorus of knights riding forth to the tournament, in which the motifs of the second act reappear to make it clear that the third act has all taken place in a supernatural sphere. This is real life again. This chorus dies away at the approach of the hellish enchantment brought by Robert with the talisman. The deviltry of the third act is to be carried on. Here we have the duet with the viol; the rhythm is highly expressive of the brutal desires of a man who is omnipotent, and the Princess, by plaintive phrases, tries to win her lover back to moderation. The musician has here placed himself in a situation of great difficulty, and has surmounted it in the loveliest number of the whole opera. How charming is the melody of the cavatina ‘Grace pour toi!’’ All the women present understood it well; each saw herself seized and snatched away on the stage. That part alone would suffice to make the fortune of the opera. Every woman felt herself engaged in a struggle with some violent lover. Never was music so passionate and so dramatic.

“The whole world now rises in arms against the reprobate. This finale may be criticised for its resemblance to that of Don Giovanni; but there is this immense difference: in Isabella we have the expression of the noblest faith, a true love that will save Robert, for he scornfully rejects the infernal powers bestowed on him, while Don Giovanni persists in his unbelief. Moreover, that particular fault is common to every composer who has written a finale since Mozart. The finale to Don Giovanni is one of those classic forms that are invented once for all.

“At last religion wins the day, uplifting the voice that governs worlds, that invites all sorrow to come for consolation, all repentance to be forgiven and helped.

“The whole house was stirred by the chorus:

“Malheureaux on coupables

Hatez-vous d’accourir!

“In the terrific tumult of raving passions, the holy Voice would have been unheard; but at this critical moment it sounds like thunder; the divine Catholic Church rises glorious in light. And here I was amazed to find that after such lavish use of harmonic treasure, the composer had come upon a new vein with the splendid chorus: ‘Gloire a la Providence’ in the manner of Handel.

“Robert rushes on with his heartrending cry: ‘Si je pouvais prier!’ and Bertram, driven by the infernal decree, pursues his son, and makes a last effort. Alice has called up the vision of the Mother, and now comes the grand trio to which the whole opera has led up: the triumph of the soul over matter, of the Spirit of Good over the Spirit of Evil. The strains of piety prevail over the chorus of hell, and happiness appears glorious; but here the music is weaker. I only saw a cathedral instead of hearing a concert of angels in bliss, and a divine prayer consecrating the union of Robert and Isabella. We ought not to have been left oppressed by the spells of hell; we ought to emerge with hope in our heart.

“I, as musician and a Catholic, wanted another prayer like that in Mose. I should have liked to see how Germany would contend with Italy, what Meyerbeer could do in rivalry with Rossini.

“However, in spite of this trifling blemish, the writer cannot say that after five hours of such solid music, a Parisian prefers a bit of ribbon to a musical masterpiece. You heard how the work was applauded; it will go through five hundred performances! If the French really understand that music——”

“It is because it expresses ideas,” the Count put in.

“No; it is because it sets forth in a definite shape a picture of the struggle in which so many perish, and because every individual life is implicated in it through memory. Ah! I, hapless wretch, should have been too happy to hear the sound of those heavenly voices I have so often dreamed of.”

Hereupon Gambara fell into a musical day-dream, improvising the most lovely melodious and harmonious cavatina that Andrea would ever hear on earth; a divine strain divinely performed on a theme as exquisite as that of O filii et filioe, but graced with additions such as none but the loftiest musical genius could devise.

The Count sat lost in keen admiration; the clouds cleared away, the blue sky opened, figures of angels appeared lifting the veil that hid the sanctuary, and the light of heaven poured down.

There was a sudden silence.

The Count, surprised at the cessation of the music, looked at Gambara, who, with fixed gaze, in the attitude of a visionary, murmured the word: “God!”

Andrea waited till the composer had descended from the enchanted realm to which he had soared on the many-hued wings of inspiration, intending to show him the truth by the light he himself would bring down with him.

“Well,” said he, pouring him out another bumper of wine and clinking glasses with him, “this German has, you see, written a sublime opera without troubling himself with theories, while those musicians who write grammars of harmony may, like literary critics, be atrocious composers.”

“Then you do not like my music?”

“I do not say so. But if, instead of carrying musical principles to an extreme—which takes you too far—you would simply try to arouse our feelings, you would be better understood, unless indeed you have mistaken your vocation. You are a great poet.”

“What,” cried Gambara, “are twenty-five years of study in vain? Am I to learn the imperfect language of men when I have the key to the heavenly tongue? Oh, if you are right,—I should die.”

“No, no. You are great and strong; you would begin life again, and I would support you. We would show the world the noble and rare alliance of a rich man and an artist in perfect sympathy and understanding.”

“Do you mean it?” asked Gambara, struck with amazement.

“As I have told you, you are a poet more than a musician.”

“A poet, a poet! It is better than nothing. But tell me truly, which do you esteem most highly, Mozart or Homer?”

“I admire them equally.”

“On your honor?”

“On my honor.”

“H’m! Once more. What do you think of Meyerbeer and Byron?”

“You have measured them by naming them together.”

The Count’s carriage was waiting. The composer and his noble physician

ran down-stairs, and in a few minutes they were with Marianna.

As they went in, Gambara threw himself into his wife's arms, but she drew back a step and turned away her head; the husband also drew back and beamed on the Count.

"Oh, monsieur!" said Gambara in a husky voice, "you might have left me my illusions." He hung his head, and then fell.

"What have you done to him? He is dead drunk!" cried Marianna, looking down at her husband with a mingled expression of pity and disgust.

The Count, with the help of his servant, picked up Gambara and laid him on his bed.

Then Andrea left, his heart exultant with horrible gladness.

The Count let the usual hour for calling slip past next day, for he began to fear lest he had duped himself and had made this humble couple pay too dear for their improved circumstances and added wisdom, since their peace was destroyed for ever.

At last Giardini came to him with a note from Marianna.

"Come," she wrote, "the mischief is not so great as you so cruelly meant it to be."

"Excellenza," said the cook, while Andrea was making ready, "you treated us splendidly last evening. But apart from the wine, which was excellent, your steward did not put anything on the table that was worthy to set before a true epicure. You will not deny, I suppose, that the dish I sent to you on the day when you did me the honor to sit down at my board, contained the quintessence of all those that disgraced your magnificent service of plate? And when I awoke this morning I remembered the promise you once made me of a place as chef. Henceforth I consider myself as a member of your household."

"I thought of the same thing a few days ago," replied Andrea. "I mentioned you to the secretary of the Austrian Embassy, and you have permission to recross the Alps as soon as you please. I have a castle in Croatia which I rarely visit. There you may combine the offices of gate-keeper, butler, and steward, with two hundred crowns a year. Your wife will have as much for doing all the rest of the work. You may make all the experiments you please in anima vili, that is to say on the stomach of my vassals. Here is a cheque for your traveling expenses."

Giardini kissed the Count's hand after the Neapolitan fashion.

"Excellenza," said he, "I accept the cheque, but beg to decline the place. It would dishonor me to give up my art by losing the opinion of the most perfect

epicures, who are certainly to be found in Paris."

When Andrea arrived at Gambara's lodgings, the musician rose to welcome him.

"My generous friend," said he, with the utmost frankness, "you either took advantage, last evening, of the weakness of my brain to make a fool of me, or else your brain is no more capable of standing the test of the heady liquors of our native Latium, than mine is. I will assume this latter hypothesis; I would rather doubt your digestion than your heart. Be this as it may, henceforth I drink no more wine—for ever. The abuse of good liquor last evening led me into much guilty folly. When I remember that I very nearly——" He gave a glance of terror at Marianna. "As to the wretched opera you took me to hear, I have thought it over, and it is, after all, music written on ordinary lines, a mountain of piled-up notes, verba et voces. It is but the dregs of the nectar I can drink in deep draughts as I reproduce the heavenly music that I hear! It is a patchwork of airs of which I could trace the origin. The passage 'Gloire a la Providence' is too much like a bit of Handel; the chorus of knights is closely related to the Scotch air in La Dame Blanche; in short, if this opera is a success, it is because the music is borrowed from everybody's—so it ought to be popular.

"I will say good-bye to you, my dear friend. I have had some ideas seething in my brain since the morning that only wait to soar up to God on the wings of song, but I wished to see you. Good-bye; I must ask forgiveness of the Muse. We shall meet at dinner to-night—but no wine; at any rate, none for me. I am firmly resolved—"

"I give him up!" cried Andrea, flushing red.

"And you restore my sense of conscience," said Marianna. "I dared not appeal to it! My friend, my friend, it is no fault of ours; he does not want to be cured."

Six years after this, in January 1837, such artists as were so unlucky as to damage their wind or stringed instruments, generally took them to the Rue Froid-Manteau, to a squalid and horrible house, where, on the fifth floor, dwelt an old Italian named Gambara.

For five years past he had been left to himself, deserted by his wife; he had gone through many misfortunes. An instrument on which he had relied to make his fortune, and which he called a Panharmonicon, had been sold by order of the Court on the public square, Place du Chatelet, together with a cartload of music paper scrawled with notes. The day after the sale, these scores had served in the market to wrap up butter, fish, and fruit.

Thus the three grand operas of which the poor man would boast, but which

an old Neapolitan cook, who was now but a patcher up of broken meats, declared to be a heap of nonsense, were scattered throughout Paris on the trucks of costermongers. But at any rate, the landlord had got his rent and the bailiffs their expenses.

According to the Neapolitan cook—who warmed up for the street-walkers of the Rue Froid-Manteau the fragments left from the most sumptuous dinners in Paris—Signora Gambara had gone off to Italy with a Milanese nobleman, and no one knew what had become of her. Worn out with fifteen years of misery, she was very likely ruining the Count by her extravagant luxury, for they were so devotedly adoring, that in all his life, Giardini could recall no instance of such a passion.

Towards the end of that very January, one evening when Giardini was chatting with a girl who had come to buy her supper, about the divine Marianna—so poor, so beautiful, so heroically devoted, and who had, nevertheless, “gone the way of them all,” the cook, his wife, and the street-girl saw coming towards them a woman fearfully thin, with a sunburned, dusty face; a nervous walking skeleton, looking at the numbers, and trying to recognize a house.

“Ecco la Marianna!” exclaimed the cook.

Marianna recognized Giardini, the erewhile cook, in the poor fellow she saw, without wondering by what series of disasters he had sunk to keep a miserable shop for secondhand food. She went in and sat down, for she had come from Fontainebleau. She had walked fourteen leagues that day, after begging her bread from Turin to Paris.

She frightened that terrible trio! Of all her wondrous beauty nothing remained but her fine eyes, dimmed and sunken. The only thing faithful to her was misfortune.

She was welcomed by the skilled old instrument mender, who greeted her with unspeakable joy.

“Why, here you are, my poor Marianna!” said he, warmly. “During your absence they sold up my instrument and my operas.”

It would have been difficult to kill the fatted calf for the return of the Samaritan, but Giardini contributed the fag end of a salmon, the trull paid for wine, Gambara produced some bread, Signora Giardini lent a cloth, and the unfortunates all supped together in the musician’s garret.

When questioned as to her adventures, Marianna would make no reply; she only raised her beautiful eyes to heaven and whispered to Giardini:

“He married a dancer!”

“And how do you mean to live?” said the girl. “The journey has ruined you, and——”

“And made me an old woman,” said Marianna. “No, that is not the result of fatigue or hardship, but of grief.”

“And why did you never send your man here any money?” asked the girl.

Marianna’s only answer was a look, but it went to the woman’s heart.

“She is proud with a vengeance!” she exclaimed. “And much good it has done her!” she added in Giardini’s ear.

All that year musicians took especial care of their instruments, and repairs did not bring in enough to enable the poor couple to pay their way; the wife, too, did not earn much by her needle, and they were compelled to turn their talents to account in the lowest form of employment. They would go out together in the dark to the Champs Elysees and sing duets, which Gambara, poor fellow, accompanied on a wretched guitar. On the way, Marianna, who on these expeditions covered her head with a sort of veil of coarse muslin, would take her husband to the grocer’s shop in the Faubourg Saint-Honore and give him two or three thimblefuls of brandy to make him tipsy; otherwise he could not play. Then they would stand up together in front of the smart people sitting on the chairs, and one of the greatest geniuses of the time, the unrecognized Orpheus of Modern Music, would perform passages from his operas—pieces so remarkable that they would extract a few half-pence from Parisian supineness. When some dilettante of comic operas happened to be sitting there and did not recognize from what work they were taken, he would question the woman dressed like a Greek priestess, who held out a bottle-stand of stamped metal in which she collected charity.

“I say, my dear, what is that music out of?”

“The opera of Mahomet,” Marianna would reply.

As Rossini composed an opera called Mahomet II., the amateur would say to his wife, sitting at his side:

“What a pity it is that they will never give us at the Italiens any operas by Rossini but those we know. That is really fine music!”

And Gambara would smile.

Only a few days since, this unhappy couple had to pay the trifling sum of thirty-six francs as arrears for rent for the cock-loft in which they lived resigned. The grocer would not give them credit for the brandy with which Marianna plied her husband to enable him to play. Gambara was, consequently, so unendurably bad that the ears of the wealthy were irresponsive, and the tin bottle-stand remained empty.

It was nine o’clock in the evening. A handsome Italian, the Principessa Massimilla De Varese, took pity on the poor creatures; she gave them forty francs and questioned them, discerning from the woman’s thanks that she was a Venetian. Prince Emilio would know the history of their woes, and Marianna told it, making no complaints of God or men.

“Madame,” said Gambara, as she ended, for he was sober, “we are victims of our own superiority. My music is good. But as soon as music transcends feeling and becomes an idea, only persons of genius should be the hearers, for they alone are capable of responding to it! It is my misfortune that I have heard the chorus of angels, and believed that men could understand the strains. The same thing happens to women when their love assumes a divine aspect: men cannot understand them.”

This speech was well worth the forty francs bestowed by Massimilla; she took out a second gold piece, and told Marianna she would write to Andrea Marcosini.

“Do not write to him, madame!” exclaimed Marianna. “And God grant you to always be beautiful!”

“Let us provide for them,” said the Princess to her husband; “for this man has remained faithful to the Ideal which we have killed.”

As he saw the gold pieces, Gambara shed tears; and then a vague reminiscence of old scientific experiments crossed his mind, and the hapless composer, as he wiped his eyes, spoke these words, which the circumstances made pathetic:

“Water is a product of burning.”

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MASSIMILLA DONI

As all who are learned in such matters know, the Venetian aristocracy is the first in Europe. Its Libro d’Oro dates from before the Crusades, from a time when Venice, a survivor of Imperial and Christian Rome which had flung itself into the waters to escape the Barbarians, was already powerful and illustrious, and the head of the political and commercial world.

With a few rare exceptions this brilliant nobility has fallen into utter ruin. Among the gondoliers who serve the English—to whom history here reads the lesson of their future fate—there are descendants of long dead Doges whose names are older than those of sovereigns. On some bridge, as you glide past it,

if you are ever in Venice, you may admire some lovely girl in rags, a poor child belonging, perhaps, to one of the most famous patrician families. When a nation of kings has fallen so low, naturally some curious characters will be met with. It is not surprising that sparks should flash out among the ashes.

These reflections, intended to justify the singularity of the persons who figure in this narrative, shall not be indulged in any longer, for there is nothing more intolerable than the stale reminiscences of those who insist on talking about Venice after so many great poets and petty travelers. The interest of the tale requires only this record of the most startling contrast in the life of man: the dignity and poverty which are conspicuous there in some of the men as they are in most of the houses.

The nobles of Venice and of Geneva, like those of Poland in former times, bore no titles. To be named Quirini, Doria, Brignole, Morosini, Sauli, Mocenigo, Fieschi, Cornaro, or Spinola, was enough for the pride of the haughtiest. But all things become corrupt. At the present day some of these families have titles.

And even at a time when the nobles of the aristocratic republics were all equal, the title of Prince was, in fact, given at Genoa to a member of the Doria family, who were sovereigns of the principality of Amalfi, and a similar title was in use at Venice, justified by ancient inheritance from Facino Cane, Prince of Varese. The Grimaldi, who assumed sovereignty, did not take possession of Monaco till much later.

The last Cane of the elder branch vanished from Venice thirty years before the fall of the Republic, condemned for various crimes more or less criminal. The branch on whom this nominal principality then devolved, the Cane Memmi, sank into poverty during the fatal period between 1796 and 1814. In the twentieth year of the present century they were represented only by a young man whose name was Emilio, and an old palace which is regarded as one of the chief ornaments of the Grand Canal. This son of Venice the Fair had for his whole fortune this useless Palazzo, and fifteen hundred francs a year derived from a country house on the Brenta, the last plot of the lands his family had formerly owned on terra firma, and sold to the Austrian government. This little income spared our handsome Emilio the ignominy of accepting, as many nobles did, the indemnity of a franc a day, due to every impoverished patrician under the stipulations of the cession to Austria.

At the beginning of winter, this young gentleman was still lingering in a country house situated at the base of the Tyrolese Alps, and purchased in the previous spring by the Duchess Cataneo. The house, erected by Palladio for the Piepolo family, is a square building of the finest style of architecture. There is a stately staircase with a marble portico on each side; the vestibules

are crowded with frescoes, and made light by sky-blue ceilings across which graceful figures float amid ornament rich in design, but so well proportioned that the building carries it, as a woman carries her head-dress, with an ease that charms the eye; in short, the grace and dignity that characterize the Procuratie in the piazetta at Venice. Stone walls, admirably decorated, keep the rooms at a pleasantly cool temperature. Verandas outside, painted in fresco, screen off the glare. The flooring throughout is the old Venetian inlay of marbles, cut into unfading flowers.

The furniture, like that of all Italian palaces, was rich with handsome silks, judiciously employed, and valuable pictures favorably hung; some by the Genoese priest, known as il Capucino, several by Leonardo da Vinci, Carlo Dolci, Tintoretto, and Titian.

The shelving gardens were full of the marvels where money has been turned into rocky grottoes and patterns of shells,—the very madness of craftsmanship,—terraces laid out by the fairies, arbors of sterner aspect, where the cypress on its tall trunk, the triangular pines, and the melancholy olive mingled pleasingly with orange trees, bays, and myrtles, and clear pools in which blue or russet fishes swam. Whatever may be said in favor of the natural or English garden, these trees, pruned into parasols, and yews fantastically clipped; this luxury of art so skilfully combined with that of nature in Court dress; those cascades over marble steps where the water spreads so shyly, a filmy scarf swept aside by the wind and immediately renewed; those bronzed metal figures speechlessly inhabiting the silent grove; that lordly palace, an object in the landscape from every side, raising its light outline at the foot of the Alps,—all the living thoughts which animate the stone, the bronze, and the trees, or express themselves in garden plots,—this lavish prodigality was in perfect keeping with the loves of a duchess and a handsome youth, for they are a poem far removed from the coarse ends of brutal nature.

Any one with a soul for fantasy would have looked to see, on one of those noble flights of steps, standing by a vase with medallions in bas-relief, a negro boy swathed about the loins with scarlet stuff, and holding in one hand a parasol over the Duchess' head, and in the other the train of her long skirt, while she listened to Emilio Memmi. And how far grander the Venetian would have looked in such a dress as the Senators wore whom Titian painted.

But alas! in this fairy palace, not unlike that of the Peschieri at Genoa, the Duchess Cataneo obeyed the edicts of Victorine and the Paris fashions. She had on a muslin dress and broad straw hat, pretty shot silk shoes, thread lace stockings that a breath of air would have blown away; and over her shoulders a black lace shawl. But the thing which no one could ever understand in Paris, where women are sheathed in their dresses as a dragon-fly is cased in its

annular armor, was the perfect freedom with which this lovely daughter of Tuscany wore her French attire; she had Italianized it. A Frenchwoman treats her shirt with the greatest seriousness; an Italian never thinks about it; she does not attempt self-protection by some prim glance, for she knows that she is safe in that of a devoted love, a passion as sacred and serious in her eyes as in those of others.

At eleven in the forenoon, after a walk, and by the side of a table still strewn with the remains of an elegant breakfast, the Duchess, lounging in an easy-chair, left her lover the master of these muslin draperies, without a frown each time he moved. Emilio, seated at her side, held one of her hands between his, gazing at her with utter absorption. Ask not whether they loved; they loved only too well. They were not reading out of the same book, like Paolo and Francesca; far from it, Emilio dared not say: “Let us read.” The gleam of those eyes, those glistening gray irises streaked with threads of gold that started from the centre like rifts of light, giving her gaze a soft, star-like radiance, thrilled him with nervous rapture that was almost a spasm. Sometimes the mere sight of the splendid black hair that crowned the adored head, bound by a simple gold fillet, and falling in satin tresses on each side of a spacious brow, was enough to give him a ringing in his ears, the wild tide of the blood rushing through his veins as if it must burst his heart. By what obscure phenomenon did his soul so overmaster his body that he was no longer conscious of his independent self, but was wholly one with this woman at the least word she spoke in that voice which disturbed the very sources of life in him? If, in utter seclusion, a woman of moderate charms can, by being constantly studied, seem supreme and imposing, perhaps one so magnificently handsome as the Duchess could fascinate to stupidity a youth in whom rapture found some fresh incitement; for she had really absorbed his young soul.

Massimilla, the heiress of the Doni, of Florence, had married the Sicilian Duke Cataneo. Her mother, since dead, had hoped, by promoting this marriage, to leave her rich and happy, according to Florentine custom. She had concluded that her daughter, emerging from a convent to embark in life, would achieve, under the laws of love, that second union of heart with heart which, to an Italian woman, is all in all. But Massimilla Doni had acquired in her convent a real taste for a religious life, and, when she had pledged her troth to Duke Cataneo, she was Christianly content to be his wife.

This was an untenable position. Cataneo, who only looked for a duchess, thought himself ridiculous as a husband; and, when Massimilla complained of this indifference, he calmly bid her look about her for a cavaliere servente, even offering his services to introduce to her some youths from whom to choose. The Duchess wept; the Duke made his bow.

Massimilla looked about her at the world that crowded round her; her

mother took her to the Pergola, to some ambassadors' drawing-rooms, to the Cascine—wherever handsome young men of fashion were to be met; she saw none to her mind, and determined to travel. Then she lost her mother, inherited her property, assumed mourning, and made her way to Venice. There she saw Emilio, who, as he went past her opera box, exchanged with her a flash of inquiry.

This was all. The Venetian was thunderstruck, while a voice in the Duchess' ear called out: "This is he!"

Anywhere else two persons more prudent and less guileless would have studied and examined each other; but these two ignorances mingled like two masses of homogeneous matter, which, when they meet, form but one. Massimilla was at once and thenceforth Venetian. She bought the palazzo she had rented on the Canareggio; and then, not knowing how to invest her wealth, she had purchased Rivalta, the country-place where she was now staying.

Emilio, being introduced to the Duchess by the Signora Vulpato, waited very respectfully on the lady in her box all through the winter. Never was love more ardent in two souls, or more bashful in its advances. The two children were afraid of each other. Massimilla was no coquette. She had no second string to her bow, no secondo, no terzo, no patito. Satisfied with a smile and a word, she admired her Venetian youth, with his pointed face, his long, thin nose, his black eyes, and noble brow; but, in spite of her artless encouragement, he never went to her house till they had spent three months in getting used to each other.

Then summer brought its Eastern sky. The Duchess lamented having to go alone to Rivalta. Emilio, at once happy and uneasy at the thought of being alone with her, had accompanied Massimilla to her retreat. And now this pretty pair had been there for six months.

Massimilla, now twenty, had not sacrificed her religious principles to her passion without a struggle. Still they had yielded, though tardily; and at this moment she would have been ready to consummate the love union for which her mother had prepared her, as Emilio sat there holding her beautiful, aristocratic hand,—long, white, and sheeny, ending in fine, rosy nails, as if she had procured from Asia some of the henna with which the Sultan's wives dye their fingertips.

A misfortune, of which she was unconscious, but which was torture to Emilio, kept up a singular barrier between them. Massimilla, young as she was, had the majestic bearing which mythological tradition ascribes to Juno, the only goddess to whom it does not give a lover; for Diana, the chaste Diana, loved! Jupiter alone could hold his own with his divine better-half, on whom many English ladies model themselves.

Emilio set his mistress far too high ever to touch her. A year hence, perhaps, he might not be a victim to this noble error which attacks none but very young or very old men. But as the archer who shoots beyond the mark is as far from it as he whose arrow falls short of it, the Duchess found herself between a husband who knew he was so far from reaching the target, that he had ceased to try for it, and a lover who was carried so much past it on the white wings of an angel, that he could not get back to it. Massimilla could be happy with desire, not imagining its issue; but her lover, distressful in his happiness, would sometimes obtain from his beloved a promise that led her to the edge of what many women call “the gulf,” and thus found himself obliged to be satisfied with plucking the flowers at the edge, incapable of daring more than to pull off their petals, and smother his torture in his heart.

They had wandered out together that morning, repeating such a hymn of love as the birds warbled in the branches. On their return, the youth, whose situation can only be described by comparing him to the cherubs represented by painters as having only a head and wings, had been so impassioned as to venture to hint a doubt as to the Duchess’ entire devotion, so as to bring her to the point of saying: “What proof do you need?”

The question had been asked with a royal air, and Memmi had ardently kissed the beautiful and guileless hand. Then he suddenly started up in a rage with himself, and left the Duchess. Massimilla remained in her indolent attitude on the sofa; but she wept, wondering how, young and handsome as she was, she could fail to please Emilio. Memmi, on the other hand, knocked his head against the tree-trunks like a hooded crow.

But at this moment a servant came in pursuit of the young Venetian to deliver a letter brought by express messenger.

Marco Vendramini,—a name also pronounced Vendramin, in the Venetian dialect, which drops many final letters,—his only friend, wrote to tell him that Facino Cane, Prince of Varese, had died in a hospital in Paris. Proofs of his death had come to hand, and the Cane-Memmi were Princes of Varese. In the eyes of the two young men a title without wealth being worthless, Vendramin also informed Emilio, as a far more important fact, of the engagement at the Fenice of the famous tenor Genovese, and the no less famous Signora Tinti.

Without waiting to finish the letter, which he crumpled up and put in his pocket, Emilio ran to communicate this great news to the Duchess, forgetting his heraldic honors.

The Duchess knew nothing of the strange story which made la Tinti an object of curiosity in Italy, and Emilio briefly repeated it.

This illustrious singer had been a mere inn-servant, whose wonderful voice

had captivated a great Sicilian nobleman on his travels. The girl's beauty—she was then twelve years old—being worthy of her voice, the gentleman had had the moderation to have brought her up, as Louis XV. had Mademoiselle de Romans educated. He had waited patiently till Clara's voice had been fully trained by a famous professor, and till she was sixteen, before taking toll of the treasure so carefully cultivated.

La Tinti had made her debut the year before, and had enchanted the three most fastidious capitals of Italy.

"I am perfectly certain that her great nobleman is not my husband," said the Duchess.

The horses were ordered, and the Duchess set out at once for Venice, to be present at the opening of the winter season.

So one fine evening in November, the new Prince of Varese was crossing the lagoon from Mestre to Venice, between the lines of stakes painted with Austrian colors, which mark out the channel for gondolas as conceded by the custom-house. As he watched Massimilla's gondola, navigated by men in livery, and cutting through the water a few yards in front, poor Emilio, with only an old gondolier who had been his father's servant in the days when Venice was still a living city, could not repress the bitter reflections suggested to him by the assumption of his title.

"What a mockery of fortune! A prince—with fifteen hundred francs a year! Master of one of the finest palaces in the world, and unable to sell the statues, stairs, paintings, sculpture, which an Austrian decree had made inalienable! To live on a foundation of piles of campeachy wood worth nearly a million of francs, and have no furniture! To own sumptuous galleries, and live in an attic above the topmost arabesque cornice constructed of marble brought from the Morea—the land which a Memmius had marched over as conqueror in the time of the Romans! To see his ancestors in effigy on their tombs of precious marbles in one of the most splendid churches in Venice, and in a chapel graced with pictures by Titian and Tintoretto, by Palma, Bellini, Paul Veronese—and to be prohibited from selling a marble Memmi to the English for bread for the living Prince Varese! Genovese, the famous tenor, could get in one season, by his warbling, the capital of an income on which this son of the Memmi could live—this descendant of Roman senators as venerable as Caesar and Sylla. Genovese may smoke an Eastern hookah, and the Prince of Varese cannot even have enough cigars!"

He tossed the end he was smoking into the sea. The Prince of Varese found cigars at the Duchess Cataneo's; how gladly would he have laid the treasures of the world at her feet! She studied all his caprices, and was happy to gratify them. He made his only meal at her house—his supper; for all his money was

spent in clothes and his place in the Fenice. He had also to pay a hundred francs a year as wages to his father's old gondolier; and he, to serve him for that sum, had to live exclusively on rice. Also he kept enough to take a cup of black coffee every morning at Florian's to keep himself up till the evening in a state of nervous excitement, and this habit, carried to excess, he hoped would in due time kill him, as Vendramin relied on opium.

"And I am a prince!"

As he spoke the words, Emilio Memmi tossed Marco Vendramin's letter into the lagoon without even reading it to the end, and it floated away like a paper boat launched by a child.

"But Emilio," he went on to himself, "is but three and twenty. He is a better man than Lord Wellington with the gout, than the paralyzed Regent, than the epileptic royal family of Austria, than the King of France——"

But as he thought of the King of France Emilio's brow was knit, his ivory skin burned yellower, tears gathered in his black eyes and hung to his long lashes; he raised a hand worthy to be painted by Titian to push back his thick brown hair, and gazed again at Massimilla's gondola.

"And this insolent mockery of fate is carried even into my love affair," said he to himself. "My heart and imagination are full of precious gifts; Massimilla will have none of them; she is a Florentine, and she will throw me over. I have to sit by her side like ice, while her voice and her looks fire me with heavenly sensations! As I watch her gondola a few hundred feet away from my own I feel as if a hot iron were set on my heart. An invisible fluid courses through my frame and scorches my nerves, a cloud dims my sight, the air seems to me to glow as it did at Rivalta when the sunlight came through a red silk blind, and I, without her knowing it, could admire her lost in dreams, with her subtle smile like that of Leonardo's Mona Lisa. Well, either my Highness will end my days by a pistol-shot, or the heir of the Cane will follow old Carmagnola's advice; we will be sailors, pirates; and it will be amusing to see how long we can live without being hanged."

The Prince lighted another cigar, and watched the curls of smoke as the wind wafted them away, as though he saw in their arabesques an echo of this last thought.

In the distance he could now perceive the mauresque pinnacles that crowned his palazzo, and he was sadder than ever. The Duchess' gondola had vanished in the Canareggio.

These fantastic pictures of a romantic and perilous existence, as the outcome of his love, went out with his cigar, and his lady's gondola no longer traced his path. Then he saw the present in its real light: a palace without a

soul, a soul that had no effect on the body, a principality without money, an empty body and a full heart—a thousand heartbreaking contradictions. The hapless youth mourned for Venice as she had been,—as did Vendramini, even more bitterly, for it was a great and common sorrow, a similar destiny, that had engendered such a warm friendship between these two young men, the wreckage of two illustrious families.

Emilio could not help dreaming of a time when the palazzo Memmi poured out light from every window, and rang with music carried far away over the Adriatic tide; when hundreds of gondolas might be seen tied up to its mooring-posts, while graceful masked figures and the magnates of the Republic crowded up the steps kissed by the waters; when its halls and gallery were full of a throng of intriguers or their dupes; when the great banqueting-hall, filled with merry feasters, and the upper balconies furnished with musicians, seemed to harbor all Venice coming and going on the great staircase that rang with laughter.

The chisels of the greatest artists of many centuries had sculptured the bronze brackets supporting long-necked or pot-bellied Chinese vases, and the candelabra for a thousand tapers. Every country had furnished some contribution to the splendor that decked the walls and ceilings. But now the panels were stripped of the handsome hangings, the melancholy ceilings were speechless and sad. No Turkey carpets, no lustres bright with flowers, no statues, no pictures, no more joy, no money—the great means to enjoyment! Venice, the London of the Middle Ages, was falling stone by stone, man by man. The ominous green weed which the sea washes and kisses at the foot of every palace, was in the Prince’s eyes, a black fringe hung by nature as an omen of death.

And finally, a great English poet had rushed down on Venice like a raven on a corpse, to croak out in lyric poetry—the first and last utterance of social man—the burden of a de profundis. English poetry! Flung in the face of the city that had given birth to Italian poetry! Poor Venice!

Conceive, then, of the young man’s amazement when roused from such meditations by Carmagnola’s cry:

“Serenissimo, the palazzo is on fire, or the old Doges have risen from their tombs! There are lights in the windows of the upper floor!”

Prince Emilio fancied that his dream was realized by the touch of a magic wand. It was dusk, and the old gondolier could by tying up his gondola to the top step, help his young master to land without being seen by the bustling servants in the palazzo, some of whom were buzzing about the landing-place like bees at the door of a hive. Emilio stole into the great hall, whence rose the finest flight of stairs in all Venice, up which he lightly ran to investigate the

cause of this strange bustle.

A whole tribe of workmen were hurriedly completing the furnishing and redecoration of the palace. The first floor, worthy of the antique glories of Venice, displayed to Emilio's waking eyes the magnificence of which he had just been dreaming, and the fairy had exercised admirable taste. Splendor worthy of a parvenu sovereign was to be seen even in the smallest details. Emilio wandered about without remark from anybody, and surprise followed on surprise.

Curious, then, to know what was going forward on the second floor, he went up, and found everything finished. The unknown laborers, commissioned by a wizard to revive the marvels of the Arabian nights in behalf of an impoverished Italian prince, were exchanging some inferior articles of furniture brought in for the nonce. Prince Emilio made his way into the bedroom, which smiled on him like a shell just deserted by Venus. The room was so charmingly pretty, so daintily smart, so full of elegant contrivance, that he straightway seated himself in an armchair of gilt wood, in front of which a most appetizing cold supper stood ready, and, without more ado, proceeded to eat.

"In all the world there is no one but Massimilla who would have thought of this surprise," thought he. "She heard that I was now a prince; Duke Cataneo is perhaps dead, and has left her his fortune; she is twice as rich as she was; she will marry me——"

And he ate in a way that would have roused the envy of an invalid Croesus, if he could have seen him; and he drank floods of capital port wine.

"Now I understand the knowing little air she put on as she said, 'Till this evening!' Perhaps she means to come and break the spell. What a fine bed! and in the bed-place such a pretty lamp! Quite a Florentine idea!"

There are some strongly blended natures on which extremes of joy or of grief have a soporific effect. Now on a youth so compounded that he could idealize his mistress to the point of ceasing to think of her as a woman, this sudden incursion of wealth had the effect of a dose of opium. When the Prince had drunk the whole of the bottle of port, eaten half a fish and some portion of a French pate, he felt an irresistible longing for bed. Perhaps he was suffering from a double intoxication. So he pulled off the counterpane, opened the bed, undressed in a pretty dressing-room, and lay down to meditate on destiny.

"I forgot poor Carmagnola," said he; "but my cook and butler will have provided for him."

At this juncture, a waiting-woman came in, lightly humming an air from the Barbiere. She tossed a woman's dress on a chair, a whole outfit for the

night, and said as she did so:

“Here they come!”

And in fact a few minutes later a young lady came in, dressed in the latest French style, who might have sat for some English fancy portrait engraved for a Forget-me-not, a Belle Assemblee, or a Book of Beauty.

The Prince shivered with delight and with fear, for, as you know, he was in love with Massimilla. But, in spite of this faith in love which fired his blood, and which of old inspired the painters of Spain, which gave Italy her Madonnas, created Michael Angelo’s statues and Ghilberti’s doors of the Baptistery,—desire had him in its toils, and agitated him without infusing into his heart that warm, ethereal glow which he felt at a look or a word from the Duchess. His soul, his heart, his reason, every impulse of his will, revolted at the thought of an infidelity; and yet that brutal, unreasoning infidelity domineered over his spirit. But the woman was not alone.

The Prince saw one of those figures in which nobody believes when they are transferred from real life, where we wonder at them, to the imaginary existence of a more or less literary description. The dress of this stranger, like that of all Neapolitans, displayed five colors, if the black of his hat may count for a color; his trousers were olive-brown, his red waistcoat shone with gilt buttons, his coat was greenish, and his linen was more yellow than white. This personage seemed to have made it his business to verify the Neapolitan as represented by Gerolamo on the stage of his puppet show. His eyes looked like glass beads. His nose, like the ace of clubs, was horribly long and bulbous; in fact, it did its best to conceal an opening which it would be an insult to the human countenance to call a mouth; within, three or four tusks were visible, endowed, as it seemed, with a proper motion and fitting into each other. His fleshy ears drooped by their own weight, giving the creature a whimsical resemblance to a dog.

His complexion, tainted, no doubt, by various metallic infusions as prescribed by some Hippocrates, verged on black. A pointed skull, scarcely covered by a few straight hairs like spun glass, crowned this forbidding face with red spots. Finally, though the man was very thin and of medium height, he had long arms and broad shoulders.

In spite of these hideous details, and though he looked fully seventy, he did not lack a certain cyclopean dignity; he had aristocratic manners and the confident demeanor of a rich man.

Any one who could have found courage enough to study him, would have seen his history written by base passions on this noble clay degraded to mud. Here was the man of high birth, who, rich from his earliest youth, had given

up his body to debauchery for the sake of extravagant enjoyment. And debauchery had destroyed the human being and made another after its own image. Thousands of bottles of wine had disappeared under the purple archway of that preposterous nose, and left their dregs on his lips. Long and slow digestion had destroyed his teeth. His eyes had grown dim under the lamps of the gaming table. The blood tainted with impurities had vitiated the nervous system. The expenditure of force in the task of digestion had undermined his intellect. Finally, amours had thinned his hair. Each vice, like a greedy heir, had stamped possession on some part of the living body.

Those who watch nature detect her in jests of the shrewdest irony. For instance, she places toads in the neighborhood of flowers, as she had placed this man by the side of this rose of love.

“Will you play the violin this evening, my dear Duke?” asked the woman, as she unhooked a cord to let a handsome curtain fall over the door.

“Play the violin!” thought Prince Emilio. “What can have happened to my palazzo? Am I awake? Here I am, in that woman’s bed, and she certainly thinks herself at home—she has taken off her cloak! Have I, like Vendramin, inhaled opium, and am I in the midst of one of those dreams in which he sees Venice as it was three centuries ago?”

The unknown fair one, seated in front of a dressing-table blazing with wax lights, was unfastening her frippery with the utmost calmness.

“Ring for Giulia,” said she; “I want to get my dress off.”

At that instant, the Duke noticed that the supper had been disturbed; he looked round the room, and discovered the Prince’s trousers hanging over a chair at the foot of the bed.

“Clarina, I will not ring!” cried the Duke, in a shrill voice of fury. “I will not play the violin this evening, nor tomorrow, nor ever again—”

“Ta, ta, ta, ta!” sang Clarina, on the four octaves of the same note, leaping from one to the next with the ease of a nightingale.

“In spite of that voice, which would make your patron saint Clara envious, you are really too impudent, you rascally hussy!”

“You have not brought me up to listen to such abuse,” said she, with some pride.

“Have I brought you up to hide a man in your bed? You are unworthy alike of my generosity and of my hatred—”

“A man in my bed!” exclaimed Clarina, hastily looking round.

“And after daring to eat our supper, as if he were at home,” added the

Duke.

“But am I not at home?” cried Emilio. “I am the Prince of Varese; this palace is mine.”

As he spoke, Emilio sat up in bed, his handsome and noble Venetian head framed in the flowing hangings.

At first Clarina laughed—one of those irrepressible fits of laughter which seize a girl when she meets with an adventure comic beyond all conception. But her laughter ceased as she saw the young man, who, as has been said, was remarkably handsome, though but lightly attired; the madness that possessed Emilio seized her, too, and, as she had no one to adore, no sense of reason bridled her sudden fancy—a Sicilian woman in love.

“Although this is the palazzo Memmi, I will thank your Highness to quit,” said the Duke, assuming the cold irony of a polished gentleman. “I am at home here.”

“Let me tell you, Monsieur le Duc, that you are in my room, not in your own,” said Clarina, rousing herself from her amazement. “If you have any doubts of my virtue, at any rate give me the benefit of my crime—”

“Doubts! Say proof positive, my lady!”

“I swear to you that I am innocent,” replied Clarina.

“What, then, do I see in that bed?” asked the Duke.

“Old Ogre!” cried Clarina. “If you believe your eyes rather than my assertion, you have ceased to love me. Go, and do not weary my ears! Do you hear? Go, Monsieur le Duc. This young Prince will repay you the million francs I have cost you, if you insist.”

“I will repay nothing,” said Emilio in an undertone.

“There is nothing due! A million is cheap for Clara Tinti when a man is so ugly. Now, go,” said she to the Duke. “You dismissed me; now I dismiss you. We are quits.”

At a gesture on Cataneo’s part, as he seemed inclined to dispute this order, which was given with an action worthy of Semiramis,—the part in which la Tinti had won her fame,—the prima donna flew at the old ape and put him out of the room.

“If you do not leave me in quiet this evening, we never meet again. And my never counts for more than yours,” she added.

“Quiet!” retorted the Duke, with a bitter laugh. “Dear idol, it strikes me that I am leaving you agitata!”

The Duke departed.

His mean spirit was no surprise to Emilio.

Every man who has accustomed himself to some particular taste, chosen from among the various effects of love, in harmony with his own nature, knows that no consideration can stop a man who has allowed his passions to become a habit.

Clarina bounded like a fawn from the door to the bed.

“A prince, and poor, young, and handsome!” cried she. “Why, it is a fairy tale!”

The Sicilian perched herself on the bed with the artless freedom of an animal, the yearning of a plant for the sun, the airy motion of a branch waltzing to the breeze. As she unbuttoned the wristbands of her sleeves, she began to sing, not in the pitch that won her the applause of an audience at the Fenice, but in a warble tender with emotion. Her song was a zephyr carrying the caresses of her love to the heart.

She stole a glance at Emilio, who was as much embarrassed as she; for this woman of the stage had lost all the boldness that had sparkled in her eyes and given decision to her voice and gestures when she dismissed the Duke. She was as humble as a courtesan who has fallen in love.

To picture la Tinti you must recall one of our best French singers when she came out in Il Fazzoletto, an opera by Garcia that was then being played by an Italian company at the theatre in the Rue Lauvois. She was so beautiful that a Naples guardsman, having failed to win a hearing, killed himself in despair. The prima donna of the Fenice had the same refinement of features, the same elegant figure, and was equally young; but she had in addition the warm blood of Sicily that gave a glow to her loveliness. Her voice was fuller and richer, and she had that air of native majesty that is characteristic of Italian women.

La Tinti—whose name also resembled that which the French singer assumed—was now seventeen, and the poor Prince three-and-twenty. What mocking hand had thought it sport to bring the match so near the powder? A fragrant room hung with rose-colored silk and brilliant with wax lights, a bed dressed in lace, a silent palace, and Venice! Two young and beautiful creatures! every ravishment at once.

Emilio snatched up his trousers, jumped out of bed, escaped into the dressing-room, put on his clothes, came back and hurried to the door.

These were his thoughts while dressing:—

“Massimilla, beloved daughter of the Doni, in whom Italian beauty is an hereditary prerogative, you who are worthy of the portrait of Margherita, one

of the few canvases painted entirely by Raphael to his glory! My beautiful and saintly mistress, shall I not have deserved you if I fly from this abyss of flowers? Should I be worthy of you if I profaned a heart that is wholly yours? No; I will not fall into the vulgar snare laid for me by my rebellious senses! This girl has her Duke, mine be my Duchess!”

As he lifted the curtain, he heard a moan. The heroic lover looked round and saw Clarina on her knees, her face hidden in the bed, choking with sobs. Is it to be believed? The singer was lovelier kneeling thus, her face invisible, than even in her confusion with a glowing countenance. Her hair, which had fallen over her shoulders, her Magdalen-like attitude, the disorder of her half-unfastened dress,—the whole picture had been composed by the devil, who, as is well known, is a fine colorist.

The Prince put his arm round the weeping girl, who slipped from him like a snake, and clung to one foot, pressing it to her beautiful bosom.

“Will you explain to me,” said he, shaking his foot to free it from her embrace, “how you happen to be in my palazzo? How the impoverished Emilio Memmi—”

“Emilio Memmi!” cried Tinti, rising. “You said you were a Prince.”

“A Prince since yesterday.”

“You are in love with the Duchess Cataneo!” said she, looking at him from head to foot.

Emilio stood mute, seeing that the prima dona was smiling at him through her tears.

“Your Highness does not know that the man who had me trained for the stage—that the Duke—is Cataneo himself. And your friend Vendramini, thinking to do you a service, let him this palace for a thousand crowns, for the period of my season at the Fenice. Dear idol of my heart!” she went on, taking his hand and drawing him towards her, “why do you fly from one for whom many a man would run the risk of broken bones? Love, you see, is always love. It is the same everywhere; it is the sun of our souls; we can warm ourselves whenever it shines, and here—now—it is full noonday. If to-morrow you are not satisfied, kill me! But I shall survive, for I am a real beauty!”

Emilio decided on remaining. When he signified his consent by a nod the impulse of delight that sent a shiver through Clarina seemed to him like a light from hell. Love had never before appeared to him in so impressive a form.

At that moment Carmagnola whistled loudly.

“What can he want of me?” said the Prince.

But bewildered by love, Emilio paid no heed to the gondolier’s repeated signals.

If you have never traveled in Switzerland you may perhaps read this description with pleasure; and if you have clambered among those mountains you will not be sorry to be reminded of the scenery.

In that sublime land, in the heart of a mass of rock riven by a gorge,—a valley as wide as the Avenue de Neuilly in Paris, but a hundred fathoms deep and broken into ravines,—flows a torrent coming from some tremendous height of the Saint-Gothard on the Simplon, which has formed a pool, I know not how many yards deep or how many feet long and wide, hemmed in by splintered cliffs of granite on which meadows find a place, with fir-trees between them, and enormous elms, and where violets also grow, and strawberries. Here and there stands a chalet and at the window you may see the rosy face of a yellow-haired Swiss girl. According to the moods of the sky the water in this tarn is blue and green, but as a sapphire is blue, as an emerald is green. Well, nothing in the world can give such an idea of depth, peace, immensity, heavenly love, and eternal happiness—to the most heedless traveler, the most hurried courier, the most commonplace tradesman—as this liquid diamond into which the snow, gathering from the highest Alps, trickles through a natural channel hidden under the trees and eaten through the rock, escaping below through a gap without a sound. The watery sheet overhanging the fall glides so gently that no ripple is to be seen on the surface which mirrors the chaise as you drive past. The postboy smacks his whip; you turn past a crag; you cross a bridge: suddenly there is a terrific uproar of cascades tumbling together one upon another. The water, taking a mighty leap, is broken into a hundred falls, dashed to spray on the boulders; it sparkles in a myriad jets against a mass that has fallen from the heights that tower over the ravine exactly in the middle of the road that has been so irresistibly cut by the most formidable of active forces.

If you have formed a clear idea of this landscape, you will see in those sleeping waters the image of Emilio’s love for the Duchess, and in the cascades leaping like a flock of sheep, an idea of his passion shared with la Tinti. In the midst of his torrent of love a rock stood up against which the torrent broke. The Prince, like Sisyphus, was constantly under the stone.

“What on earth does the Duke do with a violin?” he wondered. “Do I owe this symphony to him?”

He asked Clara Tinti.

“My dear child,”—for she saw that Emilio was but a child,—“dear child,” said she, “that man, who is a hundred and eighteen in the parish register of vice, and only forty-seven in the register of the Church, has but one single joy

left to him in life. Yes, everything is broken, everything in him is ruin or rags; his soul, intellect, heart, nerves,—everything in man that can supply an impulse and remind him of heaven, either by desire or enjoyment, is bound up with music, or rather with one of the many effects produced by music, the perfect unison of two voices, or of a voice with the top string of his violin. The old ape sits on my knee, takes his instrument,—he plays fairly well,—he produces the notes, and I try to imitate them. Then, when the long-sought-for moment comes when it is impossible to distinguish in the body of sound which is the note on the violin and which proceeds from my throat, the old man falls into an ecstasy, his dim eyes light up with their last remaining fires, he is quite happy and will roll on the floor like a drunken man.

"That is why he pays Genovese such a price. Genovese is the only tenor whose voice occasionally sounds in unison with mine. Either we really do sing exactly together once or twice in an evening, or the Duke imagines that we do; and for that imaginary pleasure he has bought Genovese. Genovese belongs to him. No theatrical manager can engage that tenor without me, nor have me to sing without him. The Duke brought me up on purpose to gratify that whim; to him I owe my talent, my beauty,—my fortune, no doubt. He will die of an attack of perfect unison. The sense of hearing alone has survived the wreck of his faculties; that is the only thread by which he holds on to life. A vigorous shoot springs from that rotten stump. There are, I am told, many men in the same predicament. May Madonna preserve them!

"You have not come to that! You can do all you want—all I want of you, I know."

Towards morning the Prince stole away and found Carmagnola lying asleep across the door.

"Altezza," said the gondolier, "the Duchess ordered me to give you this note."

He held out a dainty sheet of paper folded into a triangle. The Prince felt dizzy; he went back into the room and dropped into a chair, for his sight was dim, and his hands shook as he read:—

"DEAR EMILIO:—Your gondola stopped at your palazzo. Did you not know that Cataneo has taken it for la Tinti? If you love me, go to-night to Vendramin, who tells me he has a room ready for you in his house. What shall I do? Can I remain in Venice to see my husband and his opera singer? Shall we go back together to Friuli? Write me one word, if only to tell me what the letter was you tossed into the lagoon.

"MASSIMILLA DONI."

The writing and the scent of the paper brought a thousand memories back

to the young Venetian's mind. The sun of a single-minded passion threw its radiance on the blue depths come from so far, collected in a bottomless pool, and shining like a star. The noble youth could not restrain the tears that flowed freely from his eyes, for in the languid state produced by satiated senses he was disarmed by the thought of that purer divinity.

Even in her sleep Clarina heard his weeping; she sat up in bed, saw her Prince in a dejected attitude, and threw herself at his knees.

"They are still waiting for the answer," said Carmagnola, putting the curtain aside.

"Wretch, you have undone me!" cried Emilio, starting up and spurning Clarina with his foot.

She clutched it so lovingly, her look imploring some explanation,—the look of a tear-stained Samaritan,—that Emilio, enraged to find himself still in the toils of the passion that had wrought his fall, pushed away the singer with an unmanly kick.

"You told me to kill you,—then die, venomous reptile!" he exclaimed.

He left the palace, and sprang into his gondola.

"Pull," said he to Carmagnola.

"Where?" asked the old servant.

"Where you will."

The gondolier divined his master's wishes, and by many windings brought him at last into the Canareggio, to the door of a wonderful palazzo, which you will admire when you see Venice, for no traveler ever fails to stop in front of those windows, each of a different design, vying with each other in fantastic ornament, with balconies like lace-work; to study the corners finishing in tall and slender twisted columns, the string-courses wrought by so inventive a chisel that no two shapes are alike in the arabesques on the stones.

How charming is that doorway! how mysterious the vaulted arcade leading to the stairs! Who could fail to admire the steps on which ingenious art has laid a carpet that will last while Venice stands,—a carpet as rich as if wrought in Turkey, but composed of marbles in endless variety of shapes, inlaid in white marble. You will delight in the charming ornament of the colonnades of the upper story,—gilt like those of a ducal palace,—so that the marvels of art are both under your feet and above your head.

What delicate shadows! How silent, how cool! But how solemn, too, was that old palace! where, to delight Emilio and his friend Vendramin, the Duchess had collected antique Venetian furniture, and employed skilled hands

to restore the ceilings. There, old Venice lived again. The splendor was not merely noble, it was instructive. The archaeologist would have found there such models of perfection as the middle ages produced, having taken example from Venice. Here were to be seen the original ceilings of woodwork covered with scrolls and flowers in gold on a colored ground, or in colors on gold, and ceilings of gilt plaster castings, with a picture of many figures in each corner, with a splendid fresco in the centre,—a style so costly that there are not two in the Louvre, and that the extravagance of Louis XIV. shrunk from such expense at Versailles. On all sides marble, wood, and silk had served as materials for exquisite workmanship.

Emilio pushed open a carved oak door, made his way down the long, vaulted passage which runs from end to end on each floor of a Venetian palazzo, and stopped before another door, so familiar that it made his heart beat. On seeing him, a lady companion came out of a vast drawing-room, and admitted him to a study where he found the Duchess on her knees in front of a Madonna.

He had come to confess and ask forgiveness. Massimilla, in prayer, had converted him. He and God; nothing else dwelt in that heart.

The Duchess rose very unaffectedly, and held out her hand. Her lover did not take it.

“Did not Gianbattista see you, yesterday?” she asked.

“No,” he replied.

“That piece of ill-luck gave me a night of misery. I was so afraid lest you might meet the Duke, whose perversity I know too well. What made Vendramin let your palace to him?”

“It was a good idea, Milla, for your Prince is poor enough.”

Massimilla was so beautiful in her trust of him, and so wonderfully lovely, so happy in Emilio’s presence, that at this moment the Prince, wide awake, experienced the sensations of the horrible dream that torments persons of a lively imagination, in which after arriving in a ballroom full of women in full dress, the dreamer is suddenly aware that he is naked, without even a shirt; shame and terror possess him by turns, and only waking can relieve him from his misery. Thus stood Emilio’s soul in the presence of his mistress. Hitherto that soul had known only the fairest flowers of feeling; a debauch had plunged it into dishonor. This none knew but he, for the beautiful Florentine ascribed so many virtues to her lover that the man she adored could not but be incapable of any stain.

As Emilio had not taken her hand, the Duchess pushed her fingers through

his hair that the singer had kissed. Then she perceived that Emilio's hand was clammy and his brow moist.

"What ails you?" she asked, in a voice to which tenderness gave the sweetness of a flute.

"Never till this moment have I known how much I love you," he replied.

"Well, dear idol, what would you have?" said she.

"What have I done to make her ask that?" he wondered to himself.

"Emilio, what letter was that which you threw into the lagoon?"

"Vendramini's. I had not read it to the end, or I should never have gone to my palazzo, and there have met the Duke; for no doubt it told me all about it."

Massimilla turned pale, but a caress from Emilio reassured her.

"Stay with me all day; we will go to the opera together. We will not set out for Friuli; your presence will no doubt enable me to endure Cataneo's," said Massimilla.

Though this would be torment to her lover's soul, he consented with apparent joy.

If anything can give us a foretaste of what the damned will suffer on finding themselves so unworthy of God, is it not the state of a young man, as yet unpolluted, in the presence of a mistress he reveres, while he still feels on his lips the taste of infidelity, and brings into the sanctuary of the divinity he worships the tainted atmosphere of the courtesan?

Baader, who in his lectures eliminated things divine by erotic imagery, had no doubt observed, like some Catholic writers, the intimate resemblance between human and heavenly love.

This distress of mind cast a hue of melancholy over the pleasure the young Venetian felt in his mistress' presence. A woman's instinct has amazing aptitude for harmony of feeling; it assumes the hue, it vibrates to the note suggested by her lover. The pungent flavor of coquettish spice is far indeed from spurring affection so much as this gentle sympathy of tenderness. The smartness of a coquette too clearly marks opposition; however transient it is displeasing; but this intimate comprehension shows a perfect fusion of souls. The hapless Emilio was touched by the unspoken divination which led the Duchess to pity a fault unknown to her.

Massimilla, feeling that her strength lay in the absence of any sensual side to her love, could allow herself to be expansive; she boldly and confidently poured out her angelic spirit, she stripped it bare, just as during that diabolical night, La Tinti had displayed the soft lines of her body, and her firm, elastic

flesh. In Emilio’s eyes there was as it were a conflict between the saintly love of this white soul and that of the vehement and muscular Sicilian.

The day was spent in long looks following on deep meditations. Each of them gauged the depths of tender feeling, and found it bottomless; a conviction that brought fond words to their lips. Modesty, the goddess who in a moment of forgetfulness with Love, was the mother of Coquettishness, need not have put her hand before her face as she looked at these lovers. As a crowning joy, an orgy of happiness, Massimilla pillowed Emilio’s head in her arms, and now and then ventured to press her lips to his; but only as a bird dips its beak into the clear waters of a spring, looking round lest it should be seen. Their fancy worked upon this kiss, as a composer develops a subject by the endless resources of music, and it produced in them such tumultuous and vibrating echoes as fevered their blood.

The Idea must always be stronger than the Fact, otherwise desire would be less perfect than satisfaction, and it is in fact the stronger,—it gives birth to wit. And, indeed, they were perfectly happy; for enjoyment must always take something off happiness. Married in heaven alone, these two lovers admired each other in their purest aspect,—that of two souls incandescent, and united in celestial light, radiant to the eyes that faith has touched; and, above all, filled with the rapture which the brush of a Raphael, a Titian, a Murillo, has depicted, and which those who have ever known it, taste again as they gaze at those paintings. Do not such peerless spirits scorn the coarser joys lavished by the Sicilian singer—the material expression of that angelic union?

These noble thoughts were in the Prince’s mind as he reposed in heavenly calm on Massimilla’s cool, soft, white bosom, under the gentle radiance of her eyes veiled by long, bright lashes; and he gave himself up to this dream of an ideal orgy. At such a moment, Massimilla was as one of the Virgin visions seen in dreams, which vanish at cock-crow, but whom we recognize when we find them again in their realm of glory,—in the works of some great painters of Heaven.

In the evening the lovers went to the theatre. This is the way of Italian life: love in the morning; music in the evening; the night for sleep. How far preferable is this existence to that of a country where every one expends his lungs and strength in politics, without contributing any more, single-minded, to the progress of affairs than a grain of sand can make a cloud of dust. Liberty, in those strange lands, consists in the right to squabble over public concerns, to take care of oneself, to waste time in patriotic undertakings each more futile than the last, inasmuch as they all weaken that noble, holy self-concern which is the parent of all great human achievement. At Venice, on the contrary, love and its myriad ties, the sweet business of real happiness, fills up all the time.

In that country, love is so much a matter of course that the Duchess was regarded as a wonder; for, in spite of her violent attachment to Emilio, everybody was confident of her immaculate purity. And women gave their sincere pity to the poor young man, who was regarded as a victim to the virtue of his lady-love. At the same time, no one cared to blame the Duchess, for in Italy religion is a power as much respected as love.

Evening after evening Massimilla's box was the first object of every opera-glass, and each woman would say to her lover, as she studied the Duchess and her adorer:

"How far have they got?"

The lover would examine Emilio, seeking some evidence of success; would find no expression but that of a pure and dejected passion. And throughout the house, as they visited from box to box, the men would say to the ladies:

"La Cataneo is not yet Emilio's."

"She is unwise," said the old women. "She will tire him out."

"Forse!" (Perhaps) the young wives would reply, with the solemn accent that Italians can infuse into that great word—the answer to many questions here below.

Some women were indignant, thought the whole thing ill-judged, and declared that it was a misapprehension of religion to allow it to smother love.

"My dear, love that poor Emilio," said the Signora Vulpato to Massimilla, as they met on the stairs in going out.

"I do love him with all my might," replied the Duchess.

"Then why does not he look happy?"

Massimilla's reply was a little shrug of her shoulders.

We in France—France as the growing mania for English proprieties has made it—can form no idea of the serious interest taken in this affair by Venetian society.

Vendramini alone knew Emilio's secret, which was carefully kept between two men who had, for private pleasure, combined their coats of arms with the motto Non amici, frates.

The opening night of the opera season is an event at Venice, as in every capital in Italy. The Fenice was crowded.

The five hours of the night that are spent at the theatre fill so important a place in Italian life that it is well to give an account of the customs that have

risen from this manner of spending time.

The boxes in Italy are unlike those of any other country, inasmuch as that elsewhere the women go to be seen, and that Italian ladies do not care to make a show of themselves. Each box is long and narrow, sloping at an angle to the front and to the passage behind. On each side is a sofa, and at the end stand two armchairs, one for the mistress of the box, and the other for a lady friend when she brings one, which she rarely does. Each lady is in fact too much engaged in her own box to call on others, or to wish to see them; also no one cares to introduce a rival. An Italian woman almost always reigns alone in her box; the mothers are not the slaves of their daughters, the daughters have no mother on their hands; thus there are no children, no relations to watch and censure and bore, or cut into a conversation.

In front every box is draped in the same way, with the same silk: from the cornice hang curtains, also all to match; and these remain drawn when the family to whom the box belongs is in mourning. With very few exceptions, and those only at Milan, there is no light inside the box; they are illuminated only from the stage, and from a not very brilliant hanging lustre which, in spite of protests, has been introduced into the house in some towns; still, screened by the curtains, they are never very light, and their arrangement leaves the back of the box so dark that it is very difficult to see what is going on.

The boxes, large enough to accommodate eight or ten persons, are decorated with handsome silks, the ceilings are painted and ornamented in light and pleasing colors; the woodwork is gilt. Ices and sorbets are served there, and sweetmeats; for only the plebeian classes ever have a serious meal. Each box is freehold property, and of considerable value; some are estimated at as much as thirty thousand lire; the Litta family at Milan own three adjoining. These facts sufficiently indicate the importance attributed to this incident of fashionable life.

Conversation reigns supreme in this little apartment, which Stendhal, one of the most ingenious of modern writers, and a keen student of Italian manners, has called a boudoir with a window opening on to a pit. The music and the spectacle are in fact purely accessory; the real interest of the evening is in the social meeting there, the all-important trivialities of love that are discussed, the assignations held, the anecdotes and gossip that creep in. The theatre is an inexpensive meeting-place for a whole society which is content and amused with studying itself.

The men who are admitted take their seats on one of the sofas, in the order of their arrival. The first comer naturally is next to the mistress of the box, but when both seats are full, if another visitor comes in, the one who has sat longest rises, takes his leave and departs. All move up one place, and so each

in turn is next the sovereign.

This futile gossip, or serious colloquy, these elegant trivialities of Italian life, inevitably imply some general intimacy. The lady may be in full dress or not, as she pleases. She is so completely at home that a stranger who has been received in her box may call on her next day at her residence. The foreign visitor cannot at first understand this life of idle wit, this dolce far niente on a background of music. Only long custom and keen observation can ever reveal to a foreigner the meaning of Italian life, which is like the free sky of the south, and where a rich man will not endure a cloud. A man of rank cares little about the management of his fortune; he leaves the details to his stewards (ragionati), who rob and ruin him. He has no instinct for politics, and they would presently bore him; he lives exclusively for passion, which fills up all his time; hence the necessity felt by the lady and her lover for being constantly together; for the great feature of such a life is the lover, who for five hours is kept under the eye of a woman who has had him at her feet all day. Thus Italian habits allow of perpetual satisfaction, and necessitate a constant study of the means fitted to insure it, though hidden under apparent light-heartedness.

It is a beautiful life, but a reckless one, and in no country in the world are men so often found worn out.

The Duchess' box was on the pit tier—pepiano, as it is called in Venice; she always sat where the light from the stage fell on her face, so that her handsome head, softly illuminated, stood out against the dark background. The Florentine attracted every gaze by her broad, high brow, as white as snow, crowned with plaits of black hair that gave her a really royal look; by the refinement of her features, resembling the noble features of Andrea del Sarto's heads; by the outline of her face, the setting of her eyes; and by those velvet eyes themselves, which spoke of the rapture of a woman dreaming of happiness, still pure though loving, at once attractive and dignified.

Instead of Mose, in which la Tinti was to have appeared with Genovese, Il Barbiere was given, and the tenor was to sing without the celebrated prima donna. The manager announced that he had been obliged to change the opera in consequence of la Tinti's being ill; and the Duke was not to be seen in the theatre.

Was this a clever trick on the part of the management, to secure two full houses by bringing out Genovese and Tinti separately, or was Clarina's indisposition genuine? While this was open to discussion by others, Emilio might be better informed; and though the announcement caused him some remorse, as he remembered the singer's beauty and vehemence, her absence and the Duke's put both the Prince and the Duchess very much at their ease.

And Genovese sang in such a way as to drive out all memories of a night of illicit love, and to prolong the heavenly joys of this blissful day. Happy to be alone to receive the applause of the house, the tenor did his best with the powers which have since achieved European fame. Genovese, then but three-and-twenty, born at Bergamo, a pupil of Veluti's and devoted to his art, a fine man, good-looking, clever in apprehending the spirit of a part, was already developing into the great artist destined to win fame and fortune. He had a wild success,—a phrase which is literally exact only in Italy, where the applause of the house is absolutely frenzied when a singer procures it enjoyment.

Some of the Prince's friends came to congratulate him on coming into his title, and to discuss the news. Only last evening la Tinti, taken by the Duke to the Vulpatos', had sung there, apparently in health as sound as her voice was fine; hence her sudden disposition gave rise to much comment. It was rumored at the Cafe Florian that Genovese was desperately in love with Clarina; that she was only anxious to avoid his declarations, and that the manager had tried in vain to induce her to appear with him. The Austrian General, on the other hand, asserted that it was the Duke who was ill, that the prima donna was nursing him, and that Genovese had been commanded to make amends to the public.

The Duchess owed this visit from the Austrian General to the fact that a French physician had come to Venice whom the General wished to introduce to her. The Prince, seeing Vendramin wandering about the parterre, went out for a few minutes of confidential talk with his friend, whom he had not seen for three months; and as they walked round the gangway which divides the seats in the pit from the lowest tier of boxes, he had an opportunity of observing Massimilla's reception of the foreigner.

"Who is that Frenchman?" asked the Prince.

"A physician sent for by Cataneo, who wants to know how long he is likely to live," said Vendramin. "The Frenchman is waiting for Malfatti, with whom he is to hold a consultation."

Like every Italian woman who is in love, the Duchess kept her eyes fixed on Emilio; for in that land a woman is so wholly wrapped up in her lover that it is difficult to detect an expressive glance directed at anybody else.

"Caro," said the Prince to his friend, "remember I slept at your house last night."

"Have you triumphed?" said Vendramin, putting his arm round Emilio's waist.

"No; but I hope I may some day be happy with Massimilla."

“Well,” replied Marco, “then you will be the most envied man on earth. The Duchess is the most perfect woman in Italy. To me, seeing things as I do through the dazzling medium of opium, she seems the very highest expression of art; for nature, without knowing it, has made her a Raphael picture. Your passion gives no umbrage to Cataneo, who has handed over to me a thousand crowns, which I am to give to you.”

“Well,” added Emilio, “whatever you may hear said, I sleep every night at your house. Come, for every minute spent away from her, when I might be with her, is torment.”

Emilio took his seat at the back of the box and remained there in silence, listening to the Duchess, enchanted by her wit and beauty. It was for him, and not out of vanity, that Massimilla lavished the charms of her conversation bright with Italian wit, in which sarcasm lashed things but not persons, laughter attacked nothing that was not laughable, mere trifles were seasoned with Attic salt.

Anywhere else she might have been tiresome. The Italians, an eminently intelligent race, have no fancy for displaying their talents where they are not in demand; their chat is perfectly simple and effortless, it never makes play, as in France, under the lead of a fencing master, each one flourishing his foil, or, if he has nothing to say, sitting humiliated.

Conversation sparkles with a delicate and subtle satire that plays gracefully with familiar facts; and instead of a compromising epigram an Italian has a glance or a smile of unutterable meaning. They think—and they are right—that to be expected to understand ideas when they only seek enjoyment, is a bore.

Indeed, la Vulpato had said to Massimilla:

“If you loved him you would not talk so well.”

Emilio took no part in the conversation; he listened and gazed. This reserve might have led foreigners to suppose that the Prince was a man of no intelligence,—their impression very commonly of an Italian in love,—whereas he was simply a lover up to his ears in rapture. Vendramin sat down by Emilio, opposite the Frenchman, who, as the stranger, occupied the corner facing the Duchess.

“Is that gentleman drunk?” said the physician in an undertone to Massimilla, after looking at Vendramin.

“Yes,” replied she, simply.

In that land of passion, each passion bears its excuse in itself, and gracious indulgence is shown to every form of error. The Duchess sighed deeply, and

an expression of suppressed pain passed over her features.

“You will see strange things in our country, monsieur,” she went on. “Vendramin lives on opium, as this one lives on love, and that one buries himself in learning; most young men have a passion for a dancer, as older men are miserly. We all create some happiness or some madness for ourselves.”

“Because you all want to divert your minds from some fixed idea, for which a revolution would be a radical cure,” replied the physician. “The Genoese regrets his republic, the Milanese pines for his independence, the Piemontese longs for a constitutional government, the Romagna cries for liberty—”

“Of which it knows nothing,” interrupted the Duchess. “Alas! there are men in Italy so stupid as to long for your idiotic Charter, which destroys the influence of woman. Most of my fellow-countrywomen must need read your French books—useless rhodomontade—”

“Useless!” cried the Frenchman.

“Why, monsieur,” the Duchess went on, “what can you find in a book that is better than what we have in our hearts? Italy is mad.”

“I cannot see that a people is mad because it wishes to be its own master,” said the physician.

“Good Heavens!” exclaimed the Duchess, eagerly, “does not that mean paying with a great deal of bloodshed for the right of quarreling, as you do, over crazy ideas?”

“Then you approve of despotism?” said the physician.

“Why should I not approve of a system of government which, by depriving us of books and odious politics, leaves men entirely to us?”

“I had thought that the Italians were more patriotic,” said the Frenchman.

Massimilla laughed so slyly that her interlocutor could not distinguish mockery from serious meaning, nor her real opinion from ironical criticism.

“Then you are not a liberal?” said he.

“Heaven preserve me!” said she. “I can imagine nothing in worse taste than such opinions in a woman. Could you love a woman whose heart was occupied by all mankind?”

“Those who love are naturally aristocrats,” the Austrian General observed, with a smile.

“As I came into the theatre,” the Frenchman observed, “you were the first person I saw; and I remarked to his Excellency that if there was a woman who

could personify a nation it was you. But I grieve to discover that, though you represent its divine beauty, you have not the constitutional spirit."

"Are you not bound," said the Duchess, pointing to the ballet now being danced, "to find all our dancers detestable and our singers atrocious? Paris and London rob us of all our leading stars. Paris passes judgment on them, and London pays them. Genovese and la Tinti will not be left to us for six months —"

At this juncture, the Austrian left the box. Vendramin, the Prince, and the other two Italians exchanged a look and a smile, glancing at the French physician. He, for a moment, felt doubtful of himself,—a rare thing in a Frenchman,—fancying he had said or done something incongruous; but the riddle was immediately solved.

"Do you thing it would be judicious," said Emilio, "if we spoke our mind in the presence of our masters?"

"You are in a land of slaves," said the Duchess, in a tone and with a droop of the head which gave her at once the look for which the physician had sought in vain. "Vendramin," she went on, speaking so that only the stranger could hear her, "took to smoking opium, a villainous idea suggested to him by an Englishman who, for other reasons of his, craved an easy death—not death as men see it in the form of a skeleton, but death draped with the frippery you in France call a flag—a maiden form crowned with flowers or laurels; she appears in a cloud of gunpowder borne on the flight of a cannon-ball—or else stretched on a bed between two courtesans; or again, she rises in the steam of a bowl of punch, or the dazzling vapor of a diamond—but a diamond in the form of carbon.

"Whenever Vendramin chooses, for three Austrian lire, he can be a Venetian Captain, he can sail in the galleys of the Republic, and conquer the gilded domes of Constantinople. Then he can lounge on the divans in the Seraglio among the Sultan's wives, while the Grand Signor himself is the slave of the Venetian conqueror. He returns to restore his palazzo with the spoils of the Ottoman Empire. He can quit the women of the East for the doubly masked intrigues of his beloved Venetians, and fancy that he dreads the jealousy which has ceased to exist.

"For three zwanziger he can transport himself into the Council of Ten, can wield there terrible power, and leave the Doges' Palace to sleep under the watch of a pair of flashing eyes, or to climb a balcony from which a fair hand has hung a silken ladder. He can love a woman to whom opium lends such poetic grace as we women of flesh and blood could never show.

"Presently he turns over, and he is face to face with the dreadful frown of

the senator, who holds a dagger. He hears the blade plunged into his mistress' heart. She dies smiling on him; for she has saved him.

"And she is a happy woman!" added the Duchess, looking at Emilio.

"He escapes and flies to command the Dalmatians, to conquer the Illyrian coast for his beloved Venice. His glory wins him forgiveness, and he enjoys a life of domestic happiness,—a home, a winter evening, a young wife and charming children, who pray to San Marco under the care of an old nurse. Yes, for three francs' worth of opium he furnishes our empty arsenal, he watches convoys of merchandise coming in, going to the four quarters of the world. The forces of modern industry no longer reign in London, but in his own Venice, where the hanging gardens of Semiramis, the Temple of Jerusalem, the marvels of Rome, live once more. He adds to the glories of the middle ages by the labors of steam, by new masterpieces of art under the protection of Venice, who protected it of old. Monuments and nations crowd into his little brain; there is room for them all. Empires and cities and revolutions come and vanish in the course of a few hours, while Venice alone expands and lives; for the Venice of his dreams is the empress of the seas. She has two millions of inhabitants, the sceptre of Italy, the mastery of the Mediterranean and the Indies!"

"What an opera is the brain of man! What an unfathomed abyss!—even to those who, like Gall, have mapped it out," cried the physician.

"Dear Duchess," said Vendramin, "do not omit the last service that my elixir will do me. After hearing ravishing voices and imbibing music through every pore, after experiencing the keenest pleasures and the fiercest delights of Mahomet's paradise, I see none but the most terrible images. I have visions of my beloved Venice full of children's faces, distorted, like those of the dying; of women covered with dreadful wounds, torn and wailing; of men mangled and crushed by the copper sides of crashing vessels. I begin to see Venice as she is, shrouded in crape, stripped, robbed, destitute. Pale phantoms wander through her streets!

"Already the Austrian soldiers are grinning over me, already my visionary life is drifting into real life; whereas six months ago real life was the bad dream, and the life of opium held love and bliss, important affairs and political interests. Alas! To my grief, I see the dawn over my tomb, where truth and falsehood mingle in a dubious light, which is neither day nor darkness, but partakes of both."

"So you see that in this head there is too much patriotism," said the Prince, laying his hand on the thick black curls that fell on Vendramin's brow.

"Oh, if he loves us he will give up his dreadful opium!" said Massimilla.

“I will cure your friend,” said the Frenchman.

“Achieve that, and we shall love you,” said the Duchess. “But if on your return to France you do not calumniate us, we shall love you even better. The hapless Italians are too much crushed by foreign dominion to be fairly judged —for we have known yours,” she added, with a smile.

“It was more generous than Austria’s,” said the physician, eagerly.

“Austria squeezes and gives us nothing back, and you squeeze to enlarge and beautify our towns; you stimulated us by giving us an army. You thought you could keep Italy, and they expect to lose it—there lies the difference.

“The Austrians provide us with a sort of ease that is as stultifying and heavy as themselves, while you overwhelmed us by your devouring energy. But whether we die of tonics or of narcotics, what does it matter? It is death all the same, Monsieur le docteur.”

“Unhappy Italy! In my eyes she is like a beautiful woman whom France ought to protect by making her his mistress,” exclaimed the Frenchman.

“But you could not love us as we wish to be loved,” said the Duchess, smiling. “We want to be free. But the liberty I crave is not your ignoble and middle-class liberalism, which would kill all art. I ask,” said she, in a tone that thrilled through the box,—“that is to say, I would ask,—that each Italian republic should be resuscitated, with its nobles, its citizens, its special privileges for each caste. I would have the old aristocratic republics once more with their intestine warfare and rivalry that gave birth to the noblest works of art, that created politics, that raised up the great princely houses. By extending the action of one government over a vast expanse of country it is frittered down. The Italian republics were the glory of Europe in the middle ages. Why has Italy succumbed when the Swiss, who were her porters, have triumphed?”

“The Swiss republics,” said the doctor, “were worthy housewives, busy with their own little concerns, and neither having any cause for envying another. Your republics were haughty queens, preferring to sell themselves rather than bow to a neighbor; they fell too low ever to rise again. The Guelphs are triumphant.”

“Do not pity us too much,” said the Duchess, in a voice that made the two friends start. “We are still supreme. Even in the depths of her misfortune Italy governs through the choicer spirits that abound in her cities.

“Unfortunately the greater number of her geniuses learn to understand life so quickly that they lie sunk in poverty-stricken pleasure. As for those who are willing to play the melancholy game for immortality, they know how to get at your gold and to secure your praises. Ay, in this land—pitied for its fallen state

by traveled simpletons and hypocritical poets, while its character is traduced by politicians—in this land, which appears so languid, powerless, and ruinous, worn out rather than old, there are puissant brains in every branch of life, genius throwing out vigorous shoots as an old vine-stock throws out canes productive of delicious fruit. This race of ancient rulers still gives birth to kings—Lagrange, Volta, Rasori, Canova, Rossini, Bartolini, Galvani, Vigano, Beccaria, Cicognara, Corvetto. These Italians are masters of the scientific peaks on which they stand, or of the arts to which they devote themselves. To say nothing of the singers and executants who captivate Europe by their amazing perfections: Taglioni, Paganini, and the rest. Italy still rules the world which will always come to worship her.

“Go to Florian’s to-night; you will find in Capraja one of our cleverest men, but in love with obscurity. No one but the Duke, my master, understands music so thoroughly as he does; indeed he is known here as il Fanatico.”

After sitting a few minutes listening to the eager war of words between the physician and the Duchess, who showed much ingenious eloquence, the Italians, one by one, took leave, and went off to tell the news in every box, that la Cataneo, who was regarded as a woman of great wit and spirit, had, on the question of Italy, defeated a famous French doctor. This was the talk of the evening.

As soon as the Frenchman found himself alone with the Duchess and the Prince, he understood that they were to be left together, and took leave. Massimilla bowed with a bend of the neck that placed him at such a distance that this salute might have secured her the man’s hatred, if he could have ignored the charm of her eloquence and beauty.

Thus at the end of the opera, Emilio and Massimilla were alone, and holding hands they listened together to the duet that finishes Il Barbiere.

“There is nothing but music to express love,” said the Duchess, moved by that song as of two rapturous nightingales.

A tear twinkled in Emilio’s eye; Massimilla, sublime in such beauty as beams in Raphael’s Saint-Cecilia, pressed his hand, their knees touched, there was, as it seemed, the blossom of a kiss on her lips. The Prince saw on her blushing face a glow of joy like that which on a summer’s day shines down on the golden harvest; his heart seemed bursting with the tide of blood that rushed to it. He fancied that he could hear an angelic chorus of voices, and he would have given his life to feel the fire of passion which at this hour last night had filled him for the odious Clarina; but he was at the moment hardly conscious of having a body.

Massimilla, much distressed, ascribed this tear, in her guilelessness, to the

remark she had made as to Genovese's cavatina.

"But, carino," said she in Emilio's ear, "are not you as far better than every expression of love, as cause is superior to effect?"

After handing the Duchess to her gondola, Emilio waited for Vendramin to go to Florian's.

The Cafe Florian at Venice is a quite undefinable institution. Merchants transact their business there, and lawyers meet to talk over their most difficult cases. Florian's is at once an Exchange, a green-room, a newspaper office, a club, a confessional,—and it is so well adapted to the needs of the place that some Venetian women never know what their husband's business may be, for, if they have a letter to write, they go to write it there.

Spies, of course, abound at Florian's; but their presence only sharpens Venetian wits, which may here exercise the discretion once so famous. A great many persons spend the whole day at Florian's; in fact, to some men Florian's is so much a matter of necessity, that between the acts of an opera they leave the ladies in their boxes and take a turn to hear what is going on there.

While the two friends were walking in the narrow streets of the Merceria they did not speak, for there were too many people; but as they turned into the Piazzi di San Marco, the Prince said:

"Do not go at once to the cafe. Let us walk about; I want to talk to you."

He related his adventure with Clarina and explained his position. To Vendramin Emilio's despair seemed so nearly allied to madness that he promised to cure him completely if only he would give him carte blanche to deal with Massimilla. This ray of hope came just in time to save Emilio from drowning himself that night; for, indeed, as he remembered the singer, he felt a horrible wish to go back to her.

The two friends then went to an inner room at Florian's, where they listened to the conversation of some of the superior men of the town, who discoursed the subjects of the day. The most interesting of these were, in the first place, the eccentricities of Lord Byron, of whom the Venetians made great sport; then Cataneo's attachment for la Tinti, for which no reason could be assigned after twenty different causes had been suggested; then Genovese's debut; finally, the tilting match between the Duchess and the French doctor. Just as the discussion became vehemently musical, Duke Cataneo made his appearance. He bowed very courteously to Emilio, which seemed so natural that no one noticed it, and Emilio bowed gravely in return. Cataneo looked round to see if there was anybody he knew, recognized Vendramin and greeted him, bowed to his banker, a rich patrician, and finally to the man who happened to be speaking,—a celebrated musical fanatic, a friend of the

Comtesse Albrizzi. Like some others who frequented Florian's, his mode of life was absolutely unknown, so carefully did he conceal it. Nothing was known about him but what he chose to tell.

This was Capraja, the nobleman whom the Duchess had mentioned to the French doctor. This Venetian was one of a class of dreamers whose powerful minds divine everything. He was an eccentric theorist, and cared no more for celebrity than for a broken pipe.

His life was in accordance with his ideas. Capraja made his appearance at about ten every morning under the Procuratie, without anyone knowing whence he came. He lounged about Venice, smoking cigars. He regularly went to the Fenice, sitting in the pit-stalls, and between the acts went round to Florian's, where he took three or four cups of coffee a day; and he ended the evening at the cafe, never leaving it till about two in the morning. Twelve hundred francs a year paid all his expenses; he ate but one meal a day at an eating-house in the Merceria, where the cook had his dinner ready for him at a fixed hour, on a little table at the back of the shop; the pastry-cook's daughter herself prepared his stuffed oysters, provided him with cigars, and took care of his money. By his advice, this girl, though she was very handsome, would never countenance a lover, lived very steadily, and still wore the old Venetian costume. This purely-bred Venetian girl was twelve years old when Capraja first took an interest in her, and six-and-twenty when he died. She was very fond of him, though he had never even kissed her hand or her brow, and she knew nothing whatever of the poor old nobleman's intentions with regard to her. The girl had at last as complete control of the old gentleman as a mother has of her child; she would tell him when he wanted clean linen; next day he would come without a shirt, and she would give him a clean one to put on in the morning.

He never looked at a woman either in the theatre or out walking. Though he was the descendant of an old patrician family he never thought his rank worth mentioning. But at night, after twelve, he awoke from his apathy, talked, and showed that he had seen and heard everything. This peaceful Diogenes, quite incapable of explaining his tenets, half a Turk, half a Venetian, was thick-set, short, and fat; he had a Doge's sharp nose, an inquisitive, satirical eye, and a discreet though smiling mouth.

When he died, it became known that he had lived in a little den near San Benedetto. He had two million francs invested in the funds of various countries of Europe, and had left the interest untouched ever since he had first bought the securities in 1814, so the sum was now enormous, alike from the increased value of the capital and the accumulated interest. All this money was left to the pastry-cook's daughter.

“Genovese,” he was saying, “will do wonders. Whether he really understands the great end of music, or acts only on instinct, I know not; but he is the first singer who ever satisfied me. I shall not die without hearing a cadenza executed as I have heard them in my dreams, waking with a feeling as though the sounds were floating in the air. The clear cadenza is the highest achievement of art; it is the arabesque, decorating the finest room in the house; a shade too little and it is nothing, a touch too much and all is confusion. Its task is to awake in the soul a thousand dormant ideas; it flies up and sweeps through space, scattering seeds in the air to be taken in by our ears and blossom in our heart. Believe me, in painting his Saint-Cecilia, Raphael gave the preference to music over poetry. And he was right; music appeals to the heart, whereas writing is addressed to the intellect; it communicates ideas directly, like a perfume. The singer’s voice impinges not on the mind, not on the memory of happiness, but on the first principle of thought; it stirs the elements of sensation.

“It is a grievous thing that the populace should have compelled musicians to adapt their expression to words, to factitious emotions; but then they were not otherwise intelligible to the vulgar. Thus the cadenza is the only thing left to the lovers of pure music, the devotees of unfettered art. To-night, as I listened to that last cavatina, I felt as if I were beckoned by a fair creature whose look alone had made me young again. The enchantress placed a crown on my brow, and led me to the ivory door through which we pass to the mysterious land of day-dreams. I owe it to Genovese that I escaped for a few minutes from this old husk—minutes, short no doubt by the clock, but very long by the record of sensation. For a brief spring-time, scented with roses, I was young again—and beloved!”

“But you are mistaken, caro Capraja,” said the Duke. “There is in music an effect yet more magical than that of the cadenza.”

“What is that?” asked Capraja.

“The unison of two voices, or of a voice and a violin,—the instrument which has tones most nearly resembling those of the human voice,” replied Cataneo. “This perfect concord bears us on to the very heart of life, on the tide of elements which can resuscitate rapture and carry man up to the centre of the luminous sphere where his mind can command the whole universe. You still need a thema, Capraja, but the pure element is enough for me. You need that the current should flow through the myriad canals of the machine to fall in dazzling cascades, while I am content with the pure tranquil pool. My eye gazes across a lake without a ripple. I can embrace the infinite.”

“Speak no more, Cataneo,” said Capraja, haughtily. “What! Do you fail to see the fairy, who, in her swift rush through the sparkling atmosphere, collects

and binds with the golden thread of harmony, the gems of melody she smilingly sheds on us? Have you ever felt the touch of her wand, as she says to Curiosity, ‘Awake!’ The divinity rises up radiant from the depths of the brain; she flies to her store of wonders and fingers them lightly as an organist touches the keys. Suddenly, up starts Memory, bringing us the roses of the past, divinely preserved and still fresh. The mistress of our youth revives, and strokes the young man’s hair. Our heart, too full, overflows; we see the flowery banks of the torrent of love. Every burning bush we ever knew blazes afresh, and repeats the heavenly words we once heard and understood. The voice rolls on; it embraces in its rapid turns those fugitive horizons, and they shrink away; they vanish, eclipsed by newer and deeper joys—those of an unrevealed future, to which the fairy points as she returns to the blue heaven.”

“And you,” retorted Cataneo, “have you never seen the direct ray of a star opening the vistas above; have you never mounted on that beam which guides you to the sky, to the heart of the first causes which move the worlds?”

To their hearers, the Duke and Capraja were playing a game of which the premises were unknown.

“Genovese’s voice thrills through every fibre,” said Capraja.

“And la Tinti’s fires the blood,” replied the Duke.

“What a paraphrase of happy love is that cavatina!” Capraja went on. “Ah! Rossini was young when he wrote that interpretation of effervescent ecstasy. My heart filled with renewed blood, a thousand cravings tingled in my veins. Never have sounds more angelic delivered me more completely from my earthly bonds! Never did the fairy wave more beautiful arms, smile more invitingly, lift her tunic more cunningly to display an ankle, raising the curtain that hides my other life!”

“To-morrow, my old friend,” replied Cataneo, “you shall ride on the back of a dazzling, white swan, who will show you the loveliest land there is; you shall see the spring-time as children see it. Your heart shall open to the radiance of a new sun; you shall sleep on crimson silk, under the gaze of a Madonna; you shall feel like a happy lover gently kissed by a nymph whose bare feet you still may see, but who is about to vanish. That swan will be the voice of Genovese, if he can unite it to its Leda, the voice of Clarina. To-morrow night we are to hear Mose, the grandest opera produced by Italy’s greatest genius.”

All present left the conversation to the Duke and Capraja, not wishing to be the victims of mystification. Only Vendramin and the French doctor listened to them for a few minutes. The opium-smoker understood these poetic flights; he had the key of the palace where those two sensuous imaginations

were wandering. The doctor, too, tried to understand, and he understood, for he was one of the Pleiades of genius belonging to the Paris school of medicine, from which a true physician comes out as much a metaphysician as an accomplished analyst.

“Do you understand them?” said Emilio to Vendramin as they left the cafe at two in the morning.

“Yes, my dear boy,” said Vendramin, taking Emilio home with him. “Those two men are of the legion of unearthly spirits to whom it is given here below to escape from the wrappings of the flesh, who can fly on the shoulders of the queen of witchcraft up to the blue empyrean where the sublime marvels are wrought of the intellectual life; they, by the power of art, can soar whither your immense love carries you, whither opium transports me. Then none can understand them but those who are like them.

“I, who can inspire my soul by such base means, who can pack a hundred years of life into a single night, I can understand those lofty spirits when they talk of that glorious land, deemed a realm of chimeras by some who think themselves wise; but the realm of reality to us whom they think mad. Well, the Duke and Capraja, who were acquainted at Naples,—where Cataneo was born, —are mad about music.”

“But what is that strange system that Capraja was eager to explain to the Duke? Did you understand?”

“Yes,” replied Vendramin. “Capraja’s great friend is a musician from Cremona, lodging in the Capello palace, who has a theory that sounds meet with an element in man, analogous to that which produces ideas. According to him, man has within him keys acted on by sound, and corresponding to his nerve-centres, where ideas and sensations take their rise. Capraja, who regards the arts as an assemblage of means by which he can harmonize, in himself, all external nature with another mysterious nature that he calls the inner life, shares all ideas of this instrument-maker, who at this moment is composing an opera.

“Conceive of a sublime creation, wherein the marvels of the visible universe are reproduced with immeasurable grandeur, lightness, swiftness, and extension; wherein sensation is infinite, and whither certain privileged natures, possessed of divine powers, are able to penetrate, and you will have some notion of the ecstatic joys of which Cataneo and Capraja were speaking; both poets, each for himself alone. Only, in matters of the intellect, as soon as a man can rise above the sphere where plastic art is produced by a process of imitation, and enter into that transcendental sphere of abstractions where everything is understood as an elementary principle, and seen in the omnipotence of results, that man is no longer intelligible to ordinary minds.”

“You have thus explained my love for Massimilla,” said Emilio. “There is in me, my friend, a force which awakes under the fire of her look, at her lightest touch, and wafts me to a world of light where effects are produced of which I dare not speak. It has seemed to me often that the delicate tissue of her skin has stamped flowers on mine as her hand lies on my hand. Her words play on those inner keys in me, of which you spoke. Desire excites my brain, stirring that invisible world, instead of exciting my passive flesh; the air seems red and sparkling, unknown perfumes of indescribable strength relax my sinews, roses wreathe my temples, and I feel as though my blood were escaping through opened arteries, so complete is my inanition.”

“That is the effect on me of smoking opium,” replied Vendramin.

“Then do you wish to die?” cried Emilio, in alarm.

“With Venice!” said Vendramin, waving his hand in the direction of San Marco. “Can you see a single pinnacle or spire that stands straight? Do you not perceive that the sea is claiming its prey?”

The Prince bent his head; he dared no more speak to his friend of love.

To know what a free country means, you must have traveled in a conquered land.

When they reached the Palazzo Vendramin, they saw a gondola moored at the water-gate. The Prince put his arm round Vendramin and clasped him affectionately, saying:

“Good-night to you, my dear fellow!”

“What! a woman? for me, whose only love is Venice?” exclaimed Marco.

At this instant the gondolier, who was leaning against a column, recognizing the man he was to look out for, murmured in Emilio’s ear:

“The Duchess, monseigneur.”

Emilio sprang into the gondola, where he was seized in a pair of soft arms —an embrace of iron—and dragged down on to the cushions, where he felt the heaving bosom of an ardent woman. And then he was no more Emilio, but Clarina’s lover; for his ideas and feelings were so bewildering that he yielded as if stupefied by her first kiss.

“Forgive this trick, my beloved,” said the Sicilian. “I shall die if you do not come with me.”

And the gondola flew over the secret water.

At half-past seven on the following evening, the spectators were again in their places in the theatre, excepting that those in the pit always took their

chances of where they might sit. Old Capraja was in Cataneo's box.

Before the overture the Duke paid a call on the Duchess; he made a point of standing behind her and leaving the front seat to Emilio next the Duchess. He made a few trivial remarks, without sarcasm or bitterness, and with as polite a manner as if he were visiting a stranger.

But in spite of his efforts to seem amiable and natural, the Prince could not control his expression, which was deeply anxious. Bystanders would have ascribed such a change in his usually placid features to jealousy. The Duchess no doubt shared Emilio's feelings; she looked gloomy and was evidently depressed. The Duke, uncomfortable enough between two sulky people, took advantage of the French doctor's entrance to slip away.

"Monsieur," said Cataneo to his physician before dropping the curtain over the entrance to the box, "you will hear to-night a grand musical poem, not easy of comprehension at a first hearing. But in leaving you with the Duchess I know that you can have no more competent interpreter, for she is my pupil."

The doctor, like the Duke, was struck by the expression stamped on the faces of the lovers, a look of pining despair.

"Then does an Italian opera need a guide to it?" he asked Massimilla, with a smile.

Recalled by this question to her duties as mistress of the box, the Duchess tried to chase away the clouds that darkened her brow, and replied, with eager haste, to open a conversation in which she might vent her irritation:—

"This is not so much an opera, monsieur," said she, "as an oratorio—a work which is in fact not unlike a most magnificent edifice, and I shall with pleasure be your guide. Believe me, it will not be too much to give all your mind to our great Rossini, for you need to be at once a poet and a musician to appreciate the whole bearing of such a work.

"You belong to a race whose language and genius are too practical for it to enter into music without an effort; but France is too intellectual not to learn to love it and cultivate it, and to succeed in that as in everything else. Also, it must be acknowledged that music, as created by Lulli, Rameau, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Cimarosa, Paisiello, and Rossini, and as it will be carried on by the great geniuses of the future, is a new art, unknown to former generations; they had indeed no such variety of instruments on which the flowers of melody now blossom as on some rich soil.

"So novel an art demands study in the public, study of a kind that may develop the feelings to which music appeals. That sentiment hardly exists as yet among you—a nation given up to philosophical theories, to analysis and

discussion, and always torn by civil disturbances. Modern music demands perfect peace; it is the language of loving and sentimental souls, inclined to lofty emotional aspiration.

“That language, a thousand times fuller than the language of words, is to speech and ideas what the thought is to its utterance; it arouses sensations and ideas in their primitive form, in that part of us where sensations and ideas have their birth, but leaves them as they are in each of us. That power over our inmost being is one of the grandest facts in music. All other arts present to the mind a definite creation; those of music are indefinite—infinite. We are compelled to accept the ideas of the poet, the painter’s picture, the sculptor’s statue; but music each one can interpret at the will of his sorrow or his gladness, his hope or his despair. While other arts restrict our mind by fixing it on a predestined object, music frees it to roam over all nature which it alone has the power of expressing. You shall hear how I interpret Rossini’s Mose.”

She leaned across to the Frenchman to speak to him, without being overheard.

“Moses is the liberator of an enslaved race!” said she. “Remember that, and you will see with what religious hope the whole house will listen to the prayer of the rescued Hebrews, with what a thunder of applause it will respond!”

As the leader raised his bow, Emilio flung himself into a back seat. The Duchess pointed out the place he had left, for the physician to take it. But the Frenchman was far more curious to know what had gone wrong between the lovers than to enter the halls of music built up by the man whom all Italy was applauding—for it was the day of Rossini’s triumph in his own country. He was watching the Duchess, and she was talking with a feverish excitement. She reminded him of the Niobe he had admired at Florence: the same dignity in woe, the same physical control; and yet her soul shone though, in the warm flush of her cheeks; and her eyes, where anxiety was disguised under a flash of pride, seemed to scorch the tears away by their fire. Her suppressed grief seemed calmer when she looked at Emilio, who never took his eyes off her; it was easy to see that she was trying to mollify some fierce despair. The state of her feelings gave a certain loftiness to her mind.

Like most women when under the stress of some unusual agitation, she overstepped her ordinary limitations and assumed something of the Pythoness, though still remaining calm and beautiful; for it was the form of her thoughts that was wrung with desperation, not the features of her face. And perhaps she wanted to shine with all her wit to lend some charm to life and detain her lover from death.

When the orchestra had given out the three chords in C major, placed at the

opening by the composer to announce that the overture will be sung—for the real overture is the great movement beginning with this stern attack, and ending only when light appears at the command of Moses—the Duchess could not control a little spasmodic start, that showed how entirely the music was in accordance with her concealed distress.

“Those three chords freeze the blood,” said she. “They announce trouble. Listen attentively to this introduction; the terrible lament of a nation stricken by the hand of God. What wailing! The King, the Queen, their first-born son, all the dignitaries of the kingdom are sighing; they are wounded in their pride, in their conquests; checked in their avarice. Dear Rossini! you have done well to throw this bone to gnaw to the Tedeschi, who declared we had no harmony, no science!

“Now you will hear the ominous melody the maestro has engrafted on to this profound harmonic composition, worthy to compare with the most elaborate structures of the Germans, but never fatiguing or tiresome.

“You French, who carried through such a bloodthirsty revolution, who crushed your aristocracy under the paw of the lion mob, on the day when this oratorio is performed in your capital, you will understand this glorious dirge of the victims on whom God is avenging his chosen people. None but an Italian could have written this pregnant and inexhaustible theme—truly Dantesque. Do you think that it is nothing to have such a dream of vengeance, even for a moment? Handel, Sebastian Bach, all you old German masters, nay, even you, great Beethoven, on your knees! Here is the queen of arts, Italy triumphant!”

The Duchess had spoken while the curtain was being raised. And now the physician heard the sublime symphony with which the composer introduces the great Biblical drama. It is to express the sufferings of a whole nation. Suffering is uniform in its expression, especially physical suffering. Thus, having instinctively felt, like all men of genius, that here there must be no variety of idea, the musician, having hit on his leading phrase, has worked it out in various keys, grouping the masses and the dramatis personae to take up the theme through modulations and cadences of admirable structure. In such simplicity is power.

“The effect of this strain, depicting the sensations of night and cold in a people accustomed to live in the bright rays of the sun, and sung by the people and their princes, is most impressive. There is something relentless in that slow phrase of music; it is cold and sinister, like an iron bar wielded by some celestial executioner, and dropping in regular rhythm on the limbs of all his victims. As we hear it passing from C minor into G minor, returning to C and again to the dominant G, starting afresh and fortissimo on the tonic B flat, drifting into F major and back to C minor, and in each key in turn more

ominously terrible, chill, and dark, we are compelled at last to enter into the impression intended by the composer."

The Frenchman was, in fact, deeply moved when all this united sorrow exploded in the cry:

"O Nume d'Israel,

Se brami in liberta

Il popol tuo fedel,

Di lui di noi pieta!"

(O God of Israel, if thou wouldst see thy faithful people free, have mercy on them, and on us.)

"Never was a grander synthesis composed of natural effects or a more perfect idealization of nature. In a great national disaster, each one for a long time bewails himself alone; then, from out of the mass, rises up, here and there, a more emphatic and vehement cry of anguish; finally, when the misery has fallen on all, it bursts forth like a tempest.

"As soon as they all recognize a common grievance, the dull murmurs of the people become cries of impatience. Rossini has proceeded on this hypothesis. After the outcry in C major, Pharoah sings his grand recitative: Mano ultrice di un Dio (Avenging hand of God), after which the original subject is repeated with more vehement expression. All Egypt appeals to Moses for help."

The Duchess had taken advantage of the pause for the entrance of Moses and Aaron to give this interpretation of that fine introduction.

"Let them weep!" she added passionately. "They have done much ill. Expiate your sins, Egyptians, expiate the crimes of your maddened Court! With what amazing skill has this great painter made use of all the gloomy tones of music, of all that is saddest on the musical palette! What creepy darkness! what a mist! Is not your very spirit in mourning? Are you not convinced of the reality of the blackness that lies over the land? Do you not feel that Nature is wrapped in the deepest shades? There are no palm-trees, no Egyptian palaces, no landscape. And what a healing to your soul will the deeply religious strain be of the heaven-sent Healer who will stay this cruel plague! How skilfully is everything wrought up to end in that glorious invocation of Moses to God.

"By a learned elaboration, which Capraja could explain to you, this appeal to heaven is accompanied by brass instruments only; it is that which gives it such a solemn, religious cast. And not merely is the artifice fine in its place; note how fertile in resource is genius. Rossini has derived fresh beauty from

the difficulty he himself created. He has the strings in reserve to express daylight when it succeeds to the darkness, and thus produces one of the greatest effects ever achieved in music.

“Till this inimitable genius showed the way never was such a result obtained with mere recitative. We have not, so far, had an air or a duet. The poet has relied on the strength of the idea, on the vividness of his imagery, and the realism of the declamatory passages. This scene of despair, this darkness that may be felt, these cries of anguish,—the whole musical picture is as fine as your great Poussin’s Deluge.”

Moses waved his staff, and it was light.

“Here, monsieur, does not the music vie with the sun, whose splendor it has borrowed, with nature, whose phenomena it expresses in every detail?” the Duchess went on, in an undertone. “Art here reaches its climax; no musician can get beyond this. Do not you hear Egypt waking up after its long torpor? Joy comes in with the day. In what composition, ancient or modern, will you find so grand a passage? The greatest gladness in contrast to the deepest woe! What exclamations! What gleeful notes! The oppressed spirit breathes again. What delirium in the tremolo of the orchestra! What a noble tutti! This is the rejoicing of a delivered nation. Are you not thrilled with joy?”

The physician, startled by the contrast, was, in fact, clapping his hands, carried away by admiration for one of the finest compositions of modern music.

“Brava la Doni!” said Vendramin, who had heard the Duchess.

“Now the introduction is ended,” said she. “You have gone through a great sensation,” she added, turning to the Frenchman. “Your heart is beating; in the depths of your imagination you have a splendid sunrise, flooding with light a whole country that before was cold and dark. Now, would you know the means by which the musician has worked, so as to admire him to-morrow for the secrets of his craft after enjoying the results to-night? What do you suppose produces this effect of daylight—so sudden, so complicated, and so complete? It consists of a simple chord of C, constantly reiterated, varied only by the chord of 4-6. This reveals the magic of his touch. To show you the glory of light he has worked by the same means that he used to represent darkness and sorrow.

“This dawn in imagery is, in fact, absolutely the same as the natural dawn; for light is one and the same thing everywhere, always alike in itself, the effects varying only with the objects it falls on. Is it not so? Well, the musician has taken for the fundamental basis of his music, for its sole motif, a simple chord in C. The sun first sheds its light on the mountain-tops and then in the

valleys. In the same way the chord is first heard on the treble string of the violins with boreal mildness; it spreads through the orchestra, it awakes the instruments one by one, and flows among them. Just as light glides from one thing to the next, giving them color, the music moves on, calling out each rill of harmony till all flow together in the tutti.

“The violins, silent until now, give the signal with their tender tremolo, softly agitato like the first rays of morning. That light, cheerful movement, which caresses the soul, is cleverly supported by chords in the bass, and by a vague fanfare on the trumpets, restricted to their lowest notes, so as to give a vivid idea of the last cool shadows that linger in the valleys while the first warm rays touch the heights. Then all the wind is gradually added to strengthen the general harmony. The voices come in with sighs of delight and surprise. At last the brass breaks out, the trumpets sound. Light, the source of all harmony, inundates all nature; every musical resource is produced with a turbulence, a splendor, to compare with that of the Eastern sun. Even the triangle, with its reiterated C, reminds us by its shrill accent and playful rhythm of the song of early birds.

“Thus the same key, freshly treated by the master’s hand, expresses the joy of all nature, while it soothes the grief it uttered before.

“There is the hall-mark of the great genius: Unity. It is the same but different. In one and the same phrase we find a thousand various feelings of woe, the misery of a nation. In one and the same chord we have all the various incidents of awakening nature, every expression of the nation’s joy. These two tremendous passages are soldered into one by the prayer to an ever-living God, author of all things, of that woe and that gladness alike. Now is not that introduction by itself a grand poem?”

“It is, indeed,” said the Frenchman.

“Next comes a quintette such as Rossini can give us. If he was ever justified in giving vent to that flowery, voluptuous grace for which Italian music is blamed, is it not in this charming movement in which each person expresses joy? The enslaved people are delivered, and yet a passion in peril is fain to moan. Pharaoh’s son loves a Hebrew woman, and she must leave him. What gives its ravishing charm to this quintette is the return to the homelier feelings of life after the grandiose picture of two stupendous and national emotions:—general misery, general joy, expressed with the magic force stamped on them by divine vengeance and with the miraculous atmosphere of the Bible narrative. Now, was not I right?” added Massimilla, as the noble sretto came to a close.

“Voci di giubilo,

D’ in’orno eccheggino,

Di pace l’ Iride

Per noi spunto.”

(Cries of joy sound about us. The rainbow of peace dawns upon us.)

“How ingeniously the composer has constructed this passage!” she went on, after waiting for a reply. “He begins with a solo on the horn, of divine sweetness, supported by arpeggios on the harps; for the first voices to be heard in this grand concerted piece are those of Moses and Aaron returning thanks to the true God. Their strain, soft and solemn, reverts to the sublime ideas of the invocation, and mingles, nevertheless, with the joy of the heathen people. This transition combines the heavenly and the earthly in a way which genius alone could invent, giving the andante of this quintette a glow of color that I can only compare to the light thrown by Titian on his Divine Persons. Did you observe the exquisite interweaving of the voices? the clever entrances by which the composer has grouped them round the main idea given out by the orchestra? the learned progressions that prepare us for the festal allegro? Did you not get a glimpse, as it were, of dancing groups, the dizzy round of a whole nation escaped from danger? And when the clarionet gives the signal for the stretto,—‘Voci di giubilo,’—so brilliant and gay, was not your soul filled with the sacred pyrrhic joy of which David speaks in the Psalms, ascribing it to the hills?”

“Yes, it would make a delightful dance tune,” said the doctor.

“French! French! always French!” exclaimed the Duchess, checked in her exultant mood by this sharp thrust. “Yes; you would be capable of taking that wonderful burst of noble and dainty rejoicing and turning it into a rigadoon. Sublime poetry finds no mercy in your eyes. The highest genius,—saints, kings, disasters,—all that is most sacred must pass under the rods of caricature. And the vulgarizing of great music by turning it into a dance tune is to caricature it. With you, wit kills soul, as argument kills reason.”

They all sat in silence through the recitative of Osiride and Membrea, who plot to annul the order given by Pharaoh for the departure of the Hebrews.

“Have I vexed you?” asked the physician to the Duchess. “I should be in despair. Your words are like a magic wand. They unlock the pigeon-holes of my brain, and let out new ideas, vivified by this sublime music.”

“No,” replied she, “you have praised our great composer after your own fashion. Rossini will be a success with you, for the sake of his witty and sensual gifts. Let us hope that he may find some noble souls, in love with the ideal—which must exist in your fruitful land,—to appreciate the sublimity, the

loftiness, of such music. Ah, now we have the famous duet, between Elcia and Osiride!" she exclaimed, and she went on, taking advantage of the triple salvo of applause which hailed la Tinti, as she made her first appearance on the stage.

"If la Tinti has fully understood the part of Elcia, you will hear the frenzied song of a woman torn by her love for her people, and her passion for one of their oppressors, while Osiride, full of mad adoration for his beautiful vassal, tries to detain her. The opera is built up as much on that grand idea as on that of Pharaoh's resistance to the power of God and of liberty; you must enter into it thoroughly or you will not understand this stupendous work.

"Notwithstanding the disfavor you show to the dramas invented by our libretto writers, you must allow me to point out the skill with which this one is constructed. The antithesis required in every fine work, and eminently favorable to music, is well worked out. What can be finer than a whole nation demanding liberty, held in bondage by bad faith, upheld by God, and piling marvel on marvel to gain freedom? What more dramatic than the Prince's love for a Hebrew woman, almost justifying treason to the oppressor's power?

"And this is what is expressed in this bold and stupendous musical poem; Rossini has stamped each nation with its fantastic individuality, for we have attributed to them a certain historic grandeur to which every imagination subscribes. The songs of the Hebrews, and their trust in God, are perpetually contrasted with Pharaoh's shrieks of rage and vain efforts, represented with a strong hand.

"At this moment Osiride, thinking only of love, hopes to detain his mistress by the memories of their joys as lovers; he wants to conquer the attractions of her feeling for her people. Here, then, you will find delicious languor, the glowing sweetness, the voluptuous suggestions of Oriental love, in the air 'Ah! se puoi cosi lasciarmi,' sung by Osiride, and in Elcia's reply, 'Ma perche cosi straziarmi?' No; two hearts in such melodious unison could never part," she went on, looking at the Prince.

"But the lovers are suddenly interrupted by the exultant voice of the Hebrew people in the distance, which recalls Elcia. What a delightful and inspiriting allegro is the theme of this march, as the Israelites set out for the desert! No one but Rossini can make wind instruments and trumpets say so much. And is not the art which can express in two phrases all that is meant by the 'native land' certainly nearer to heaven than the others? This clarion-call always moves me so deeply that I cannot find words to tell you how cruel it is to an enslaved people to see those who are free march away!"

The Duchess' eyes filled with tears as she listened to the grand movement, which in fact crowns the opera.

“Dov’ e mai quel core amante,” she murmured in Italian, as la Tinti began the delightful aria of the stretto in which she implores pity for her grief. “But what is the matter? The pit are dissatisfied—”

“Genovese is braying like a stage,” replied the Prince.

In point of fact, this first duet with la Tinti was spoilt by Genovese’s utter breakdown. His excellent method, recalling that of Crescentini and Veluti, seemed to desert him completely. A sostenuto in the wrong place, an embellishment carried to excess, spoilt the effect; or again a loud climax with no due crescendo, an outburst of sound like water tumbling through a suddenly opened sluice, showed complete and wilful neglect of the laws of good taste.

The pit was in the greatest excitement. The Venetian public believed there was a deliberate plot between Genovese and his friends. La Tinti was recalled and applauded with frenzy while Genovese had a hint or two warning him of the hostile feeling of the audience. During this scene, highly amusing to a Frenchman, while la Tinti was recalled eleven times to receive alone the frantic acclamations of the house,—Genovese, who was all but hissed, not daring to offer her his hand,—the doctor made a remark to the Duchess as to the stretto of the duet.

“In this place,” said he, “Rossini ought to have expressed the deepest grief, and I find on the contrary an airy movement, a tone of ill-timed cheerfulness.”

“You are right,” said she. “This mistake is the result of a tyrannous custom which composers are expected to obey. He was thinking more of his prima donna than of Elcia when he wrote that stretto. But this evening, even if la Tinti had been more brilliant than ever, I could throw myself so completely into the situation, that the passage, lively as it is, is to me full of sadness.”

The physician looked attentively from the Prince to the Duchess, but could not guess the reason that held them apart, and that made this duet seem to them so heartrending.

“Now comes a magnificent thing, the scheming of Pharaoh against the Hebrews. The great aria ‘A rispettarmi apprenda’’ (Learn to respect me) is a triumph for Carthagenova, who will express superbly the offended pride and the duplicity of a sovereign. The Throne will speak. He will withdraw the concessions that have been made, he arms himself in wrath. Pharaoh rises to his feet to clutch the prey that is escaping.

“Rossini never wrote anything grander in style, or stamped with more living and irresistible energy. It is a consummate work, supported by an accompaniment of marvelous orchestration, as indeed is every portion of this opera. The vigor of youth illumines the smallest details.”

The whole house applauded this noble movement, which was admirably rendered by the singer, and thoroughly appreciated by the Venetians.

“In the finale,” said the Duchess, “you hear a repetition of the march, expressive of the joy of deliverance and of faith in God, who allows His people to rush off gleefully to wander in the Desert! What lungs but would be refreshed by the aspirations of a whole nation freed from slavery.

“Oh, beloved and living melodies! Glory to the great genius who has known how to give utterance to such feelings! There is something essentially warlike in that march, proclaiming that the God of armies is on the side of these people. How full of feeling are these strains of thanksgiving! The imagery of the Bible rises up in our mind; this glorious musical scena enables us to realize one of the grandest dramas of that ancient and solemn world. The religious form given to some of the voice parts, and the way in which they come in, one by one, to group with the others, express all we have ever imagined of the sacred marvels of that early age of humanity.

“And yet this fine concerted piece is no more than a development of the theme of the march into all its musical outcome. That theme is the inspiring element alike for the orchestra and the voices, for the air, and for the brilliant instrumentation that supports it.

“Elcia now comes to join the crowd; and to give shade to the rejoicing spirit of this number, Rossini has made her utter her regrets. Listen to her duettino with Amenofi. Did blighted love ever express itself in lovelier song? It is full of the grace of a notturno, of the secret grief of hopeless love. How sad! how sad! The Desert will indeed be a desert to her!

“After this comes the fierce conflict of the Egyptians and the Hebrews. All their joy is spoiled, their march stopped by the arrival of the Egyptians. Pharaoh’s edict is proclaimed in a musical phrase, hollow and dread, which is the leading motif of the finale; we could fancy that we hear the tramp of the great Egyptian army, surrounding the sacred phalanx of the true God, curling round it, like a long African serpent enveloping its prey. But how beautiful is the lament of the duped and disappointed Hebrews! Though, in truth, it is more Italian than Hebrew. What a superb passage introduces Pharaoh’s arrival, when his presence brings the two leaders face to face, and all the moving passions of the drama. The conflict of sentiments in that sublime ottetto, where the wrath of Moses meets that of the two Pharaohs, is admirable. What a medley of voices and of unchained furies!

“No grander subject was ever wrought out by a composer. The famous finale of Don Giovanni, after all, only shows us a libertine at odds with his victims, who invoke the vengeance of Heaven; while here earth and its dominions try to defeat God. Two nations are here face to face. And Rossini,

having every means at his command, has made wonderful use of them. He has succeeded in expressing the turmoil of a tremendous storm as a background to the most terrible imprecations, without making it ridiculous. He has achieved it by the use of chords repeated in triple time—a monotonous rhythm of gloomy musical emphasis—and so persistent as to be quite overpowering. The horror of the Egyptians at the torrent of fire, the cries of vengeance from the Hebrews, needed a delicate balance of masses; so note how he has made the development of the orchestral parts follow that of the chorus. The allegro assai in C minor is terrible in the midst of that deluge of fire.

“Confess now,” said Massimilla, at the moment when Moses, lifting his rod, brings down the rain of fire, and when the composer puts forth all his powers in the orchestra and on the stage, “that no music ever more perfectly expressed the idea of distress and confusion.”

“They have spread to the pit,” remarked the Frenchman.

“What is it now? The pit is certainly in great excitement,” said the Duchess.

In the finale, Genovese, his eyes fixed on la Tinti, had launched into such preposterous flourishes, that the pit, indignant at this interference with their enjoyment, were at a height of uproar. Nothing could be more exasperating to Italian ears than this contrast of good and bad singing. The manager went so far as to appear on the stage, to say that in reply to his remarks to his leading singer, Signor Genovese had replied that he knew not how or by what offence he had lost the countenance of the public, at the very moment when he was endeavoring to achieve perfection in his art.

“Let him be as bad as he was yesterday—that was good enough for us!” roared Capraja, in a rage.

This suggestion put the house into a good humor again.

Contrary to Italian custom, the ballet was not much attended to. In every box the only subject of conversation was Genovese’s strange behavior, and the luckless manager’s speech. Those who were admitted behind the scenes went off at once to inquire into the mystery of this performance, and it was presently rumored that la Tinti had treated her colleague Genovese to a dreadful scene, in which she had accused the tenor of being jealous of her success, of having hindered it by his ridiculous behavior, and even of trying to spoil her performance by acting passionate devotion. The lady was shedding bitter tears over this catastrophe. She had been hoping, she said, to charm her lover, who was somewhere in the house, though she had failed to discover him.

Without knowing the peaceful course of daily life in Venice at the present

day, so devoid of incident that a slight altercation between two lovers, or the transient huskiness of a singer's voice becomes a subject of discussion, regarded of as much importance as politics in England, it is impossible to conceive of the excitement in the theatre and at the Cafe Florian. La Tinti was in love; la Tinti had been hindered in her performance; Genovese was mad or purposely malignant, inspired by the artist's jealousy so familiar to Italians! What a mine of matter for eager discussion!

The whole pit was talking as men talk at the Bourse, and the result was such a clamor as could not fail to amaze a Frenchman accustomed to the quiet of the Paris theatres. The boxes were in a ferment like the stir of swarming bees.

One man alone remained passive in the turmoil. Emilio Memmi, with his back to the stage and his eyes fixed on Massimilla with a melancholy expression, seemed to live in her gaze; he had not once looked round at the prima donna.

"I need not ask you, caro carino, what was the result of my negotiation," said Vendramin to Emilio. "Your pure and pious Massimilla has been supremely kind—in short, she has been la Tinti?"

The Prince's reply was a shake of his head, full of the deepest melancholy.

"Your love has not descended from the ethereal spaces where you soar," said Vendramin, excited by opium. "It is not yet materialized. This morning, as every day for six months—you felt flowers opening their scented cups under the dome of your skull that had expanded to vast proportions. All your blood moved to your swelling heart that rose to choke your throat. There, in there,"—and he laid his hand on Emilio's breast,—"you felt rapturous emotions. Massimilla's voice fell on your soul in waves of light; her touch released a thousand imprisoned joys which emerged from the convolutions of your brain to gather about you in clouds, to waft your etherealized body through the blue air to a purple glow far above the snowy heights, to where the pure love of angels dwells. The smile, the kisses of her lips wrapped you in a poisoned robe which burnt up the last vestiges of your earthly nature. Her eyes were twin stars that turned you into shadowless light. You knelt together on the palm-branches of heaven, waiting for the gates of Paradise to be opened; but they turned heavily on their hinges, and in your impatience you struck at them, but could not reach them. Your hand touched nothing but clouds more nimble than your desires. Your radiant companion, crowned with white roses like a bride of Heaven, wept at your anguish. Perhaps she was murmuring melodious litanies to the Virgin, while the demoniacal cravings of the flesh were haunting you with their shameless clamor, and you disdained the divine fruits of that ecstasy in which I live, though shortening my life."

“Your exaltation, my dear Vendramin,” replied Emilio, calmly, “is still beneath reality. Who can describe that purely physical exhaustion in which we are left by the abuse of a dream of pleasure, leaving the soul still eternally craving, and the spirit in clear possession of its faculties?

“But I am weary of this torment, which is that of Tantalus. This is my last night on earth. After one final effort, our Mother shall have her child again—the Adriatic will silence my last sigh—”

“Are you idiotic?” cried Vendramin. “No; you are mad; for madness, the crisis we despise, is the memory of an antecedent condition acting on our present state of being. The genius of my dreams has taught me that, and much else! You want to make one of the Duchess and la Tinti; nay, dear Emilio, take them separately; it will be far wiser. Raphael alone ever united form and idea. You want to be the Raphael of love; but chance cannot be commanded. Raphael was a ‘fluke’ of God’s creation, for He foreordained that form and idea should be antagonistic; otherwise nothing could live. When the first cause is more potent than the outcome, nothing comes of it. We must live either on earth or in the skies. Remain in the skies; it is always too soon to come down to earth.”

“I will take the Duchess home,” said the Prince, “and make a last attempt—afterwards?”

“Afterwards,” cried Vendramin, anxiously, “promise to call for me at Florian’s.”

“I will.”

This dialogue, in modern Greek, with which Vendramin and Emilio were familiar, as many Venetians are, was unintelligible to the Duchess and to the Frenchman. Although he was quite outside the little circle that held the Duchess, Emilio and Vendramin together—for these three understood each other by means of Italian glances, by turns arch and keen, or veiled and sidelong—the physician at last discerned part of the truth. An earnest entreaty from the Duchess had prompted Vendramin’s suggestion to Emilio, for Massimilla had begun to suspect the misery endured by her lover in that cold empyrean where he was wandering, though she had no suspicions of la Tinti.

“These two young men are mad!” said the doctor.

“As to the Prince,” said the Duchess, “trust me to cure him. As to Vendramin, if he cannot understand this sublime music, he is perhaps incurable.”

“If you would but tell me the cause of their madness, I could cure them,” said the Frenchman.

“And since when have great physicians ceased to read men’s minds?” said she, jestingly.

The ballet was long since ended; the second act of Mose was beginning. The pit was perfectly attentive. A rumor had got abroad that Duke Cataneo had lectured Genovese, representing to him what injury he was doing to Clarina, the diva of the day. The second act would certainly be magnificent.

“The Egyptian Prince and his father are on the stage,” said the Duchess. “They have yielded once more, though insulting the Hebrews, but they are trembling with rage. The father congratulates himself on his son’s approaching marriage, and the son is in despair at this fresh obstacle, though it only increases his love, to which everything is opposed. Genovese and Carthagenova are singing admirably. As you see, the tenor is making his peace with the house. How well he brings out the beauty of the music! The phrase given out by the son on the tonic, and repeated by the father on the dominant, is all in character with the simple, serious scheme which prevails throughout the score; the sobriety of it makes the endless variety of the music all the more wonderful. All Egypt is there.

“I do not believe that there is in modern music a composition more perfectly noble. The solemn and majestic paternity of a king is fully expressed in that magnificent theme, in harmony with the grand style that stamps the opera throughout. The idea of a Pharaoh’s son pouring out his sorrows on his father’s bosom could surely not be more admirably represented than in this grand imagery. Do you not feel a sense of the splendor we are wont to attribute to that monarch of antiquity?”

“It is indeed sublime music,” said the Frenchman.

“The air Pace mia smarrita, which the Queen will now sing, is one of those bravura songs which every composer is compelled to introduce, though they mar the general scheme of the work; but an opera would as often as not never see the light, if the prima donna’s vanity were not duly flattered. Still, this musical ‘sop’ is so fine in itself that it is performed as written, on every stage; it is so brilliant that the leading lady does not substitute her favorite show piece, as is very commonly done in operas.

“And now comes the most striking movement in the score: the duet between Osiride and Elcia in the subterranean chamber where he has hidden her to keep her from the departing Israelites, and to fly with her himself from Egypt. The lovers are then intruded on by Aaron, who has been to warn Amalthea, and we get the grandest of all quartettes: Mi manca la voce, mi sento morire. This is one of those masterpieces that will survive in spite of time, that destroyer of fashion in music, for it speaks the language of the soul which can never change. Mozart holds his own by the famous finale to Don

Giovanni; Marcello, by his psalm, Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei; Cimarosa, by the air Pria che spunti; Beethoven by his C minor symphony; Pergolesi, by his Stabat Mater; Rossini will live by Mi manca la voce. What is most to be admired in Rossini is his command of variety to form; to produce the effect here required, he has had recourse to the old structure of the canon in unison, to bring the voices in, and merge them in the same melody. As the form of these sublime melodies was new, he set them in an old frame; and to give it the more relief he has silenced the orchestra, accompanying the voices with the harps alone. It is impossible to show greater ingenuity of detail, or to produce a grander general effect.—Dear me! again an outbreak!" said the Duchess.

Genovese, who had sung his duet with Carthagenova so well, was caricaturing himself now that la Tinti was on the stage. From a great singer he sank to the level of the most worthless chorus singer.

The most formidable uproar arose that had ever echoed to the roof of the Fenice. The commotion only yielded to Clarina, and she, furious at the difficulties raised by Genovese's obstinacy, sang Mi manca la voce as it will never be sung again. The enthusiasm was tremendous; the audience forgot their indignation and rage in pleasure that was really acute.

"She floods my soul with purple glow!" said Capraja, waving his hand in benediction at la Diva Tinti.

"Heaven send all its blessings on your head!" cried a gondolier.

"Pharaoh will now revoke his commands," said the Duchess, while the commotion in the pit was calming down. "Moses will overwhelm him, even on his throne, by declaring the death of every first-born son in Egypt, singing that strain of vengeance which augurs thunders from heaven, while above it the Hebrew clarions ring out. But you must clearly understand that this air is by Pacini; Carthagenova introduces it instead of that by Rossini. This air, Paventa, will no doubt hold its place in the score; it gives a bass too good an opportunity for displaying the quality of his voice, and expression here will carry the day rather than science. However, the air is full of magnificent menace, and it is possible that we may not be long allowed to hear it."

A thunder of clapping and bravos hailed the song, followed by deep and cautious silence; nothing could be more significant or more thoroughly Venetian than the outbreak and its sudden suppression.

"I need say nothing of the coronation march announcing the enthronement of Osiride, intended by the King as a challenge to Moses; to hear it is enough. Their famous Beethoven has written nothing grander. And this march, full of earthly pomp, contrasts finely with the march of the Israelites. Compare them,

and you will see that the music is full of purpose.

“Elcia declares her love in the presence of the two Hebrew leaders, and then renounces it in the fine aria, Porge la destra amata. (Place your beloved hand.) Ah! What anguish! Only look at the house!”

The pit was shouting bravo, when Genovese left the stage.

“Now, free from her deplorable lover, we shall hear Tinti sing, O desolata Elcia—the tremendous cavatina expressive of love disapproved by God.”

“Where art thou, Rossini?” cried Cataneo. “If he could but hear the music created by his genius so magnificently performed,” he went on. “Is not Clarina worthy of him?” he asked Capraja. “To give life to those notes by such gusts of flame, starting from the lungs and feeding in the air on some unknown matter which our ears inhale, and which bears us heavenwards in a rapture of love, she must be divine!”

“She is like the gorgeous Indian plant, which deserting the earth absorbs invisible nourishment from the atmosphere, and sheds from its spiral white blossom such fragrant vapors as fill the brain with dreams,” replied Capraja.

On being recalled, la Tinti appeared alone. She was received with a storm of applause; a thousand kisses were blown to her from finger-tips; she was pelted with roses, and a wreath was made of the flowers snatched from the ladies’ caps, almost all sent out from Paris.

The cavatina was encored.

“How eagerly Capraja, with his passion for embellishments, must have looked forward to this air, which derives all its value from execution,” remarked Massimilla. “Here Rossini has, so to speak, given the reins over to the singer’s fancy. Her cadenzas and her feeling are everything. With a poor voice or inferior execution, it would be nothing—the throat is responsible for the effects of this aria.

“The singer has to express the most intense anguish,—that of a woman who sees her lover dying before her very eyes. La Tinti makes the house ring with her highest notes; and Rossini, to leave pure singing free to do its utmost, has written it in the simplest, clearest style. Then, as a crowning effort, he has composed those heartrending musical cries: Tormenti! Affanni! Smanie! What grief, what anguish, in those runs. And la Tinti, you see, has quite carried the house off its feet.”

The Frenchman, bewildered by this adoring admiration throughout a vast theatre for the source of its delight, here had a glimpse of genuine Italian nature. But neither the Duchess nor the two young men paid any attention to the ovation. Clarina began again.

The Duchess feared that she was seeing her Emilio for the last time. As to the Prince: in the presence of the Duchess, the sovereign divinity who lifted him to the skies, he had forgotten where he was, he no longer heard the voice of the woman who had initiated him into the mysteries of earthly pleasure, for deep dejection made his ears tingle with a chorus of plaintive voices, half-drowned in a rushing noise as of pouring rain.

Vendramin saw himself in an ancient Venetian costume, looking on at the ceremony of the Bucentaur. The Frenchman, who plainly discerned that some strange and painful mystery stood between the Prince and the Duchess, was racking his brain with shrewd conjecture to discover what it could be.

The scene had changed. In front of a fine picture, representing the Desert and the Red Sea, the Egyptians and Hebrews marched and countermarched without any effect on the feelings of the four persons in the Duchess' box. But when the first chords on the harps preluded the hymn of the delivered Israelites, the Prince and Vendramin rose and stood leaning against the opposite sides of the box, and the Duchess, resting her elbow on the velvet ledge, supported her head on her left hand.

The Frenchman, understanding from this little stir, how important this justly famous chorus was in the opinion of the house, listened with devout attention.

The audience, with one accord, shouted for its repetition.

"I feel as if I were celebrating the liberation of Italy," thought a Milanese.

"Such music lifts up bowed heads, and revives hope in the most torpid," said a man from the Romagna.

"In this scene," said Massimilla, whose emotion was evident, "science is set aside. Inspiration, alone, dictated this masterpiece; it rose from the composer's soul like a cry of love! As to the accompaniment, it consists of the harps; the orchestra appears only at the last repetition of that heavenly strain. Rossini can never rise higher than in this prayer; he will do as good work, no doubt, but never better: the sublime is always equal to itself; but this hymn is one of the things that will always be sublime. The only match for such a conception might be found in the psalms of the great Marcello, a noble Venetian, who was to music what Giotto was to painting. The majesty of the phrase, unfolding itself with episodes of inexhaustible melody, is comparable with the finest things ever invented by religious writers.

"How simple is the structure! Moses opens the attack in G minor, ending in a cadenza in B flat which allows the chorus to come in, pianissimo at first, in B flat, returning by modulations to G minor. This splendid treatment of the voices, recurring three times, ends in the last strophe with a stretto in G major

of absolutely overpowering effect. We feel as though this hymn of a nation released from slavery, as it mounts to heaven, were met by kindred strains falling from the higher spheres. The stars respond with joy to the ecstasy of liberated mortals. The rounded fulness of the rhythm, the deliberate dignity of the graduations leading up to the outbursts of thanksgiving, and its slow return raise heavenly images in the soul. Could you not fancy that you saw heaven open, angels holding sistrums of gold, prostrate seraphs swinging their fragrant censers, and the archangels leaning on the flaming swords with which they have vanquished the heathen?

"The secret of this music and its refreshing effect on the soul is, I believe, that of a very few works of human genius: it carries us for the moment into the infinite; we feel it within us; we see it, in those melodies as boundless as the hymns sung round the throne of God. Rossini's genius carries us up to prodigious heights, whence we look down on a promised land, and our eyes, charmed by heavenly light, gaze into limitless space. Elcia's last strain, having almost recovered from her grief, brings a feeling of earth-born passions into this hymn of thanksgiving. This, again, is a touch of genius.

"Ay, sing!" exclaimed the Duchess, as she listened to the last stanza with the same gloomy enthusiasm as the singers threw into it. "Sing! You are free!"

The words were spoken in a voice that startled the physician. To divert Massimilla from her bitter reflections, while the excitement of recalling la Tinti was at its height, he engaged her in one of the arguments in which the French excel.

"Madame," said he, "in explaining this grand work—which I shall come to hear again to-morrow with a fuller comprehension, thanks to you, of its structure and its effect—you have frequently spoken of the color of the music, and of the ideas it depicts; now I, as an analyst, a materialist, must confess that I have always rebelled against the affectation of certain enthusiasts, who try to make us believe that music paints with tones. Would it not be the same thing if Raphael's admirers spoke of his singing with colors?"

"In the language of musicians," replied the Duchess, "painting is arousing certain associations in our souls, or certain images in our brain; and these memories and images have a color of their own; they are sad or cheerful. You are battling for a word, that is all. According to Capraja, each instrument has its task, its mission, and appeals to certain feelings in our souls. Does a pattern in gold on a blue ground produce the same sensations in you as a red pattern on black or green? In these, as in music, there are no figures, no expression of feeling; they are purely artistic, and yet no one looks at them with indifference. Has not the oboe the peculiar tone that we associate with the open country, in common with most wind instruments? The brass suggests martial ideas, and

rouses us to vehement or even somewhat furious feelings. The strings, for which the material is derived from the organic world, seem to appeal to the subtlest fibres of our nature; they go to the very depths of the heart. When I spoke of the gloomy hue, and the coldness of the tones in the introduction to Mose, was I not fully as much justified as your critics are when they speak of the ‘color’ in a writer’s language? Do you not acknowledge that there is a nervous style, a pallid style, a lively, and a highly-colored style? Art can paint with words, sounds, colors, lines, form; the means are many; the result is one.

“An Italian architect might give us the same sensation that is produced in us by the introduction to Mose, by constructing a walk through dark, damp avenues of tall, thick trees, and bringing us out suddenly in a valley full of streams, flowers, and mills, and basking in the sunshine. In their greatest moments the arts are but the expression of the grand scenes of nature.

“I am not learned enough to enlarge on the philosophy of music; go and talk to Capraja; you will be amazed at what he can tell you. He will say that every instrument that depends on the touch or breath of man for its expression and length of note, is superior as a vehicle of expression to color, which remains fixed, or speech, which has its limits. The language of music is infinite; it includes everything; it can express all things.

“Now do you see wherein lies the pre-eminence of the work you have just heard? I can explain it in a few words. There are two kinds of music: one, petty, poor, second-rate, always the same, based on a hundred or so of phrases which every musician has at his command, a more or less agreeable form of babble which most composers live in. We listen to their strains, their would-be melodies, with more or less satisfaction, but absolutely nothing is left in our mind; by the end of the century they are forgotten. But the nations, from the beginning of time till our own day, have cherished as a precious treasure certain strains which epitomize their instincts and habits; I might almost say their history. Listen to one of these primitive tones,—the Gregorian chant, for instance, is, in sacred song, the inheritance of the earliest peoples,—and you will lose yourself in deep dreaming. Strange and immense conceptions will unfold within you, in spite of the extreme simplicity of these rudimentary relics. And once or twice in a century—not oftener, there arises a Homer of music, to whom God grants the gift of being ahead of his age; men who can compact melodies full of accomplished facts, pregnant with mighty poetry. Think of this; remember it. The thought, repeated by you, will prove fruitful; it is melody, not harmony, that can survive the shocks of time.

“The music of this oratorio contains a whole world of great and sacred things. A work which begins with that introduction and ends with that prayer is immortal—as immortal as the Easter hymn, O filii et filioe, as the Dies iroe of the dead, as all the songs which in every land have outlived its splendor, its

happiness, and its ruined prosperity."

The tears the Duchess wiped away as she quitted her box showed plainly that she was thinking of the Venice that is no more; and Vendramin kissed her hand.

The performance ended with the most extraordinary chaos of noises: abuse and hisses hurled at Genovese and a fit of frenzy in praise of la Tinti. It was a long time since the Venetians had had so lively an evening. They were warmed and revived by that antagonism which is never lacking in Italy, where the smallest towns always throve on the antagonistic interests of two factions: the Geulphs and Ghibellines everywhere; the Capulets and the Montagues at Verona; the Geremei and the Lomelli at Bologna; the Fieschi and the Doria at Genoa; the patricians and the populace, the Senate and tribunes of the Roman republic; the Pazzi and the Medici at Florence; the Sforza and the Visconti at Milan; the Orsini and the Colonna at Rome,—in short, everywhere and on every occasion there has been the same impulse.

Out in the streets there were already Genovists and Tintists.

The Prince escorted the Duchess, more depressed than ever by the loves of Osiride; she feared some similar disaster to her own, and could only cling to Emilio, as if to keep him next her heart.

"Remember your promise," said Vendramin. "I will wait for you in the square."

Vendramin took the Frenchman's arm, proposing that they should walk together on the Piazza San Marco while awaiting the Prince.

"I shall be only too glad if he should not come," he added.

This was the text for a conversation between the two, Vendramin regarding it as a favorable opportunity for consulting the physician, and telling him the singular position Emilio had placed himself in.

The Frenchman did as every Frenchman does on all occasions: he laughed. Vendramin, who took the matter very seriously, was angry; but he was mollified when the disciple of Majendie, of Cuvier, of Dupuytren, and of Brossais assured him that he believed he could cure the Prince of his high-flown raptures, and dispel the heavenly poetry in which he shrouded Massimilla as in a cloud.

"A happy form of misfortune!" said he. "The ancients, who were not such fools as might be inferred from their crystal heaven and their ideas on physics, symbolized in the fable of Ixion the power which nullifies the body and makes the spirit lord of all."

Vendramin and the doctor presently met Genovese, and with him the

fantastic Capraja. The melomaniac was anxious to learn the real cause of the tenor's fiasco. Genovese, the question being put to him, talked fast, like all men who can intoxicate themselves by the ebullition of ideas suggested to them by a passion.

"Yes, signori, I love her, I worship her with a frenzy of which I never believed myself capable, now that I am tired of women. Women play the mischief with art. Pleasure and work cannot be carried on together. Clara fancies that I was jealous of her success, that I wanted to hinder her triumph at Venice; but I was clapping in the side-scenes, and shouted Diva louder than any one in the house."

"But even that," said Cataneo, joining them, "does not explain why, from being a divine singer, you should have become one of the most execrable performers who ever piped air through his larynx, giving none of the charm even which enchants and bewitches us."

"I!" said the singer. "I a bad singer! I who am the equal of the greatest performers!"

By this time, the doctor and Vendramin, Capraja, Cataneo, and Genovese had made their way to the piazzetta. It was midnight. The glittering bay, outlined by the churches of San Giorgio and San Paulo at the end of the Giudecca, and the beginning of the Grand Canal, that opens so mysteriously under the Dogana and the church of Santa Maria della Salute, lay glorious and still. The moon shone on the barques along the Riva de' Schiavoni. The waters of Venice, where there is no tide, looked as if they were alive, dancing with a myriad spangles. Never had a singer a more splendid stage.

Genovese, with an emphatic flourish, seemed to call Heaven and Earth to witness; and then, with no accompaniment but the lapping waves, he sang Ombra adorata, Crescentini's great air. The song, rising up between the statues of San Teodoro and San Giorgio, in the heart of sleeping Venice lighted by the moon, the words, in such strange harmony with the scene, and the melancholy passion of the singer, held the Italians and the Frenchman spellbound.

At the very first notes, Vendramin's face was wet with tears. Capraja stood as motionless as one of the statues in the ducal palace. Cataneo seemed moved to some feeling. The Frenchman, taken by surprise, was meditative, like a man of science in the presence of a phenomenon that upsets all his fundamental axioms. These four minds, all so different, whose hopes were so small, who believed in nothing for themselves or after themselves, who regarded their own existence as that of a transient and a fortuitous being,—like the little life of a plant or a beetle,—had a glimpse of Heaven. Never did music more truly merit the epithet divine. The consoling notes, as they were poured out, enveloped their souls in soft and soothing airs. On these vapors, almost

visible, as it seemed to the listeners, like the marble shapes about them in the silver moonlight, angels sat whose wings, devoutly waving, expressed adoration and love. The simple, artless melody penetrated to the soul as with a beam of light. It was a holy passion!

But the singer's vanity roused them from their emotion with a terrible shock.

"Now, am I a bad singer?" he exclaimed, as he ended.

His audience only regretted that the instrument was not a thing of Heaven. This angelic song was then no more than the outcome of a man's offended vanity! The singer felt nothing, thought nothing, of the pious sentiments and divine images he could create in others,—no more, in fact, than Paganini's violin knows what the player makes it utter. What they had seen in fancy was Venice lifting its shroud and singing—and it was merely the result of a tenor's fiasco!

"Can you guess the meaning of such a phenomenon?" the Frenchman asked of Capraja, wishing to make him talk, as the Duchess had spoken of him as a profound thinker.

"What phenomenon?" said Capraja.

"Genovese—who is admirable in the absence of la Tinti, and when he sings with her is a braying ass."

"He obeys an occult law of which one of your chemists might perhaps give you the mathematical formula, and which the next century will no doubt express in a statement full of x, a, and b, mixed up with little algebraic signs, bars, and quirks that give me the colic; for the finest conceptions of mathematics do not add much to the sum total of our enjoyment.

"When an artist is so unfortunate as to be full of the passion he wishes to express, he cannot depict it because he is the thing itself instead of its image. Art is the work of the brain, not of the heart. When you are possessed by a subject you are a slave, not a master; you are like a king besieged by his people. Too keen a feeling, at the moment when you want to represent that feeling, causes an insurrection of the senses against the governing faculty."

"Might we not convince ourselves of this by some further experiment?" said the doctor.

"Cataneo, you might bring your tenor and the prima donna together again," said Capraja to his friend.

"Well, gentlemen," said the Duke, "come to sup with me. We ought to reconcile the tenor and la Clarina; otherwise the season will be ruined in Venice."

The invitation was accepted.

“Gondoliers!” called Cataneo.

“One minute,” said Vendramin. “Memmi is waiting for me at Florian’s; I cannot leave him to himself. We must make him tipsy to-night, or he will kill himself to-morrow.”

“Corpo santo!” exclaimed the Duke. “I must keep that young fellow alive, for the happiness and future prospects of my race. I will invite him, too.”

They all went back to Florian’s, where the assembled crowd were holding an eager and stormy discussion to which the tenor’s arrival put an end. In one corner, near a window looking out on the colonnade, gloomy, with a fixed gaze and rigid attitude, Emilio was a dismal image of despair.

“That crazy fellow,” said the physician, in French, to Vendramin, “does not know what he wants. Here is a man who can make of a Massimilla Doni a being apart from the rest of creation, possessing her in heaven, amid ideal splendor such as no power on earth can make real. He can behold his mistress for ever sublime and pure, can always hear within him what we have just heard on the seashore; can always live in the light of a pair of eyes which create for him the warm and golden glow that surrounds the Virgin in Titian’s Assumption,—after Raphael had invented it or had it revealed to him for the Transfiguration,—and this man only longs to smirch the poem.

“By my advice he must needs combine his sensual joys and his heavenly adoration in one woman. In short, like all the rest of us, he will have a mistress. He had a divinity, and the wretched creature insists on her being a female! I assure you, monsieur, he is resigning heaven. I will not answer for it that he may not ultimately die of despair.

“O ye women’s faces, delicately outlined in a pure and radiant oval, reminding us of those creations of art where it has most successfully competed with nature! Divine feet that cannot walk, slender forms that an earthly breeze would break, shapes too frail ever to conceive, virgins that we dreamed of as we grew out of childhood, admired in secret, and adored without hope, veiled in the beams of some unwearying desire,—maids whom we may never see again, but whose smile remains supreme in our life, what hog of Epicurus could insist on dragging you down to the mire of this earth!

“The sun, monsieur, gives light and heat to the world, only because it is at a distance of thirty-three millions of leagues. Get nearer to it, and science warns you that it is not really hot or luminous,—for science is of some use,” he added, looking at Capraja.

“Not so bad for a Frenchman and a doctor,” said Capraja, patting the

foreigner on the shoulder. “You have in those words explained the thing which Europeans least understand in all Dante: his Beatrice. Yes, Beatrice, that ideal figure, the queen of the poet’s fancies, chosen above all the elect, consecrated with tears, deified by memory, and for ever young in the presence of ineffectual desire!”

“Prince,” said the Duke to Emilio, “come and sup with me. You cannot refuse the poor Neapolitan whom you have robbed both of his wife and of his mistress.”

This broad Neapolitan jest, spoken with an aristocratic good manner, made Emilio smile; he allowed the Duke to take his arm and lead him away.

Cataneo had already sent a messenger to his house from the cafe.

As the Palazzo Memmi was on the Grand Canal, not far from Santa Maria della Salute, the way thither on foot was round by the Rialto, or it could be reached in a gondola. The four guests would not separate and preferred to walk; the Duke’s infirmities obliged him to get into his gondola.

At about two in the morning anybody passing the Memmi palace would have seen light pouring out of every window across the Grand Canal, and have heard the delightful overture to Semiramide performed at the foot of the steps by the orchestra of the Fenice, as a serenade to la Tinti.

The company were at supper in the second floor gallery. From the balcony la Tinti in return sang Almavida’s Buona sera from Il Barbiere, while the Duke’s steward distributed payment from his master to the poor artists and bid them to dinner the next day, such civilities as are expected of grand signors who protect singers, and of fine ladies who protect tenors and basses. In these cases there is nothing for it but to marry all the corps de theatre.

Cataneo did things handsomely; he was the manager’s banker, and this season was costing him two thousand crowns.

He had had all the palace furnished, had imported a French cook, and wines of all lands. So the supper was a regal entertainment.

The Prince, seated next la Tinti, was keenly alive, all through the meal, to what poets in every language call the darts of love. The transcendental vision of Massimilla was eclipsed, just as the idea of God is sometimes hidden by clouds of doubt in the consciousness of solitary thinkers. Clarina thought herself the happiest woman in the world as she perceived Emilio was in love with her. Confident of retaining him, her joy was reflected in her features, her beauty was so dazzling that the men, as they lifted their glasses, could not resist bowing to her with instinctive admiration.

“The Duchess is not to compare with la Tinti,” said the Frenchman,

forgetting his theory under the fire of the Sicilian's eyes.

The tenor ate and drank languidly; he seemed to care only to identify himself with the prima donna's life, and had lost the hearty sense of enjoyment which is characteristic of Italian men singers.

"Come, signorina," said the Duke, with an imploring glance at Clarina, "and you, caro prima uomo," he added to Genovese, "unite your voices in one perfect sound. Let us have the C of Qual portento, when light appears in the oratorio we have just heard, to convince my old friend Capraja of the superiority of unison to any embellishment."

"I will carry her off from that Prince she is in love with; for she adores him —it stares me in the face!" said Genovese to himself.

What was the amazement of the guests who had heard Genovese out of doors, when he began to bray, to coo, mew, squeal, gargle, bellow, thunder, bark, shriek, even produce sounds which could only be described as a hoarse rattle,—in short, go through an incomprehensible farce, while his face was transfigured with rapturous expression like that of a martyr, as painted by Zurbaran or Murillo, Titian or Raphael. The general shout of laughter changed to almost tragical gravity when they saw that Genovese was in utter earnest. La Tinti understood that her companion was in love with her, and had spoken the truth on the stage, the land of falsehood.

"Poverino!" she murmured, stroking the Prince's hand under the table.

"By all that is holy!" cried Capraja, "will you tell me what score you are reading at this moment—murdering Rossini? Pray inform us what you are thinking about, what demon is struggling in your throat."

"A demon!" cried Genovese, "say rather the god of music. My eyes, like those of Saint-Cecilia, can see angels, who, pointing with their fingers, guide me along the lines of the score which is written in notes of fire, and I am trying to keep up with them. PER DIO! do you not understand? The feeling that inspires me has passed into my being; it fills my heart and my lungs; my soul and throat have but one life.

"Have you never, in a dream, listened to the most glorious strains, the ideas of unknown composers who have made use of pure sound as nature has hidden it in all things,—sound which we call forth, more or less perfectly, by the instruments we employ to produce masses of various color; but which in those dream-concerts are heard free from the imperfections of the performers who cannot be all feeling, all soul? And I, I give you that perfection, and you abuse me!

"You are as mad at the pit of the Fenice, who hissed me! I scorned the

vulgar crowd for not being able to mount with me to the heights whence we reign over art, and I appeal to men of mark, to a Frenchman—Why, he is gone!”

“Half an hour ago,” said Vendramin.

“That is a pity. He, perhaps, would have understood me, since Italians, lovers of art, do not—”

“On you go!” said Capraja, with a smile, and tapping lightly on the tenor’s head. “Ride off on the divine Ariosto’s hippogriff; hunt down your radiant chimera, musical visionary as you are!”

In point of fact, all the others, believing that Genovese was drunk, let him talk without listening to him. Capraja alone had understood the case put by the French physician.

While the wine of Cyprus was loosening every tongue, and each one was prancing on his favorite hobby, the doctor, in a gondola, was waiting for the Duchess, having sent her a note written by Vendramin. Massimilla appeared in her night wrapper, so much had she been alarmed by the tone of the Prince’s farewell, and so startled by the hopes held out by the letter.

“Madame,” said the Frenchman, as he placed her in a seat and desired the gondoliers to start, “at this moment Prince Emilio’s life is in danger, and you alone can save him.”

“What is to be done?” she asked.

“Ah! Can you resign yourself to play a degrading part—in spite of the noblest face to be seen in Italy? Can you drop from the blue sky where you dwell, into the bed of a courtesan? In short, can you, an angel of refinement, of pure and spotless beauty, condescend to imagine what the love must be of a Tinti—in her room, and so effectually as to deceive the ardor of Emilio, who is indeed too drunk to be very clear-sighted?”

“Is that all?” said she, with a smile that betrayed to the Frenchman a side he had not as yet perceived of the delightful nature of an Italian woman in love. “I will out-do la Tinti, if need be, to save my friend’s life.”

“And you will thus fuse into one two kinds of love, which he sees as distinct—divided by a mountain of poetic fancy, that will melt away like the snow on a glacier under the beams of the midsummer sun.”

“I shall be eternally your debtor,” said the Duchess, gravely.

When the French doctor returned to the gallery, where the orgy had by this time assumed the stamp of Venetian frenzy, he had a look of satisfaction which the Prince, absorbed by la Tinti, failed to observe; he was promising himself a

repetition of the intoxicating delights he had known. La Tinti, a true Sicilian, was floating on the tide of a fantastic passion on the point of being gratified.

The doctor whispered a few words to Vendramin, and la Tinti was uneasy.

“What are you plotting?” she inquired of the Prince’s friend.

“Are you kind-hearted?” said the doctor in her ear, with the sternness of an operator.

The words pierced to her comprehension like a dagger-thrust to her heart.

“It is to save Emilio’s life,” added Vendramin.

“Come here,” said the doctor to Clarina.

The hapless singer rose and went to the other end of the table where, between Vendramin and the Frenchman, she looked like a criminal between the confessor and the executioner.

She struggled for a long time, but yielded at last for love of Emilio.

The doctor’s last words were:

“And you must cure Genovese!”

She spoke a word to the tenor as she went round the table. She returned to the Prince, put her arm round his neck and kissed his hair with an expression of despair which struck Vendramin and the Frenchman, the only two who had their wits about them, then she vanished into her room. Emilio, seeing Genovese leave the table, while Cataneo and Capraja were absorbed in a long musical discussion, stole to the door of the bedroom, lifted the curtain, and slipped in, like an eel into the mud.

“But you see, Cataneo,” said Capraja, “you have exacted the last drop of physical enjoyment, and there you are, hanging on a wire like a cardboard harlequin, patterned with scars, and never moving unless the string is pulled of a perfect unison.”

“And you, Capraja, who have squeezed ideas dry, are not you in the same predicament? Do you not live riding the hobby of a cadenza?”

“I? I possess the whole world!” cried Capraja, with a sovereign gesture of his hand.

“And I have devoured it!” replied the Duke.

They observed that the physician and Vendramin were gone, and that they were alone.

Next morning, after a night of perfect happiness, the Prince’s sleep was disturbed by a dream. He felt on his heart the trickle of pearls, dropped there

by an angel; he woke, and found himself bathed in the tears of Massimilla Doni. He was lying in her arms, and she gazed at him as he slept.

That evening, at the Fenice,—though la Tinti had not allowed him to rise till two in the afternoon, which is said to be very bad for a tenor voice,—Genovese sang divinely in his part in Semiramide. He was recalled with la Tinti, fresh crowns were given, the pit was wild with delight; the tenor no longer attempted to charm the prima donna by angelic methods.

Vendramin was the only person whom the doctor could not cure. Love for a country that has ceased to be is a love beyond curing. The young Venetian, by dint of living in his thirteenth century republic, and in the arms of that pernicious courtesan called opium, when he found himself in the work-a-day world to which reaction brought him, succumbed, pitied and regretted by his friends.

No, how shall the end of this adventure be told—for it is too disastrously domestic. A word will be enough for the worshipers of the ideal.

The Duchess was expecting an infant.

The Peris, the naiads, the fairies, the sylphs of ancient legend, the Muses of Greece, the Marble Virgins of the Certosa at Pavia, the Day and Night of Michael Angelo, the little Angels which Bellini was the first to put at the foot of his Church pictures, and which Raphael painted so divinely in his Virgin with the Donor, and the Madonna who shivers at Dresden, the lovely Maidens by Orcagna in the Church of San-Michele, at Florence, the celestial choir round the tomb in Saint-Sebaldus, at Nuremberg, the Virgins of the Duomo, at Milan, the whole population of a hundred Gothic Cathedrals, all the race of beings who burst their mould to visit you, great imaginative artists—all these angelic and disembodied maidens gathered round Massimilla’s bed, and wept!

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JUANA

(THE MARANAS)

CHAPTER I. EXPOSITION

Notwithstanding the discipline which Marechal Suchet had introduced into his army corps, he was unable to prevent a short period of trouble and disorder at the taking of Tarragona. According to certain fair-minded military men, this intoxication of victory bore a striking resemblance to pillage, though the

marechal promptly suppressed it. Order being re-established, each regiment quartered in its respective lines, and the commandant of the city appointed, military administration began. The place assumed a mongrel aspect. Though all things were organized on a French system, the Spaniards were left free to follow “in petto” their national tastes.

This period of pillage (it is difficult to determine how long it lasted) had, like all other sublunary effects, a cause, not so difficult to discover. In the marechal’s army was a regiment, composed almost entirely of Italians and commanded by a certain Colonel Eugene, a man of remarkable bravery, a second Murat, who, having entered the military service too late, obtained neither a Grand Duchy of Berg nor a Kingdom of Naples, nor balls at the Pizzo. But if he won no crown he had ample opportunity to obtain wounds, and it was not surprising that he met with several. His regiment was composed of the scattered fragments of the Italian legion. This legion was to Italy what the colonial battalions are to France. Its permanent cantonments, established on the island of Elba, served as an honorable place of exile for the troublesome sons of good families and for those great men who have just missed greatness, whom society brands with a hot iron and designates by the term “mauvais sujets”; men who are for the most part misunderstood; whose existence may become either noble through the smile of a woman lifting them out of their rut, or shocking at the close of an orgy under the influence of some damnable reflection dropped by a drunken comrade.

Napoleon had incorporated these vigorous beings in the sixth of the line, hoping to metamorphose them finally into generals,—barring those whom the bullets might take off. But the emperor’s calculation was scarcely fulfilled, except in the matter of the bullets. This regiment, often decimated but always the same in character, acquired a great reputation for valor in the field and for wickedness in private life. At the siege of Tarragona it lost its celebrated hero, Bianchi, the man who, during the campaign, had wagered that he would eat the heart of a Spanish sentinel, and did eat it. Though Bianchi was the prince of the devils incarnate to whom the regiment owed its dual reputation, he had, nevertheless, that sort of chivalrous honor which excuses, in the army, the worst excesses. In a word, he would have been, at an earlier period, an admirable pirate. A few days before his death he distinguished himself by a daring action which the marechal wished to reward. Bianchi refused rank, pension, and additional decoration, asking, for sole recompense, the favor of being the first to mount the breach at the assault on Tarragona. The marechal granted the request and then forgot his promise; but Bianchi forced him to remember Bianchi. The enraged hero was the first to plant our flag on the wall, where he was shot by a monk.

This historical digression was necessary, in order to explain how it was that

the 6th of the line was the regiment to enter Tarragona, and why the disorder and confusion, natural enough in a city taken by storm, degenerated for a time into a slight pillage.

This regiment possessed two officers, not at all remarkable among these men of iron, who played, nevertheless, in the history we shall now relate, a somewhat important part.

The first, a captain in the quartermaster's department, an officer half civil, half military, was considered, in soldier phrase, to be fighting his own battle. He pretended bravery, boasted loudly of belonging to the 6th of the line, twirled his moustache with the air of a man who was ready to demolish everything; but his brother officers did not esteem him. The fortune he possessed made him cautious. He was nicknamed, for two reasons, "captain of crows." In the first place, he could smell powder a league off, and took wing at the sound of a musket; secondly, the nickname was based on an innocent military pun, which his position in the regiment warranted. Captain Montefiore, of the illustrious Montefiore family of Milan (though the laws of the Kingdom of Italy forbade him to bear his title in the French service) was one of the handsomest men in the army. This beauty may have been among the secret causes of his prudence on fighting days. A wound which might have injured his nose, cleft his forehead, or scarred his cheek, would have destroyed one of the most beautiful Italian faces which a woman ever dreamed of in all its delicate proportions. This face, not unlike the type which Girodet has given to the dying young Turk, in the "Revolt at Cairo," was instinct with that melancholy by which all women are more or less duped.

The Marquis de Montefiore possessed an entailed property, but his income was mortgaged for a number of years to pay off the costs of certain Italian escapades which are inconceivable in Paris. He had ruined himself in supporting a theatre at Milan in order to force upon a public a very inferior prima donna, whom he was said to love madly. A fine future was therefore before him, and he did not care to risk it for the paltry distinction of a bit of red ribbon. He was not a brave man, but he was certainly a philosopher; and he had precedents, if we may use so parliamentary an expression. Did not Philip the Second register a vow after the battle of Saint Quentin that never again would he put himself under fire? And did not the Duke of Alba encourage him in thinking that the worst trade in the world was the involuntary exchange of a crown for a bullet? Hence, Montefiore was Philippiste in his capacity of rich marquis and handsome man; and in other respects also he was quite as profound a politician as Philip the Second himself. He consoled himself for his nickname, and for the disesteem of the regiment by thinking that his comrades were blackguards, whose opinion would never be of any consequence to him if by chance they survived the

present war, which seemed to be one of extermination. He relied on his face to win him promotion; he saw himself made colonel by feminine influence and a carefully managed transition from captain of equipment to orderly officer, and from orderly officer to aide-de-camp on the staff of some easy-going marshal. By that time, he reflected, he should come into his property of a hundred thousand scudi a year, some journal would speak of him as “the brave Montefiore,” he would marry a girl of rank, and no one would dare to dispute his courage or verify his wounds.

Captain Montefiore had one friend in the person of the quartermaster, —a Provencal, born in the neighborhood of Nice, whose name was Diard. A friend, whether at the galleys or in the garret of an artist, consoles for many troubles. Now Montefiore and Diard were two philosophers, who consoled each other for their present lives by the study of vice, as artists soothe the immediate disappointment of their hopes by the expectation of future fame. Both regarded the war in its results, not its action; they simply considered those who died for glory fools. Chance had made soldiers of them; whereas their natural proclivities would have seated them at the green table of a congress. Nature had poured Montefiore into the mould of a Rizzio, and Diard into that of a diplomatist. Both were endowed with that nervous, feverish, half-feminine organization, which is equally strong for good or evil, and from which may emanate, according to the impulse of these singular temperaments, a crime or a generous action, a noble deed or a base one. The fate of such natures depends at any moment on the pressure, more or less powerful, produced on their nervous systems by violent and transitory passions.

Diard was considered a good accountant, but no soldier would have trusted him with his purse or his will, possibly because of the antipathy felt by all real soldiers against the bureaucrats. The quartermaster was not without courage and a certain juvenile generosity, sentiments which many men give up as they grow older, by dint of reasoning or calculating. Variable as the beauty of a fair woman, Diard was a great boaster and a great talker, talking of everything. He said he was artistic, and he made prizes (like two celebrated generals) of works of art, solely, he declared, to preserve them for posterity. His military comrades would have been puzzled indeed to form a correct judgment of him. Many of them, accustomed to draw upon his funds when occasion obliged them, thought him rich; but in truth, he was a gambler, and gamblers may be said to have nothing of their own. Montefiore was also a gambler, and all the officers of the regiment played with the pair; for, to the shame of men be it said, it is not a rare thing to see persons gambling together around a green table who, when the game is finished, will not bow to their companions, feeling no respect for them. Montefiore was the man with whom Bianchi made his bet about the heart of the Spanish sentinel.

Montefiore and Diard were among the last to mount the breach at Tarragona, but the first in the heart of the town as soon as it was taken. Accidents of this sort happen in all attacks, but with this pair of friends they were customary. Supporting each other, they made their way bravely through a labyrinth of narrow and gloomy little streets in quest of their personal objects; one seeking for painted madonnas, the other for madonnas of flesh and blood.

In what part of Tarragona it happened I cannot say, but Diard presently recognized by its architecture the portal of a convent, the gate of which was already battered in. Springing into the cloister to put a stop to the fury of the soldiers, he arrived just in time to prevent two Parisians from shooting a Virgin by Albano. In spite of the moustache with which in their military fanaticism they had decorated her face, he bought the picture. Montefiore, left alone during this episode, noticed, nearly opposite the convent, the house and shop of a draper, from which a shot was fired at him at the moment when his eyes caught a flaming glance from those of an inquisitive young girl, whose head was advanced under the shelter of a blind. Tarragona taken by assault, Tarragona furious, firing from every window, Tarragona violated, with dishevelled hair, and half-naked, was indeed an object of curiosity,—the curiosity of a daring Spanish woman. It was a magnified bull-fight.

Montefiore forgot the pillage, and heard, for the moment, neither the cries, nor the musketry, nor the growling of the artillery. The profile of that Spanish girl was the most divinely delicious thing which he, an Italian libertine, weary of Italian beauty, and dreaming of an impossible woman because he was tired of all women, had ever seen. He could still quiver, he, who had wasted his fortune on a thousand follies, the thousand passions of a young and blase man —the most abominable monster that society generates. An idea came into his head, suggested perhaps by the shot of the draper-patriot, namely,—to set fire to the house. But he was now alone, and without any means of action; the fighting was centred in the market-place, where a few obstinate beings were still defending the town. A better idea then occurred to him. Diard came out of the convent, but Montefiore said not a word of his discovery; on the contrary, he accompanied him on a series of rambles about the streets. But the next day, the Italian had obtained his military billet in the house of the draper,—an appropriate lodging for an equipment captain!

The house of the worthy Spaniard consisted, on the ground-floor, of a vast and gloomy shop, externally fortified with stout iron bars, such as we see in the old storehouses of the rue des Lombards. This shop communicated with a parlor lighted from an interior courtyard, a large room breathing the very spirit of the middle-ages, with smoky old pictures, old tapestries, antique “brazero,” a plumed hat hanging to a nail, the musket of the guerrillas, and the cloak of Bartholo. The kitchen adjoined this unique living-room, where the inmates

took their meals and warmed themselves over the dull glow of the brazier, smoking cigars and discoursing bitterly to animate all hearts with hatred against the French. Silver pitchers and precious dishes of plate and porcelain adorned a buttery shelf of the old fashion. But the light, sparsely admitted, allowed these dazzling objects to show but slightly; all things, as in pictures of the Dutch school, looked brown, even the faces. Between the shop and this living-room, so fine in color and in its tone of patriarchal life, was a dark staircase leading to a ware-room where the light, carefully distributed, permitted the examination of goods. Above this were the apartments of the merchant and his wife. Rooms for an apprentice and a servant-woman were in a garret under the roof, which projected over the street and was supported by buttresses, giving a somewhat fantastic appearance to the exterior of the building. These chambers were now taken by the merchant and his wife who gave up their own rooms to the officer who was billeted upon them,—probably because they wished to avoid all quarrelling.

Montefiore gave himself out as a former Spanish subject, persecuted by Napoleon, whom he was serving against his will; and these semi-lies had the success he expected. He was invited to share the meals of the family, and was treated with the respect due to his name, his birth, and his title. He had his reasons for capturing the good-will of the merchant and his wife; he scented his madonna as the ogre scented the youthful flesh of Tom Thumb and his brothers. But in spite of the confidence he managed to inspire in the worthy pair the latter maintained the most profound silence as to the said madonna; and not only did the captain see no trace of the young girl during the first day he spent under the roof of the honest Spaniard, but he heard no sound and came upon no indication which revealed her presence in that ancient building. Supposing that she was the only daughter of the old couple, Montefiore concluded they had consigned her to the garret, where, for the time being, they made their home.

But no revelation came to betray the hiding-place of that precious treasure. The marquis glued his face to the lozenge-shaped leaded panes which looked upon the black-walled enclosure of the inner courtyard; but in vain; he saw no gleam of light except from the windows of the old couple, whom he could see and hear as they went and came and talked and coughed. Of the young girl, not a shadow!

Montefiore was far too wary to risk the future of his passion by exploring the house nocturnally, or by tapping softly on the doors. Discovery by that hot patriot, the mercer, suspicious as a Spaniard must be, meant ruin infallibly. The captain therefore resolved to wait patiently, resting his faith on time and the imperfection of men, which always results—even with scoundrels, and how much more with honest men!—in the neglect of precautions.

The next day he discovered a hammock in the kitchen, showing plainly where the servant-woman slept. As for the apprentice, his bed was evidently made on the shop counter. During supper on the second day Montefiore succeeded, by cursing Napoleon, in smoothing the anxious forehead of the merchant, a grave, black-visaged Spaniard, much like the faces formerly carved on the handles of Moorish lutes; even the wife let a gay smile of hatred appear in the folds of her elderly face. The lamp and the reflections of the brazier illumined fantastically the shadows of the noble room. The mistress of the house offered a “cigarrito” to their semi-compatriot. At this moment the rustle of a dress and the fall of a chair behind the tapestry were plainly heard.

“Ah!” cried the wife, turning pale, “may the saints assist us! God grant no harm has happened!”

“You have some one in the next room, have you not?” said Montefiore, giving no sign of emotion.

The draper dropped a word of imprecation against the girls. Evidently alarmed, the wife opened a secret door, and led in, half fainting, the Italian’s madonna, to whom he was careful to pay no attention; only, to avoid a too-studied indifference, he glanced at the girl before he turned to his host and said in his own language:—

“Is that your daughter, signore?”

Perez de Lagounia (such was the merchant’s name) had large commercial relations with Genoa, Florence, and Livorno; he knew Italian, and replied in the same language:—

“No; if she were my daughter I should take less precautions. The child is confided to our care, and I would rather die than see any evil happen to her. But how is it possible to put sense into a girl of eighteen?”

“She is very handsome,” said Montefiore, coldly, not looking at her face again.

“Her mother’s beauty is celebrated,” replied the merchant, briefly.

They continued to smoke, watching each other. Though Montefiore compelled himself not to give the slightest look which might contradict his apparent coldness, he could not refrain, at a moment when Perez turned his head to expectorate, from casting a rapid glance at the young girl, whose sparkling eyes met his. Then, with that science of vision which gives to a libertine, as it does to a sculptor, the fatal power of disrobing, if we may so express it, a woman, and divining her shape by inductions both rapid and sagacious, he beheld one of those masterpieces of Nature whose creation appears to demand as its right all the happiness of love. Here was a fair young

face, on which the sun of Spain had cast faint tones of bistre which added to its expression of seraphic calmness a passionate pride, like a flash of light infused beneath that diaphanous complexion,—due, perhaps, to the Moorish blood which vivified and colored it. Her hair, raised to the top of her head, fell thence with black reflections round the delicate transparent ears and defined the outlines of a blue-veined throat. These luxuriant locks brought into strong relief the dazzling eyes and the scarlet lips of a well-arched mouth. The bodice of the country set off the lines of a figure that swayed as easily as a branch of willow. She was not the Virgin of Italy, but the Virgin of Spain, of Murillo, the only artist daring enough to have painted the Mother of God intoxicated with the joy of conceiving the Christ,—the glowing imagination of the boldest and also the warmest of painters.

In this young girl three things were united, a single one of which would have sufficed for the glory of a woman: the purity of the pearl in the depths of ocean; the sublime exaltation of the Spanish Saint Teresa; and a passion of love which was ignorant of itself. The presence of such a woman has the virtue of a talisman. Montefiore no longer felt worn and jaded. That young girl brought back his youthful freshness.

But, though the apparition was delightful, it did not last. The girl was taken back to the secret chamber, where the servant-woman carried to her openly both light and food.

“You do right to hide her,” said Montefiore in Italian. “I will keep your secret. The devil! we have generals in our army who are capable of abducting her.”

Montefiore’s infatuation went so far as to suggest to him the idea of marrying her. He accordingly asked her history, and Perez very willingly told him the circumstances under which she had become his ward. The prudent Spaniard was led to make this confidence because he had heard of Montefiore in Italy, and knowing his reputation was desirous to let him see how strong were the barriers which protected the young girl from the possibility of seduction. Though the good-man was gifted with a certain patriarchal eloquence, in keeping with his simple life and customs, his tale will be improved by abridgment.

At the period when the French Revolution changed the manners and morals of every country which served as the scene of its wars, a street prostitute came to Tarragona, driven from Venice at the time of its fall. The life of this woman had been a tissue of romantic adventures and strange vicissitudes. To her, oftener than to any other woman of her class, it had happened, thanks to the caprice of great lords struck with her extraordinary beauty, to be literally gorged with gold and jewels and all the delights of

excessive wealth,—flowers, carriages, pages, maids, palaces, pictures, journeys (like those of Catherine II.); in short, the life of a queen, despotic in her caprices and obeyed, often beyond her own imaginings. Then, without herself, or any one, chemist, physician, or man of science, being able to discover how her gold evaporated, she would find herself back in the streets, poor, denuded of everything, preserving nothing but her all-powerful beauty, yet living on without thought or care of the past, the present, or the future. Cast, in her poverty, into the hands of some poor gambling officer, she attached herself to him as a dog to its master, sharing the discomforts of the military life, which indeed she comforted, as content under the roof of a garret as beneath the silken hangings of opulence. Italian and Spanish both, she fulfilled very scrupulously the duties of religion, and more than once she had said to love:—

“Return to-morrow; to-day I belong to God.”

But this slime permeated with gold and perfumes, this careless indifference to all things, these unbridled passions, these religious beliefs cast into that heart like diamonds into mire, this life begun, and ended, in a hospital, these gambling chances transferred to the soul, to the very existence,—in short, this great alchemy, for which vice lit the fire beneath the crucible in which fortunes were melted up and the gold of ancestors and the honor of great names evaporated, proceeded from a cause, a particular heredity, faithfully transmitted from mother to daughter since the middle ages. The name of this woman was La Marana. In her family, existing solely in the female line, the idea, person, name and power of a father had been completely unknown since the thirteenth century. The name Marana was to her what the designation of Stuart is to the celebrated royal race of Scotland, a name of distinction substituted for the patronymic name by the constant heredity of the same office devolving on the family.

Formerly, in France, Spain, and Italy, when those three countries had, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, mutual interests which united and disunited them by perpetual warfare, the name Marana served to express in its general sense, a prostitute. In those days women of that sort had a certain rank in the world of which nothing in our day can give an idea. Ninon de l’Enclos and Marian Delorme have alone played, in France, the role of the Imperias, Catalinas, and Maranas who, in preceding centuries, gathered around them the cassock, gown, and sword. An Imperia built I forget which church in Rome in a frenzy of repentance, as Rhodope built, in earlier times, a pyramid in Egypt. The name Marana, inflicted at first as a disgrace upon the singular family with which we are now concerned, had ended by becoming its veritable name and by ennobling its vice by incontestable antiquity.

One day, a day of opulence or of penury I know not which, for this event

was a secret between herself and God, but assuredly it was in a moment of repentance and melancholy, this Marana of the nineteenth century stood with her feet in the slime and her head raised to heaven. She cursed the blood in her veins, she cursed herself, she trembled lest she should have a daughter, and she swore, as such women swear, on the honor and with the will of the galleys —the firmest will, the most scrupulous honor that there is on earth—she swore, before an altar, and believing in that altar, to make her daughter a virtuous creature, a saint, and thus to gain, after that long line of lost women, criminals in love, an angel in heaven for them all.

The vow once made, the blood of the Maranas spoke; the courtesan returned to her reckless life, a thought the more within her heart. At last she loved, with the violent love of such women, as Henrietta Wilson loved Lord Ponsonby, as Mademoiselle Dupuis loved Bolingbroke, as the Marchesa Pescara loved her husband—but no, she did not love, she adored one of those fair men, half women, to whom she gave the virtues which she had not, striving to keep for herself all that there was of vice between them. It was from that weak man, that senseless marriage unblessed by God or man which happiness is thought to justify, but which no happiness absolves, and for which men blush at last, that she had a daughter, a daughter to save, a daughter for whom to desire a noble life and the chastity she had not. Henceforth, happy or not happy, opulent or beggared, she had in her heart a pure, untainted sentiment, the highest of all human feelings because the most disinterested. Love has its egotism, but motherhood has none. La Marana was a mother like none other; for, in her total, her eternal shipwreck, motherhood might still redeem her. To accomplish sacredly through life the task of sending a pure soul to heaven, was not that a better thing than a tardy repentance? was it not, in truth, the only spotless prayer which she could lift to God?

So, when this daughter, when her Marie-Juana-Pepita (she would fain have given her all the saints in the calendar as guardians), when this dear little creature was granted to her, she became possessed of so high an idea of the dignity of motherhood that she entreated vice to grant her a respite. She made herself virtuous and lived in solitude. No more fetes, no more orgies, no more love. All joys, all fortunes were centred now in the cradle of her child. The tones of that infant voice made an oasis for her soul in the burning sands of her existence. That sentiment could not be measured or estimated by any other. Did it not, in fact, comprise all human sentiments, all heavenly hopes? La Marana was so resolved not to soil her daughter with any stain other than that of birth, that she sought to invest her with social virtues; she even obliged the young father to settle a handsome patrimony upon the child and to give her his name. Thus the girl was not know as Juana Marana, but as Juana di Mancini.

Then, after seven years of joy, and kisses, and intoxicating happiness, the

time came when the poor Marana deprived herself of her idol. That Juana might never bow her head under their hereditary shame, the mother had the courage to renounce her child for her child's sake, and to seek, not without horrible suffering, for another mother, another home, other principles to follow, other and saintlier examples to imitate. The abdication of a mother is either a revolting act or a sublime one; in this case, was it not sublime?

At Tarragona a lucky accident threw the Lagounias in her way, under circumstances which enabled her to recognize the integrity of the Spaniard and the noble virtue of his wife. She came to them at a time when her proposal seemed that of a liberating angel. The fortune and honor of the merchant, momentarily compromised, required a prompt and secret succor. La Marana made over to the husband the whole sum she had obtained of the father for Juana's "dot," requiring neither acknowledgment nor interest. According to her own code of honor, a contract, a trust, was a thing of the heart, and God its supreme judge. After stating the miseries of her position to Dona Lagounia, she confided her daughter and her daughter's fortune to the fine old Spanish honor, pure and spotless, which filled the precincts of that ancient house. Dona Lagounia had no child, and she was only too happy to obtain one to nurture. The mother then parted from her Juana, convinced that the child's future was safe, and certain of having found her a mother, a mother who would bring her up as a Mancini, and not as a Marana.

Leaving her child in the simple modest house of the merchant where the burgher virtues reigned, where religion and sacred sentiments and honor filled the air, the poor prostitute, the disinherited mother was enabled to bear her trial by visions of Juana, virgin, wife, and mother, a mother throughout her life. On the threshold of that house Marana left a tear such as the angels garner up.

Since that day of mourning and hope the mother, drawn by some invincible presentiment, had thrice returned to see her daughter. Once when Juana fell ill with a dangerous complaint:

"I knew it," she said to Perez when she reached the house.

Asleep, she had seen her Juana dying. She nursed her and watched her, until one morning, sure of the girl's convalescence, she kissed her, still asleep, on the forehead and left her without betraying whom she was. A second time the Marana came to the church where Juana made her first communion. Simply dressed, concealing herself behind a column, the exiled mother recognized herself in her daughter such as she once had been, pure as the snow fresh-fallen on the Alps. A courtesan even in maternity, the Marana felt in the depths of her soul a jealous sentiment, stronger for the moment than that of love, and she left the church, incapable of resisting any longer the desire to kill

Dona Lagounia, as she sat there, with radiant face, too much the mother of her child. A third and last meeting had taken place between mother and daughter in the streets of Milan, to which city the merchant and his wife had paid a visit. The Marana drove through the Corso in all the splendor of a sovereign; she passed her daughter like a flash of lightning and was not recognized. Horrible anguish! To this Marana, surfeited with kisses, one was lacking, a single one, for which she would have bartered all the others: the joyous, girlish kiss of a daughter to a mother, an honored mother, a mother in whom shone all the domestic virtues. Juana living was dead to her. One thought revived the soul of the courtesan—a precious thought! Juana was henceforth safe. She might be the humblest of women, but at least she was not what her mother was —an infamous courtesan.

The merchant and his wife had fulfilled their trust with scrupulous integrity. Juana's fortune, managed by them, had increased tenfold. Perez de Lagounia, now the richest merchant in the provinces, felt for the young girl a sentiment that was semi-superstitious. Her money had preserved his ancient house from dishonorable ruin, and the presence of so precious a treasure had brought him untold prosperity. His wife, a heart of gold, and full of delicacy, had made the child religious, and as pure as she was beautiful. Juana might well become the wife of either a great seigneur or a wealthy merchant; she lacked no virtue necessary to the highest destiny. Perez had intended taking her to Madrid and marrying her to some grandee, but the events of the present war delayed the fulfilment of this project.

"I don't know where the Marana now is," said Perez, ending the above history, "but in whatever quarter of the world she may be living, when she hears of the occupation of our province by your armies, and of the siege of Tarragona, she will assuredly set out at once to come here and see to her daughter's safety."

CHAPTER II. AUCTION

The foregoing narrative changed the intentions of the Italian captain; no longer did he think of making a Marchesa di Montefiore of Juana di Mancini. He recognized the blood of the Maranas in the glance the girl had given from behind the blinds, in the trick she had just played to satisfy her curiosity, and also in the parting look she had cast upon him. The libertine wanted a virtuous woman for a wife.

The adventure was full of danger, but danger of a kind that never daunts the least courageous man, for love and pleasure followed it. The apprentice

sleeping in the shop, the cook bivouacking in the kitchen, Perez and his wife sleeping, no doubt, the wakeful sleep of the aged, the echoing sonority of the old mansion, the close surveillance of the girl in the day-time,—all these things were obstacles, and made success a thing well-nigh impossible. But Montefiore had in his favor against all impossibilities the blood of the Maranas which gushed in the heart of that inquisitive girl, Italian by birth, Spanish in principles, virgin indeed, but impatient to love. Passion, the girl, and Montefiore were ready and able to defy the whole universe.

Montefiore, impelled as much by the instinct of a man of gallantry as by those vague hopes which cannot be explained, and to which we give the name of presentiments (a word of astonishing verbal accuracy), Montefiore spent the first hours of the night at his window, endeavoring to look below him to the secret apartment where, undoubtedly, the merchant and his wife had hidden the love and joyfulness of their old age. The ware-room of the “entresol” separated him from the rooms on the ground-floor. The captain therefore could not have recourse to noises significantly made from one floor to the other, an artificial language which all lovers know well how to create. But chance, or it may have been the young girl herself, came to his assistance. At the moment when he stationed himself at his window, he saw, on the black wall of the courtyard, a circle of light, in the centre of which the silhouette of Juana was clearly defined; the consecutive movement of the arms, and the attitude, gave evidence that she was arranging her hair for the night.

“Is she alone?” Montefiore asked himself; “could I, without danger, lower a letter filled with coin and strike it against that circular window in her hiding-place?”

At once he wrote a note, the note of a man exiled by his family to Elba, the note of a degraded marquis now a mere captain of equipment. Then he made a cord of whatever he could find that was capable of being turned into string, filled the note with a few silver crowns, and lowered it in the deepest silence to the centre of that spherical gleam.

“The shadows will show if her mother or the servant is with her,” thought Montefiore. “If she is not alone, I can pull up the string at once.”

But, after succeeding with infinite trouble in striking the glass, a single form, the little figure of Juana, appeared upon the wall. The young girl opened her window cautiously, saw the note, took it, and stood before the window while she read it. In it, Montefiore had given his name and asked for an interview, offering, after the style of the old romances, his heart and hand to the Signorina Juana di Mancini—a common trick, the success of which is nearly always certain. At Juana’s age, nobility of soul increases the dangers which surround youth. A poet of our day has said: “Woman succumbs only to

her own nobility. The lover pretends to doubt the love he inspires at the moment when he is most beloved; the young girl, confident and proud, longs to make sacrifices to prove her love, and knows the world and men too little to continue calm in the midst of her rising emotions and repel with contempt the man who accepts a life offered in expiation of a false reproach."

Ever since the constitution of societies the young girl finds herself torn by a struggle between the caution of prudent virtue and the evils of wrong-doing. Often she loses a love, delightful in prospect, and the first, if she resists; on the other hand, she loses a marriage if she is imprudent. Casting a glance over the vicissitudes of social life in Paris, it is impossible to doubt the necessity of religion; and yet Paris is situated in the forty-eighth degree of latitude, while Tarragona is in the forty-first. The old question of climates is still useful to narrators to explain the sudden denouements, the imprudences, or the resistances of love.

Montefiore kept his eyes fixed on the exquisite black profile projected by the gleam upon the wall. Neither he nor Juana could see each other; a troublesome cornice, vexatiously placed, deprived them of the mute correspondence which may be established between a pair of lovers as they bend to each other from their windows. Thus the mind and the attention of the captain were concentrated on that luminous circle where, without perhaps knowing it herself, the young girl would, he thought, innocently reveal her thoughts by a series of gestures. But no! The singular motions she proceeded to make gave not a particle of hope to the expectant lover. Juana was amusing herself by cutting up his missive. But virtue and innocence sometimes imitate the clever proceedings inspired by jealousy to the Bartholos of comedy. Juana, without pens, ink, or paper, was replying by snip of scissors. Presently she refastened the note to the string; the officer drew it up, opened it, and read by the light of his lamp one word, carefully cut out of the paper: COME.

"Come!" he said to himself; "but what of poison? or the dagger or carbine of Perez? And that apprentice not yet asleep, perhaps, in the shop? and the servant in her hammock? Besides, this old house echoes the slightest sound; I can hear old Perez snoring even here. Come, indeed! She can have nothing more to lose."

Bitter reflection! rakes alone are logical and will punish a woman for devotion. Man created Satan and Lovelace; but a virgin is an angel on whom he can bestow naught but his own vices. She is so grand, so beautiful, that he cannot magnify or embellish her; he has only the fatal power to blast her and drag her down into his own mire.

Montefiore waited for a later and more somnolent hour of the night; then, in spite of his reflections, he descended the stairs without boots, armed with

his pistols, moving step by step, stopping to question the silence, putting forth his hands, measuring the stairs, peering into the darkness, and ready at the slightest incident to fly back into his room. The Italian had put on his handsomest uniform; he had perfumed his black hair, and now shone with the particular brilliancy which dress and toilet bestow upon natural beauty. Under such circumstances most men are as feminine as a woman.

The marquis arrived without hindrance before the secret door of the room in which the girl was hidden, a sort of cell made in the angle of the house and belonging exclusively to Juana, who had remained there hidden during the day from every eye while the siege lasted. Up to the present time she had slept in the room of her adopted mother, but the limited space in the garret where the merchant and his wife had gone to make room for the officer who was billeted upon them, did not allow of her going with them. Dona Lagounia had therefore left the young girl to the guardianship of lock and key, under the protection of religious ideas, all the more efficacious because they were partly superstitious, and also under the shield of a native pride and sensitive modesty which made the young Mancini in sort an exception among her sex. Juana possessed in an equal degree the most attaching virtues and the most passionate impulses; she had needed the modesty and sanctity of this monotonous life to calm and cool the tumultuous blood of the Maranas which bounded in her heart, the desires of which her adopted mother told her were an instigation of the devil.

A faint ray of light traced along the sill of the secret door guided Montefiore to the place; he scratched the panel softly and Juana opened to him. Montefiore entered, palpitating, but he recognized in the expression of the girl’s face complete ignorance of her peril, a sort of naive curiosity, and an innocent admiration. He stopped short, arrested for a moment by the sacredness of the picture which met his eyes.

He saw before him a tapestry on the walls with a gray ground sprinkled with violets, a little coffer of ebony, an antique mirror, an immense and very old arm chair also in ebony and covered with tapestry, a table with twisted legs, a pretty carpet on the floor, near the table a single chair; and that was all. On the table, however, were flowers and embroidery; in a recess at the farther end of the room was the narrow little bed where Juana dreamed. Above the bed were three pictures; and near the pillow a crucifix, with a holy water basin and a prayer, printed in letters of gold and framed. Flowers exhaled their perfume faintly; the candles cast a tender light; all was calm and pure and sacred. The dreamy thoughts of Juana, but above all Juana herself, had communicated to all things her own peculiar charm; her soul appeared to shine there, like the pearl in its matrix. Juana, dressed in white, beautiful with naught but her own beauty, laying down her rosary to answer love, might have

inspired respect, even in a Montefiore, if the silence, if the night, if Juana herself had not seemed so amorous. Montefiore stood still, intoxicated with an unknown happiness, possibly that of Satan beholding heaven through a rift of the clouds which form its enclosure.

“As soon as I saw you,” he said in pure Tuscan, and in the modest tone of voice so peculiarly Italian, “I loved you. My soul and my life are now in you, and in you they will be forever, if you will have it so.”

Juana listened, inhaling from the atmosphere the sound of these words which the accents of love made magnificent.

“Poor child! how have you breathed so long the air of this dismal house without dying of it? You, made to reign in the world, to inhabit the palace of a prince, to live in the midst of fetes, to feel the joys which love bestows, to see the world at your feet, to efface all other beauty by your own which can have no rival—you, to live here, solitary, with those two shopkeepers!”

Adroit question! He wished to know if Juana had a lover.

“True,” she replied. “But who can have told you my secret thoughts? For the last few months I have nearly died of sadness. Yes, I would rather die than stay longer in this house. Look at that embroidery; there is not a stitch there which I did not set with dreadful thoughts. How many times I have thought of escaping to fling myself into the sea! Why? I don’t know why,—little childish troubles, but very keen, though they are so silly. Often I have kissed my mother at night as one would kiss a mother for the last time, saying in my heart: ‘To-morrow I will kill myself.’ But I do not die. Suicides go to hell, you know, and I am so afraid of hell that I resign myself to live, to get up in the morning and go to bed at night, and work the same hours, and do the same things. I am not so weary of it, but I suffer—And yet, my father and mother adore me. Oh! I am bad, I am bad; I say so to my confessor.”

“Do you always live here alone, without amusement, without pleasures?”

“Oh! I have not always been like this. Till I was fifteen the festivals of the church, the chants, the music gave me pleasure. I was happy, feeling myself like the angels without sin and able to communicate every week—I loved God then. But for the last three years, from day to day, all things have changed. First, I wanted flowers here—and I have them, lovely flowers! Then I wanted —but I want nothing now,” she added, after a pause, smiling at Montefiore. “Have you not said that you would love me always?”

“Yes, my Juana,” cried Montefiore, softly, taking her round the waist and pressing her to his heart, “yes. But let me speak to you as you speak to God. Are you not as beautiful as Mary in heaven? Listen. I swear to you,” he continued, kissing her hair, “I swear to take that forehead for my altar, to make

you my idol, to lay at your feet all the luxuries of the world. For you, my palace at Milan; for you my horses, my jewels, the diamonds of my ancient family; for you, each day, fresh jewels, a thousand pleasures, and all the joys of earth!”

“Yes,” she said reflectively, “I would like that; but I feel within my soul that I would like better than all the world my husband. Mio caro sposo!” she said, as if it were impossible to give in any other language the infinite tenderness, the loving elegance with which the Italian tongue and accent clothe those delightful words. Besides, Italian was Juana’s maternal language.

“I should find,” she continued, with a glance at Montefiore in which shone the purity of the cherubim, “I should find in him my dear religion, him and God—God and him. Is he to be you?” she said. “Yes, surely it will be you,” she cried, after a pause. “Come, and see the picture my father brought me from Italy.”

She took a candle, made a sign to Montefiore, and showed him at the foot of her bed a Saint Michael overthrowing the demon.

“Look!” she said, “has he not your eyes? When I saw you from my window in the street, our meeting seemed to me a sign from heaven. Every day during my morning meditation, while waiting for my mother to call me to prayer, I have so gazed at that picture, that angel, that I have ended by thinking him my husband—oh! heavens, I speak to you as though you were myself. I must seem crazy to you; but if you only knew how a poor captive wants to tell the thoughts that choke her! When alone, I talk to my flowers, to my tapestry; they can understand me better, I think, than my father and mother, who are so grave.”

“Juana,” said Montefiore, taking her hands and kissing them with the passion that gushed in his eyes, in his gestures, in the tones of his voice, “speak to me as your husband, as yourself. I have suffered all that you have suffered. Between us two few words are needed to make us comprehend our past, but there will never be enough to express our coming happiness. Lay your hand upon my heart. Feel how it beats. Let us promise before God, who sees and hears us, to be faithful to each other throughout our lives. Here, take my ring—and give me yours.”

“Give you my ring!” she said in terror.

“Why not?” asked Montefiore, uneasy at such artlessness.

“But our holy father the Pope has blessed it; it was put upon my finger in childhood by a beautiful lady who took care of me, and who told me never to part with it.”

“Juana, you cannot love me!”

“Ah!” she said, “here it is; take it. You, are you not another myself?”

She held out the ring with a trembling hand, holding it tightly as she looked at Montefiore with a clear and penetrating eye that questioned him. That ring! all of herself was in it; but she gave it to him.

“Oh, my Juana!” said Montefiore, again pressing her in his arms. “I should be a monster indeed if I deceived you. I will love you forever.”

Juana was thoughtful. Montefiore, reflecting that in this first interview he ought to venture upon nothing that might frighten a young girl so ignorantly pure, so imprudent by virtue rather than from desire, postponed all further action to the future, relying on his beauty, of which he knew the power, and on this innocent ring-marriage, the hymen of the heart, the lightest, yet the strongest of all ceremonies. For the rest of that night, and throughout the next day, Juana’s imagination was the accomplice of her passion.

On this first evening Montefiore forced himself to be as respectful as he was tender. With that intention, in the interests of his passion and the desires with which Juana inspired him, he was caressing and unctuous in language; he launched the young creature into plans for a new existence, described to her the world under glowing colors, talked to her of household details always attractive to the mind of girls, giving her a sense of the rights and realities of love. Then, having agreed upon the hour for their future nocturnal interviews, he left her happy, but changed; the pure and pious Juana existed no longer; in the last glance she gave him, in the pretty movement by which she brought her forehead to his lips, there was already more of passion than a girl should feel. Solitude, weariness of employments contrary to her nature had brought this about. To make the daughter of the Maranas truly virtuous, she ought to have been habituated, little by little, to the world, or else to have been wholly withdrawn from it.

“The day, to-morrow, will seem very long to me,” she said, receiving his kisses on her forehead. “But stay in the salon, and speak loud, that I may hear your voice; it fills my soul.”

Montefiore, clever enough to imagine the girl’s life, was all the more satisfied with himself for restraining his desires because he saw that it would lead to his greater contentment. He returned to his room without accident.

Ten days went by without any event occurring to trouble the peace and solitude of the house. Montefiore employed his Italian cajolery on old Perez, on Dona Lagounia, on the apprentice, even on the cook, and they all liked him; but, in spite of the confidence he now inspired in them, he never asked to see Juana, or to have the door of her mysterious hiding-place opened to him.

The young girl, hungry to see her lover, implored him to do so; but he always refused her from an instinct of prudence. Besides, he had used his best powers and fascinations to lull the suspicions of the old couple, and had now accustomed them to see him, a soldier, stay in bed till midday on pretence that he was ill. Thus the lovers lived only in the night-time, when the rest of the household were asleep. If Montefiore had not been one of those libertines whom the habit of gallantry enables to retain their self-possession under all circumstances, he might have been lost a dozen times during those ten days. A young lover, in the simplicity of a first love, would have committed the enchanting imprudences which are so difficult to resist. But he did resist even Juana herself, Juana pouting, Juana making her long hair a chain which she wound about his neck when caution told him he must go.

The most suspicious of guardians would however have been puzzled to detect the secret of their nightly meetings. It is to be supposed that, sure of success, the Italian marquis gave himself the ineffable pleasures of a slow seduction, step by step, leading gradually to the fire which should end the affair in a conflagration. On the eleventh day, at the dinner-table, he thought it wise to inform old Perez, under seal of secrecy, that the reason of his separation from his family was an ill-assorted marriage. This false revelation was an infamous thing in view of the nocturnal drama which was being played under that roof. Montefiore, an experienced rake, was preparing for the finale of that drama which he foresaw and enjoyed as an artist who loves his art. He expected to leave before long, and without regret, the house and his love. It would happen, he thought, in this way: Juana, after waiting for him in vain for several nights, would risk her life, perhaps, in asking Perez what had become of his guest; and Perez would reply, not aware of the importance of his answer, —

“The Marquis de Montefiore is reconciled to his family, who consent to receive his wife; he has gone to Italy to present her to them.”

And Juana?—The marquis never asked himself what would become of Juana; but he had studied her character, its nobility, candor, and strength, and he knew he might be sure of her silence.

He obtained a mission from one of the generals. Three days later, on the night preceding his intended departure, Montefiore, instead of returning to his own room after dinner, contrived to enter unseen that of Juana, to make that farewell night the longer. Juana, true Spaniard and true Italian, was enchanted with such boldness; it argued ardor! For herself she did not fear discovery. To find in the pure love of marriage the excitements of intrigue, to hide her husband behind the curtains of her bed, and say to her adopted father and mother, in case of detection: “I am the Marquise de Montefiore!”—was to an ignorant and romantic young girl, who for three years past had dreamed of

love without dreaming of its dangers, delightful. The door closed on this last evening upon her folly, her happiness, like a veil, which it is useless here to raise.

It was nine o’clock; the merchant and his wife were reading their evening prayers; suddenly the noise of a carriage drawn by several horses resounded in the street; loud and hasty raps echoed from the shop where the servant hurried to open the door, and into that venerable salon rushed a woman, magnificently dressed in spite of the mud upon the wheels of her travelling-carriage, which had just crossed Italy, France, and Spain. It was, of course, the Marana,—the Marana who, in spite of her thirty-six years, was still in all the glory of her ravishing beauty; the Marana who, being at that time the mistress of a king, had left Naples, the fetes, the skies of Naples, the climax of her life of luxury, on hearing from her royal lover of the events in Spain and the siege of Tarragona.

“Tarragona! I must get to Tarragona before the town is taken!” she cried. “Ten days to reach Tarragona!”

Then without caring for crown or court, she arrived in Tarragona, furnished with an almost imperial safe-conduct; furnished too with gold which enabled her to cross France with the velocity of a rocket.

“My daughter! my daughter!” cried the Marana.

At this voice, and the abrupt invasion of their solitude, the prayer-book fell from the hands of the old couple.

“She is there,” replied the merchant, calmly, after a pause during which he recovered from the emotion caused by the abrupt entrance, and the look and voice of the mother. “She is there,” he repeated, pointing to the door of the little chamber.

“Yes, but has any harm come to her; is she still—”

“Perfectly well,” said Dona Lagounia.

“O God! send me to hell if it so pleases thee!” cried the Marana, dropping, exhausted and half dead, into a chair.

The flush in her cheeks, due to anxiety, paled suddenly; she had strength to endure suffering, but none to bear this joy. Joy was more violent in her soul than suffering, for it contained the echoes of her pain and the agonies of its own emotion.

“But,” she said, “how have you kept her safe? Tarragona is taken.”

“Yes,” said Perez, “but since you see me living why do you ask that question? Should I not have died before harm could have come to Juana?”

At that answer, the Marana seized the calloused hand of the old man, and kissed it, wetting it with the tears that flowed from her eyes—she who never wept! those tears were all she had most precious under heaven.

“My good Perez!” she said at last. “But have you had no soldiers quartered in your house?”

“Only one,” replied the Spaniard. “Fortunately for us the most loyal of men; a Spaniard by birth, but now an Italian who hates Bonaparte; a married man. He is ill, and gets up late and goes to bed early.”

“An Italian! What is his name?”

“Montefiore.”

“Can it be the Marquis de Montefiore—”

“Yes, Senora, he himself.”

“Has he seen Juana?”

“No,” said Dona Lagounia.

“You are mistaken, wife,” said Perez. “The marquis must have seen her for a moment, a short moment, it is true; but I think he looked at her that evening she came in here during supper.”

“Ah, let me see my daughter!”

“Nothing easier,” said Perez; “she is now asleep. If she has left the key in the lock we must waken her.”

As he rose to take the duplicate key of Juana’s door his eyes fell by chance on the circular gleam of light upon the black wall of the inner courtyard. Within that circle he saw the shadow of a group such as Canova alone has attempted to render. The Spaniard turned back.

“I do not know,” he said to the Marana, “where to find the key.”

“You are very pale,” she said.

“And I will show you why,” he cried, seizing his dagger and rapping its hilt violently on Juana’s door as he shouted,—

“Open! open! open! Juana!”

Juana did not open, for she needed time to conceal Montefiore. She knew nothing of what was passing in the salon; the double portieres of thick tapestry deadened all sounds.

“Madame, I lied to you in saying I could not find the key. Here it is,” added Perez, taking it from a sideboard. “But it is useless. Juana’s key is in the

lock; her door is barricaded. We have been deceived, my wife!" he added, turning to Dona Lagounia. "There is a man in Juana's room."

"Impossible! By my eternal salvation I say it is impossible!" said his wife.

"Do not swear, Dona Lagounia. Our honor is dead, and this woman—" He pointed to the Marana, who had risen and was standing motionless, blasted by his words, "this woman has the right to despise us. She saved our life, our fortune, and our honor, and we have saved nothing for her but her money—Juana!" he cried again, "open, or I will burst in your door."

His voice, rising in violence, echoed through the garrets in the roof. He was cold and calm. The life of Montefiore was in his hands; he would wash away his remorse in the blood of that Italian.

"Out, out, out! out, all of you!" cried the Marana, springing like a tigress on the dagger, which she wrenched from the hand of the astonished Perez. "Out, Perez," she continued more calmly, "out, you and your wife and servants! There will be murder here. You might be shot by the French. Have nothing to do with this; it is my affair, mine only. Between my daughter and me there is none but God. As for the man, he belongs to me. The whole earth could not tear him from my grasp. Go, go! I forgive you. I see plainly that the girl is a Marana. You, your religion, your virtue, were too weak to fight against my blood."

She gave a dreadful sigh, turning her dry eyes on them. She had lost all, but she knew how to suffer,—a true courtesan.

The door opened. The Marana forgot all else, and Perez, making a sign to his wife, remained at his post. With his old invincible Spanish honor he was determined to share the vengeance of the betrayed mother. Juana, all in white, and softly lighted by the wax candles, was standing calmly in the centre of her chamber.

"What do you want with me?" she said.

The Marana could not repress a passing shudder.

"Perez," she asked, "has this room another issue?"

Perez made a negative gesture; confiding in that gesture, the mother entered the room.

"Juana," she said, "I am your mother, your judge; you have placed yourself in the only situation in which I could reveal myself to you. You have come down to me, you, whom I thought in heaven. Ah! you have fallen low indeed. You have a lover in this room."

"Madame, there is and can be no one but my husband," answered the girl.

“I am the Marquise de Montefiore.”

“Then there are two,” said Perez, in a grave voice. “He told me he was married.”

“Montefiore, my love!” cried the girl, tearing aside the curtain and revealing the officer. “Come! they are slandering you.”

The Italian appeared, pale and speechless; he saw the dagger in the Marana’s hand, and he knew her well. With one bound he sprang from the room, crying out in a thundering voice,—

“Help! help! they are murdering a Frenchman. Soldiers of the 6th of the line, rush for Captain Diard! Help, help!”

Perez had gripped the man and was trying to gag him with his large hand, but the Marana stopped him, saying,—

“Bind him fast, but let him shout. Open the doors, leave them open, and go, go, as I told you; go, all of you.—As for you,” she said, addressing Montefiore, “shout, call for help if you choose; by the time your soldiers get here this blade will be in your heart. Are you married? Answer.”

Montefiore, who had fallen on the threshold of the door, scarcely a step from Juana, saw nothing but the blade of the dagger, the gleam of which blinded him.

“Has he deceived me?” said Juana, slowly. “He told me he was free.”

“He told me that he was married,” repeated Perez, in his solemn voice.

“Holy Virgin!” murmured Dona Lagounia.

“Answer, soul of corruption,” said the Marana, in a low voice, bending to the ear of the marquis.

“Your daughter—” began Montefiore.

“The daughter that was mine is dead or dying,” interrupted the Marana. “I have no daughter; do not utter that word. Answer, are you married?”

“No, madame,” said Montefiore, at last, striving to gain time, “I desire to marry your daughter.”

“My noble Montefiore!” said Juana, drawing a deep breath.

“Then why did you attempt to fly and cry for help?” asked Perez.

Terrible, revealing light!

Juana said nothing, but she wrung her hands and went to her arm-chair and sat down.

At that moment a tumult rose in the street which was plainly heard in the silence of the room. A soldier of the 6th, hearing Montefiore's cry for help, had summoned Diard. The quartermaster, who was fortunately in his bivouac, came, accompanied by friends.

"Why did I fly?" said Montefiore, hearing the voice of his friend. "Because I told you the truth; I am married—Diard! Diard!" he shouted in a piercing voice.

But, at a word from Perez, the apprentice closed and bolted the doors, so that the soldiers were delayed by battering them in. Before they could enter, the Marana had time to strike her dagger into the guilty man; but anger hindered her aim, the blade slipped upon the Italian's epaulet, though she struck her blow with such force that he fell at the very feet of Juana, who took no notice of him. The Marana sprang upon him, and this time, resolved not to miss her prey, she caught him by the throat.

"I am free and I will marry her! I swear it, by God, by my mother, by all there is most sacred in the world; I am a bachelor; I will marry her, on my honor!"

And he bit the arm of the courtesan.

"Mother," said Juana, "kill him. He is so base that I will not have him for my husband, were he ten times as beautiful."

"Ah! I recognize my daughter!" cried the mother.

"What is all this?" demanded the quartermaster, entering the room.

"They are murdering me," cried Montefiore, "on account of this girl; she says I am her lover. She inveigled me into a trap, and they are forcing me to marry her—"

"And you reject her?" cried Diard, struck with the splendid beauty which contempt, hatred, and indignation had given to the girl, already so beautiful. "Then you are hard to please. If she wants a husband I am ready to marry her. Put up your weapons; there is no trouble here."

The Marana pulled the Italian to the side of her daughter's bed and said to him, in a low voice,—

"If I spare you, give thanks for the rest of your life; but, remember this, if your tongue ever injures my daughter you will see me again. Go!—How much 'dot' do you give her?" she continued, going up to Perez.

"She has two hundred thousand gold piastres," replied the Spaniard.

"And that is not all, monsieur," said the Marana, turning to Diard. "Who are you?—Go!" she repeated to Montefiore.

The marquis, hearing this statement of gold piastres, came forward once more, saying,—

“I am really free—”

A glance from Juana silenced him.

“You are really free to go,” she said.

And he went immediately.

“Alas! monsieur,” said the girl, turning to Diard, “I thank you with admiration. But my husband is in heaven. To-morrow I shall enter a convent —”

“Juana, my Juana, hush!” cried the mother, clasping her in her arms. Then she whispered in the girl’s ear. “You must have another husband.”

Juana turned pale. She freed herself from her mother and sat down once more in her arm-chair.

“Who are you, monsieur?” repeated the Marana, addressing Diard.

“Madame, I am at present only the quartermaster of the 6th of the line. But for such a wife I have the heart to make myself a marshal of France. My name is Pierre-Francois Diard. My father was provost of merchants. I am not—”

“But, at least, you are an honest man, are you not?” cried the Marana, interrupting him. “If you please the Signorina Juana di Mancini, you can marry her and be happy together.—Juana,” she continued in a grave tone, “in becoming the wife of a brave and worthy man remember that you will also be a mother. I have sworn that you shall kiss your children without a blush upon your face” (her voice faltered slightly). “I have sworn that you shall live a virtuous life; expect, therefore, many troubles. But, whatever happens, continue pure, and be faithful to your husband. Sacrifice all things to him, for he will be the father of your children—the father of your children! If you take a lover, I, your mother, will stand between you and him. Do you see that dagger? It is in your ‘dot,’” she continued, throwing the weapon on Juana’s bed. “I leave it there as the guarantee of your honor so long as my eyes are open and my arm free. Farewell,” she said, restraining her tears. “God grant that we may never meet again.”

At that idea, her tears began to flow.

“Poor child!” she added, “you have been happier than you knew in this dull home.—Do not allow her to regret it,” she said, turning to Diard.

The foregoing rapid narrative is not the principal subject of this Study, for the understanding of which it was necessary to explain how it happened that the quartermaster Diard married Juana di Mancini, that Montefiore and Diard

were intimately known to each other, and to show plainly what blood and what passions were in Madame Diard.

CHAPTER III. THE HISTORY OF MADAME DIARD

By the time that the quartermaster had fulfilled all the long and dilatory formalities without which no French soldier can be married, he was passionately in love with Juana di Mancini, and Juana had had time to think of her coming destiny.

An awful destiny! Juana, who felt neither esteem nor love for Diard, was bound to him forever, by a rash but necessary promise. The man was neither handsome nor well-made. His manners, devoid of all distinction, were a mixture of the worst army tone, the habits of his province, and his own insufficient education. How could she love Diard, she, a young girl all grace and elegance, born with an invincible instinct for luxury and good taste, her very nature tending toward the sphere of the higher social classes? As for esteeming him, she rejected the very thought precisely because he had married her. This repulsion was natural. Woman is a saintly and noble creature, but almost always misunderstood, and nearly always misjudged because she is misunderstood. If Juana had loved Diard she would have esteemed him. Love creates in a wife a new woman; the woman of the day before no longer exists on the morrow. Putting on the nuptial robe of a passion in which life itself is concerned, the woman wraps herself in purity and whiteness. Reborn into virtue and chastity, there is no past for her; she is all future, and should forget the things behind her to relearn life. In this sense the famous words which a modern poet has put into the lips of Marion Delorme is infused with truth,—

“And Love remade me virgin.”

That line seems like a reminiscence of a tragedy of Corneille, so truly does it recall the energetic diction of the father of our modern theatre. Yet the poet was forced to sacrifice it to the essentially vaudevillist spirit of the pit.

So Juana loveless was doomed to be Juana humiliated, degraded, hopeless. She could not honor the man who took her thus. She felt, in all the conscientious purity of her youth, that distinction, subtle in appearance but sacredly true, legal with the heart’s legality, which women apply instinctively to all their feelings, even the least reflective. Juana became profoundly sad as she saw the nature and the extent of the life before her. Often she turned her eyes, brimming with tears proudly repressed, upon Perez and Dona Lagounia, who fully comprehended, both of them, the bitter thoughts those tears

contained. But they were silent: of what good were reproaches now; why look for consolations? The deeper they were, the more they enlarged the wound.

One evening, Juana, stupid with grief, heard through the open door of her little room, which the old couple had thought shut, a pitying moan from her adopted mother.

“The child will die of grief.”

“Yes,” said Perez, in a shaking voice, “but what can we do? I cannot now boast of her beauty and her chastity to Comte d’Arcos, to whom I hoped to marry her.”

“But a single fault is not vice,” said the old woman, pitying as the angels.

“Her mother gave her to this man,” said Perez.

“Yes, in a moment; without consulting the poor child!” cried Dona Lagounia.

“She knew what she was doing.”

“But oh! into what hands our pearl is going!”

“Say no more, or I shall seek a quarrel with that Diard.”

“And that would only lead to other miseries.”

Hearing these dreadful words Juana saw the happy future she had lost by her own wrongdoing. The pure and simple years of her quiet life would have been rewarded by a brilliant existence such as she had fondly dreamed,—dreams which had caused her ruin. To fall from the height of Greatness to Monsieur Diard! She wept. At times she went nearly mad. She floated for a while between vice and religion. Vice was a speedy solution, religion a lifetime of suffering. The meditation was stormy and solemn. The next day was the fatal day, the day for the marriage. But Juana could still remain free. Free, she knew how far her misery would go; married, she was ignorant of where it went or what it might bring her.

Religion triumphed. Dona Lagounia stayed beside her child and prayed and watched as she would have prayed and watched beside the dying.

“God wills it,” she said to Juana.

Nature gives to woman alternately a strength which enables her to suffer and a weakness which leads her to resignation. Juana resigned herself; and without restriction. She determined to obey her mother’s prayer, and cross the desert of life to reach God’s heaven, knowing well that no flowers grew for her along the way of that painful journey.

She married Diard. As for the quartermaster, though he had no grace in

Juana's eyes, we may well absolve him. He loved her distractedly. The Marana, so keen to know the signs of love, had recognized in that man the accents of passion and the brusque nature, the generous impulses, that are common to Southerners. In the paroxysm of her anger and her distress she had thought such qualities enough for her daughter's happiness.

The first days of this marriage were apparently happy; or, to express one of those latent facts, the miseries of which are buried by women in the depths of their souls, Juana would not cast down her husband's joy,—a double role, dreadful to play, but to which, sooner or later, all women unhappily married come. This is a history impossible to recount in its full truth. Juana, struggling hourly against her nature, a nature both Spanish and Italian, having dried up the source of her tears by dint of weeping, was a human type, destined to represent woman's misery in its utmost expression, namely, sorrow undyingly active; the description of which would need such minute observations that to persons eager for dramatic emotions they would seem insipid. This analysis, in which every wife would find some one of her own sufferings, would require a volume to express them all; a fruitless, hopeless volume by its very nature, the merit of which would consist in faintest tints and delicate shadings which critics would declare to be effeminate and diffuse. Besides, what man could rightly approach, unless he bore another heart within his heart, those solemn and touching elegies which certain women carry with them to their tomb; melancholies, misunderstood even by those who cause them; sighs unheeded, devotions unrewarded,—on earth at least,—splendid silences misconstrued; vengeances withheld, disdained; generosities perpetually bestowed and wasted; pleasures longed for and denied; angelic charities secretly accomplished,—in short, all the religions of womanhood and its inextinguishable love.

Juana knew that life; fate spared her nought. She was wholly a wife, but a sorrowful and suffering wife; a wife incessantly wounded, yet forgiving always; a wife pure as a flawless diamond,—she who had the beauty and the glow of the diamond, and in that beauty, that glow, a vengeance in her hand; for she was certainly not a woman to fear the dagger added to her "dot."

At first, inspired by a real love, by one of those passions which for the time being change even odious characters and bring to light all that may be noble in a soul, Diard behaved like a man of honor. He forced Montefiore to leave the regiment and even the army corps, so that his wife might never meet him during the time they remained in Spain. Next, he petitioned for his own removal, and succeeded in entering the Imperial Guard. He desired at any price to obtain a title, honors, and consideration in keeping with his present wealth. With this idea in his mind, he behaved courageously in one of the most bloody battles in Germany, but, unfortunately, he was too severely wounded to

remain in the service. Threatened with the loss of a leg, he was forced to retire on a pension, without the title of baron, without those rewards he hoped to win, and would have won had he not been Diard.

This event, this wound, and his thwarted hopes contributed to change his character. His Provencal energy, roused for a time, sank down. At first he was sustained by his wife, in whom his efforts, his courage, his ambition had induced some belief in his nature, and who showed herself, what women are, tender and consoling in the troubles of life. Inspired by a few words from Juana, the retired soldier came to Paris, resolved to win in an administrative career a position to command respect, bury in oblivion the quartermaster of the 6th of the line, and secure for Madame Diard a noble title. His passion for that seductive creature enabled him to divine her most secret wishes. Juana expressed nothing, but he understood her. He was not loved as a lover dreams of being loved; he knew this, and he strove to make himself respected, loved, and cherished. He foresaw a coming happiness, poor man, in the patience and gentleness shown on all occasions by his wife; but that patience, that gentleness, were only the outward signs of the resignation which had made her his wife. Resignation, religion, were they love? Often Diard wished for refusal where he met with chaste obedience; often he would have given his eternal life that Juana might have wept upon his bosom and not disguised her secret thoughts behind a smiling face which lied to him nobly. Many young men—for after a certain age men no longer struggle—persist in the effort to triumph over an evil fate, the thunder of which they hear, from time to time, on the horizon of their lives; and when at last they succumb and roll down the precipice of evil, we ought to do them justice and acknowledge these inward struggles.

Like many men Diard tried all things, and all things were hostile to him. His wealth enabled him to surround his wife with the enjoyments of Parisian luxury. She lived in a fine house, with noble rooms, where she maintained a salon, in which abounded artists (by nature no judges of men), men of pleasure ready to amuse themselves anywhere, a few politicians who swelled the numbers, and certain men of fashion, all of whom admired Juana. Those who put themselves before the eyes of the public in Paris must either conquer Paris or be subject to it. Diard’s character was not sufficiently strong, compact, or persistent to command society at that epoch, because it was an epoch when all men were endeavoring to rise. Social classifications ready-made are perhaps a great boon even for the people. Napoleon has confided to us the pains he took to inspire respect in his court, where most of the courtiers had been his equals. But Napoleon was Corsican, and Diard Provencal. Given equal genius, an islander will always be more compact and rounded than the man of terra firma in the same latitude; the arm of the sea which separates Corsica from Provence is, in spite of human science, an ocean which has made two nations.

Diard's mongrel position, which he himself made still more questionable, brought him great troubles. Perhaps there is useful instruction to be derived from the almost imperceptible connection of acts which led to the finale of this history.

In the first place, the sneerers of Paris did not see without malicious smiles and words the pictures with which the former quartermaster adorned his handsome mansion. Works of art purchased the night before were said to be spoils from Spain; and this accusation was the revenge of those who were jealous of his present fortune. Juana comprehended this reproach, and by her advice Diard sent back to Tarragona all the pictures he had brought from there. But the public, determined to see things in the worst light, only said, "That Diard is shrewd; he has sold his pictures." Worthy people continued to think that those which remained in the Diard salons were not honorably acquired. Some jealous women asked how it was that a Diard (!) had been able to marry so rich and beautiful a young girl. Hence comments and satires without end, such as Paris contributes. And yet, it must be said, that Juana met on all sides the respect inspired by her pure and religious life, which triumphed over everything, even Parisian calumny; but this respect stopped short with her, her husband received none of it. Juana's feminine perception and her keen eye hovering over her salons, brought her nothing but pain.

This lack of esteem was perfectly natural. Diard's comrades, in spite of the virtues which our imaginations attribute to soldiers, never forgave the former quartermaster of the 6th of the line for becoming suddenly so rich and for attempting to cut a figure in Paris. Now in Paris, from the last house in the faubourg Saint-Germain to the last in the rue Saint-Lazare, between the heights of the Luxembourg and the heights of Montmartre, all that clothes itself and gabbles, clothes itself to go out and goes out to gabble. All that world of great and small pretensions, that world of insolence and humble desires, of envy and cringing, all that is gilded or tarnished, young or old, noble of yesterday or noble from the fourth century, all that sneers at a parvenu, all that fears to commit itself, all that wants to demolish power and worships power if it resists,—all those ears hear, all those tongues say, all those minds know, in a single evening, where the new-comer who aspires to honor among them was born and brought up, and what that interloper has done, or has not done, in the course of his life. There may be no court of assizes for the upper classes of society; but at any rate they have the most cruel of public prosecutors, an intangible moral being, both judge and executioner, who accuses and brands. Do not hope to hide anything from him; tell him all yourself; he wants to know all and he will know all. Do not ask what mysterious telegraph it was which conveyed to him in the twinkling of an eye, at any hour, in any place, that story, that bit of news, that scandal; do not ask what prompts him. That telegraph is a social mystery; no observer can

report its effects. Of many extraordinary instances thereof, one may suffice: The assassination of the Duc de Berry, which occurred at the Opera-house, was related within ten minutes in the Ile-Saint-Louis. Thus the opinion of the 6th of the line as to its quartermaster filtered through society the night on which he gave his first ball.

Diard was therefore debarred from succeeding in society. Henceforth his wife alone had the power to make anything of him. Miracle of our strange civilization! In Paris, if a man is incapable of being anything himself, his wife, when she is young and clever, may give him other chances for elevation. We sometimes meet with invalid women, feeble beings apparently, who, without rising from sofas or leaving their chambers, have ruled society, moved a thousand springs, and placed their husbands where their ambition or their vanity prompted. But Juana, whose childhood was passed in her retreat in Tarragona, knew nothing of the vices, the meannesses, or the resources of Parisian society; she looked at that society with the curiosity of a girl, but she learned from it only that which her sorrow and her wounded pride revealed to her.

Juana had the tact of a virgin heart which receives impressions in advance of the event, after the manner of what are called “sensitives.” The solitary young girl, so suddenly become a woman and a wife, saw plainly that were she to attempt to compel society to respect her husband, it must be after the manner of Spanish beggars, carbine in hand. Besides, the multiplicity of the precautions she would have to take, would they meet the necessity? Suddenly she divined society as, once before, she had divined life, and she saw nothing around her but the immense extent of an irreparable disaster. She had, moreover, the additional grief of tardily recognizing her husband’s peculiar form of incapacity; he was a man unfitted for any purpose that required continuity of ideas. He could not understand a consistent part, such as he ought to play in the world; he perceived it neither as a whole nor in its gradations, and its gradations were everything. He was in one of those positions where shrewdness and tact might have taken the place of strength; when shrewdness and tact succeed, they are, perhaps, the highest form of strength.

Now Diard, far from arresting the spot of oil on his garments left by his antecedents, did his best to spread it. Incapable of studying the phase of the empire in the midst of which he came to live in Paris, he wanted to be made prefect. At that time every one believed in the genius of Napoleon; his favor enhanced the value of all offices. Prefectures, those miniature empires, could only be filled by men of great names, or chamberlains of H.M. the emperor and king. Already the prefects were a species of vizier. The myrmidons of the great man scoffed at Diard’s pretensions to a prefecture, whereupon he

lowered his demand to a sub-prefecture. There was, of course, a ridiculous discrepancy between this latter demand and the magnitude of his fortune. To frequent the imperial salons and live with insolent luxury, and then to abandon that millionaire life and bury himself as sub-prefect at Issoudun or Savenay was certainly holding himself below his position. Juana, too late aware of our laws and habits and administrative customs, did not enlighten her husband soon enough. Diard, desperate, petitioned successively all the ministerial powers; repulsed everywhere, he found nothing open to him; and society then judged him as the government judged him and as he judged himself. Diard, grievously wounded on the battlefield, was nevertheless not decorated; the quartermaster, rich as he was, was allowed no place in public life, and society logically refused him that to which he pretended in its midst.

Finally, to cap all, the luckless man felt in his own home the superiority of his wife. Though she used great tact—we might say velvet softness if the term were admissible—to disguise from her husband this supremacy, which surprised and humiliated herself, Diard ended by being affected by it.

At a game of life like this men are either unmanned, or they grow the stronger, or they give themselves to evil. The courage or the ardor of this man lessened under the reiterated blows which his own faults dealt to his self-appreciation, and fault after fault he committed. In the first place he had to struggle against his own habits and character. A passionate Provencal, frank in his vices as in his virtues, this man whose fibres vibrated like the strings of a harp, was all heart to his former friends. He succored the shabby and spattered man as readily as the needy of rank; in short, he accepted everybody, and gave his hand in his gilded salons to many a poor devil. Observing this on one occasion, a general of the empire, a variety of the human species of which no type will presently remain, refused his hand to Diard, and called him, insolently, “my good fellow” when he met him. The few persons of really good society whom Diard knew, treated him with that elegant, polished contempt against which a new-made man has seldom any weapons. The manners, the semi-Italian gesticulations, the speech of Diard, his style of dress,—all contributed to repulse the respect which careful observation of matters of good taste and dignity might otherwise obtain for vulgar persons; the yoke of such conventionalities can only be cast off by great and unthinkable powers. So goes the world.

These details but faintly picture the many tortures to which Juana was subjected; they came upon her one by one; each social nature pricked her with its own particular pin; and to a soul which preferred the thrust of a dagger, there could be no worse suffering than this struggle in which Diard received insults he did not feel and Juana felt those she did not receive. A moment came, an awful moment, when she gained a clear and lucid perception of

society, and felt in one instant all the sorrows which were gathering themselves together to fall upon her head. She judged her husband incapable of rising to the honored ranks of the social order, and she felt that he would one day descend to where his instincts led him. Henceforth Juana felt pity for him.

The future was very gloomy for this young woman. She lived in constant apprehension of some disaster. This presentiment was in her soul as a contagion is in the air, but she had strength of mind and will to disguise her anguish beneath a smile. Juana had ceased to think of herself. She used her influence to make Diard resign his various pretensions and to show him, as a haven, the peaceful and consoling life of home. Evils came from society—why not banish it? In his home Diard found peace and respect; he reigned there. She felt herself strong to accept the trying task of making him happy,—he, a man dissatisfied with himself. Her energy increased with the difficulties of life; she had all the secret heroism necessary to her position; religion inspired her with those desires which support the angel appointed to protect a Christian soul—occult poesy, allegorical image of our two natures!

Diard abandoned his projects, closed his house to the world, and lived in his home. But here he found another reef. The poor soldier had one of those eccentric souls which need perpetual motion. Diard was one of the men who are instinctively compelled to start again the moment they arrive, and whose vital object seems to be to come and go incessantly, like the wheels mentioned in Holy Writ. Perhaps he felt the need of flying from himself. Without wearying of Juana, without blaming Juana, his passion for her, rendered tranquil by time, allowed his natural character to assert itself. Henceforth his days of gloom were more frequent, and he often gave way to southern excitement. The more virtuous a woman is and the more irreproachable, the more a man likes to find fault with her, if only to assert by that act his legal superiority. But if by chance she seems really imposing to him, he feels the need of foisting faults upon her. After that, between man and wife, trifles increase and grow till they swell to Alps.

But Juana, patient and without pride, gentle and without that bitterness which women know so well how to cast into their submission, left Diard no chance for planned ill-humor. Besides, she was one of those noble creatures to whom it is impossible to speak disrespectfully; her glance, in which her life, saintly and pure, shone out, had the weight of a fascination. Diard, embarrassed at first, then annoyed, ended by feeling that such high virtue was a yoke upon him. The goodness of his wife gave him no violent emotions, and violent emotions were what he wanted. What myriads of scenes are played in the depths of his souls, beneath the cold exterior of lives that are, apparently, commonplace! Among these dramas, lasting each but a short time, though

they influence life so powerfully and are frequently the forerunners of the great misfortune doomed to fall on so many marriages, it is difficult to choose an example. There was a scene, however, which particularly marked the moment when in the life of this husband and wife estrangement began. Perhaps it may also serve to explain the finale of this narrative.

Juana had two children, happily for her, two sons. The first was born seven months after her marriage. He was called Juan, and he strongly resembled his mother. The second was born about two years after her arrival in Paris. The latter resembled both Diard and Juana, but more particularly Diard. His name was Francisque. For the last five years Francisque had been the object of Juana's most tender and watchful care. The mother was constantly occupied with that child; to him her prettiest caresses; to him the toys, but to him, especially, the penetrating mother-looks. Juana had watched him from his cradle; she had studied his cries, his motions; she endeavored to discern his nature that she might educate him wisely. It seemed at times as if she had but that one child. Diard, seeing that the eldest, Juan, was in a way neglected, took him under his own protection; and without inquiring even of himself whether the boy was the fruit of that ephemeral love to which he owed his wife, he made him his Benjamin.

Of all the sentiments transmitted to her through the blood of her grandmothers which consumed her, Madame Diard accepted one alone, — maternal love. But she loved her children doubly: first with the noble violence of which her mother the Marana had given her the example; secondly, with grace and purity, in the spirit of those social virtues the practice of which was the glory of her life and her inward recompense. The secret thought, the conscience of her motherhood, which gave to the Marana's life its stamp of untaught poesy, was to Juana an acknowledged life, an open consolation at all hours. Her mother had been virtuous as other women are criminal,—in secret; she had stolen a fancied happiness, she had never really tasted it. But Juana, unhappy in her virtue as her mother was unhappy in her vice, could enjoy at all moments the ineffable delights which her mother had so craved and could not have. To her, as to her mother, maternity comprised all earthly sentiments. Each, from differing causes, had no other comfort in their misery. Juana's maternal love may have been the strongest because, deprived of all other affections, she put the joys she lacked into the one joy of her children; and there are noble passions that resemble vice; the more they are satisfied the more they increase. Mothers and gamblers are alike insatiable.

When Juana saw the generous pardon laid silently on the head of Juan by Diard's fatherly affection, she was much moved, and from the day when the husband and wife changed parts she felt for him the true and deep interest she had hitherto shown to him as a matter of duty only. If that man had been more

consistent in his life; if he had not destroyed by fitful inconstancy and restlessness the forces of a true though excitable sensibility, Juana would doubtless have loved him in the end. Unfortunately, he was a type of those southern natures which are keen in perceptions they cannot follow out; capable of great things over-night, and incapable the next morning; often the victim of their own virtues, and often lucky through their worst passions; admirable men in some respects, when their good qualities are kept to a steady energy by some outward bond. For two years after his retreat from active life Diard was held captive in his home by the softest chains. He lived, almost in spite of himself, under the influence of his wife, who made herself gay and amusing to cheer him, who used the resources of feminine genius to attract and seduce him to a love of virtue, but whose ability and cleverness did not go so far as to simulate love.

At this time all Paris was talking of the affair of a captain in the army who in a paroxysm of libertine jealousy had killed a woman. Diard, on coming home to dinner, told his wife that the officer was dead. He had killed himself to avoid the dishonor of a trial and the shame of death upon the scaffold. Juana did not see at first the logic of such conduct, and her husband was obliged to explain to her the fine jurisprudence of French law, which does not prosecute the dead.

“But, papa, didn’t you tell us the other day that the king could pardon?” asked Francisque.

“The king can give nothing but life,” said Juan, half scornfully.

Diard and Juana, the spectators of this little scene, were differently affected by it. The glance, moist with joy, which his wife cast upon her eldest child was a fatal revelation to the husband of the secrets of a heart hitherto impenetrable. That eldest child was all Juana; Juana comprehended him; she was sure of his heart, his future; she adored him, but her ardent love was a secret between herself, her child, and God. Juan instinctively enjoyed the seeming indifference of his mother in presence of his father and brother, for she pressed him to her heart when alone. Francisque was Diard, and Juana’s incessant care and watchfulness betrayed her desire to correct in the son the vices of the father and to encourage his better qualities. Juana, unaware that her glance had said too much and that her husband had rightly interpreted it, took Francisque in her lap and gave him, in a gentle voice still trembling with the pleasure that Juan’s answer had brought her, a lesson upon honor, simplified to his childish intelligence.

“That boy’s character requires care,” said Diard.

“Yes,” she replied simply.

“How about Juan?”

Madame Diard, struck by the tone in which the words were uttered, looked at her husband.

“Juan was born perfect,” he added.

Then he sat down gloomily, and reflected. Presently, as his wife continued silent, he added:—

“You love one of your children better than the other.”

“You know that,” she said.

“No,” said Diard, “I did not know until now which of them you preferred.”

“But neither of them have ever given me a moment’s uneasiness,” she answered quickly.

“But one of them gives you greater joys,” he said, more quickly still.

“I never counted them,” she said.

“How false you women are!” cried Diard. “Will you dare to say that Juan is not the child of your heart?”

“If that were so,” she said, with dignity, “do you think it a misfortune?”

“You have never loved me. If you had chosen, I would have conquered worlds for your sake. You know all that I have struggled to do in life, supported by the hope of pleasing you. Ah! if you had only loved me!”

“A woman who loves,” said Juana, “likes to live in solitude, far from the world, and that is what we are doing.”

“I know, Juana, that you are never in the wrong.”

The words were said bitterly, and cast, for the rest of their lives together, a coldness between them.

On the morrow of that fatal day Diard went back to his old companions and found distractions for his mind in play. Unfortunately, he won much money, and continued playing. Little by little, he returned to the dissipated life he had formerly lived. Soon he ceased even to dine in his own home.

Some months went by in the enjoyment of this new independence; he was determined to preserve it, and in order to do so he separated himself from his wife, giving her the large apartments and lodging himself in the entresol. By the end of the year Diard and Juana only saw each other in the morning at breakfast.

Like all gamblers, he had his alternations of loss and gain. Not wishing to

cut into the capital of his fortune, he felt the necessity of withdrawing from his wife the management of their income; and the day came when he took from her all she had hitherto freely disposed of for the household benefit, giving her instead a monthly stipend. The conversation they had on this subject was the last of their married intercourse. The silence that fell between them was a true divorce; Juana comprehended that from henceforth she was only a mother, and she was glad, not seeking for the causes of this evil. For such an event is a great evil. Children are conjointly one with husband and wife in the home, and the life of her husband could not be a source of grief and injury to Juana only.

As for Diard, now emancipated, he speedily grew accustomed to win and lose enormous sums. A fine player and a heavy player, he soon became celebrated for his style of playing. The social consideration he had been unable to win under the Empire, he acquired under the Restoration by the rolling of his gold on the green cloth and by his talent for all games that were in vogue. Ambassadors, bankers, persons with newly-acquired large fortunes, and all those men who, having sucked life to the dregs, turn to gambling for its feverish joys, admired Diard at their clubs,—seldom in their own houses,—and they all gambled with him. He became the fashion. Two or three times during the winter he gave a fete as a matter of social pride in return for the civilities he received. At such times Juana once more caught a glimpse of the world of balls, festivities, luxury, and lights; but for her it was a sort of tax imposed upon the comfort of her solitude. She, the queen of these solemnities, appeared like a being fallen from some other planet. Her simplicity, which nothing had corrupted, her beautiful virginity of soul, which her peaceful life restored to her, her beauty and her true modesty, won her sincere homage. But observing how few women ever entered her salons, she came to understand that though her husband was following, without communicating its nature to her, a new line of conduct, he had gained nothing actually in the world’s esteem.

Diard was not always lucky; far from it. In three years he had dissipated three fourths of his fortune, but his passion for play gave him the energy to continue it. He was intimate with a number of men, more particularly with the roues of the Bourse, men who, since the revolution, have set up the principle that robbery done on a large scale is only a smirch to the reputation,—transferring thus to financial matters the loose principles of love in the eighteenth century. Diard now became a sort of business man, and concerned himself in several of those affairs which are called shady in the slang of the law-courts. He practised the decent thievery by which so many men, cleverly masked, or hidden in the recesses of the political world, make their fortunes,—thievery which, if done in the streets by the light of an oil lamp, would see a poor devil to the galleys, but, under gilded ceilings and by the light of candelabra, is sanctioned. Diard brought up, monopolized, and sold sugars; he

sold offices; he had the glory of inventing the “man of straw” for lucrative posts which it was necessary to keep in his own hands for a short time; he bought votes, receiving, on one occasion, so much per cent on the purchase of fifteen parliamentary votes which all passed on one division from the benches of the Left to the benches of the Right. Such actions are no longer crimes or thefts,—they are called governing, developing industry, becoming a financial power. Diard was placed by public opinion on the bench of infamy where many an able man was already seated. On that bench is the aristocracy of evil. It is the upper Chamber of scoundrels of high life. Diard was, therefore, not a mere commonplace gambler who is seen to be a blackguard, and ends by begging. That style of gambler is no longer seen in society of a certain topographical height. In these days bold scoundrels die brilliantly in the chariot of vice with the trappings of luxury. Diard, at least, did not buy his remorse at a low price; he made himself one of these privileged men. Having studied the machinery of government and learned all the secrets and the passions of the men in power, he was able to maintain himself in the fiery furnace into which he had sprung.

Madame Diard knew nothing of her husband’s infernal life. Glad of his abandonment, she felt no curiosity about him, and all her hours were occupied. She devoted what money she had to the education of her children, wishing to make men of them, and giving them straight-forward reasons, without, however, taking the bloom from their young imaginations. Through them alone came her interests and her emotions; consequently, she suffered no longer from her blemished life. Her children were to her what they are to many mothers for a long period of time,—a sort of renewal of their own existence. Diard was now an accidental circumstance, not a participator in her life, and since he had ceased to be the father and the head of the family, Juana felt bound to him by no tie other than that imposed by conventional laws. Nevertheless, she brought up her children to the highest respect for paternal authority, however imaginary it was for them. In this she was greatly seconded by her husband’s continual absence. If he had been much in the home Diard would have neutralized his wife’s efforts. The boys had too much intelligence and shrewdness not to have judged their father; and to judge a father is moral parricide.

In the long run, however, Juana’s indifference to her husband wore itself away; it even changed to a species of fear. She understood at last how the conduct of a father might long weigh on the future of her children, and her motherly solicitude brought her many, though incomplete, revelations of the truth. From day to day the dread of some unknown but inevitable evil in the shadow of which she lived became more and more keen and terrible. Therefore, during the rare moments when Diard and Juana met she would cast upon his hollow face, wan from nights of gambling and furrowed by emotions,

a piercing look, the penetration of which made Diard shudder. At such times the assumed gaiety of her husband alarmed Juana more than his gloomiest expressions of anxiety when, by chance, he forgot that assumption of joy. Diard feared his wife as a criminal fears the executioner. In him, Juana saw her children's shame; and in her Diard dreaded a calm vengeance, the judgment of that serene brow, an arm raised, a weapon ready.

After fifteen years of marriage Diard found himself without resources. He owed three hundred thousand francs and he could scarcely muster one hundred thousand. The house, his only visible possession, was mortgaged to its fullest selling value. A few days more, and the sort of prestige with which opulence had invested him would vanish. Not a hand would be offered, not a purse would be open to him. Unless some favorable event occurred he would fall into a slough of contempt, deeper perhaps than he deserved, precisely because he had mounted to a height he could not maintain. At this juncture he happened to hear that a number of strangers of distinction, diplomats and others, were assembled at the watering-places in the Pyrenees, where they gambled for enormous sums, and were doubtless well supplied with money.

He determined to go at once to the Pyrenees; but he would not leave his wife in Paris, lest some importunate creditor might reveal to her the secret of his horrible position. He therefore took her and the two children with him, refusing to allow her to take the tutor and scarcely permitting her to take a maid. His tone was curt and imperious; he seemed to have recovered some energy. This sudden journey, the cause of which escaped her penetration, alarmed Juana secretly. Her husband made it gaily. Obliged to occupy the same carriage, he showed himself day by day more attentive to the children and more amiable to their mother. Nevertheless, each day brought Juana dark presentiments, the presentiments of mothers who tremble without apparent reason, but who are seldom mistaken when they tremble thus. For them the veil of the future seems thinner than for others.

At Bordeaux, Diard hired in a quiet street a quiet little house, neatly furnished, and in it he established his wife. The house was at the corner of two streets, and had a garden. Joined to the neighboring house on one side only, it was open to view and accessible on the other three sides. Diard paid the rent in advance, and left Juana barely enough money for the necessary expenses of three months, a sum not exceeding a thousand francs. Madame Diard made no observation on this unusual meanness. When her husband told her that he was going to the watering-places and that she would stay at Bordeaux, Juana offered no difficulty, and at once formed a plan to teach the children Spanish and Italian, and to make them read the two masterpieces of the two languages. She was glad to lead a retired life, simply and naturally economical. To spare herself the troubles of material life, she arranged with a "traiteur" the day after

Diard's departure to send in their meals. Her maid then sufficed for the service of the house, and she thus found herself without money, but her wants all provided for until her husband's return. Her pleasures consisted in taking walks with the children. She was then thirty-three years old. Her beauty, greatly developed, was in all its lustre. Therefore as soon as she appeared, much talk was made in Bordeaux about the beautiful Spanish stranger. At the first advances made to her Juana ceased to walk abroad, and confined herself wholly to her own large garden.

Diard at first made a fortune at the baths. In two months he won three hundred thousand dollars, but it never occurred to him to send any money to his wife; he kept it all, expecting to make some great stroke of fortune on a vast stake. Towards the end of the second month the Marquis de Montefiore appeared at the same baths. The marquis was at this time celebrated for his wealth, his handsome face, his fortunate marriage with an Englishwoman, and more especially for his love of play. Diard, his former companion, encountered him, and desired to add his spoils to those of others. A gambler with four hundred thousand francs in hand is always in a position to do as he pleases. Diard, confident in his luck, renewed acquaintance with Montefiore. The latter received him very coldly, but nevertheless they played together, and Diard lost every penny that he possessed, and more.

"My dear Montefiore," said the ex-quartermaster, after making a tour of the salon, "I owe you a hundred thousand francs; but my money is in Bordeaux, where I have left my wife."

Diard had the money in bank-bills in his pocket; but with the self-possession and rapid bird's-eye view of a man accustomed to catch at all resources, he still hoped to recover himself by some one of the endless caprices of play. Montefiore had already mentioned his intention of visiting Bordeaux. Had he paid his debt on the spot, Diard would have been left without the power to take his revenge; a revenge at cards often exceeds the amount of all preceding losses. But these burning expectations depended on the marquis's reply.

"Wait, my dear fellow," said Montefiore, "and we will go together to Bordeaux. In all conscience, I am rich enough to-day not to wish to take the money of an old comrade."

Three days later Diard and Montefiore were in Bordeaux at a gambling table. Diard, having won enough to pay his hundred thousand francs, went on until he had lost two hundred thousand more on his word. He was gay as a man who swam in gold. Eleven o'clock sounded; the night was superb. Montefiore may have felt, like Diard, a desire to breathe the open air and recover from such emotions in a walk. The latter proposed to the marquis to

come home with him to take a cup of tea and get his money.

“But Madame Diard?” said Montefiore.

“Bah!” exclaimed the husband.

They went down-stairs; but before taking his hat Diard entered the dining-room of the establishment and asked for a glass of water. While it was being brought, he walked up and down the room, and was able, without being noticed, to pick up one of those small sharp-pointed steel knives with pearl handles which are used for cutting fruit at dessert.

“Where do you live?” said Montefiore, in the courtyard, “for I want to send a carriage there to fetch me.”

Diard told him the exact address.

“You see,” said Montefiore, in a low voice, taking Diard’s arm, “that as long as I am with you I have nothing to fear; but if I came home alone and a scoundrel were to follow me, I should be profitable to kill.”

“Have you much with you?”

“No, not much,” said the wary Italian, “only my winnings. But they would make a pretty fortune for a beggar and turn him into an honest man for the rest of his life.”

Diard led the marquis along a lonely street where he remembered to have seen a house, the door of which was at the end of an avenue of trees with high and gloomy walls on either side of it. When they reached this spot he coolly invited the marquis to precede him; but as if the latter understood him he preferred to keep at his side. Then, no sooner were they fairly in the avenue, then Diard, with the agility of a tiger, tripped up the marquis with a kick behind the knees, and putting a foot on his neck stabbed him again and again to the heart till the blade of the knife broke in it. Then he searched Montefiore’s pockets, took his wallet, money, everything. But though he had taken the Italian unawares, and had done the deed with lucid mind and the quickness of a pickpocket, Montefiore had time to cry “Murder! Help!” in a shrill and piercing voice which was fit to rouse every sleeper in the neighborhood. His last sighs were given in those horrible shrieks.

Diard was not aware that at the moment when they entered the avenue a crowd just issuing from a theatre was passing at the upper end of the street. The cries of the dying man reached them, though Diard did his best to stifle the noise by setting his foot firmly on Montefiore’s neck. The crowd began to run towards the avenue, the high walls of which appeared to echo back the cries, directing them to the very spot where the crime was committed. The sound of their coming steps seemed to beat on Diard’s brain. But not losing his

head as yet, the murderer left the avenue and came boldly into the street, walking very gently, like a spectator who sees the inutility of trying to give help. He even turned round once or twice to judge of the distance between himself and the crowd, and he saw them rushing up the avenue, with the exception of one man, who, with a natural sense of caution, began to watch Diard.

“There he is! there he is!” cried the people, who had entered the avenue as soon as they saw Montefiore stretched out near the door of the empty house.

As soon as that clamor rose, Diard, feeling himself well in the advance, began to run or rather to fly, with the vigor of a lion and the bounds of a deer. At the other end of the street he saw, or fancied he saw, a mass of persons, and he dashed down a cross street to avoid them. But already every window was open, and heads were thrust forth right and left, while from every door came shouts and gleams of light. Diard kept on, going straight before him, through the lights and the noise; and his legs were so actively agile that he soon left the tumult behind him, though without being able to escape some eyes which took in the extent of his course more rapidly than he could cover it. Inhabitants, soldiers, gendarmes, every one, seemed afoot in the twinkling of an eye. Some men awoke the commissaries of police, others stayed by the body to guard it. The pursuit kept on in the direction of the fugitive, who dragged it after him like the flame of a conflagration.

Diard, as he ran, had all the sensations of a dream when he heard a whole city howling, running, panting after him. Nevertheless, he kept his ideas and his presence of mind. Presently he reached the wall of the garden of his house. The place was perfectly silent, and he thought he had foiled his pursuers, though a distant murmur of the tumult came to his ears like the roaring of the sea. He dipped some water from a brook and drank it. Then, observing a pile of stones on the road, he hid his treasure in it; obeying one of those vague thoughts which come to criminals at a moment when the faculty to judge their actions under all bearings deserts them, and they think to establish their innocence by want of proof of their guilt.

That done, he endeavored to assume a placid countenance; he even tried to smile as he rapped softly on the door of his house, hoping that no one saw him. He raised his eyes, and through the outer blinds of one window came a gleam of light from his wife’s room. Then, in the midst of his trouble, visions of her gentle life, spent with her children, beat upon his brain with the force of a hammer. The maid opened the door, which Diard hastily closed behind him with a kick. For a moment he breathed freely; then, noticing that he was bathed in perspiration, he sent the servant back to Juana and stayed in the darkness of the passage, where he wiped his face with his handkerchief and put his clothes in order, like a dandy about to pay a visit to a pretty woman.

After that he walked into a track of the moonlight to examine his hands. A quiver of joy passed over him as he saw that no blood stains were on them; the hemorrhage from his victim's body was no doubt inward.

But all this took time. When at last he mounted the stairs to Juana's room he was calm and collected, and able to reflect on his position, which resolved itself into two ideas: to leave the house, and get to the wharves. He did not think these ideas, he saw them written in fiery letters on the darkness. Once at the wharves he could hide all day, return at night for his treasure, then conceal himself, like a rat, in the hold of some vessel and escape without any one suspecting his whereabouts. But to do all this, money, gold, was his first necessity,—and he did not possess one penny.

The maid brought a light to show him up.

"Felicie," he said, "don't you hear a noise in the street, shouts, cries? Go and see what it means, and come and tell me."

His wife, in her white dressing-gown, was sitting at a table, reading aloud to Francisque and Juan from a Spanish Cervantes, while the boys followed her pronunciation of the words from the text. They all three stopped and looked at Diard, who stood in the doorway with his hands in his pockets; overcome, perhaps, by finding himself in this calm scene, so softly lighted, so beautiful with the faces of his wife and children. It was a living picture of the Virgin between her son and John.

"Juana, I have something to say to you."

"What has happened?" she asked, instantly perceiving from the livid paleness of her husband that the misfortune she had daily expected was upon them.

"Oh, nothing; but I want to speak to you—to you, alone."

And he glanced at his sons.

"My dears, go to your room, and go to bed," said Juana; "say your prayers without me."

The boys left the room in silence, with the incurious obedience of well-trained children.

"My dear Juana," said Diard, in a coaxing voice, "I left you with very little money, and I regret it now. Listen to me; since I relieved you of the care of our income by giving you an allowance, have you not, like other women, laid something by?"

"No," replied Juana, "I have nothing. In making that allowance you did not reckon the costs of the children's education. I don't say that to reproach you,

my friend, only to explain my want of money. All that you gave me went to pay masters and—”

“Enough!” cried Diard, violently. “Thunder of heaven! every instant is precious! Where are your jewels?”

“You know very well I have never worn any.”

“Then there’s not a sou to be had here!” cried Diard, frantically.

“Why do you shout in that way?” she asked.

“Juana,” he replied, “I have killed a man.”

Juana sprang to the door of her children’s room and closed it; then she returned.

“Your sons must hear nothing,” she said. “With whom have you fought?”

“Montefiore,” he replied.

“Ah!” she said with a sigh, “the only man you had the right to kill.”

“There were many reasons why he should die by my hand. But I can’t lose time—Money, money! for God’s sake, money! I may be pursued. We did not fight. I—I killed him.”

“Killed him!” she cried, “how?”

“Why, as one kills anything. He stole my whole fortune and I took it back, that’s all. Juana, now that everything is quiet you must go down to that heap of stones—you know the heap by the garden wall—and get that money, since you haven’t any in the house.”

“The money that you stole?” said Juana.

“What does that matter to you? Have you any money to give me? I tell you I must get away. They are on my traces.”

“Who?”

“The people, the police.”

Juana left the room, but returned immediately.

“Here,” she said, holding out to him at arm’s length a jewel, “that is Dona Lagounia’s cross. There are four rubies in it, of great value, I have been told. Take it and go—go!”

“Felicie hasn’t come back,” he cried, with a sudden thought. “Can she have been arrested?”

Juana laid the cross on the table, and sprang to the windows that looked on the street. There she saw, in the moonlight, a file of soldiers posting

themselves in deepest silence along the wall of the house. She turned, affecting to be calm, and said to her husband:—

“You have not a minute to lose; you must escape through the garden. Here is the key of the little gate.”

As a precaution she turned to the other windows, looking on the garden. In the shadow of the trees she saw the gleam of the silver lace on the hats of a body of gendarmes; and she heard the distant mutterings of a crowd of persons whom sentinels were holding back at the end of the streets up which curiosity had drawn them. Diard had, in truth, been seen to enter his house by persons at their windows, and on their information and that of the frightened maid-servant, who was arrested, the troops and the people had blocked the two streets which led to the house. A dozen gendarmes, returning from the theatre, had climbed the walls of the garden, and guarded all exit in that direction.

“Monsieur,” said Juana, “you cannot escape. The whole town is here.”

Diard ran from window to window with the useless activity of a captive bird striking against the panes to escape. Juana stood silent and thoughtful.

“Juana, dear Juana, help me! give me, for pity’s sake, some advice.”

“Yes,” said Juana, “I will; and I will save you.”

“Ah! you are always my good angel.”

Juana left the room and returned immediately, holding out to Diard, with averted head, one of his own pistols. Diard did not take it. Juana heard the entrance of the soldiers into the courtyard, where they laid down the body of the murdered man to confront the assassin with the sight of it. She turned round and saw Diard white and livid. The man was nearly fainting, and tried to sit down.

“Your children implore you,” she said, putting the pistol beneath his hand.

“But—my good Juana, my little Juana, do you think—Juana! is it so pressing?—I want to kiss you.”

The gendarmes were mounting the staircase. Juana grasped the pistol, aimed it at Diard, holding him, in spite of his cries, by the throat; then she blew his brains out and flung the weapon on the ground.

At that instant the door was opened violently. The public prosecutor, followed by an examining judge, a doctor, a sheriff, and a posse of gendarmes, all the representatives, in short, of human justice, entered the room.

“What do you want?” asked Juana.

“Is that Monsieur Diard?” said the prosecutor, pointing to the dead body

bent double on the floor.

“Yes, monsieur.”

“Your gown is covered with blood, madame.”

“Do you not see why?” replied Juana.

She went to the little table and sat down, taking up the volume of Cervantes; she was pale, with a nervous agitation which she nevertheless controlled, keeping it wholly inward.

“Leave the room,” said the prosecutor to the gendarmes.

Then he signed to the examining judge and the doctor to remain.

“Madame, under the circumstances, we can only congratulate you on the death of your husband,” he said. “At least he has died as a soldier should, whatever crime his passions may have led him to commit. His act renders negatory that of justice. But however we may desire to spare you at such a moment, the law requires that we should make an exact report of all violent deaths. You will permit us to do our duty?”

“May I go and change my dress?” she asked, laying down the volume.

“Yes, madame; but you must bring it back to us. The doctor may need it.”

“It would be too painful for madame to see me operate,” said the doctor, understanding the suspicions of the prosecutor. “Messieurs,” he added, “I hope you will allow her to remain in the next room.”

The magistrates approved the request of the merciful physician, and Felicie was permitted to attend her mistress. The judge and the prosecutor talked together in a low voice. Officers of the law are very unfortunate in being forced to suspect all, and to imagine evil everywhere. By dint of supposing wicked intentions, and of comprehending them, in order to reach the truth hidden under so many contradictory actions, it is impossible that the exercise of their dreadful functions should not, in the long run, dry up at their source the generous emotions they are constrained to repress. If the sensibilities of the surgeon who probes into the mysteries of the human body end by growing callous, what becomes of those of the judge who is incessantly compelled to search the inner folds of the soul? Martyrs to their mission, magistrates are all their lives in mourning for their lost illusions; crime weighs no less heavily on them than on the criminal. An old man seated on the bench is venerable, but a young judge makes a thoughtful person shudder. The examining judge in this case was young, and he felt obliged to say to the public prosecutor,—

“Do you think that woman was her husband’s accomplice? Ought we to take her into custody? Is it best to question her?”

The prosecutor replied, with a careless shrug of his shoulders,—

“Montefiore and Diard were two well-known scoundrels. The maid evidently knew nothing of the crime. Better let the thing rest there.”

The doctor performed the autopsy, and dictated his report to the sheriff. Suddenly he stopped, and hastily entered the next room.

“Madame—” he said.

Juana, who had removed her bloody gown, came towards him.

“It was you,” he whispered, stooping to her ear, “who killed your husband.”

“Yes, monsieur,” she replied.

The doctor returned and continued his dictation as follows,—

“And, from the above assemblage of facts, it appears evident that the said Diard killed himself voluntarily and by his own hand.”

“Have you finished?” he said to the sheriff after a pause.

“Yes,” replied the writer.

The doctor signed the report. Juana, who had followed him into the room, gave him one glance, repressing with difficulty the tears which for an instant rose into her eyes and moistened them.

“Messieurs,” she said to the public prosecutor and the judge, “I am a stranger here, and a Spaniard. I am ignorant of the laws, and I know no one in Bordeaux. I ask of you one kindness: enable me to obtain a passport for Spain.”

“One moment!” cried the examining judge. “Madame, what has become of the money stolen from the Marquis de Montefiore?”

“Monsieur Diard,” she replied, “said something to me vaguely about a heap of stones, under which he must have hidden it.”

“Where?”

“In the street.”

The two magistrates looked at each other. Juana made a noble gesture and motioned to the doctor.

“Monsieur,” she said in his ear, “can I be suspected of some infamous action? I! The pile of stones must be close to the wall of my garden. Go yourself, I implore you. Look, search, find that money.”

The doctor went out, taking with him the examining judge, and together

they found Montefiore’s treasure.

Within two days Juana had sold her cross to pay the costs of a journey. On her way with her two children to take the diligence which would carry her to the frontiers of Spain, she heard herself being called in the street. Her dying mother was being carried to a hospital, and through the curtains of her litter she had seen her daughter. Juana made the bearers enter a porte-cochere that was near them, and there the last interview between the mother and the daughter took place. Though the two spoke to each other in a low voice, Juan heard these parting words,—

“Mother, die in peace; I have suffered for you all.”

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FAREWELL

“Come, Deputy of the Centre, come along! We shall have to mend our pace if we mean to sit down to dinner when every one else does, and that’s a fact! Hurry up! Jump, Marquis! That’s it! Well done! You are bounding over the furrows just like a stag!”

These words were uttered by a sportsman seated much at his ease on the outskirts of the Foret de l’Isle-Adam; he had just finished a Havana cigar, which he had smoked while he waited for his companion, who had evidently been straying about for some time among the forest undergrowth. Four panting dogs by the speaker’s side likewise watched the progress of the personage for whose benefit the remarks were made. To make their sarcastic import fully clear, it should be added that the second sportsman was both short and stout; his ample girth indicated a truly magisterial corpulence, and in consequence his progress across the furrows was by no means easy. He was striding over a vast field of stubble; the dried corn-stalks underfoot added not a little to the difficulties of his passage, and to add to his discomforts, the genial influence of the sun that slanted into his eyes brought great drops of perspiration into his face. The uppermost thought in his mind being a strong desire to keep his balance, he lurched to and fro like a coach jolted over an atrocious road.

It was one of those September days of almost tropical heat that finishes the work of summer and ripens the grapes. Such heat forebodes a coming storm; and though as yet there were wide patches of blue between the dark rain-clouds low down on the horizon, pale golden masses were rising and scattering with ominous swiftness from west to east, and drawing a shadowy veil across the sky. The wind was still, save in the upper regions of the air, so

that the weight of the atmosphere seemed to compress the steamy heat of the earth into the forest glades. The tall forest trees shut out every breath of air so completely that the little valley across which the sportsman was making his way was as hot as a furnace; the silent forest seemed parched with the fiery heat. Birds and insects were mute; the topmost twigs of the trees swayed with scarcely perceptible motion. Any one who retains some recollection of the summer of 1819 must surely compassionate the plight of the hapless supporter of the ministry who toiled and sweated over the stubble to rejoin his satirical comrade. That gentleman, as he smoked his cigar, had arrived, by a process of calculation based on the altitude of the sun, to the conclusion that it must be about five o'clock.

"Where the devil are we?" asked the stout sportsman. He wiped his brow as he spoke, and propped himself against a tree in the field opposite his companion, feeling quite unequal to clearing the broad ditch that lay between them.

"And you ask that question of me!" retorted the other, laughing from his bed of tall brown grasses on the top of the bank. He flung the end of his cigar into the ditch, exclaiming, "I swear by Saint Hubert that no one shall catch me risking myself again in a country that I don't know with a magistrate, even if, like you, my dear d'Albon, he happens to be an old schoolfellow."

"Why, Philip, have you really forgotten your own language? You surely must have left your wits behind you in Siberia," said the stouter of the two, with a glance half-comic, half-pathetic at the guide-post distant about a hundred paces from them.

"I understand," replied the one addressed as Philip. He snatched up his rifle, suddenly sprang to his feet, made but one jump of it into the field, and rushed off to the guide-post. "This way, d'Albon, here you are! left about!" he shouted, gesticulating in the direction of the highroad. "To Baillet and l'Isle-Adam!" he went on; "so if we go along here, we shall be sure to come upon the cross-road to Cassan."

"Quite right, Colonel," said M. d'Albon, putting the cap with which he had been fanning himself back on his head.

"Then forward! highly respected Councillor," returned Colonel Philip, whistling to the dogs, that seemed already to obey him rather than the magistrate their owner.

"Are you aware, my lord Marquis, that two leagues yet remain before us?" inquired the malicious soldier. "That village down yonder must be Baillet."

"Great heavens!" cried the Marquis d'Albon. "Go on to Cassan by all means, if you like; but if you do, you will go alone. I prefer to wait here, storm

or no storm; you can send a horse for me from the chateau. You have been making game of me, Sucy. We were to have a nice day's sport by ourselves; we were not to go very far from Cassan, and go over ground that I knew. Pooh! instead of a day's fun, you have kept me running like a greyhound since four o'clock this morning, and nothing but a cup or two of milk by way of breakfast. Oh! if ever you find yourself in a court of law, I will take care that the day goes against you if you were in the right a hundred times over."

The dejected sportsman sat himself down on one of the stumps at the foot of the guide-post, disencumbered himself of his rifle and empty game-bag, and heaved a prolonged sigh.

"Oh, France, behold thy Deputies!" laughed Colonel de Sucy. "Poor old d'Albon; if you had spent six months at the other end of Siberia as I did..."

He broke off, and his eyes sought the sky, as if the story of his troubles was a secret between himself and God.

"Come, march!" he added. "If you once sit down, it is all over with you."

"I can't help it, Philip! It is such an old habit in a magistrate! I am dead beat, upon my honor. If I had only bagged one hare though!"

Two men more different are seldom seen together. The civilian, a man of forty-two, seemed scarcely more than thirty; while the soldier, at thirty years of age, looked to be forty at the least. Both wore the red rosette that proclaimed them to be officers of the Legion of Honor. A few locks of hair, mingled white and black, like a magpie's wing, had strayed from beneath the Colonel's cap; while thick, fair curls clustered about the magistrate's temples. The Colonel was tall, spare, dried up, but muscular; the lines in his pale face told a tale of vehement passions or of terrible sorrows; but his comrade's jolly countenance beamed with health, and would have done credit to an Epicurean. Both men were deeply sunburnt. Their high gaiters of brown leather carried souvenirs of every ditch and swamp that they crossed that day.

"Come, come," cried M. de Sucy, "forward! One short hour's march, and we shall be at Cassan with a good dinner before us."

"You never were in love, that is positive," returned the Councillor, with a comically piteous expression. "You are as inexorable as Article 304 of the Penal Code!"

Philip de Sucy shuddered violently. Deep lines appeared in his broad forehead, his face was overcast like the sky above them; but though his features seemed to contract with the pain of an intolerably bitter memory, no tears came to his eyes. Like all men of strong character, he possessed the power of forcing his emotions down into some inner depth, and, perhaps, like

many reserved natures, he shrank from laying bare a wound too deep for any words of human speech, and winced at the thought of ridicule from those who do not care to understand. M. d'Albon was one of those who are keenly sensitive by nature to the distress of others, who feel at once the pain they have unwillingly given by some blunder. He respected his friend's mood, rose to his feet, forgot his weariness, and followed in silence, thoroughly annoyed with himself for having touched on a wound that seemed not yet healed.

"Some day I will tell you my story," Philip said at last, wringing his friend's hand, while he acknowledged his dumb repentance with a heart-rending glance. "To-day I cannot."

They walked on in silence. As the Colonel's distress passed off the Councillor's fatigue returned. Instinctively, or rather urged by weariness, his eyes explored the depths of the forest around them; he looked high and low among the trees, and gazed along the avenues, hoping to discover some dwelling where he might ask for hospitality. They reached a place where several roads met; and the Councillor, fancying that he saw a thin film of smoke rising through the trees, made a stand and looked sharply about him. He caught a glimpse of the dark green branches of some firs among the other forest trees, and finally, "A house! a house!" he shouted. No sailor could have raised a cry of "Land ahead!" more joyfully than he.

He plunged at once into undergrowth, somewhat of the thickest; and the Colonel, who had fallen into deep musings, followed him unheedingly.

"I would rather have an omelette here and home-made bread, and a chair to sit down in, than go further for a sofa, truffles, and Bordeaux wine at Cassan."

This outburst of enthusiasm on the Councillor's part was caused by the sight of the whitened wall of a house in the distance, standing out in strong contrast against the brown masses of knotted tree-trunks in the forest.

"Aha! This used to be a priory, I should say," the Marquis d'Albon cried once more, as they stood before a grim old gateway. Through the grating they could see the house itself standing in the midst of some considerable extent of park land; from the style of the architecture it appeared to have been a monastery once upon a time.

"Those knowing rascals of monks knew how to choose a site!"

This last exclamation was caused by the magistrate's amazement at the romantic hermitage before his eyes. The house had been built on a spot half-way up the hillside on the slope below the village of Nerville, which crowned the summit. A huge circle of great oak-trees, hundreds of years old, guarded the solitary place from intrusion. There appeared to be about forty acres of the park. The main building of the monastery faced the south, and stood in a space

of green meadow, picturesquely intersected by several tiny clear streams, and by larger sheets of water so disposed as to have a natural effect. Shapely trees with contrasting foliage grew here and there. Grottos had been ingeniously contrived; and broad terraced walks, now in ruin, though the steps were broken and the balustrades eaten through with rust, gave to this sylvan Thebaid a certain character of its own. The art of man and the picturesqueness of nature had wrought together to produce a charming effect. Human passions surely could not cross that boundary of tall oak-trees which shut out the sounds of the outer world, and screened the fierce heat of the sun from this forest sanctuary.

“What neglect!” said M. d’Albon to himself, after the first sense of delight in the melancholy aspect of the ruins in the landscape, which seemed blighted by a curse.

It was like some haunted spot, shunned of men. The twisted ivy stems clambered everywhere, hiding everything away beneath a luxuriant green mantle. Moss and lichens, brown and gray, yellow and red, covered the trees with fantastic patches of color, grew upon the benches in the garden, overran the roof and the walls of the house. The window-sashes were weather-worn and warped with age, the balconies were dropping to pieces, the terraces in ruins. Here and there the folding shutters hung by a single hinge. The crazy doors would have given way at the first attempt to force an entrance.

Out in the orchard the neglected fruit-trees were running to wood, the rambling branches bore no fruit save the glistening mistletoe berries, and tall plants were growing in the garden walks. All this forlornness shed a charm across the picture that wrought on the spectator’s mind with an influence like that of some enchanting poem, filling his soul with dreamy fancies. A poet must have lingered there in deep and melancholy musings, marveling at the harmony of this wilderness, where decay had a certain grace of its own.

In a moment a few gleams of sunlight struggled through a rift in the clouds, and a shower of colored light fell over the wild garden. The brown tiles of the roof glowed in the light, the mosses took bright hues, strange shadows played over the grass beneath the trees; the dead autumn tints grew vivid, bright unexpected contrasts were evoked by the light, every leaf stood out sharply in the clear, thin air. Then all at once the sunlight died away, and the landscape that seemed to have spoken grew silent and gloomy again, or rather, it took gray soft tones like the tenderest hues of autumn dusk.

“It is the palace of the Sleeping Beauty,” the Councillor said to himself (he had already begun to look at the place from the point of view of an owner of property). “Whom can the place belong to, I wonder. He must be a great fool not to live on such a charming little estate!”

Just at that moment, a woman sprang out from under a walnut tree on the right-hand side of the gateway, and passed before the Councillor as noiselessly and swiftly as the shadow of a cloud. This apparition struck him dumb with amazement.

“Hallo, d’Albon, what is the matter?” asked the Colonel.

“I am rubbing my eyes to find out whether I am awake or asleep,” answered the magistrate, whose countenance was pressed against the grating in the hope of catching a second glimpse of the ghost.

“In all probability she is under that fig-tree,” he went on, indicating, for Philip’s benefit, some branches that over-topped the wall on the left-hand side of the gateway.

“She? Who?”

“Eh! how should I know?” answered M. d’Albon. “A strange-looking woman sprang up there under my very eyes just now,” he added, in a low voice; “she looked to me more like a ghost than a living being. She was so slender, light and shadowy that she might be transparent. Her face was as white as milk, her hair, her eyes, and her dress were black. She gave me a glance as she flitted by. I am not easily frightened, but that cold stony stare of hers froze the blood in my veins.”

“Was she pretty?” inquired Philip.

“I don’t know. I saw nothing but those eyes in her head.”

“The devil take dinner at Cassan!” exclaimed the Colonel; “let us stay here. I am as eager as a boy to see the inside of this queer place. The window-sashes are painted red, do you see? There is a red line round the panels of the doors and the edges of the shutters. It might be the devil’s own dwelling; perhaps he took it over when the monks went out. Now, then, let us give chase to the black and white lady; come along!” cried Philip, with forced gaiety.

He had scarcely finished speaking when the two sportsmen heard a cry as if some bird had been taken in a snare. They listened. There was a sound like the murmur of rippling water, as something forced its way through the bushes; but diligently as they lent their ears, there was no footfall on the path, the earth kept the secret of the mysterious woman’s passage, if indeed she had moved from her hiding-place.

“This is very strange!” cried Philip.

Following the wall of the path, the two friends reached before long a forest road leading to the village of Chauvry; they went along this track in the direction of the highway to Paris, and reached another large gateway. Through the railings they had a complete view of the facade of the mysterious house.

From this point of view, the dilapidation was still more apparent. Huge cracks had riven the walls of the main body of the house built round three sides of a square. Evidently the place was allowed to fall to ruin; there were holes in the roof, broken slates and tiles lay about below. Fallen fruit from the orchard trees was left to rot on the ground; a cow was grazing over the bowling-green and trampling the flowers in the garden beds; a goat browsed on the green grapes and young vine-shoots on the trellis.

“It is all of a piece,” remarked the Colonel. “The neglect is in a fashion systematic.” He laid his hand on the chain of the bell-pull, but the bell had lost its clapper. The two friends heard no sound save the peculiar grating creak of the rusty spring. A little door in the wall beside the gateway, though ruinous, held good against all their efforts to force it open.

“Oho! all this is growing very interesting,” Philip said to his companion.

“If I were not a magistrate,” returned M. d’Albon, “I should think that the woman in black is a witch.”

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the cow came up to the railings and held out her warm damp nose, as if she were glad of human society. Then a woman, if so indescribable a being could be called a woman, sprang up from the bushes, and pulled at the cord about the cow’s neck. From beneath the crimson handkerchief about the woman’s head, fair matted hair escaped, something as tow hangs about a spindle. She wore no kerchief at the throat. A coarse black-and-gray striped woolen petticoat, too short by several inches, left her legs bare. She might have belonged to some tribe of Redskins in Fenimore Cooper’s novels; for her neck, arms, and ankles looked as if they had been painted brick-red. There was no spark of intelligence in her featureless face; her pale, bluish eyes looked out dull and expressionless from beneath the eyebrows with one or two straggling white hairs on them. Her teeth were prominent and uneven, but white as a dog’s.

“Hallo, good woman,” called M. de Sucy.

She came slowly up to the railing, and stared at the two sportsmen with a contorted smile painful to see.

“Where are we? What is the name of the house yonder? Whom does it belong to? Who are you? Do you come from hereabouts?”

To these questions, and to a host of others poured out in succession upon her by the two friends, she made no answer save gurgling sounds in the throat, more like animal sounds than anything uttered by a human voice.

“Don’t you see that she is deaf and dumb?” said M. d’Albon.

“Minorites!” the peasant woman said at last.

“Ah! she is right. The house looks as though it might once have been a Minorite convent,” he went on.

Again they plied the peasant woman with questions, but, like a wayward child, she colored up, fidgeted with her sabot, twisted the rope by which she held the cow that had fallen to grazing again, stared at the sportsmen, and scrutinized every article of clothing upon them; she gibbered, grunted, and clucked, but no articulate word did she utter.

“Your name?” asked Philip, fixing her with his eyes as if he were trying to bewitch the woman.

“Genevieve,” she answered, with an empty laugh.

“The cow is the most intelligent creature we have seen so far,” exclaimed the magistrate. “I shall fire a shot, that ought to bring somebody out.”

D’Albon had just taken up his rifle when the Colonel put out a hand to stop him, and pointed out the mysterious woman who had aroused such lively curiosity in them. She seemed to be absorbed in deep thought, as she went along a green alley some little distance away, so slowly that the friends had time to take a good look at her. She wore a threadbare black satin gown, her long hair curled thickly over her forehead, and fell like a shawl about her shoulders below her waist. Doubtless she was accustomed to the dishevelment of her locks, for she seldom put back the hair on either side of her brows; but when she did so, she shook her head with a sudden jerk that had not to be repeated to shake away the thick veil from her eyes or forehead. In everything that she did, moreover, there was a wonderful certainty in the working of the mechanism, an unerring swiftness and precision, like that of an animal, well-nigh marvelous in a woman.

The two sportsmen were amazed to see her spring up into an apple-tree and cling to a bough lightly as a bird. She snatched at the fruit, ate it, and dropped to the ground with the same supple grace that charms us in a squirrel. The elasticity of her limbs took all appearance of awkwardness or effort from her movements. She played about upon the grass, rolling in it as a young child might have done; then, on a sudden, she lay still and stretched out her feet and hands, with the languid natural grace of a kitten dozing in the sun.

There was a threatening growl of thunder far away, and at this she started up on all fours and listened, like a dog who hears a strange footstep. One result of this strange attitude was to separate her thick black hair into two masses, that fell away on either side of her face and left her shoulders bare; the two witnesses of this singular scene wondered at the whiteness of the skin that shone like a meadow daisy, and at the neck that indicated the perfection of the rest of her form.

A wailing cry broke from her; she rose to her feet, and stood upright. Every successive movement was made so lightly, so gracefully, so easily, that she seemed to be no human being, but one of Ossian’s maids of the mist. She went across the grass to one of the pools of water, deftly shook off her shoe, and seemed to enjoy dipping her foot, white as marble, in the spring; doubtless it pleased her to make the circling ripples, and watch them glitter like gems. She knelt down by the brink, and played there like a child, dabbling her long tresses in the water, and flinging them loose again to see the water drip from the ends, like a string of pearls in the sunless light.

“She is mad!” cried the Councillor.

A hoarse cry rang through the air; it came from Genevieve, and seemed to be meant for the mysterious woman. She rose to her feet in a moment, flinging back the hair from her face, and then the Colonel and d’Albon could see her features distinctly. As soon as she saw the two friends she bounded to the railings with the swiftness of a fawn.

“Farewell!” she said in low, musical tones, but they could not discover the least trace of feeling, the least idea in the sweet sounds that they had awaited impatiently.

M. d’Albon admired the long lashes, the thick, dark eyebrows, the dazzling fairness of skin untinged by any trace of red. Only the delicate blue veins contrasted with that uniform whiteness.

But when the Marquis turned to communicate his surprise at the sight of so strange an apparition, he saw the Colonel stretched on the grass like one dead. M. d’Albon fired his gun into the air, shouted for help, and tried to raise his friend. At the sound of the shot, the strange lady, who had stood motionless by the gate, fled away, crying out like a wounded wild creature, circling round and round in the meadow, with every sign of unspeakable terror.

M. d’Albon heard a carriage rolling along the road to l’Isle-Adam, and waved his handkerchief to implore help. The carriage immediately came towards the Minorite convent, and M. d’Albon recognized neighbors, M. and Mme. de Grandville, who hastened to alight and put their carriage at his disposal. Colonel de Sucy inhaled the salts which Mme. de Grandville happened to have with her; he opened his eyes, looked towards the mysterious figure that still fled wailing through the meadow, and a faint cry of horror broke from him; he closed his eyes again, with a dumb gesture of entreaty to his friends to take him away from this scene. M. and Mme. de Grandville begged the Councillor to make use of their carriage, adding very obligingly that they themselves would walk.

“Who can the lady be?” inquired the magistrate, looking towards the

strange figure.

“People think that she comes from Moulins,” answered M. de Grandville. “She is a Comtesse de Vandieres; she is said to be mad; but as she has only been here for two months, I cannot vouch for the truth of all this hearsay talk.”

M. d’Albon thanked M. and Mme. de Grandville, and they set out for Cassan.

“It is she!” cried Philip, coming to himself.

“She? who?” asked d’Albon.

“Stephanie.... Ah! dead and yet living still; still alive, but her mind is gone! I thought the sight would kill me.”

The prudent magistrate, recognizing the gravity of the crisis through which his friend was passing, refrained from asking questions or exciting him further, and grew impatient of the length of the way to the chateau, for the change wrought in the Colonel’s face alarmed him. He feared lest the Countess’ terrible disease had communicated itself to Philip’s brain. When they reached the avenue at l’Isle-Adam, d’Albon sent the servant for the local doctor, so that the Colonel had scarcely been laid in bed before the surgeon was beside him.

“If Monsieur le Colonel had not been fasting, the shock must have killed him,” pronounced the leech. “He was over-tired, and that saved him,” and with a few directions as to the patient’s treatment, he went to prepare a composing draught himself. M. de Sucy was better the next morning, but the doctor had insisted on sitting up all night with him.

“I confess, Monsieur le Marquis,” the surgeon said, “that I feared for the brain. M. de Sucy has had some very violent shock; he is a man of strong passions, but, with his temperament, the first shock decides everything. He will very likely be out of danger to-morrow.”

The doctor was perfectly right. The next day the patient was allowed to see his friend.

“I want you to do something for me, dear d’Albon,” Philip said, grasping his friend’s hand. “Hasten at once to the Minorite convent, find out everything about the lady whom we saw there, and come back as soon as you can; I shall count the minutes till I see you again.”

M. d’Albon called for his horse, and galloped over to the old monastery. When he reached the gateway he found some one standing there, a tall, spare man with a kindly face, who answered in the affirmative when he was asked if he lived in the ruined house. M. d’Albon explained his errand.

“Why, then, it must have been you, sir, who fired that unlucky shot! You all but killed my poor invalid.”

“Eh! I fired into the air!”

“If you had actually hit Madame la Comtesse, you would have done less harm to her.”

“Well, well, then, we can neither of us complain, for the sight of the Countess all but killed my friend, M. de Sucy.”

“The Baron de Sucy, is it possible?” cried the doctor, clasping his hands. “Has he been in Russia? was he in the Beresina?”

“Yes,” answered d’Albon. “He was taken prisoner by the Cossacks and sent to Siberia. He has not been back in this country a twelvemonth.”

“Come in, monsieur,” said the other, and he led the way to a drawing-room on the ground-floor. Everything in the room showed signs of capricious destruction.

Valuable china jars lay in fragments on either side of a clock beneath a glass shade, which had escaped. The silk hangings about the windows were torn to rags, while the muslin curtains were untouched.

“You see about you the havoc wrought by a charming being to whom I have dedicated my life. She is my niece; and though medical science is powerless in her case, I hope to restore her to reason, though the method which I am trying is, unluckily, only possible to the wealthy.”

Then, like all who live much alone and daily bear the burden of a heavy trouble, he fell to talk with the magistrate. This is the story that he told, set in order, and with the many digressions made by both teller and hearer omitted.

When, at nine o’clock at night, on the 28th of November 1812, Marshal Victor abandoned the heights of Studzianka, which he had held through the day, he left a thousand men behind with instructions to protect, till the last possible moment, the two pontoon bridges over the Beresina that still held good. This rear guard was to save if possible an appalling number of stragglers, so numbed with the cold, that they obstinately refused to leave the baggage-wagons. The heroism of the generous band was doomed to fail; for, unluckily, the men who poured down to the eastern bank of the Beresina found carriages, caissons, and all kinds of property which the Army had been forced to abandon during its passage on the 27th and 28th days of November. The poor, half-frozen wretches, sunk almost to the level of brutes, finding such unhoped-for riches, bivouacked in the deserted space, laid hands on the military stores, improvised huts out of the material, lighted fires with anything that would burn, cut up the carcasses of the horses for food, tore out the

linings of the carriages, wrapped themselves in them, and lay down to sleep instead of crossing the Beresina in peace under cover of night—the Beresina that even then had proved, by incredible fatality, so disastrous to the Army. Such apathy on the part of the poor fellows can only be understood by those who remember tramping across those vast deserts of snow, with nothing to quench their thirst but snow, snow for their bed, snow as far as the horizon on every side, and no food but snow, a little frozen beetroot, horseflesh, or a handful of meal.

The miserable creatures were dropping down, overcome by hunger, thirst, weariness, and sleep, when they reached the shores of the Beresina and found fuel and fire and victuals, countless wagons and tents, a whole improvised town, in short. The whole village of Studzianka had been removed piecemeal from the heights of the plain, and the very perils and miseries of this dangerous and doleful habitation smiled invitingly to the wayfarers, who beheld no prospect beyond it but the awful Russian deserts. A huge hospice, in short, was erected for twenty hours of existence. Only one thought—the thought of rest—appealed to men weary of life or rejoicing in unlooked-for comfort.

They lay right in the line of fire from the cannon of the Russian left; but to that vast mass of human creatures, a patch upon the snow, sometimes dark, sometimes breaking into flame, the indefatigable grapeshot was but one discomfort the more. For them it was only a storm, and they paid the less attention to the bolts that fell among them because there were none to strike down there save dying men, the wounded, or perhaps the dead. Stragglers came up in little bands at every moment. These walking corpses instantly separated, and wandered begging from fire to fire; and meeting, for the most part, with refusals, banded themselves together again, and took by force what they could not otherwise obtain. They were deaf to the voices of their officers prophesying death on the morrow, and spent the energy required to cross the swamp in building shelters for the night and preparing a meal that often proved fatal. The coming death no longer seemed an evil, for it gave them an hour of slumber before it came. Hunger and thirst and cold—these were evils, but not death.

At last wood and fuel and canvas and shelters failed, and hideous brawls began between destitute late comers and the rich already in possession of a lodging. The weaker were driven away, until a few last fugitives before the Russian advance were obliged to make their bed in the snow, and lay down to rise no more.

Little by little the mass of half-dead humanity became so dense, so deaf, so torpid,—or perhaps it should be said so happy—that Marshal Victor, their heroic defender against twenty thousand Russians under Wittgenstein, was

actually compelled to cut his way by force through this forest of men, so as to cross the Beresina with the five thousand heroes whom he was leading to the Emperor. The miserable creatures preferred to be trampled and crushed to death rather than stir from their places, and died without a sound, smiling at the dead ashes of their fires, forgetful of France.

Not before ten o'clock that night did the Duc de Belluno reach the other side of the river. Before committing his men to the pontoon bridges that led to Zembin, he left the fate of the rearguard at Studzianka in Eble's hands, and to Eble the survivors of the calamities of the Beresina owed their lives.

About midnight, the great General, followed by a courageous officer, came out of his little hut by the bridge, and gazed at the spectacle of this camp between the bank of the Beresina and the Borizof road to Studzianka. The thunder of the Russian cannonade had ceased. Here and there faces that had nothing human about them were lighted up by countless fires that seemed to grow pale in the glare of the snowfields, and to give no light. Nearly thirty thousand wretches, belonging to every nation that Napoleon had hurled upon Russia, lay there hazarding their lives with the indifference of brute beasts.

"We have all these to save," the General said to his subordinate. "To-morrow morning the Russians will be in Studzianka. The moment they come up we shall have to set fire to the bridge; so pluck up heart, my boy! Make your way out and up yonder through them, and tell General Fournier that he has barely time to evacuate his post and cut his way through to the bridge. As soon as you have seen him set out, follow him down, take some able-bodied men, and set fire to the tents, wagons, caissons, carriages, anything and everything, without pity, and drive these fellows on to the bridge. Compel everything that walks on two legs to take refuge on the other bank. We must set fire to the camp; it is our last resource. If Berthier had let me burn those d——d wagons sooner, no lives need have been lost in the river except my poor pontooners, my fifty heroes, who saved the Army, and will be forgotten."

The General passed his hand over his forehead and said no more. He felt that Poland would be his tomb, and foresaw that afterwards no voice would be raised to speak for the noble fellows who had plunged into the stream—into the waters of the Beresina!—to drive in the piles for the bridges. And, indeed, only one of them is living now, or, to be more accurate, starving, utterly forgotten in a country village! The brave officer had scarcely gone a hundred paces towards Studzianka, when General Eble roused some of his patient pontooners, and began his work of mercy by setting fire to the camp on the side nearest the bridge, so compelling the sleepers to rise and cross the Beresina. Meanwhile the young aide-de-camp, not without difficulty, reached the one wooden house yet left standing in Studzianka.

“So the box is pretty full, is it, messmate?” he said to a man whom he found outside.

“You will be a knowing fellow if you manage to get inside,” the officer returned, without turning round or stopping his occupation of hacking at the woodwork of the house with his sabre.

“Philip, is that you?” cried the aide-de-camp, recognizing the voice of one of his friends.

“Yes. Aha! is it you, old fellow?” returned M. de Sucy, looking round at the aide-de-camp, who like himself was not more than twenty-three years old. “I fancied you were on the other side of this confounded river. Do you come to bring us sweetmeats for dessert? You will get a warm welcome,” he added, as he tore away a strip of bark from the wood and gave it to his horse by way of fodder.

“I am looking for your commandant. General Eble has sent me to tell him to file off to Zembin. You have only just time to cut your way through that mass of dead men; as soon as you get through, I am going to set fire to the place to make them move—”

“You almost make me feel warm! Your news has put me in a fever; I have two friends to bring through. Ah! but for those marmots, I should have been dead before now, old fellow. On their account I am taking care of my horse instead of eating him. But have you a crust about you, for pity’s sake? It is thirty hours since I have stowed any victuals. I have been fighting like a madman to keep up a little warmth in my body and what courage I have left.”

“Poor Philip! I have nothing—not a scrap!—But is your General in there?”

“Don’t attempt to go in. The barn is full of our wounded. Go up a bit higher, and you will see a sort of pig-sty to the right—that is where the General is. Good-bye, my dear fellow. If ever we meet again in a quadrille in a ballroom in Paris—”

He did not finish the sentence, for the treachery of the northeast wind that whistled about them froze Major Philip’s lips, and the aide-de-camp kept moving for fear of being frost-bitten. Silence soon prevailed, scarcely broken by the groans of the wounded in the barn, or the stifled sounds made by M. de Sucy’s horse crunching on the frozen bark with famished eagerness. Philip thrust his sabre into the sheath, caught at the bridle of the precious animal that he had managed to keep for so long, and drew her away from the miserable fodder that she was bolting with apparent relish.

“Come along, Bichette! come along! It lies with you now, my beauty, to save Stephanie’s life. There, wait a little longer, and they will let us lie down

and die, no doubt;" and Philip, wrapped in a pelisse, to which doubtless he owed his life and energies, began to run, stamping his feet on the frozen snow to keep them warm. He was scarce five hundred paces away before he saw a great fire blazing on the spot where he had left his carriage that morning with an old soldier to guard it. A dreadful misgiving seized upon him. Many a man under the influence of a powerful feeling during the Retreat summoned up energy for his friend's sake when he would not have exerted himself to save his own life; so it was with Philip. He soon neared a hollow, where he had left a carriage sheltered from the cannonade, a carriage that held a young woman, his playmate in childhood, dearer to him than any one else on earth.

Some thirty stragglers were sitting round a tremendous blaze, which they kept up with logs of wood, planks wrenched from the floors of the caissons, and wheels, and panels from carriage bodies. These had been, doubtless, among the last to join the sea of fires, huts, and human faces that filled the great furrow in the land between Studzianka and the fatal river, a restless living sea of almost imperceptibly moving figures, that sent up a smothered hum of sound blended with frightful shrieks. It seemed that hunger and despair had driven these forlorn creatures to take forcible possession of the carriage, for the old General and his young wife, whom they had found warmly wrapped in pelisses and traveling cloaks, were now crouching on the earth beside the fire, and one of the carriage doors was broken.

As soon as the group of stragglers round the fire heard the footfall of the Major's horse, a frenzied yell of hunger went up from them. "A horse!" they cried. "A horse!"

All the voices went up as one voice.

"Back! back! Look out!" shouted two or three of them, leveling their muskets at the animal.

"I will pitch you neck and crop into your fire, you blackguards!" cried Philip, springing in front of the mare. "There are dead horses lying up yonder; go and look for them!"

"What a rum customer the officer is!—Once, twice, will you get out of the way?" returned a giant grenadier. "You won't? All right then, just as you please."

A woman's shriek rang out above the report. Luckily, none of the bullets hit Philip; but poor Bichette lay in the agony of death. Three of the men came up and put an end to her with thrusts of the bayonet.

"Cannibals! leave me the rug and my pistols," cried Philip in desperation.

"Oh! the pistols if you like; but as for the rug, there is a fellow yonder who

has had nothing to wet his whistle these two days, and is shivering in his coat of cobwebs, and that's our General."

Philips looked up and saw a man with worn-out shoes and a dozen rents in his trousers; the only covering for his head was a ragged foraging cap, white with rime. He said no more after that, but snatched up his pistols.

Five of the men dragged the mare to the fire, and began to cut up the carcass as dexterously as any journeymen butchers in Paris. The scraps of meat were distributed and flung upon the coals, and the whole process was magically swift. Philip went over to the woman who had given the cry of terror when she recognized his danger, and sat down by her side. She sat motionless upon a cushion taken from the carriage, warming herself at the blaze; she said no word, and gazed at him without a smile. He saw beside her the soldier whom he had left mounting guard over the carriage; the poor fellow had been wounded; he had been overpowered by numbers, and forced to surrender to the stragglers who had set upon him, and, like a dog who defends his master's dinner till the last moment, he had taken his share of the spoil, and had made a sort of cloak for himself out of a sheet. At that particular moment he was busy toasting a piece of horseflesh, and in his face the major saw a gleeful anticipation of the coming feast.

The Comte de Vandieres, who seemed to have grown quite childish in the last few days, sat on a cushion close to his wife, and stared into the fire. He was only just beginning to shake off his torpor under the influence of the warmth. He had been no more affected by Philip's arrival and danger than by the fight and subsequent pillaging of his traveling carriage.

At first Sucy caught the young Countess' hand in his, trying to express his affection for her, and the pain that it gave him to see her reduced like this to the last extremity of misery; but he said nothing as he sat by her side on the thawing heap of snow, he gave himself up to the pleasure of the sensation of warmth, forgetful of danger, forgetful of all things else in the world. In spite of himself his face expanded with an almost fatuous expression of satisfaction, and he waited impatiently till the scrap of horseflesh that had fallen to his soldier's share should be cooked. The smell of charred flesh stimulated his hunger. Hunger clamored within and silenced his heart, his courage, and his love. He coolly looked round on the results of the spoliation of his carriage. Not a man seated round the fire but had shared the booty, the rugs, cushions, pelisses, dresses,—articles of clothing that belonged to the Count and Countess or to himself. Philip turned to see if anything worth taking was left in the berline. He saw by the light of the flames, gold, and diamonds, and silver lying scattered about; no one had cared to appropriate the least particle. There was something hideous in the silence among those human creatures round the fire; none of them spoke, none of them stirred, save to do such

things as each considered necessary for his own comfort.

It was a grotesque misery. The men's faces were wrapped and disfigured with the cold, and plastered over with a layer of mud; you could see the thickness of the mask by the channel traced down their cheeks by the tears that ran from their eyes, and their long slovenly-kept beards added to the hideousness of their appearance. Some were wrapped round in women's shawls, others in horse-cloths, dirty blankets, rags stiffened with melting hoar-frost; here and there a man wore a boot on one foot and a shoe on the other, in fact, there was not one of them but wore some ludicrously odd costume. But the men themselves with such matter for jest about them were gloomy and taciturn.

The silence was unbroken save by the crackling of the wood, the roaring of the flames, the far-off hum of the camp, and the sound of sabres hacking at the carcass of the mare. Some of the hungriest of the men were still cutting tidbits for themselves. A few miserable creatures, more weary than the others, slept outright; and if they happened to roll into the fire, no one pulled them back. With cut-and-dried logic their fellows argued that if they were not dead, a scorching ought to be sufficient warning to quit and seek out more comfortable quarters. If the poor wretch woke to find himself on fire, he was burned to death, and nobody pitied him. Here and there the men exchanged glances, as if to excuse their indifference by the carelessness of the rest; the thing happened twice under the Countess' eyes, and she uttered no sound. When all the scraps of horseflesh had been broiled upon the coals, they were devoured with a ravenous greediness that would have been disgusting in wild beasts.

"And now we have seen thirty infantrymen on one horse for the first time in our lives!" cried the grenadier who had shot the mare, the one solitary joke that sustained the Frenchmen's reputation for wit.

Before long the poor fellows huddled themselves up in their clothes, and lay down on planks of timber, on anything but the bare snow, and slept—heedless of the morrow. Major de Sucy having warmed himself and satisfied his hunger, fought in vain against the drowsiness that weighed upon his eyes. During this brief struggle he gazed at the sleeping girl who had turned her face to the fire, so that he could see her closed eyelids and part of her forehead. She was wrapped round in a furred pelisse and a coarse horseman's cloak, her head lay on a blood-stained cushion; a tall astrakhan cap tied over her head by a handkerchief knotted under the chin protected her face as much as possible from the cold, and she had tucked up her feet in the cloak. As she lay curled up in this fashion, she bore no likeness to any creature.

Was this the lowest of camp-followers? Was this the charming woman, the

pride of her lover’s heart, the queen of many a Parisian ballroom? Alas! even for the eyes of this most devoted friend, there was no discernible trace of womanhood in that bundle of rags and linen, and the cold was mightier than the love in a woman’s heart.

Then for the major the husband and wife came to be like two distant dots seen through the thick veil that the most irresistible kind of slumber spread over his eyes. It all seemed to be part of a dream—the leaping flames, the recumbent figures, the awful cold that lay in wait for them three paces away from the warmth of the fire that glowed for a little while. One thought that could not be stifled haunted Philip—“If I go to sleep, we shall all die; I will not sleep,” he said to himself.

He slept. After an hour’s slumber M. de Sucy was awakened by a hideous uproar and the sound of an explosion. The remembrance of his duty, of the danger of his beloved, rushed upon his mind with a sudden shock. He uttered a cry like the growl of a wild beast. He and his servant stood upright above the rest. They saw a sea of fire in the darkness, and against it moving masses of human figures. Flames were devouring the huts and tents. Despairing shrieks and yelling cries reached their ears; they saw thousands upon thousands of wild and desperate faces; and through this inferno a column of soldiers was cutting its way to the bridge, between the two hedges of dead bodies.

“Our rearguard is in full retreat,” cried the major. “There is no hope left!”

“I have spared your traveling carriage, Philip,” said a friendly voice.

Sucy turned and saw the young aide-de-camp by the light of the flames.

“Oh, it is all over with us,” he answered. “They have eaten my horse. And how am I to make this sleepy general and his wife stir a step?”

“Take a brand, Philip, and threaten them.”

“Threaten the Countess?...”

“Good-bye,” cried the aide-de-camp; “I have only just time to get across that unlucky river, and go I must, there is my mother in France!... What a night! This herd of wretches would rather lie here in the snow, and most of them would sooner be burned alive than get up.... It is four o’clock, Philip! In two hours the Russians will begin to move, and you will see the Beresina covered with corpses a second time, I can tell you. You haven’t a horse, and you cannot carry the Countess, so come along with me,” he went on, taking his friend by the arm.

“My dear fellow, how am I to leave Stephanie?”

Major de Sucy grasped the Countess, set her on her feet, and shook her roughly; he was in despair. He compelled her to wake, and she stared at him

with dull fixed eyes.

“Stephanie, we must go, or we shall die here!”

For all answer, the Countess tried to sink down again and sleep on the earth. The aide-de-camp snatched a brand from the fire and shook it in her face.

“We must save her in spite of herself,” cried Philip, and he carried her in his arms to the carriage. He came back to entreat his friend to help him, and the two young men took the old general and put him beside his wife, without knowing whether he were alive or dead. The major rolled the men over as they crouched on the earth, took away the plundered clothing, and heaped it upon the husband and wife, then he flung some of the broiled fragments of horseflesh into a corner of the carriage.

“Now, what do you mean to do?” asked the aide-de-camp.

“Drag them along!” answered Sucy.

“You are mad!”

“You are right!” exclaimed Philip, folding his arms on his breast.

Suddenly a desperate plan occurred to him.

“Look you here!” he said, grasping his sentinel by the unwounded arm. “I leave her in your care for one hour. Bear in mind that you must die sooner than let any one, no matter whom, come near the carriage!”

The major seized a handful of the lady’s diamonds, drew his sabre, and violently battered those who seemed to him to be the bravest among the sleepers. By this means he succeeded in rousing the gigantic grenadier and a couple of men whose rank and regiment were undiscoverable.

“It is all up with us!” he cried.

“Of course it is,” returned the grenadier; “but that is all one to me.”

“Very well then, if die you must, isn’t it better to sell your life for a pretty woman, and stand a chance of going back to France again?”

“I would rather go to sleep,” said one of the men, dropping down into the snow; “and if you worry me again, major, I shall stick my toasting-iron into your body.”

“What is it all about, sir?” asked the grenadier. “The man’s drunk. He is a Parisian, and likes to lie in the lap of luxury.”

“You shall have these, good fellow,” said the major, holding out a riviere of diamonds, “if you will follow me and fight like a madman. The Russians are

not ten minutes away; they have horses; we will march up to the nearest battery and carry off two stout ones."

"How about the sentinels, major?"

"One of us three—" he began; then he turned from the soldier and looked at the aide-de-camp.—"You are coming, aren't you, Hippolyte?"

Hippolyte nodded assent.

"One of us," the major went on, "will look after the sentry. Besides, perhaps those blessed Russians are also fast asleep."

"All right, major; you are a good sort! But will you take me in your carriage?" asked the grenadier.

"Yes, if you don't leave your bones up yonder.—If I come to grief, promise me, you two, that you will do everything in your power to save the Countess."

"All right," said the grenadier.

They set out for the Russian lines, taking the direction of the batteries that had so cruelly raked the mass of miserable creatures huddled together by the river bank. A few minutes later the hoofs of two galloping horses rang on the frozen snow, and the awakened battery fired a volley that passed over the heads of the sleepers; the hoof-beats rattled so fast on the iron ground that they sounded like the hammering in a smithy. The generous aide-de-camp had fallen; the stalwart grenadier had come off safe and sound; and Philip himself received a bayonet thrust in the shoulder while defending his friend. Notwithstanding his wound, he clung to his horse's mane, and gripped him with his knees so tightly that the animal was held as in a vise.

"God be praised!" cried the major, when he saw his soldier still on the spot, and the carriage standing where he had left it.

"If you do the right thing by me, sir, you will get me the cross for this. We have treated them to a sword dance to a pretty tune from the rifle, eh?"

"We have done nothing yet! Let us put the horses in. Take hold of these cords."

"They are not long enough."

"All right, grenadier, just go and overhaul those fellows sleeping there; take their shawls, sheets, anything—"

"I say! the rascal is dead," cried the grenadier, as he plundered the first man who came to hand. "Why, they are all dead! how queer!"

"All of them?"

“Yes, every one. It looks as though the horseflesh a la neige was indigestible.”

Philip shuddered at the words. The night had grown twice as cold as before.

“Great heaven! to lose her when I have saved her life a score of times already.”

He shook the Countess, “Stephanie! Stephanie!” he cried.

She opened her eyes.

“We are saved, madame!”

“Saved!” she echoed, and fell back again.

The horses were harnessed after a fashion at last. The major held his sabre in his unwounded hand, took the reins in the other, saw to his pistols, and sprang on one of the horses, while the grenadier mounted the other. The old sentinel had been pushed into the carriage, and lay across the knees of the general and the Countess; his feet were frozen. Urged on by blows from the flat of the sabre, the horses dragged the carriage at a mad gallop down to the plain, where endless difficulties awaited them. Before long it became almost impossible to advance without crushing sleeping men, women, and even children at every step, all of whom declined to stir when the grenadier awakened them. In vain M. de Sucy looked for the track that the rearguard had cut through this dense crowd of human beings; there was no more sign of their passage than the wake of a ship in the sea. The horses could only move at a foot-pace, and were stopped most frequently by soldiers, who threatened to kill them.

“Do you mean to get there?” asked the grenadier.

“Yes, if it costs every drop of blood in my body! if it costs the whole world!” the major answered.

“Forward, then!... You can’t have the omelette without breaking eggs.” And the grenadier of the Garde urged on the horses over the prostrate bodies, and upset the bivouacs; the blood-stained wheels ploughing that field of faces left a double furrow of dead. But in justice it should be said that he never ceased to thunder out his warning cry, “Carrion! look out!”

“Poor wretches!” exclaimed the major.

“Bah! That way, or the cold, or the cannon!” said the grenadier, goading on the horses with the point of his sword.

Then came the catastrophe, which must have happened sooner but for miraculous good fortune; the carriage was overturned, and all further progress

was stopped at once.

“I expected as much!” exclaimed the imperturbable grenadier. “Oho! he is dead!” he added, looking at his comrade.

“Poor Laurent!” said the major.

“Laurent! Wasn’t he in the Fifth Chasseurs?”

“Yes.”

“My own cousin.—Pshaw! this beastly life is not so pleasant that one need be sorry for him as things go.”

But all this time the carriage lay overturned, and the horses were only released after great and irreparable loss of time. The shock had been so violent that the Countess had been awakened by it, and the subsequent commotion aroused her from her stupor. She shook off the rugs and rose.

“Where are we, Philip?” she asked in musical tones, as she looked about her.

“About five hundred paces from the bridge. We are just about to cross the Beresina. When we are on the other side, Stephanie, I will not tease you any more; I will let you go to sleep; we shall be in safety, we can go on to Wilna in peace. God grant that you may never know what your life has cost!”

“You are wounded!”

“A mere trifle.”

The hour of doom had come. The Russian cannon announced the day. The Russians were in possession of Studzianka, and thence were raking the plain with grapeshot; and by the first dim light of the dawn the major saw two columns moving and forming above the heights. Then a cry of horror went up from the crowd, and in a moment every one sprang to his feet. Each instinctively felt his danger, and all made a rush for the bridge, surging towards it like a wave.

Then the Russians came down upon them, swift as a conflagration. Men, women, children, and horses all crowded towards the river. Luckily for the major and the Countess, they were still at some distance from the bank. General Eble had just set fire to the bridge on the other side; but in spite of all the warnings given to those who rushed towards the chance of salvation, not one among them could or would draw back. The overladen bridge gave way, and not only so, the impetus of the frantic living wave towards that fatal bank was such that a dense crowd of human beings was thrust into the water as if by an avalanche. The sound of a single human cry could not be distinguished; there was a dull crash as if an enormous stone had fallen into the water—and

the Beresina was covered with corpses.

The violent recoil of those in front, striving to escape this death, brought them into hideous collision with those behind then, who were pressing towards the bank, and many were suffocated and crushed. The Comte and Comtesse de Vandieres owed their lives to the carriage. The horses that had trampled and crushed so many dying men were crushed and trampled to death in their turn by the human maelstrom which eddied from the bank. Sheer physical strength saved the major and the grenadier. They killed others in self-defence. That wild sea of human faces and living bodies, surging to and fro as by one impulse, left the bank of the Beresina clear for a few moments. The multitude had hurled themselves back on the plain. Some few men sprang down from the banks of the river, not so much with any hope of reaching the opposite shore, which for them meant France, as from dread of the wastes of Siberia. For some bold spirits despair became a panoply. An officer leaped from hummock to hummock of ice, and reached the other shore; one of the soldiers scrambled over miraculously on the piles of dead bodies and drift ice. But the immense multitude left behind saw at last that the Russians would not slaughter twenty thousand unarmed men, too numb with the cold to attempt to resist them, and each awaited his fate with dreadful apathy. By this time the major and his grenadier, the old general and his wife, were left to themselves not very far from the place where the bridge had been. All four stood dry-eyed and silent among the heaps of dead. A few able-bodied men and one or two officers, who had recovered all their energy at this crisis, gathered about them. The group was sufficiently large; there were about fifty men all told. A couple of hundred paces from them stood the wreck of the artillery bridge, which had broken down the day before; the major saw this, and “Let us make a raft!” he cried.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the whole group hurried to the ruins of the bridge. A crowd of men began to pick up iron clamps and to hunt for planks and ropes—for all the materials for a raft, in short. A score of armed men and officers, under command of the major, stood on guard to protect the workers from any desperate attempt on the part of the multitude if they should guess their design. The longing for freedom, which inspires prisoners to accomplish impossibilities, cannot be compared with the hope which lent energy at that moment to these forlorn Frenchmen.

“The Russians are upon us! Here are the Russians!” the guard shouted to the workers.

The timbers creaked, the raft grew larger, stronger, and more substantial. Generals, colonels, and common soldiers all alike bent beneath the weight of wagon-wheels, chains, coils of rope, and planks of timber; it was a modern realization of the building of Noah’s ark. The young Countess, sitting by her husband’s side, looked on, regretful that she could do nothing to aide the

workers, though she helped to knot the lengths of rope together.

At last the raft was finished. Forty men launched it out into the river, while ten of the soldiers held the ropes that must keep it moored to the shore. The moment that they saw their handiwork floating on the Beresina, they sprang down onto it from the bank with callous selfishness. The major, dreading the frenzy of the first rush, held back Stephanie and the general; but a shudder ran through him when he saw the landing place black with people, and men crowding down like playgoers into the pit of a theatre.

“It was I who thought of the raft, you savages!” he cried. “I have saved your lives, and you will not make room for me!”

A confused murmur was the only answer. The men at the edge took up stout poles, trust them against the bank with all their might, so as to shove the raft out and gain an impetus at its starting upon a journey across a sea of floating ice and dead bodies towards the other shore.

“Tonnerre de Dieu! I will knock some of you off into the water if you don’t make room for the major and his two companions,” shouted the grenadier. He raised his sabre threateningly, delayed the departure, and made the men stand closer together, in spite of threatening yells.

“I shall fall in!... I shall go overboard!...” his fellows shouted.

“Let us start! Put off!”

The major gazed with tearless eyes at the woman he loved; an impulse of sublime resignation raised her eyes to heaven.

“To die with you!” she said.

In the situation of the folk upon the raft there was a certain comic element. They might utter hideous yells, but not one of them dared to oppose the grenadier, for they were packed together so tightly that if one man were knocked down, the whole raft might capsize. At this delicate crisis, a captain tried to rid himself of one of his neighbors; the man saw the hostile intention of his officer, collared him, and pitched him overboard. “Aha! The duck has a mind to drink. ... Over with you!—There is room for two now!” he shouted. “Quick, major! throw your little woman over, and come! Never mind that old dotard! he will drop off to-morrow!”

“Be quick!” cried a voice, made up of a hundred voices.

“Come, major! Those fellows are making a fuss, and well they may.”

The Comte de Vandieres flung off his ragged blankets, and stood before them in his general’s uniform.

“Let us save the Count,” said Philip.

Stephanie grasped his hand tightly in hers, flung her arms about, and clasped him close in an agonized embrace.

“Farewell!” she said.

Then each knew the other’s thoughts. The Comte de Vandieres recovered his energies and presence of mind sufficiently to jump on to the raft, whither Stephanie followed him after one last look at Philip.

“Major, won’t you take my place? I do not care a straw for life; I have neither a wife, nor child, nor mother belonging to me—”

“I give them into your charge,” cried the major, indicating the Count and his wife.

“Be easy; I will take as much care of them as of the apple of my eye.”

Philip stood stock-still on the bank. The raft sped so violently towards the opposite shore that it ran aground with a violent shock to all on board. The Count, standing on the very edge, was shaken into the stream; and as he fell, a mass of ice swept by and struck off his head, and sent it flying like a ball.

“Hey! major!” shouted the grenadier.

“Farewell!” a woman’s voice called aloud.

An icy shiver ran through Philip de Sucy, and he dropped down where he stood, overcome with cold and sorrow and weariness.

“My poor niece went out of her mind,” the doctor added after a brief pause. “Ah! monsieur,” he went on, grasping M. d’Albon’s hand, “what a fearful life for a poor little thing, so young, so delicate! An unheard-of misfortune separated her from that grenadier of the Garde (Fleuriot by name), and for two years she was dragged on after the army, the laughing-stock of a rabble of outcasts. She went barefoot, I heard, ill-clad, neglected, and starved for months at a time; sometimes confined to a hospital, sometimes living like a hunted animal. God alone knows all the misery which she endured, and yet she lives. She was shut up in a madhouse in a little German town, while her relations, believing her to be dead, were dividing her property here in France.

“In 1816 the grenadier Fleuriot recognized her in an inn in Strasbourg. She had just managed to escape from captivity. Some peasants told him that the Countess had lived for a whole month in a forest, and how that they had tracked her and tried to catch her without success.

“I was at that time not many leagues from Strasbourg; and hearing the talk about the girl in the wood, I wished to verify the strange facts that had given rise to absurd stories. What was my feeling when I beheld the Countess? Fleuriot told me all that he knew of the piteous story. I took the poor fellow

with my niece into Auvergne, and there I had the misfortune to lose him. He had some ascendancy over Mme. de Vandieres. He alone succeeded in persuading her to wear clothes; and in those days her one word of human speech—Farewell—she seldom uttered. Fleuriot set himself to the task of awakening certain associations; but there he failed completely; he drew that one sorrowful word from her a little more frequently, that was all. But the old grenadier could amuse her, and devoted himself to playing with her, and through him I hoped; but—" here Stephanie's uncle broke off. After a moment he went on again.

"Here she has found another creature with whom she seems to have an understanding—an idiot peasant girl, who once, in spite of her plainness and imbecility, fell in love with a mason. The mason thought of marrying her because she had a little bit of land, and for a whole year poor Genevieve was the happiest of living creatures. She dressed in her best, and danced on Sundays with Dallot; she understood love; there was room for love in her heart and brain. But Dallot thought better of it. He found another girl who had all her senses and rather more land than Genevieve, and he forsook Genevieve for her. Then the poor thing lost the little intelligence that love had developed in her; she can do nothing now but cut grass and look after the cattle. My niece and the poor girl are in some sort bound to each other by the invisible chain of their common destiny, and by their madness due to the same cause. Just come here a moment; look!" and Stephanie's uncle led the Marquis d'Albon to the window.

There, in fact, the magistrate beheld the pretty Countess sitting on the ground at Genevieve's knee, while the peasant girl was wholly absorbed in combing out Stephanie's long, black hair with a huge comb. The Countess submitted herself to this, uttering low smothered cries that expressed her enjoyment of the sensation of physical comfort. A shudder ran through M. d'Albon as he saw her attitude of languid abandonment, the animal supineness that revealed an utter lack of intelligence.

"Oh! Philip, Philip!" he cried, "past troubles are as nothing. Is it quite hopeless?" he asked.

The doctor raised his eyes to heaven.

"Good-bye, monsieur," said M. d'Albon, pressing the old man's hand. "My friend is expecting me; you will see him here before long."

"Then it is Stephanie herself?" cried Sucy when the Marquis had spoken the first few words. "Ah! until now I did not feel sure!" he added. Tears filled the dark eyes that were wont to wear a stern expression.

"Yes; she is the Comtesse de Vandieres," his friend replied.

The colonel started up, and hurriedly began to dress.

“Why, Philip!” cried the horrified magistrate. “Are you going mad?”

“I am quite well now,” said the colonel simply. “This news has soothed all my bitterest grief; what pain could hurt me while I think of Stephanie? I am going over to the Minorite convent, to see her and speak to her, to restore her to health again. She is free; ah, surely, surely, happiness will smile on us, or there is no Providence above. How can you think she could hear my voice, poor Stephanie, and not recover her reason?”

“She has seen you once already, and she did not recognize you,” the magistrate answered gently, trying to suggest some wholesome fears to this friend, whose hopes were visibly too high.

The colonel shuddered, but he began to smile again, with a slight involuntary gesture of incredulity. Nobody ventured to oppose his plans, and a few hours later he had taken up his abode in the old priory, to be near the doctor and the Comtesse de Vandieres.

“Where is she?” he cried at once.

“Hush!” answered M. Fanjat, Stephanie’s uncle. “She is sleeping. Stay; here she is.”

Philip saw the poor distraught sleeper crouching on a stone bench in the sun. Her thick hair, straggling over her face, screened it from the glare and heat; her arms dropped languidly to the earth; she lay at ease as gracefully as a fawn, her feet tucked up beneath her; her bosom rose and fell with her even breathing; there was the same transparent whiteness as of porcelain in her skin and complexion that we so often admire in children’s faces. Genevieve sat there motionless, holding a spray that Stephanie doubtless had brought down from the top of one of the tallest poplars; the idiot girl was waving the green branch above her, driving away the flies from her sleeping companion, and gently fanning her.

She stared at M. Fanjat and the colonel as they came up; then, like a dumb animal that recognizes its master, she slowly turned her face towards the countess, and watched over her as before, showing not the slightest sign of intelligence or of astonishment. The air was scorching. The glittering particles of the stone bench shone like sparks of fire; the meadow sent up the quivering vapors that hover above the grass and gleam like golden dust when they catch the light, but Genevieve did not seem to feel the raging heat.

The colonel wrung M. Fanjat’s hands; the tears that gathered in the soldier’s eyes stole down his cheeks, and fell on the grass at Stephanie’s feet.

“Sir,” said her uncle, “for these two years my heart has been broken daily.

Before very long you will be as I am; if you do not weep, you will not feel your anguish the less."

"You have taken care of her!" said the colonel, and jealousy no less than gratitude could be read in his eyes.

The two men understood one another. They grasped each other by the hand again, and stood motionless, gazing in admiration at the serenity that slumber had brought into the lovely face before them. Stephanie heaved a sigh from time to time, and this sigh, that had all the appearance of sensibility, made the unhappy colonel tremble with gladness.

"Alas!" M. Fanjat said gently, "do not deceive yourself, monsieur; as you see her now, she is in full possession of such reason as she has."

Those who have sat for whole hours absorbed in the delight of watching over the slumber of some tenderly-beloved one, whose waking eyes will smile for them, will doubtless understand the bliss and anguish that shook the colonel. For him this slumber was an illusion, the waking must be a kind of death, the most dreadful of all deaths.

Suddenly a kid frisked in two or three bounds towards the bench and snuffed at Stephanie. The sound awakened her; she sprang lightly to her feet without scaring away the capricious creature; but as soon as she saw Philip she fled, followed by her four-footed playmate, to a thicket of elder-trees; then she uttered a little cry like the note of a startled wild bird, the same sound that the colonel had heard once before near the grating, when the Countess appeared to M. d'Albon for the first time. At length she climbed into a laburnum-tree, ensconced herself in the feathery greenery, and peered out at the strange man with as much interest as the most inquisitive nightingale in the forest.

"Farewell, farewell, farewell," she said, but the soul sent no trace of expression of feeling through the words, spoken with the careless intonation of a bird's notes.

"She does not know me!" the colonel exclaimed in despair. "Stephanie! Here is Philip, your Philip!... Philip!" and the poor soldier went towards the laburnum-tree; but when he stood three paces away, the Countess eyed him almost defiantly, though there was timidity in her eyes; then at a bound she sprang from the laburnum to an acacia, and thence to a spruce-fir, swinging from bough to bough with marvelous dexterity.

"Do not follow her," said M. Fanjat, addressing the colonel. "You would arouse a feeling of aversion in her which might become insurmountable; I will help you to make her acquaintance and to tame her. Sit down on the bench. If you pay no heed whatever to her, poor child, it will not be long before you will see her come nearer by degrees to look at you."

“That she should not know me; that she should fly from me!” the colonel repeated, sitting down on a rustic bench and leaning his back against a tree that overshadowed it.

He bowed his head. The doctor remained silent. Before very long the Countess stole softly down from her high refuge in the spruce-fir, flitting like a will-o’-the-wisp; for as the wind stirred the boughs, she lent herself at times to the swaying movements of the trees. At each branch she stopped and peered at the stranger; but as she saw him sitting motionless, she at length jumped down to the grass, stood a while, and came slowly across the meadow. When she took up her position by a tree about ten paces from the bench, M. Fanjat spoke to the colonel in a low voice.

“Feel in my pocket for some lumps of sugar,” he said, “and let her see them, she will come; I willingly give up to you the pleasure of giving her sweetmeats. She is passionately fond of sugar, and by that means you will accustom her to come to you and to know you.”

“She never cared for sweet things when she was a woman,” Philip answered sadly.

When he held out the lump of sugar between his thumb and finger, and shook it, Stephanie uttered the wild note again, and sprang quickly towards him; then she stopped short, there was a conflict between longing for the sweet morsel and instinctive fear of him; she looked at the sugar, turned her head away, and looked again like an unfortunate dog forbidden to touch some scrap of food, while his master slowly recites the greater part of the alphabet until he reaches the letter that gives permission. At length the animal appetite conquered fear; Stephanie rushed to Philip, held out a dainty brown hand to pounce upon the coveted morsel, touched her lover’s fingers, snatched the piece of sugar, and vanished with it into a thicket. This painful scene was too much for the colonel; he burst into tears, and took refuge in the drawing-room.

“Then has love less courage than affection?” M. Fanjat asked him. “I have hope, Monsieur le Baron. My poor niece was once in a far more pitiable state than at present.”

“Is it possible?” cried Philip.

“She would not wear clothes,” answered the doctor.

The colonel shuddered, and his face grew pale. To the doctor’s mind this pallor was an unhealthy symptom; he went over to him and felt his pulse. M. de Sucy was in a high fever; by dint of persuasion, he succeeded in putting the patient in bed, and gave him a few drops of laudanum to gain repose and sleep.

The Baron de Sucy spent nearly a week, in a constant struggle with a deadly anguish, and before long he had no tears left to shed. He was often well-nigh heartbroken; he could not grow accustomed to the sight of the Countess' madness; but he made terms for himself, as it were, in this cruel position, and sought alleviations in his pain. His heroism was boundless. He found courage to overcome Stephanie's wild shyness by choosing sweetmeats for her, and devoted all his thoughts to this, bringing these dainties, and following up the little victories that he set himself to gain over Stephanie's instincts (the last gleam of intelligence in her), until he succeeded to some extent—she grew tamer than ever before. Every morning the colonel went into the park; and if, after a long search for the Countess, he could not discover the tree in which she was rocking herself gently, nor the nook where she lay crouching at play with some bird, nor the roof where she had perched herself, he would whistle the well-known air Partant pour la Syrie, which recalled old memories of their love, and Stephanie would run towards him lightly as a fawn. She saw the colonel so often that she was no longer afraid of him; before very long she would sit on his knee with her thin, lithe arms about him. And while thus they sat as lovers love to do, Philip doled out sweetmeats one by one to the eager Countess. When they were all finished, the fancy often took Stephanie to search through her lover's pockets with a monkey's quick instinctive dexterity, till she had assured herself that there was nothing left, and then she gazed at Philip with vacant eyes; there was no thought, no gratitude in their clear depths. Then she would play with him. She tried to take off his boots to see his foot; she tore his gloves to shreds, and put on his hat; and she would let him pass his hands through her hair, and take her in his arms, and submit passively to his passionate kisses, and at last, if he shed tears, she would gaze silently at him.

She quite understood the signal when he whistled Partant pour la Syrie, but he could never succeed in inducing her to pronounce her own name—Stephanie. Philip persevered in his heart-rending task, sustained by a hope that never left him. If on some bright autumn morning he saw her sitting quietly on a bench under a poplar tree, grown brown now as the season wore, the unhappy lover would lie at her feet and gaze into her eyes as long as she would let him gaze, hoping that some spark of intelligence might gleam from them. At times he lent himself to an illusion; he would imagine that he saw the hard, changeless light in them falter, that there was a new life and softness in them, and he would cry, "Stephanie! oh, Stephanie! you hear me, you see me, do you not?"

But for her the sound of his voice was like any other sound, the stirring of the wind in the trees, or the lowing of the cow on which she scrambled; and the colonel wrung his hands in a despair that lost none of its bitterness; nay, time and these vain efforts only added to his anguish.

One evening, under the quiet sky, in the midst of the silence and peace of the forest hermitage, M. Fanjat saw from a distance that the Baron was busy loading a pistol, and knew that the lover had given up all hope. The blood surged to the old doctor's heart; and if he overcame the dizzy sensation that seized on him, it was because he would rather see his niece live with a disordered brain than lose her for ever. He hurried to the place.

"What are you doing?" he cried.

"That is for me," the colonel answered, pointing to a loaded pistol on the bench, "and this is for her!" he added, as he rammed down the wad into the pistol that he held in his hands.

The Countess lay stretched out on the ground, playing with the balls.

"Then you do not know that last night, as she slept, she murmured 'Philip?'" said the doctor quietly, dissembling his alarm.

"She called my name?" cried the Baron, letting his weapon fall. Stephanie picked it up, but he snatched it out of her hands, caught the other pistol from the bench, and fled.

"Poor little one!" exclaimed the doctor, rejoicing that his stratagem had succeeded so well. He held her tightly to his heart as he went on. "He would have killed you, selfish that he is! He wants you to die because he is unhappy. He cannot learn to love you for your own sake, little one! We forgive him, do we not? He is senseless; you are only mad. Never mind; God alone shall take you to Himself. We look upon you as unhappy because you no longer share our miseries, fools that we are!... Why, she is happy," he said, taking her on his knee; "nothing troubles her; she lives like the birds, like the deer—"

Stephanie sprang upon a young blackbird that was hopping about, caught it with a little shriek of glee, twisted its neck, looked at the dead bird, and dropped it at the foot of a tree without giving it another thought.

The next morning at daybreak the colonel went out into the garden to look for Stephanie; hope was very strong in him. He did not see her, and whistled; and when she came, he took her arm, and for the first time they walked together along an alley beneath the trees, while the fresh morning wind shook down the dead leaves about them. The colonel sat down, and Stephanie, of her own accord, lit upon his knee. Philip trembled with gladness.

"Love!" he cried, covering her hands with passionate kisses, "I am Philip..."

She looked curiously at him.

"Come close," he added, as he held her tightly. "Do you feel the beating of my heart? It has beat for you, for you only. I love you always. Philip is not

dead. He is here. You are sitting on his knee. You are my Stephanie, I am your Philip."

"Farewell!" she said, "farewell!"

The colonel shivered. He thought that some vibration of his highly wrought feeling had surely reached his beloved; that the heart-rending cry, drawn from him by hope, the utmost effort of a love that must last for ever, of passion in its ecstasy, striving to reach the soul of the woman he loved, must awaken her.

"Oh, Stephanie! we shall be happy yet!"

A cry of satisfaction broke from her, a dim light of intelligence gleamed in her eyes.

"She knows me!... Stephanie!..."

The colonel felt his heart swell, and tears gathered under his eyelids. But all at once the Countess held up a bit of sugar for him to see; she had discovered it by searching diligently for it while he spoke. What he had mistaken for a human thought was a degree of reason required for a monkey's mischievous trick!

Philip fainted. M. Fanjat found the Countess sitting on his prostrate body. She was nibbling her bit of sugar, giving expression to her enjoyment by little grimaces and gestures that would have been thought clever in a woman in full possession of her senses if she tried to mimic her paroquet or her cat.

"Oh, my friend!" cried Philip, when he came to himself. "This is like death every moment of the day! I love her too much! I could bear anything if only through her madness she had kept some little trace of womanhood. But, day after day, to see her like a wild animal, not even a sense of modesty left, to see her—"

"So you must have a theatrical madness, must you!" said the doctor sharply, "and your prejudices are stronger than your lover's devotion? What, monsieur! I resign to you the sad pleasure of giving my niece her food, and the enjoyment of her playtime; I have kept for myself nothing but the most burdensome cares. I watch over her while you are asleep, I—Go, monsieur, and give up the task. Leave this dreary hermitage; I can live with my little darling; I understand her disease; I study her movements; I know her secrets. Some day you shall thank me."

The colonel left the Minorite convent, that he was destined to see only once again. The doctor was alarmed by the effect that his words made upon his guest; his niece's lover became as dear to him as his niece. If either of them deserved to be pitied, that one was certainly Philip; did he not bear alone

the burden of an appalling sorrow?

The doctor made inquiries, and learned that the hapless colonel had retired to a country house of his near Saint-Germain. A dream had suggested to him a plan for restoring the Countess to reason, and the doctor did not know that he was spending the rest of the autumn in carrying out a vast scheme. A small stream ran through his park, and in winter time flooded a low-lying land, something like the plain on the eastern side of the Beresina. The village of Satout, on the slope of a ridge above it, bounded the horizon of a picture of desolation, something as Studzianka lay on the heights that shut in the swamp of the Beresina. The colonel set laborers to work to make a channel to resemble the greedy river that had swallowed up the treasures of France and Napoleon's army. By the help of his memories, Philip reconstructed on his own lands the bank where General Eble had built his bridges. He drove in piles, and then set fire to them, so as to reproduce the charred and blackened balks of timber that on either side of the river told the stragglers that their retreat to France had been cut off. He had materials collected like the fragments out of which his comrades in misfortune had made the raft; his park was laid waste to complete the illusion on which his last hopes were founded. He ordered ragged uniforms and clothing for several hundred peasants. Huts and bivouacs and batteries were raised and burned down. In short, he omitted no device that could reproduce that most hideous of all scenes. He succeeded. When, in the earliest days of December, snow covered the earth with a thick white mantle, it seemed to him that he saw the Beresina itself. The mimic Russia was so startlingly real, that several of his old comrades recognized the scene of their past sufferings. M. de Sucy kept the secret of the drama to be enacted with this tragical background, but it was looked upon as a mad freak in several circles of society in Paris.

In the early days of the month of January 1820, the colonel drove over to the Forest of l'Isle-Adam in a carriage like the one in which M. and Mme. de Vandieres had driven from Moscow to Studzianka. The horses closely resembled that other pair that he had risked his life to bring from the Russian lines. He himself wore the grotesque and soiled clothes, accoutrements, and cap that he had worn on the 29th of November 1812. He had even allowed his hair and beard to grow, and neglected his appearance, that no detail might be lacking to recall the scene in all its horror.

"I guessed what you meant to do," cried M. Fanjat, when he saw the colonel dismount. "If you mean your plan to succeed, do not let her see you in that carriage. This evening I will give my niece a little laudanum, and while she sleeps, we will dress her in such clothes as she wore at Studzianka, and put her in your traveling-carriage. I will follow you in a berline."

Soon after two o'clock in the morning, the young Countess was lifted into

the carriage, laid on the cushions, and wrapped in a coarse blanket. A few peasants held torches while this strange elopement was arranged.

A sudden cry rang through the silence of night, and Philip and the doctor, turning, saw Genevieve. She had come out half-dressed from the low room where she slept.

“Farewell, farewell; it is all over, farewell!” she called, crying bitterly.

“Why, Genevieve, what is it?” asked M. Fanjat.

Genevieve shook her head despairingly, raised her arm to heaven, looked at the carriage, uttered a long snarling sound, and with evident signs of profound terror, slunk in again.

“‘Tis a good omen,” cried the colonel. “The girl is sorry to lose her companion. Very likely she sees that Stephanie is about to recover her reason.”

“God grant it may be so!” answered M. Fanjat, who seemed to be affected by this incident. Since insanity had interested him, he had known several cases in which a spirit of prophecy and the gift of second sight had been accorded to a disordered brain—two faculties which many travelers tell us are also found among savage tribes.

So it happened that, as the colonel had foreseen and arranged, Stephanie traveled across the mimic Beresina about nine o’clock in the morning, and was awakened by an explosion of rockets about a hundred paces from the scene of action. It was a signal. Hundreds of peasants raised a terrible clamor, like the despairing shouts that startled the Russians when twenty thousand stragglers learned that by their own fault they were delivered over to death or to slavery.

When the Countess heard the report and the cries that followed, she sprang out of the carriage, and rushed in frenzied anguish over the snow-covered plain; she saw the burned bivouacs and the fatal raft about to be launched on a frozen Beresina. She saw Major Philip brandishing his sabre among the crowd. The cry that broke from Mme. de Vandieres made the blood run cold in the veins of all who heard it. She stood face to face with the colonel, who watched her with a beating heart. At first she stared blankly at the strange scene about her, then she reflected. For an instant, brief as a lightning flash, there was the same quick gaze and total lack of comprehension that we see in the bright eyes of a bird; then she passed her hand across her forehead with the intelligent expression of a thinking being; she looked round on the memories that had taken substantial form, into the past life that had been transported into her present; she turned her face to Philip—and saw him! An awed silence fell upon the crowd. The colonel breathed hard, but dared not speak; tears filled the doctor’s eyes. A faint color overspread Stephanie’s beautiful face, deepening slowly, till at last she glowed like a girl radiant with youth. Still the

bright flush grew. Life and joy, kindled within her at the blaze of intelligence, swept through her like leaping flames. A convulsive tremor ran from her feet to her heart. But all these tokens, which flashed on the sight in a moment, gathered and gained consistence, as it were, when Stephanie's eyes gleamed with heavenly radiance, the light of a soul within. She lived, she thought! She shuddered—was it with fear? God Himself unloosed a second time the tongue that had been bound by death, and set His fire anew in the extinguished soul. The electric torrent of the human will vivified the body whence it had so long been absent.

"Stephanie!" the colonel cried.

"Oh! it is Philip!" said the poor Countess.

She fled to the trembling arms held out towards her, and the embrace of the two lovers frightened those who beheld it. Stephanie burst into tears.

Suddenly the tears ceased to flow; she lay in his arms a dead weight, as if stricken by a thunderbolt, and said faintly:

"Farewell, Philip!... I love you.... farewell!"

"She is dead!" cried the colonel, unclasping his arms.

The old doctor received the lifeless body of his niece in his arms as a young man might have done; he carried her to a stack of wood and set her down. He looked at her face, and laid a feeble hand, tremulous with agitation, upon her heart—it beat no longer.

"Can it really be so?" he said, looking from the colonel, who stood there motionless, to Stephanie's face. Death had invested it with a radiant beauty, a transient aureole, the pledge, it may be, of a glorious life to come.

"Yes, she is dead."

"Oh, but that smile!" cried Philip; "only see that smile. Is it possible?"

"She has grown cold already," answered M. Fanjat.

M. de Sucy made a few strides to tear himself from the sight; then he stopped, and whistled the air that the mad Stephanie had understood; and when he saw that she did not rise and hasten to him, he walked away, staggering like a drunken man, still whistling, but he did not turn again.

In society General de Sucy is looked upon as very agreeable, and above all things, as very lively and amusing. Not very long ago a lady complimented him upon his good humor and equable temper.

"Ah! madame," he answered, "I pay very dearly for my merriment in the evening if I am alone."

“Then, you are never alone, I suppose.”

“No,” he answered, smiling.

If a keen observer of human nature could have seen the look that Sucy’s face wore at that moment, he would, without doubt, have shuddered.

“Why do you not marry?” the lady asked (she had several daughters of her own at a boarding-school). “You are wealthy; you belong to an old and noble house; you are clever; you have a future before you; everything smiles upon you.”

“Yes,” he answered; “one smile is killing me—”

On the morrow the lady heard with amazement that M. de Sucy had shot himself through the head that night.

The fashionable world discussed the extraordinary news in divers ways, and each had a theory to account for it; play, love, ambition, irregularities in private life, according to the taste of the speaker, explained the last act of the tragedy begun in 1812. Two men alone, a magistrate and an old doctor, knew that Monsieur le Comte de Sucy was one of those souls unhappy in the strength God gives to them to enable them to triumph daily in a ghastly struggle with a mysterious horror. If for a minute God withdraws His sustaining hand, they succumb.

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THE RECRUIT

On an evening in the month of November, 1793, the principal persons of Carentan were assembled in the salon of Madame de Dey, where they met daily. Several circumstances which would never have attracted attention in a large town, though they greatly preoccupied the little one, gave to this habitual rendezvous an unusual interest. For the two preceding evenings Madame de Dey had closed her doors to the little company, on the ground that she was ill. Such an event would, in ordinary times, have produced as much effect as the closing of the theatres in Paris; life under those circumstances seems merely incomplete. But in 1793, Madame de Dey's action was likely to have fatal results. The slightest departure from a usual custom became, almost invariably for the nobles, a matter of life or death. To fully understand the eager curiosity and searching inquiry which animated on this occasion the Norman countenances of all these rejected visitors, but more especially to enter into Madame de Dey's secret anxieties, it is necessary to explain the role she

played at Carentan. The critical position in which she stood at this moment being that of many others during the Revolution the sympathies and recollections of more than one reader will help to give color to this narrative.

Madame de Dey, widow of a lieutenant-general, chevalier of the Orders, had left the court at the time of the emigration. Possessing a good deal of property in the neighborhood of Carentan, she took refuge in that town, hoping that the influence of the Terror would be little felt there. This expectation, based on a knowledge of the region, was well-founded. The Revolution committed but few ravages in Lower Normandy. Though Madame de Dey had known none but the nobles of her own caste when she visited her property in former years, she now felt it advisable to open her house to the principle bourgeois of the town, and to the new governmental authorities; trying to make them pleased at obtaining her society, without arousing either hatred or jealousy. Gracious and kind, gifted by nature with that inexpressible charm which can please without having recourse to subserviency or to making overtures, she succeeded in winning general esteem by an exquisite tact; the sensitive warnings of which enabled her to follow the delicate line along which she might satisfy the exactions of this mixed society, without humiliating the touchy pride of the parvenus, or shocking that of her own friends.

Then about thirty-eight years of age, she still preserved, not the fresh plump beauty which distinguishes the daughters of Lower Normandy, but a fragile and, so to speak, aristocratic beauty. Her features were delicate and refined, her figure supple and easy. When she spoke, her pale face lighted and seemed to acquire fresh life. Her large dark eyes were full of affability and kindness, and yet their calm, religious expression seemed to say that the springs of her existence were no longer in her.

Married in the flower of her age to an old and jealous soldier, the falseness of her position in the midst of a court noted for its gallantry contributed much, no doubt, to draw a veil of melancholy over a face where the charms and the vivacity of love must have shone in earlier days. Obliged to repress the naive impulses and emotions of a woman when she simply feels them instead of reflecting about them, passion was still virgin in the depths of her heart. Her principal attraction came, in fact, from this innate youth, which sometimes, however, played her false, and gave to her ideas an innocent expression of desire. Her manner and appearance commanded respect, but there was always in her bearing, in her voice, a sort of looking forward to some unknown future, as in girlhood. The most insensible man would find himself in love with her, and yet be restrained by a sort of respectful fear, inspired by her courtly and polished manners. Her soul, naturally noble, but strengthened by cruel trials, was far indeed from the common run, and men did justice to it. Such a soul

necessarily required a lofty passion; and the affections of Madame de Dey were concentrated on a single sentiment,—that of motherhood. The happiness and pleasure of which her married life was deprived, she found in the passionate love she bore her son. She loved him not only with the pure and deep devotion of a mother, but with the coquetry of a mistress, and the jealousy of a wife. She was miserable away from him, uneasy at his absence, could never see him enough, and loved only through him and for him. To make men understand the strength of this feeling, it suffices to add that the son was not only the sole child of Madame de Dey, but also her last relation, the only being in the world to whom the fears and hopes and joys of her life could be naturally attached.

The late Comte de Dey was the last surviving scion of his family, and she herself was the sole heiress of her own. Human interests and projects combined, therefore, with the noblest deeds of the soul to exalt in this mother's heart a sentiment that is always so strong in the hearts of women. She had brought up this son with the utmost difficulty, and with infinite pains, which rendered the youth still dearer to her; a score of times the doctors had predicted his death, but, confident in her own presentiments, her own unfailing hope, she had the happiness of seeing him come safely through the perils of childhood, with a constitution that was ever improving, in spite of the warnings of the Faculty.

Thanks to her constant care, this son had grown and developed so much, and so gracefully, that at twenty years of age, he was thought a most elegant cavalier at Versailles. Madame de Dey possessed a happiness which does not always crown the efforts and struggles of a mother. Her son adored her; their souls understood each other with fraternal sympathy. If they had not been bound by nature's ties, they would instinctively have felt for each other that friendship of man to man, which is so rarely to be met in this life. Appointed sub-lieutenant of dragoons, at the age of eighteen, the young Comte de Dey had obeyed the point of honor of the period by following the princes of the blood in their emigration.

Thus Madame de Dey, noble, rich, and the mother of an emigre, could not be unaware of the dangers of her cruel situation. Having no other desire than to preserve a fortune for her son, she renounced the happiness of emigrating with him; and when she read the vigorous laws by virtue of which the Republic daily confiscated the property of emigres, she congratulated herself on that act of courage; was she not guarding the property of her son at the peril of her life? And when she heard of the terrible executions ordered by the Convention, she slept in peace, knowing that her sole treasure was in safety, far from danger, far from scaffolds. She took pleasure in believing that they had each chosen the wisest course, a course which would save to him both life

and fortune.

With this secret comfort in her mind, she was ready to make all the concessions required by those evil days, and without sacrificing either her dignity as a woman, or her aristocratic beliefs, she conciliated the good-will of those about her. Madame de Dey had fully understood the difficulties that awaited her on coming to Carentan. To seek to occupy a leading position would be daily defiance to the scaffold; yet she pursued her even way. Sustained by her motherly courage, she won the affections of the poor by comforting indiscriminately all miseries, and she made herself necessary to the rich by assisting their pleasures. She received the procureur of the commune, the mayor, the judge of the district court, the public prosecutor, and even the judges of the revolutionary tribunal.

The first four of these personages, being bachelors, courted her with the hope of marriage, furthering their cause by either letting her see the evils they could do her, or those from which they could protect her. The public prosecutor, previously an attorney at Caen, and the manager of the countess's affairs, tried to inspire her with love by an appearance of generosity and devotion; a dangerous attempt for her. He was the most to be feared among her suitors. He alone knew the exact condition of the property of his former client. His passion was increased by cupidity, and his cause was backed by enormous power, the power of life and death throughout the district. This man, still young, showed so much apparent nobleness and generosity in his proceedings that Madame de Dey had not yet been able to judge him. But, disregarding the danger that attends all attempts at subtilty with Normans, she employed the inventive wit and slyness which Nature grants to women in opposing the four rivals one against the other. By thus gaining time, she hoped to come safe and sound to the end of the national troubles. At this period, the royalists in the interior of France expected day by day that the Revolution would be ended on the morrow. This conviction was the ruin of very many of them.

In spite of these difficulties, the countess had maintained her independence very cleverly until the day when, by an inexplicable imprudence, she closed her doors to her usual evening visitors. Madame de Dey inspired so genuine and deep an interest, that the persons who called upon her that evening expressed extreme anxiety on being told that she was unable to receive them. Then, with that frank curiosity which appears in provincial manners, they inquired what misfortune, grief, or illness afflicted her. In reply to these questions, an old housekeeper named Brigitte informed them that her mistress had shut herself up in her room and would see no one, not even the servants of the house. The semi-cloistral existence of the inhabitants of a little town creates so invincible a habit of analyzing and explaining the actions of their neighbors, that after compassionating Madame de Dey (without knowing

whether she were happy or unhappy), they proceeded to search for the reasons of this sudden retreat.

"If she were ill," said the first Inquisitive, "she would have sent for the doctor; but the doctor has been all day long playing chess with me. He told me, laughing, that in these days there was but one malady, and that was incurable."

This joke was cautiously uttered. Men, women, old men, and young girls, all set to work to explore the vast field of conjecture. The next day, conjectures became suspicions. As life is all aboveboard in a little town, the women were the first to learn that Brigitte had made larger purchases than usual in the market. This fact could not be disputed: Brigitte had been seen there, very early in the morning; and, extraordinary event! she had bought the only hare the market afforded. Now all the town knew that Madame de Dey did not like game. The hare became, therefore, the point of departure for a vast array of suspicions. The old men who were taking their walks abroad, remarked a sort of concentrated activity about Madame de Dey's premises, shown by the very precautions which the servants took to conceal it. The foot-man was beating a carpet in the garden. The day before, no one would have noticed that fact; but the carpet now became a corner-stone on which the whole town built up its theories. Each individual had his or her surmise.

The second day, on learning that Madame de Dey declared herself ill, the principal personages of Carentan, assembled in the evening at the house of the mayor's brother, an old married merchant, a man of strict integrity, greatly respected, and for whom Madame de Dey had shown much esteem. There all the aspirants for the hand of the rich widow had a tale to tell that was more or less probable; and each expected to turn to his own profit the secret event which he thus recounted. The public prosecutor imagined a whole drama to result in the return by night of Madame de Dey's son, the emigre. The mayor was convinced that a priest who refused the oath had arrived from La Vendee and asked for asylum; but the day being Friday, the purchase of a hare embarrassed the good mayor not a little. The judge of the district court held firmly to the theory of a Chouan leader or a body of Vendeans hotly pursued. Others were convinced that the person thus harbored was a noble escaped from the Paris prisons. In short, they all suspected the countess of being guilty of one of those generosities, which the laws of the day called crimes, and punished on the scaffold. The public prosecutor remarked in a low voice that it would be best to say no more, but to do their best to save the poor woman from the abyss toward which she was hurrying.

"If you talk about this affair," he said, "I shall be obliged to take notice of it, and search her house, and then—"

He said no more, but all present understood what he meant.

The sincere friends of Madame de Dey were so alarmed about her, that on the morning of the third day, the procureur-syndic of the commune made his wife write her a letter, urging her to receive her visitors as usual that evening. Bolder still, the old merchant went himself in the morning to Madame de Dey's house, and, strong in the service he wanted to render her, he insisted on seeing her, and was amazed to find her in the garden gathering flowers for her vases.

"She must be protecting a lover," thought the old man, filled with sudden pity for the charming woman.

The singular expression on the countess's face strengthened this conjecture. Much moved at the thought of such devotion, for all men are flattered by the sacrifices a woman makes for one of them, the old man told the countess of the rumors that were floating about the town, and the dangers to which she was exposing herself.

"For," he said in conclusion, "though some of the authorities will readily pardon a heroism which protects a priest, none of them will spare you if they discover that you are sacrificing yourself to the interests of your heart."

At these words Madame de Dey looked at the old man with a wild and bewildered air, that made him shudder.

"Come," she said, taking him by the hand and leading him into her bedroom. After assuring herself that they were quite alone, she drew from her bosom a soiled and crumpled letter.

"Read that," she said, making a violent effort to say the words.

She fell into a chair, seemingly exhausted. While the old man searched for his spectacles and rubbed their glasses, she raised her eyes to him, and seemed to study him with curiosity; then she said in an altered voice, and very softly, —

"I trust you."

"I am here to share your crime," replied the good man, simply.

She quivered. For the first time in that little town, her soul sympathized with that of another. The old man now understood both the hopes and the fears of the poor woman. The letter was from her son. He had returned to France to share in Granville's expedition, and was taken prisoner. The letter was written from his cell, but it told her to hope. He did not doubt his means of escape, and he named to her three days, on one of which he expected to be with her in disguise. But in case he did not reach Carentan by the third day, she might know some fatal difficulty had occurred, and the letter contained his last

wishes and a sad farewell. The paper trembled in the old man's hand.

"This is the third day," cried the countess, rising and walking hurriedly up and down.

"You have been very imprudent," said the merchant. "Why send Brigitte to buy those provisions?"

"But he may arrive half-dead with hunger, exhausted, and—"

She could say no more.

"I am sure of my brother the mayor," said the old man. "I will see him at once, and put him in your interests."

After talking with the mayor, the shrewd old man made visits on various pretexts to the principal families of Carentan, to all of whom he mentioned that Madame de Dey, in spite of her illness, would receive her friends that evening. Matching his own craft against those wily Norman minds, he replied to the questions put to him on the nature of Madame de Dey's illness in a manner that hoodwinked the community. He related to a gouty old dame, that Madame de Dey had almost died of a sudden attack of gout in the stomach, but had been relieved by a remedy which the famous doctor, Tronchin, had once recommended to her,—namely, to apply the skin of a freshly-flayed hare on the pit of the stomach, and to remain in bed without making the slightest movement for two days. This tale had prodigious success, and the doctor of Carentan, a royalist "in petto," increased its effect by the manner in which he discussed the remedy.

Nevertheless, suspicions had taken too strong a root in the minds of some obstinate persons, and a few philosophers, to be thus dispelled; so that all Madame de Dey's usual visitors came eagerly and early that evening to watch her countenance: some out of true friendship, but most of them to detect the secret of her seclusion.

They found the countess seated as usual, at the corner of the great fireplace in her salon, a room almost as unpretentious as the other salons in Carentan; for, in order not to wound the narrow view of her guests, she denied herself the luxuries to which she was accustomed. The floor of her reception room was not even waxed, the walls were still hung with dingy tapestries; she used the country furniture, burned tallow candles, and followed the customs of the town,—adopting provincial life, and not shrinking from its pettiness or its many disagreeable privations. Knowing, however, that her guests would pardon luxuries if provided for their own comfort, she neglected nothing which conduced to their personal enjoyment, and gave them, more especially, excellent dinners.

Toward seven o'clock on this memorable evening, her guests were all assembled in a wide circle around the fireplace. The mistress of the house, sustained in her part by the sympathizing glances of the old merchant, submitted with wonderful courage to the minute questioning and stupid, or frivolous, comments of her visitors. At every rap upon her door, every footfall echoing in the street, she hid her emotions by starting topics relating to the interests of the town, and she raised such a lively discussion on the quality of ciders, which was ably seconded by the old merchant, that the company almost forgot to watch her, finding her countenance quite natural, and her composure imperturbable. The public prosecutor and one of the judges of the revolutionary tribunal was taciturn, observing attentively every change in her face; every now and then they addressed her some embarrassing question, to which, however, the countess answered with admirable presence of mind. Mothers have such courage!

After Madame de Dey had arranged the card parties, placing some guests at the boston, and some at the whist tables, she stood talking to a number of young people with extreme ease and liveliness of manner, playing her part like a consummate actress. Presently she suggested a game of loto, and offered to find the box, on the ground that she alone knew where it was, and then she disappeared.

"I am suffocating, my poor Brigitte," she cried, wiping the tears that gushed from her eyes, now brilliant with fever, anxiety, and impatience. "He does not come," she moaned, looking round the room prepared for her son. "Here alone I can breathe, I can live! A few minutes more and he must be here; for I know he is living. I am certain of it, my heart says so. Don't you hear something, Brigitte? I would give the rest of my life to know at this moment whether he were still in prison, or out in the free country. Oh! I wish I could stop thinking—"

She again examined the room to see if all were in order. A good fire burned on the hearth, the shutters were carefully closed, the furniture shone with rubbing; even the manner in which the bed was made showed that the countess had assisted Brigitte in every detail; her hopes were uttered in the delicate care given to that room where she expected to fold her son in her arms. A mother alone could have thought of all his wants; a choice repast, rare wine, fresh linen, slippers, in short, everything the tired man would need,—all were there that nothing might be lacking; the comforts of his home should reveal to him without words the tenderness of his mother!

"Brigitte!" said the countess, in a heart-rending tone, placing a chair before the table, as if to give a semblance of reality to her hopes, and so increase the strength of her illusions.

"Ah! madame, he will come. He is not far off. I haven't a doubt he is living, and on his way," replied Brigitte. "I put a key in the Bible, and I held it on my fingers while Cottin read a chapter in the gospel of Saint John; and, madame, the key never turned at all!"

"Is that a good sign?" asked the countess.

"Oh! madame, that's a well-known sign. I would wager my salvation, he still lives. God would not so deceive us."

"Ah! if he would only come—no matter for his danger here."

"Poor Monsieur Auguste!" cried Brigitte, "he must be toiling along the roads on foot."

"There's eight o'clock striking now," cried the countess, in terror.

She dared not stay away any longer from her guests; but before re-entering the salon, she paused a moment under the peristyle of the staircase, listening if any sound were breaking the silence of the street. She smiled at Brigitte's husband, who was standing sentinel at the door, and whose eyes seemed stupefied by the intensity of his attention to the murmurs of the street and night.

Madame de Dey re-entered her salon, affecting gaiety, and began to play loto with the young people; but after a while she complained of feeling ill, and returned to her chimney-corner.

Such was the situation of affairs, and of people's minds in the house of Madame de Dey, while along the road, between Paris and Cherbourg, a young man in a brown jacket, called a "carmagnole," worn de rigueur at that period, was making his way to Carentan. When drafts for the army were first instituted, there was little or no discipline. The requirements of the moment did not allow the Republic to equip its soldiers immediately, and it was not an unusual thing to see the roads covered with recruits, who were still wearing citizen's dress. These young men either preceded or lagged behind their respective battalions, according to their power of enduring the fatigues of a long march.

The young man of whom we are now speaking, was much in advance of a column of recruits, known to be on its way from Cherbourg, which the mayor of Carentan was awaiting hourly, in order to give them their billets for the night. The young man walked with a jades step, but firmly, and his gait seemed to show that he had long been familiar with military hardships. Though the moon was shining on the meadows about Carentan, he had noticed heavy clouds on the horizon, and the fear of being overtaken by a tempest may have hurried his steps, which were certainly more brisk than his evident

lassitude could have desired. On his back was an almost empty bag, and he held in his hand a boxwood stick, cut from the tall broad hedges of that shrub, which is so frequent in Lower Normandy.

This solitary wayfarer entered Carentan, the steeples of which, touched by the moonlight, had only just appeared to him. His step woke the echoes of the silent streets, but he met no one until he came to the shop of a weaver, who was still at work. From him he inquired his way to the mayor's house, and the way-worn recruit soon found himself seated in the porch of that establishment, waiting for the billet he had asked for. Instead of receiving it at once, he was summoned to the mayor's presence, where he found himself the object of minute observation. The young man was good-looking, and belonged, evidently, to a distinguished family. His air and manner were those of the nobility. The intelligence of a good education was in his face.

"What is your name?" asked the mayor, giving him a shrewd and meaning look.

"Julien Jussieu."

"Where do you come from?" continued the magistrate, with a smile of incredulity.

"Paris."

"Your comrades are at some distance," resumed the Norman official, in a sarcastic tone.

"I am nine miles in advance of the battalion."

"Some strong feeling must be bringing you to Carentan, citizen recruit," said the mayor, slyly. "Very good, very good," he added hastily, silencing with a wave of his hand a reply the young man was about to make. "I know where to send you. Here," he added, giving him his billet, "take this and go to that house, 'Citizen Jussieu.'"

So saying, the mayor held out to the recruit a billet, on which the address of Madame de Dey's house was written. The young man read it with an air of curiosity.

"He knows he hasn't far to go," thought the mayor as the recruit left the house. "That's a bold fellow! God guide him! He seemed to have his answers ready. But he'd have been lost if any one but I had questioned him and demanded to see his papers."

At that instant, the clocks of Carentan struck half-past nine; the lanterns were lighted in Madame de Dey's antechamber; the servants were helping their masters and mistresses to put on their clogs, their cloaks, and their mantles; the card-players had paid their debts, and all the guests were preparing to leave

together after the established customs of provincial towns.

"The prosecutor, it seems, has stayed behind," said a lady, perceiving that that important personage was missing, when the company parted in the large square to go to their several houses.

That terrible magistrate was, in fact, alone with the countess, who waited, trembling, till it should please him to depart.

"Citoyenne," he said, after a long silence in which there was something terrifying, "I am here to enforce the laws of the Republic."

Madame de Dey shuddered.

"Have you nothing to reveal to me?" he demanded.

"Nothing," she replied, astonished.

"Ah! madame," cried the prosecutor, changing his tone and seating himself beside her, "at this moment, for want of a word between us, you and I may be risking our heads on the scaffold. I have too long observed your character, your soul, your manners, to share the error into which you have persuaded your friends this evening. You are, I cannot doubt, expecting your son."

The countess made a gesture of denial; but she had turned pale, the muscles of her face contracted from the effort that she made to exhibit firmness, and the implacable eye of the public prosecutor lost none of her movements.

"Well, receive him," continued the functionary of the Revolution, "but do not keep him under your roof later than seven o'clock in the morning. To-morrow, at eight, I shall be at your door with a denunciation."

She looked at him with a stupid air that might have made a tiger pitiful.

"I will prove," he continued in a kindly voice, "the falsity of the denunciation, by making a careful search of the premises; and the nature of my report will protect you in future from all suspicions. I will speak of your patriotic gifts, your civic virtues, and that will save you."

Madame de Dey feared a trap, and she stood motionless; but her face was on fire, and her tongue stiff in her mouth. A rap sounded on the door.

"Oh!" cried the mother, falling on her knees, "save him! save him!"

"Yes, we will save him," said the official, giving her a look of passion; "if it costs us our life, we will save him."

"I am lost!" she murmured, as the prosecutor raised her courteously.

"Madame," he said, with an oratorical movement, "I will owe you only—to

yourself."

"Madame, he has come," cried Brigitte, rushing in and thinking her mistress was alone.

At sight of the public prosecutor, the old woman, flushed and joyous as she was, became motionless and livid.

"Who has come?" asked the prosecutor.

"A recruit, whom the mayor has sent to lodge here," replied Brigitte, showing the billet.

"True," said the prosecutor, reading the paper. "We expect a detachment to-night."

And he went away.

The countess had too much need at this moment to believe in the sincerity of her former attorney, to distrust his promise. She mounted the stairs rapidly, though her strength seemed failing her; then she opened the door, saw her son, and fell into his arms half dead,—

"Oh! my child! my child!" she cried, sobbing, and covering him with kisses in a sort of frenzy.

"Madame!" said an unknown man.

"Ah! it is not he!" she cried, recoiling in terror, and standing erect before the recruit, at whom she gazed with a haggard eye.

"Holy Father! what a likeness!" said Brigitte.

There was silence for a moment. The recruit himself shuddered at the aspect of Madame de Dey.

"Ah! monsieur," she said, leaning on Brigitte's husband, who had entered the room, and feeling to its fullest extent an agony the fear of which had already nearly killed her. "Monsieur, I cannot stay with you longer. Allow my people to attend upon you."

She returned to her own room, half carried by Brigitte and her old servant.

"Oh! madame," said Brigitte, as she undressed her mistress, "must that man sleep in Monsieur Auguste's bed, and put on Monsieur Auguste's slippers, and eat the pate I made for Monsieur Auguste? They may guillotine me if I—"

"Brigitte!" cried Madame de Dey.

Brigitte was mute.

"Hush!" said her husband in her ear, "do you want to kill madame?"

At that moment the recruit made a noise in the room above by sitting down to his supper.

"I cannot stay here!" cried Madame de Dey. "I will go into the greenhouse; there I can hear what happens outside during the night."

She still floated between the fear of having lost her son and the hope of his suddenly appearing.

The night was horribly silent. There was one dreadful moment for the countess, when the battalion of recruits passed through the town, and went to their several billets. Every step, every sound, was a hope,—and a lost hope. After that the stillness continued. Towards morning the countess was obliged to return to her room. Brigitte, who watched her movements, was uneasy when she did not reappear, and entering the room she found her dead.

"She must have heard that recruit walking about Monsieur Auguste's room, and singing their damned Marseillaise, as if he were in a stable," cried Brigitte. "That was enough to kill her!"

The death of the countess had a far more solemn cause; it resulted, no doubt, from an awful vision. At the exact hour when Madame de Dey died at Carentan, her son was shot in the Morbihan. That tragic fact may be added to many recorded observations on sympathies that are known to ignore the laws of space: records which men of solitude are collecting with far-seeing curiosity, and which will some day serve as the basis of a new science for which, up to the present time, a man of genius has been lacking.

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EL VERDUGO

The clock of the little town of Menda had just struck midnight. At that moment a young French officer, leaning on the parapet of a long terrace which bordered the gardens of the chateau de Menda, seemed buried in thoughts that were deeper than comported with the light-hearted carelessness of military life; though it must be said that never were hour, scene, or night more propitious for meditation. The beautiful sky of Spain spread its dome of azure above his head. The scintillation of the stars and the soft light of the moon illumined the delightful valley that lay at his feet. Resting partly against an orange-tree in bloom, the young major could see, three hundred feet below him, the town of Menda, at the base of the rock on which the castle is built. Turning his head, he looked down upon the sea, the sparkling waters of which encircled the landscape with a sheet of silver.

The chateau was illuminated. The joyous uproar of a ball, the sounds of an orchestra, the laughter of the dancers came to him, mingling with the distant murmur of the waves. The coolness of the night gave fresh energy to his body, that was tired with the heat of the day. Besides which, the gardens were planted with trees so balmy and flowers so sweet, that the young man felt as if plunged in a perfumed bath.

The chateau de Menda belonged to a grandee of Spain, who was at this time living there with his family. During the whole evening, the eldest daughter had looked at the young officer with an interest expressing extreme sadness, and such implied compassion on the part of a Spaniard might well have caused the reverie of the Frenchman. Clara was beautiful; and though she had three brothers and one sister, the wealth of the Marquis de Leganes seemed sufficient to justify Victor Marchand in believing that the young lady would be richly dowered. But could he dare to believe that the daughter of the proudest noble in Spain would be given to the son of a Parisian grocer? Besides, Frenchmen were hated. The marquis having been suspected by General G—t—r, who governed the province, of preparing an insurrection in favor of Ferdinand VII., the battalion commanded by Victor Marchand was quartered in the little town of Menda, to hold in check the neighboring districts, which were under the control of the Marquis de Leganes.

A recent despatch from Marechal Ney made it seem probable that the English would soon land a force upon the coast; and he mentioned the marquis as the man who was believed to be in communication with the cabinet of London. Thus, in spite of the cordial welcome which that Spaniard had given to Victor Marchand and his soldiers, the young officer held himself perpetually on his guard. As he came from the ballroom to the terrace, intending to cast his eye upon the state of the town and the outlying districts confided to his care, he asked himself how he ought to interpret the good will which the marquis never failed to show him, and whether the fears of his general were warranted by the apparent tranquillity of the region. But no sooner had he reached the terrace than these thoughts were driven from his mind by a sense of prudence, and also by natural curiosity.

He saw in the town a great number of lights. Although it was the feast of Saint James, he had, that very morning, ordered that all lights should be put out at the hour prescribed in the army regulations, those of the chateau alone excepted. He saw, it is true, the bayonets of his soldiers gleaming here and there at their appointed posts; but the silence was solemn, and nothing indicated that the Spaniards were disregarding his orders in the intoxication of a fete. Endeavoring to explain to himself this culpable and deliberate infraction of rules on the part of the inhabitants, it struck him as the more incomprehensible because he had left a number of officers in charge of patrols

who were to make their rounds during the night, and enforce the regulations.

With the impetuosity of youth, he was about to spring through an opening in the terrace wall, and descend by the rocks more rapidly than by the usual road to a little outpost which he had placed at the entrance of the town, on the side toward the chateau, when a slight noise arrested him. He fancied he heard the light step of a woman on the gravelled path behind him. He turned his head and saw no one, but his eyes were caught by an extraordinary light upon the ocean. Suddenly he beheld a sight so alarming that he stood for a moment motionless with surprise, fancying that his senses were mistaken. The white rays of the moonlight enabled him to distinguish sails at some distance. He tried to convince himself that this vision was an optical delusion caused by the caprices of the waves and the moon. At that moment, a hoarse voice uttered his name. He looked toward the opening in the wall, and saw the head of the orderly who had accompanied him to the chateau rising cautiously through it.

"Is it you, commander?"

"Yes. What is it?" replied the young man, in a low voice, a sort of presentiment warning him to act mysteriously.

"Those rascals are squirming like worms," said the man; "and I have come, if you please, to tell you my little observations."

"Speak out."

"I have just followed from the chateau a man with a lantern who is coming this way. A lantern is mightily suspicious! I don't believe that Christian has any call to go and light the church tapers at this time of night. They want to murder us! said I to myself, so I followed his heels; and I've discovered, commander, close by here, on a pile of rock, a great heap of fagots—he's after lighting a beacon of some kind up here, I'll be bound—"

A terrible cry echoing suddenly through the town stopped the soldier's speech. A brilliant light illuminated the young officer. The poor orderly was shot in the head and fell. A fire of straw and dry wood blazed up like a conflagration not thirty feet distant from the young commander. The music and the laughter ceased in the ballroom. The silence of death, broken only by moans, succeeded to the joyous sounds of a festival. A single cannon-shot echoed along the plain of the ocean.

A cold sweat rolled from the officer's brow. He wore no sword. He was confident that his soldiers were murdered, and that the English were about to disembark. He saw himself dishonored if he lived, summoned before a council of war to explain his want of vigilance; then he measured with his eye the depths of the descent, and was springing towards it when Clara's hand seized his.

"Fly!" she said; "my brothers are following me to kill you. Your soldiers are killed. Escape yourself. At the foot of the rock, over there, see! you will find Juanito's barb—Go, go!"

She pushed him; but the stupefied young man looked at her, motionless, for a moment. Then, obeying the instinct of self-preservation which never abandons any man, even the strongest, he sprang through the park in the direction indicated, running among the rocks where goats alone had hitherto made their way. He heard Clara calling to her brothers to pursue him; he heard the steps of his murderers; he heard the balls of several muskets whistling about his ears; but he reached the valley, found the horse, mounted him, and disappeared with the rapidity of an arrow.

A few hours later the young officer reached the headquarters of General G—t—r, whom he found at dinner with his staff.

"I bring you my head!" cried the commander of the lost battalion as he entered, pale and overcome.

He sat down and related the horrible occurrence. An awful silence followed his tale.

"I think you were more unfortunate than criminal," replied the terrible general, when at last he spoke. "You are not responsible for the crime of those Spaniards; and, unless the marshal should think otherwise, I absolve you."

These words gave but a feeble consolation to the unhappy officer.

"But when the emperor hears of it!" he cried.

"He will want to have you shot," said the general; "but we will see about that. Now," he added in a stern tone, "not another word of this, except to turn it into a vengeance which shall impress with salutary terror a people who make war like savages."

An hour later a whole regiment, a detachment of cavalry, and a battery of artillery were on their way to Menda. The general and Victor marched at the head of the column. The soldiers, informed of the massacre of their comrades, were possessed by fury. The distance which separated the town of Menda from general headquarters, was marched with marvellous rapidity. On the way, the general found all the villages under arms. Each of the wretched hamlets was surrounded, and the inhabitants decimated.

By one of those fatalities which are inexplicable, the British ships lay to without advancing. It was known later that these vessels carried the artillery, and had outsailed the rest of the transports. Thus the town of Menda, deprived of the support it expected, and which the appearance of the British fleet in the offing had led the inhabitants to suppose was at hand, was surrounded by

French troops almost without a blow being struck. The people of the town, seized with terror, offered to surrender at discretion. With a spirit of devotion not rare in the Peninsula, the slayers of the French soldiery, fearing, from the cruelty of their commander, that Menda would be given to the flames, and the whole population put to the sword, proposed to the general to denounce themselves. He accepted their offer, making a condition that the inhabitants of the chateau, from the marquis to the lowest valet, should be delivered into his hands. This condition being agreed to, the general proceeded to pardon the rest of the population, and to prevent his soldiers from pillaging the town or setting fire to it. An enormous tribute was levied, and the wealthiest inhabitants held prisoner to secure payment of it, which payment was to be made within twenty-four hours.

The general took all precautions necessary for the safety of his troops, and provided for the defence of the region from outside attack, refusing to allow his soldiers to be billeted in the houses. After putting them in camp, he went up to the chateau and took possession of it. The members of the Leganes family and their servants were bound and kept under guard in the great hall where the ball had taken place. The windows of this room commanded the terrace which overhung the town. Headquarters were established in one of the galleries, where the general held, in the first place, a council as to the measures that should be taken to prevent the landing of the British. After sending an aide-de-camp to Marechal Ney, and having ordered batteries to certain points along the shore, the general and his staff turned their attention to the prisoners. Two hundred Spaniards who had delivered themselves up were immediately shot. After this military execution, the general ordered as many gibbets planted on the terrace as there were members of the family of Leganes, and he sent for the executioner of the town.

Victor Marchand took advantage of the hour before dinner, to go and see the prisoners. Before long he returned to the general.

"I have come," he said in a voice full of feeling, "to ask for mercy."

"You!" said the general, in a tone of bitter irony.

"Alas!" replied Victor, "it is only a sad mercy. The marquis, who has seen those gibbets set up, hopes that you will change that mode of execution. He asks you to behead his family, as befits nobility."

"So be it," replied the general.

"They also ask for religious assistance, and to be released from their bonds; they promise in return to make no attempt to escape."

"I consent," said the general; "but I make you responsible for them."

"The marquis offers you his whole fortune, if you will consent to pardon one of his sons."

"Really!" exclaimed the general. "His property belongs already to King Joseph."

He stopped. A thought, a contemptuous thought, wrinkled his brow, and he said presently,—

"I will surpass his wishes. I comprehend the importance of his last request. Well, he shall buy the continuance of his name and lineage, but Spain shall forever connect with it the memory of his treachery and his punishment. I will give life and his whole fortune to whichever of his sons will perform the office of executioner on the rest. Go; not another word to me on the subject."

Dinner was served. The officers satisfied an appetite sharpened by exertion. A single one of them, Victor Marchand, was not at the feast. After hesitating long, he returned to the hall where the proud family of Leganes were prisoners, casting a mournful look on the scene now presented in that apartment where, only two nights before, he had seen the heads of the two young girls and the three young men turning giddily in the waltz. He shuddered as he thought how soon they would fall, struck off by the sabre of the executioner.

Bound in their gilded chairs, the father and mother, the three sons, and the two daughters, sat rigid in a state of complete immobility. Eight servants stood near them, their arms bound behind their backs. These fifteen persons looked at one another gravely, their eyes scarcely betraying the sentiments that filled their souls. The sentinels, also motionless, watched them, but respected the sorrow of those cruel enemies.

An expression of inquiry came upon the faces of all when Victor appeared. He gave the order to unbind the prisoners, and went himself to unfasten the cords that held Clara in her chair. She smiled sadly. The officer could not help touching softly the arms of the young girl as he looked with sad admiration at her beautiful hair and her supple figure. She was a true Spaniard, having the Spanish complexion, the Spanish eyes with their curved lashes, and their large pupils blacker than a raven's wing.

"Have you succeeded?" she said, with one of those funereal smiles in which something of girlhood lingers.

Victor could not keep himself from groaning. He looked in turn at the three brothers, and then at Clara. One brother, the eldest, was thirty years of age. Though small and somewhat ill-made, with an air that was haughty and disdainful, he was not lacking in a certain nobility of manner, and he seemed to have something of that delicacy of feeling which made the Spanish chivalry

of other days so famous. He was named Juanito. The second son, Felipe, was about twenty years of age; he resembled Clara. The youngest was eight. A painter would have seen in the features of Manuelo a little of that Roman constancy that David has given to children in his republican pages. The head of the old marquis, covered with flowing white hair, seemed to have escaped from a picture of Murillo. As he looked at them, the young officer shook his head, despairing that any one of those four beings would accept the dreadful bargain of the general. Nevertheless, he found courage to reveal it to Clara.

The girl shuddered for a moment; then she recovered her calmness, and went to her father, kneeling at his feet.

"Oh!" she said to him, "make Juanito swear that he will obey, faithfully, the orders that you will give him, and our wishes will be fulfilled."

The marquise quivered with hope. But when, leaning against her husband, she heard the horrible confidence that Clara now made to him, the mother fainted. Juanito, on hearing the offer, bounded like a lion in his cage.

Victor took upon himself to send the guard away, after obtaining from the marquis a promise of absolute submission. The servants were delivered to the executioner, who hanged them.

When the family were alone, with no one but Victor to watch them, the old father rose.

"Juanito!" he said.

Juanito answered only with a motion of his head that signified refusal, falling back into his chair, and looking at his parents with dry and awful eyes. Clara went up to him with a cheerful air and sat upon his knee.

"Dear Juanito," she said, passing her arm around his neck and kissing his eyelids, "if you knew how sweet death would seem to me if given by you! Think! I should be spared the odious touch of an executioner. You would save me from all the woes that await me—and, oh! dear Juanito! you would not have me belong to any one—therefore—"

Her velvet eyes cast gleams of fire at Victor, as if to rouse in the heart of Juanito his hatred of the French.

"Have courage," said his brother Felipe; "otherwise our race, our almost royal race, must die extinct."

Suddenly Clara rose, the group that had formed about Juanito separated, and the son, rebellious with good reason, saw before him his old father standing erect, who said in solemn tones,—

"Juanito, I command you to obey."

The young count remained immovable. Then his father knelt at his feet. Involuntarily Clara, Felipe, and Manuelo imitated his action. They all stretched out their hands to him, who was to save the family from extinction, and each seemed to echo the words of the father.

"My son, can it be that you would fail in Spanish energy and true feeling? Will you leave me longer on my knees? Why do you consider your life, your sufferings only? Is this my son?" he added, turning to his wife.

"He consents!" cried the mother, in despair, seeing a motion of Juanito's eyelids, the meaning of which was known to her alone.

Mariquita, the second daughter, was on her knees pressing her mother in her feeble arms, and as she wept hot tears her little brother scolded her.

At this moment the chaplain of the chateau entered the hall; the family instantly surrounded him and led him to Juanito. Victor, unable to endure the scene any longer, made a sign to Clara, and went away, determined to make one more attempt upon the general.

He found him in fine good-humour, in the midst of a banquet, drinking with his officers, who were growing hilarious.

An hour later, one hundred of the leading inhabitants of Menda assembled on the terrace, according to the orders of the general, to witness the execution of the Leganes family. A detachment of soldiers were posted to restrain the Spaniards, stationed beneath the gallows on which the servants had been hanged. The heads of the burghers almost touched the feet of these martyrs. Thirty feet from this group was a block, and on it glittered a scimitar. An executioner was present in case Juanito refused his obedience at the last moment.

Soon the Spaniards heard, in the midst of the deepest silence, the steps of many persons, the measured sound of the march of soldiers, and the slight rattle of their accoutrements. These noises mingled with the gay laughter of the officers, as a few nights earlier the dances of a ball had served to mask the preparations for a bloody treachery. All eyes turned to the chateau and saw the noble family advancing with inconceivable composure. Their faces were serene and calm.

One member alone, pale, undone, leaned upon the priest, who spent his powers of religious consolation upon this man,—the only one who was to live. The executioner knew, as did all present, that Juanito had agreed to accept his place for that one day. The old marquis and his wife, Clara, Mariquita, and the two younger brothers walked forward and knelt down a few steps distant from the fatal block. Juanito was led forward by the priest. When he reached the place the executioner touched him on the arm and gave him, probably, a few

instructions. The confessor, meantime, turned the victims so that they might not see the fatal blows. But, like true Spaniards, they stood erect without faltering.

Clara was the first to come forward.

"Juanito," she said, "have pity on my want of courage; begin with me."

At this instant the hurried steps of a man were heard, and Victor Marchand appeared on the terrace. Clara was already on her knees, her white neck bared for the scimitar. The officer turned pale, but he ran with all his might.

"The general grants your life if you will marry me," he said to her in a low voice.

The Spanish girl cast upon the officer a look of pride and contempt.

"Go on, Juanito!" she said, in a deep voice, and her head rolled at Victor's feet.

The Marquise de Leganes made one convulsive movement as she heard that sound; it was the only sign she gave of sorrow.

"Am I placed right this way, my good Juanito?" asked the little Manuelo of his brother.

"Ah! you are weeping, Mariquita!" said Juanito to his sister.

"Yes," she said, "I think of you, my poor Juanito; how lonely you will be without us."

Soon the grand figure of the marquis came forward. He looked at the blood of his children; he turned to the mute and motionless spectators, and said in a strong voice, stretching his hands toward Juanito,—

"Spaniards! I give my son my fatherly blessing! Now, Marquis, strike, without fear—you are without reproach."

But when Juanito saw his mother approach him, supported by the priest, he cried out: "She bore me!"

A cry of horror broke from all present. The noise of the feast and the jovial laughter of the officers ceased at that terrible clamor. The marquise comprehended that Juanito's courage was exhausted, and springing with one bound over the parapet, she was dashed to pieces on the rocks below. A sound of admiration rose. Juanito had fallen senseless.

"General," said an officer, who was half drunk, "Marchand has just told me the particulars of that execution down there. I will bet you never ordered it."

"Do you forget, messieurs," cried General G—t—r, "that five hundred

French families are plunged in affliction, and that we are now in Spain? Do you wish to leave our bones in its soil?"

After that allocution, no one, not even a sub-lieutenant, had the courage to empty his glass.

In spite of the respect with which he is surrounded, in spite of the title El Verdugo (the executioner) which the King of Spain bestowed as a title of nobility on the Marquis de Leganes, he is a prey to sorrow; he lives in solitude, and is seldom seen. Overwhelmed with the burden of his noble crime, he seems to await with impatience the birth of a second son, which will give him the right to rejoin the Shades who ceaselessly accompany him.

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A DRAMA ON THE SEASHORE

Nearly all young men have a compass with which they delight in measuring the future. When their will is equal to the breadth of the angle at which they open it the world is theirs. But this phenomenon of the inner life takes place only at a certain age. That age, which for all men lies between twenty-two and twenty-eight, is the period of great thoughts, of fresh conceptions, because it is the age of immense desires. After that age, short as the seed-time, comes that of execution. There are, as it were, two youths,—the youth of belief, the youth of action; these are often commingled in men whom Nature has favored and who, like Caesar, like Newton, like Bonaparte, are the greatest among great men.

I was measuring how long a time it might take a thought to develop. Compass in hand, standing on a rock some hundred fathoms above the ocean, the waves of which were breaking on the reef below, I surveyed my future, filling it with books as an engineer or builder traces on vacant ground a palace or a fort.

The sea was beautiful; I had just dressed after bathing; and I awaited Pauline, who was also bathing, in a granite cove floored with fine sand, the most coquettish bath-room that Nature ever devised for her water-fairies. The spot was at the farther end of Croisic, a dainty little peninsula in Brittany; it was far from the port, and so inaccessible that the coast-guard seldom thought it necessary to pass that way. To float in ether after floating on the wave!—ah! who would not have floated on the future as I did! Why was I thinking? Whence comes evil?—who knows! Ideas drop into our hearts or into our heads without consulting us. No courtesan was ever more capricious nor more

imperious than conception is to artists; we must grasp it, like fortune, by the hair when it comes.

Astride upon my thought, like Astolphe on his hippogriff, I was galloping through worlds, suiting them to my fancy. Presently, as I looked about me to find some omen for the bold productions my wild imagination was urging me to undertake, a pretty cry, the cry of a woman issuing refreshed and joyous from a bath, rose above the murmur of the rippling fringes as their flux and reflux marked a white line along the shore. Hearing that note as it gushed from a soul, I fancied I saw among the rocks the foot of an angel, who with outspread wings cried out to me, "Thou shalt succeed!" I came down radiant, light-hearted; I bounded like a pebble rolling down a rapid slope. When she saw me, she said,—

"What is it?"

I did not answer; my eyes were moist. The night before, Pauline had understood my sorrows, as she now understood my joy, with the magical sensitiveness of a harp that obeys the variations of the atmosphere. Human life has glorious moments. Together we walked in silence along the beach. The sky was cloudless, the sea without a ripple; others might have thought them merely two blue surfaces, the one above the other, but we—we who heard without the need of words, we who could evoke between these two infinitudes the illusions that nourish youth,—we pressed each other's hands at every change in the sheet of water or the sheets of air, for we took those slight phenomena as the visible translation of our double thought. Who has never tasted in wedded love that moment of illimitable joy when the soul seems freed from the trammels of flesh, and finds itself restored, as it were, to the world whence it came? Are there not hours when feelings clasp each other and fly upward, like children taking hands and running, they scarce know why? It was thus we went along.

At the moment when the village roofs began to show like a faint gray line on the horizon, we met a fisherman, a poor man returning to Croisic. His feet were bare; his linen trousers ragged round the bottom; his shirt of common sailcloth, and his jacket tatters. This abject poverty pained us; it was like a discord amid our harmonies. We looked at each other, grieving mutually that we had not at that moment the power to dip into the treasury of Aboul Casem. But we saw a splendid lobster and a crab fastened to a string which the fisherman was dangling in his right hand, while with the left he held his tackle and his net.

We accosted him with the intention of buying his haul,—an idea which came to us both, and was expressed in a smile, to which I responded by a slight pressure of the arm I held and drew toward my heart. It was one of those

nothings of which memory makes poems when we sit by the fire and recall the hour when that nothing moved us, and the place where it did so,—a mirage the effects of which have never been noted down, though it appears on the objects that surround us in moments when life sits lightly and our hearts are full. The loveliest scenery is that we make ourselves. What man with any poesy in him does not remember some mere mass of rock, which holds, it may be, a greater place in his memory than the celebrated landscapes of other lands, sought at great cost. Beside that rock, tumultuous thoughts! There a whole life evolved; there all fears dispersed; there the rays of hope descended to the soul! At this moment, the sun, sympathizing with these thoughts of love and of the future, had cast an ardent glow upon the savage flanks of the rock; a few wild mountain flowers were visible; the stillness and the silence magnified that rugged pile,—really sombre, though tinted by the dreamer, and beautiful beneath its scanty vegetation, the warm chamomile, the Venus' tresses with their velvet leaves. Oh, lingering festival; oh, glorious decorations; oh, happy exaltation of human forces! Once already the lake of Brienne had spoken to me thus. The rock of Croisic may be perhaps the last of these my joys. If so, what will become of Pauline?

"Have you had a good catch to-day, my man?" I said to the fisherman.

"Yes, monsieur," he replied, stopping and turning toward us the swarthy face of those who spend whole days exposed to the reflection of the sun upon the water.

That face was an emblem of long resignation, of the patience of a fisherman and his quiet ways. The man had a voice without harshness, kind lips, evidently no ambition, and something frail and puny about him. Any other sort of countenance would, at that moment, have jarred upon us.

"Where shall you sell your fish?"

"In the town."

"How much will they pay you for that lobster?"

"Fifteen sous."

"And the crab?"

"Twenty sous."

"Why so much difference between a lobster and a crab?"

"Monsieur, the crab is much more delicate eating. Besides, it's as malicious as a monkey, and it seldom lets you catch it."

"Will you let us buy the two for a hundred sous?" asked Pauline.

The man seemed petrified.

"You shall not have it!" I said to her, laughing. "I'll pay ten francs; we should count the emotions in."

"Very well," she said, "then I'll pay ten francs, two sous."

"Ten francs, ten sous."

"Twelve francs."

"Fifteen francs."

"Fifteen francs, fifty centimes," she said.

"One hundred francs."

"One hundred and fifty francs."

I yielded. We were not rich enough at that moment to bid higher. Our poor fisherman did not know whether to be angry at a hoax, or to go mad with joy; we drew him from his quandary by giving him the name of our landlady and telling him to take the lobster and the crab to her house.

"Do you earn enough to live on?" I asked the man, in order to discover the cause of his evident penury.

"With great hardships, and always poorly," he replied. "Fishing on the coast, when one hasn't a boat or deep-sea nets, nothing but pole and line, is a very uncertain business. You see we have to wait for the fish, or the shell-fish; whereas a real fisherman puts out to sea for them. It is so hard to earn a living this way that I'm the only man in these parts who fishes along-shore. I spend whole days without getting anything. To catch a crab, it must go to sleep, as this one did, and a lobster must be silly enough to stay among the rocks. Sometimes after a high tide the mussels come in and I grab them."

"Well, taking one day with another, how much do you earn?"

"Oh, eleven or twelve sous. I could do with that if I were alone; but I have got my old father to keep, and he can't do anything, the good man, because he's blind."

At these words, said simply, Pauline and I looked at each other without a word; then I asked,—

"Haven't you a wife, or some good friend?"

He cast upon us one of the most lamentable glances that I ever saw as he answered,—

"If I had a wife I must abandon my father; I could not feed him and a wife and children too."

"Well, my poor lad, why don't you try to earn more at the salt marshes, or

by carrying the salt to the harbor?"

"Ah, monsieur, I couldn't do that work three months. I am not strong enough, and if I died my father would have to beg. I am forced to take a business which only needs a little knack and a great deal of patience."

"But how can two persons live on twelve sous a day?"

"Oh, monsieur, we eat cakes made of buckwheat, and barnacles which I get off the rocks."

"How old are you?"

"Thirty-seven."

"Did you ever leave Croisic?"

"I went once to Guerande to draw for the conscription; and I went to Savenay to the messieurs who measure for the army. If I had been half an inch taller they'd have made me a soldier. I should have died of my first march, and my poor father would to-day be begging his bread."

I had thought out many dramas; Pauline was accustomed to great emotions beside a man so suffering as myself; well, never had either of us listened to words so moving as these. We walked on in silence, measuring, each of us, the silent depths of that obscure life, admiring the nobility of a devotion which was ignorant of itself. The strength of that feebleness amazed us; the man's unconscious generosity belittled us. I saw that poor being of instinct chained to that rock like a galley-slave to his ball; watching through twenty years for shell-fish to earn a living, and sustained in his patience by a single sentiment. How many hours wasted on a lonely shore! How many hopes defeated by a change of weather! He was hanging there to a granite rock, his arm extended like that of an Indian fakir, while his father, sitting in their hovel, awaited, in silence and darkness, a meal of the coarsest bread and shell-fish, if the sea permitted.

"Do you ever drink wine?" I asked.

"Three or four times a year," he replied.

"Well, you shall drink it to-day,—you and your father; and we will send you some white bread."

"You are very kind, monsieur."

"We will give you your dinner if you will show us the way along the shore to Batz, where we wish to see the tower which overlooks the bay between Batz and Croisic."

"With pleasure," he said. "Go straight before you, along the path you are

now on, and I will follow you when I have put away my tackle."

We nodded consent, and he ran off joyfully toward the town. This meeting maintained us in our previous mental condition; but it lessened our gay lightheartedness.

"Poor man!" said Pauline, with that accent which removes from the compassion of a woman all that is mortifying in human pity, "ought we not to feel ashamed of our happiness in presence of such misery?"

"Nothing is so cruelly painful as to have powerless desires," I answered. "Those two poor creatures, the father and son, will never know how keen our sympathy for them is, any more than the world will know how beautiful are their lives; they are laying up their treasures in heaven."

"Oh, how poor this country is!" she said, pointing to a field enclosed by a dry stone wall, which was covered with droppings of cow's dung applied symmetrically. "I asked a peasant-woman who was busy sticking them on, why it was done; she answered that she was making fuel. Could you have imagined that when those patches of dung have dried, human beings would collect them, store them, and use them for fuel? During the winter, they are even sold as peat is sold. And what do you suppose the best dressmaker in the place can earn?—five sous a day!" adding, after a pause, "and her food."

"But see," I said, "how the winds from the sea bend or destroy everything. There are no trees. Fragments of wreckage or old vessels that are broken up are sold to those who can afford to buy; for costs of transportation are too heavy to allow them to use the firewood with which Brittany abounds. This region is fine for none but noble souls; persons without sentiments could never live here; poets and barnacles alone should inhabit it. All that ever brought a population to this rock were the salt-marshes and the factory which prepares the salt. On one side the sea; on the other, sand; above, illimitable space."

We had now passed the town, and had reached the species of desert which separates Croisic from the village of Batz. Imagine, my dear uncle, a barren track of miles covered with the glittering sand of the seashore. Here and there a few rocks lifted their heads; you might have thought them gigantic animals couchant on the dunes. Along the coast were reefs, around which the water foamed and sparkled, giving them the appearance of great white roses, floating on the liquid surface or resting on the shore. Seeing this barren tract with the ocean on one side, and on the other the arm of the sea which runs up between Croisic and the rocky shore of Guerande, at the base of which lay the salt marshes, denuded of vegetation, I looked at Pauline and asked her if she felt the courage to face the burning sun and the strength to walk through sand.

"I have boots," she said. "Let us go," and she pointed to the tower of Batz,

which arrested the eye by its immense pile placed there like a pyramid; but a slender, delicately outlined pyramid, a pyramid so poetically ornate that the imagination figured in it the earliest ruin of a great Asiatic city.

We advanced a few steps and sat down upon the portion of a large rock which was still in the shade. But it was now eleven o'clock, and the shadow, which ceased at our feet, was disappearing rapidly.

"How beautiful this silence!" she said to me; "and how the depth of it is deepened by the rhythmic quiver of the wave upon the shore."

"If you will give your understanding to the three immensities which surround us, the water, the air, and the sands, and listen exclusively to the repeating sounds of flux and reflux," I answered her, "you will not be able to endure their speech; you will think it is uttering a thought which will annihilate you. Last evening, at sunset, I had that sensation; and it exhausted me."

"Oh! let us talk, let us talk," she said, after a long pause. "I understand it. No orator was ever more terrible. I think," she continued, presently, "that I perceive the causes of the harmonies which surround us. This landscape, which has but three marked colors,—the brilliant yellow of the sands, the blue of the sky, the even green of the sea,—is grand without being savage; it is immense, yet not a desert; it is monotonous, but it does not weary; it has only three elements, and yet it is varied."

"Women alone know how to render such impressions," I said. "You would be the despair of a poet, dear soul that I divine so well!"

"The extreme heat of mid-day casts into those three expressions of the infinite an all-powerful color," said Pauline, smiling. "I can here conceive the poesy and the passion of the East."

"And I can perceive its despair."

"Yes," she said, "this dune is a cloister,—a sublime cloister."

We now heard the hurried steps of our guide; he had put on his Sunday clothes. We addressed a few ordinary words to him; he seemed to think that our mood had changed, and with that reserve that comes of misery, he kept silence. Though from time to time we pressed each other's hands that we might feel the mutual flow of our ideas and impressions, we walked along for half an hour in silence, either because we were oppressed by the heat which rose in waves from the burning sands, or because the difficulty of walking absorbed our attention. Like children, we held each other's hands; in fact, we could hardly have made a dozen steps had we walked arm in arm. The path which led to Batz was not so much as traced. A gust of wind was enough to

efface all tracks left by the hoofs of horses or the wheels of carts; but the practised eye of our guide could recognize by scraps of mud or the dung of cattle the road that crossed that desert, now descending towards the sea, then rising landward according to either the fall of the ground or the necessity of rounding some breastwork of rock. By mid-day, we were only half way.

"We will stop to rest over there," I said, pointing to a promontory of rocks sufficiently high to make it probable we should find a grotto.

The fisherman, who heard me and saw the direction in which I pointed, shook his head, and said,—

"Some one is there. All those who come from the village of Batz to Croisic, or from Croisic to Batz, go round that place; they never pass it."

These words were said in a low voice, and seemed to indicate a mystery.

"Who is he,—a robber, a murderer?"

Our guide answered only by drawing a deep breath, which redoubled our curiosity.

"But if we pass that way, would any harm happen to us?"

"Oh, no!"

"Will you go with us?"

"No, monsieur."

"We will go, if you assure us there is no danger."

"I do not say so," replied the fisherman, hastily. "I only say that he who is there will say nothing to you, and do you no harm. He never so much as moves from his place."

"Who is it?"

"A man."

Never were two syllables pronounced in so tragic a manner. At this moment we were about fifty feet from the rocky eminence, which extended a long reef into the sea. Our guide took a path which led him round the base of the rock. We ourselves continued our way over it; but Pauline took my arm. Our guide hastened his steps in order to meet us on the other side, where the two paths came together again.

This circumstance excited our curiosity, which soon became so keen that our hearts were beating as if with a sense of fear. In spite of the heat of the day, and the fatigue caused by toiling through the sand, our souls were still surrendered to the softness unspeakable of our exquisite ecstasy. They were

filled with that pure pleasure which cannot be described unless we liken it to the joy of listening to enchanting music, Mozart's "Audiamo mio ben," for instance. When two pure sentiments blend together, what is that but two sweet voices singing? To be able to appreciate properly the emotion that held us, it would be necessary to share the state of half sensuous delight into which the events of the morning had plunged us. Admire for a long time some pretty dove with iridescent colors, perched on a swaying branch above a spring, and you will give a cry of pain when you see a hawk swooping down upon her, driving its steel claws into her breast, and bearing her away with murderous rapidity. When we had advanced a step or two into an open space which lay before what seemed to be a grotto, a sort of esplanade placed a hundred feet above the ocean, and protected from its fury by buttresses of rock, we suddenly experienced an electrical shudder, something resembling the shock of a sudden noise awaking us in the dead of night.

We saw, sitting on a vast granite boulder, a man who looked at us. His glance, like that of the flash of a cannon, came from two bloodshot eyes, and his stoical immobility could be compared only to the immutable granite masses that surrounded him. His eyes moved slowly, his body remaining rigid as though he were petrified. Then, having cast upon us that look which struck us like a blow, he turned his eyes once more to the limitless ocean, and gazed upon it, in spite of its dazzling light, as eagles gaze at the sun, without lowering his eyelids. Try to remember, dear uncle, one of those old oaks, whose knotty trunks, from which the branches have been lopped, rise with weird power in some lonely place, and you will have an image of this man. Here was a ruined Herculean frame, the face of an Olympian Jove, destroyed by age, by hard sea toil, by grief, by common food, and blackened as it were by lightning. Looking at his hard and hairy hands, I saw that the sinews stood out like cords of iron. Everything about him denoted strength of constitution. I noticed in a corner of the grotto a quantity of moss, and on a sort of ledge carved by nature on the granite, a loaf of bread, which covered the mouth of an earthenware jug. Never had my imagination, when it carried me to the deserts where early Christian anchorites spent their lives, depicted to my mind a form more grandly religious nor more horribly repentant than that of this man. You, who have a life-long experience of the confessional, dear uncle, you may never, perhaps, have seen so awful a remorse,—remorse sunk in the waves of prayer, the ceaseless supplication of a mute despair. This fisherman, this mariner, this hard, coarse Breton, was sublime through some hidden emotion. Had those eyes wept? That hand, moulded for an unwrought statue, had it struck? That ragged brow, where savage honor was imprinted, and on which strength had left vestiges of the gentleness which is an attribute of all true strength, that forehead furrowed with wrinkles, was it in harmony with the heart within? Why was this man in the granite? Why was the granite in the

man? Which was the man, which was the granite? A world of fancies came into our minds. As our guide had prophesied, we passed in silence, rapidly; when he met us he saw our emotion of mingled terror and astonishment, but he made no boast of the truth of his prediction; he merely said,—

"You have seen him."

"Who is that man?"

"They call him the Man of the Vow."

You can imagine the movement with which our two heads turned at once to our guide. He was a simple-hearted fellow; he understood at once our mute inquiry, and here follows what he told us; I shall try to give it as best I can in his own language, retaining his popular parlance.

"Madame, folks from Croisic and those from Batz think this man is guilty of something, and is doing a penance ordered by a famous rector to whom he confessed his sin somewhere beyond Nantes. Others think that Cambremer, that's his name, casts an evil fate on those who come within his air, and so they always look which way the wind is before they pass this rock. If it's nor'-westerly they wouldn't go by, no, not if their errand was to get a bit of the true cross; they'd go back, frightened. Others—they are the rich folks of Croisic—they say that Cambremer has made a vow, and that's why people call him the Man of the Vow. He is there night and day, he never leaves the place. All these sayings have some truth in them. See there," he continued, turning round to show us a thing we had not remarked, "look at that wooden cross he has set up there, to the left, to show that he has put himself under the protection of God and the holy Virgin and the saints. But the fear that people have of him keeps him as safe as if he were guarded by a troop of soldiers. He has never said one word since he locked himself up in the open air in this way; he lives on bread and water, which is brought to him every morning by his brother's daughter, a little lass about twelve years old to whom he has left his property, a pretty creature, gentle as a lamb, a nice little girl, so pleasant. She has such blue eyes, long as that," he added, marking a line on his thumb, "and hair like the cherubim. When you ask her: 'Tell me, Perotte' (That's how we say Pierette in these parts," he remarked, interrupting himself; "she is vowed to Saint Pierre; Cambremer is named Pierre, and he was her godfather)—'Tell me, Perotte, what does your uncle say to you?'—'He says nothing to me, nothing.'—'Well, then, what does he do to you?' 'He kisses me on the forehead, Sundays.'—'Are you afraid of him?'—'Ah, no, no; isn't he my godfather? he wouldn't have anybody but me bring him his food.' Perotte declares that he smiles when she comes; but you might as well say the sun shines in a fog; he's as gloomy as a cloudy day."

"But," I said to him, "you excite our curiosity without satisfying it. Do you

know what brought him there? Was it grief, or repentance; is it a mania; is it crime, is it—"

"Eh, monsieur, there's no one but my father and I who know the real truth. My late mother was servant in the family of a lawyer to whom Cambremer told all by order of the priest, who wouldn't give him absolution until he had done so—at least, that's what the folks of the port say. My poor mother overheard Cambremer without trying to; the lawyer's kitchen was close to the office, and that's how she heard. She's dead, and so is the lawyer. My mother made us promise, my father and I, not to talk about the matter to the folks of the neighborhood; but I can tell you my hair stood on end the night she told us the tale."

"Well, my man, tell it to us now, and we won't speak of it."

The fisherman looked at us; then he continued:

"Pierre Cambremer, whom you have seen there, is the eldest of the Cambremers, who from father to son have always been sailors; their name says it—the sea bends under them. Pierre was a deep-sea fisherman. He had boats, and fished for sardine, also for the big fishes, and sold them to dealers. He'd have charted a large vessel and trawled for cod if he hadn't loved his wife so much; she was a fine woman, a Brouin of Guerande, with a good heart. She loved Cambremer so much that she couldn't bear to have her man leave her for longer than to fish sardine. They lived over there, look!" said the fisherman, going up a hillock to show us an island in the little Mediterranean between the dunes where we were walking and the marshes of Guerande. "You can see the house from here. It belonged to him. Jacquette Brouin and Cambremer had only one son, a lad they loved—how shall I say?—well, they loved him like an only child, they were mad about him. How many times we have seen them at fairs buying all sorts of things to please him; it was out of all reason the way they indulged him, and so folks told them. The little Cambremer, seeing that he was never thwarted, grew as vicious as a red ass. When they told pere Cambremer, 'Your son has nearly killed little such a one,' he would laugh and say: 'Bah! he'll be a bold sailor; he'll command the king's fleets.'—Another time, 'Pierre Cambremer, did you know your lad very nearly put out the eye of the little Pougard girl?'—'Ha! he'll like the girls,' said Pierre. Nothing troubled him. At ten years old the little cur fought everybody, and amused himself with cutting the hens' necks off and ripping up the pigs; in fact, you might say he wallowed in blood. 'He'll be a famous soldier,' said Cambremer, 'he's got the taste of blood.' Now, you see," said the fisherman, "I can look back and remember all that—and Cambremer, too," he added, after a pause. "By the time Jacques Cambremer was fifteen or sixteen years of age he had come to be—what shall I say?—a shark. He amused himself at Guerande, and was after the girls at Savenay. Then he wanted money. He robbed his mother, who didn't

dare say a word to his father. Cambremer was an honest man who'd have tramped fifty miles to return two sous that any one had overpaid him on a bill. At last, one day the mother was robbed of everything. During one of his father's fishing-trips Jacques carried off all she had, furniture, pots and pans, sheets, linen, everything; he sold it to go to Nantes and carry on his capers there. The poor mother wept day and night. This time it couldn't be hidden from the father, and she feared him—not for herself, you may be sure of that. When Pierre Cambremer came back and saw furniture in his house which the neighbors had lent to his wife, he said,—

"'What is all this?'

"The poor woman, more dead than alive, replied:

"'We have been robbed.'

"'Where is Jacques?'

"'Jacques is off amusing himself.'

"No one knew where the scoundrel was.

"'He amuses himself too much,' said Pierre.

"Six months later the poor father heard that his son was about to be arrested in Nantes. He walked there on foot, which is faster than by sea, put his hands on his son, and compelled him to return home. Once here, he did not ask him, 'What have you done?' but he said:—

"'If you do not conduct yourself properly at home with your mother and me, and go fishing, and behave like an honest man, you and I will have a reckoning.'

"The crazy fellow, counting on his parent's folly, made a face; on which Pierre struck him a blow which sent Jacques to his bed for six weeks. The poor mother nearly died of grief. One night, as she was fast asleep beside her husband, a noise awoke her; she rose up quickly, and was stabbed in the arm with a knife. She cried out loud, and when Pierre Cambremer struck a light and saw his wife wounded, he thought it was the doing of robbers,—as if we ever had any in these parts, where you might carry ten thousand francs in gold from Croisic to Saint-Nazaire without ever being asked what you had in your arms. Pierre looked for his son, but he could not find him. In the morning, if that monster didn't have the face to come home, saying he had stayed at Batz all night! I should tell you that the mother had not known where to hide her money. Cambremer put his with Monsieur Dupotel at Croisic. Their son's follies had by this time cost them so much that they were half-ruined, and that was hard for folks who once had twelve thousand francs, and who owned their island. No one ever knew what Cambremer paid at Nantes to get his son away

from there. Bad luck seemed to follow the family. Troubles fell upon Cambremer's brother, he needed help. Pierre said, to console him, that Jacques and Perotte (the brother's daughter) could be married. Then, to help Joseph Cambremer to earn his bread, Pierre took him with him a-fishing; for the poor man was now obliged to live by his daily labor. His wife was dead of the fever, and money was owing for Perotte's nursing. The wife of Pierre Cambremer owed about one hundred francs to divers persons for the little girl,—linen, clothes, and what not,—and it so chanced that she had sewed a bit of Spanish gold into her mattress for a nest-egg toward paying off that money. It was wrapped in paper, and on the paper was written by her: 'For Perotte.' Jacquette Brouin had had a fine education; she could write like a clerk, and had taught her son to write too. I can't tell you how it was that the villain scented the gold, stole it, and went off to Croisic to enjoy himself. Pierre Cambremer, as if it was ordained, came back that day in his boat; as he landed he saw a bit of paper floating in the water, and he picked it up, looked at it, and carried it to his wife, who fell down as if dead, seeing her own writing. Cambremer said nothing, but he went to Croisic, and heard that his son was in a billiard room; so then he went to the mistress of the cafe, and said to her:—

"'I told Jacques not to use a piece of gold with which he will pay you; give it back to me, and I'll give you white money in place of it.'

"The good woman did as she was told. Cambremer took the money and just said 'Good,' and then he went home. So far, all the town knows that; but now comes what I alone know, though others have always had some suspicion of it. As I say, Cambremer came home; he told his wife to clean up their chamber, which is on the lower floor; he made a fire, lit two candles, placed two chairs on one side of the hearth, and a stool on the other. Then he told his wife to bring him his wedding-clothes, and ordered her to put on hers. He dressed himself. When dressed, he fetched his brother, and told him to watch before the door, and warn him of any noise on either of the beaches,—that of Croisic, or that of Guerande. Then he loaded a gun, and placed it at a corner of the fireplace. Jacques came home late; he had drunk and gambled till ten o'clock, and had to get back by way of the Carnouf point. His uncle heard his hail, and he went over and fetched him, but said nothing. When Jacques entered the house, his father said to him,—

"'Sit there,' pointing to the stool. 'You are,' he said, 'before your father and mother, whom you have offended, and who will now judge you.'

"At this Jacques began to howl, for his father's face was all distorted. His mother was rigid as an oar.

"'If you shout, if you stir, if you do not sit still on that stool,' said Pierre, aiming the gun at him, 'I will shoot you like a dog.'

"Jacques was mute as a fish. The mother said nothing.

"'Here,' said Pierre, 'is a piece of paper which wrapped a Spanish gold piece. That piece of gold was in your mother's bed; she alone knew where it was. I found that paper in the water when I landed here to-day. You gave a piece of Spanish gold this night to Mere Fleurant, and your mother's piece is no longer in her bed. Explain all this.'

"Jacques said he had not taken his mother's money, and that the gold piece was one he had brought from Nantes.

"'I am glad of it,' said Pierre; 'now prove it.'

"'I had it all along.'

"'You did not take the gold piece belonging to your mother?'

"'No.'

"'Will you swear it on your eternal life?'

"He was about to swear; his mother raised her eyes to him, and said:—

"'Jacques, my child, take care; do not swear if it is not true; you can repent, you can amend; there is still time.'

"And she wept.

"'You are a this and a that,' he said; 'you have always wanted to ruin me.'

"Cambremer turned white and said,—

"'Such language to your mother increases your crime. Come, to the point! Will you swear?'

"'Yes.'

"'Then,' Pierre said, 'was there upon your gold piece the little cross which the sardine merchant who paid it to me scratched on ours?'

"Jacques broke down and wept.

"'Enough,' said Pierre. 'I shall not speak to you of the crimes you have committed before this. I do not choose that a Cambremer should die on a scaffold. Say your prayers and make haste. A priest is coming to confess you.'

"The mother had left the room; she could not hear her son condemned. After she had gone, Joseph Cambremer, the uncle, brought in the rector of Piriac, to whom Jacques would say nothing. He was shrewd; he knew his father would not kill him until he had made his confession.

"'Thank you, and excuse us,' said Cambremer to the priest, when he saw Jacques' obstinacy. 'I wished to give a lesson to my son, and will ask you to

say nothing about it. As for you,' he said to Jacques, 'if you do not amend, the next offence you commit will be your last; I shall end it without confession.'

"And he sent him to bed. The lad thought he could still get round his father. He slept. His father watched. When he saw that his son was soundly asleep, he covered his mouth with tow, blindfolded him tightly, bound him hand and foot—'He raged, he wept blood,' my mother heard Cambremer say to the lawyer. The mother threw herself at the father's feet.

"'He is judged and condemned,' replied Pierre; 'you must now help me carry him to the boat.'

"She refused; and Cambremer carried him alone; he laid him in the bottom of the boat, tied a stone to his neck, took the oars and rowed out of the cove to the open sea, till he came to the rock where he now is. When the poor mother, who had come up here with her brother-in-law, cried out, 'Mercy, mercy!' it was like throwing a stone at a wolf. There was a moon, and she saw the father casting her son into the water; her son, the child of her womb, and as there was no wind, she heard blouf! and then nothing—neither sound nor bubble. Ah! the sea is a fine keeper of what it gets. Rowing inshore to stop his wife's cries, Cambremer found her half-dead. The two brothers couldn't carry her the whole distance home, so they had to put her into the boat which had just served to kill her son, and they rowed back round the tower by the channel of Croisic. Well, well! the belle Brouin, as they called her, didn't last a week. She died begging her husband to burn that accursed boat. Oh, he did it! As for him, he became I don't know what; he staggered about like a man who can't carry his wine. Then he went away and was gone ten days, and after he returned he put himself where you saw him, and since he has been there he has never said one word."

The fisherman related this history rapidly and more simply than I can write it. The lower classes make few comments as they relate a thing; they tell the fact that strikes them, and present it as they felt it. This tale was made as sharply incisive as the blow of an axe.

"I shall not go to Batz," said Pauline, when we came to the upper shore of the lake.

We returned to Croisic by the salt marshes, through the labyrinth of which we were guided by our fisherman, now as silent as ourselves. The inclination of our souls was changed. We were both plunged into gloomy reflections, saddened by the recital of a drama which explained the sudden presentiment which had seized us on seeing Cambremer. Each of us had enough knowledge of life to divine all that our guide had not told of that triple existence. The anguish of those three beings rose up before us as if we had seen it in a drama, culminating in that of the father expiating his crime. We dared not look at the

rock where sat the fatal man who held the whole countryside in awe. A few clouds dimmed the skies; mists were creeping up from the horizon. We walked through a landscape more bitterly gloomy than any our eyes had ever rested on, a nature that seemed sickly, suffering, covered with salty crust, the eczema, it might be called, of earth. Here, the soil was mapped out in squares of unequal size and shape, all encased with enormous ridges or embankments of gray earth and filled with water, to the surface of which the salt scum rises. These gullies, made by the hand of man, are again divided by causeways, along which the laborers pass, armed with long rakes, with which they drag this scum to the bank, heaping it on platforms placed at equal distances when the salt is fit to handle.

For two hours we skirted the edge of this melancholy checkerboard, where salt has stifled all forms of vegetation, and where no one ever comes but a few "paludiers," the local name given to the laborers of the salt marshes. These men, or rather this clan of Bretons, wear a special costume: a white jacket, something like that of brewers. They marry among themselves. There is no instance of a girl of the tribe having ever married any man who was not a paludier.

The horrible aspects of these marshes, these sloughs, the mud of which was systematically raked, the dull gray earth that the Breton flora held in horror, were in keeping with the gloom that filled our souls. When we reached a spot where we crossed an arm of the sea, which no doubt serves to feed the stagnant salt-pools, we noticed with relief the puny vegetation which sprouted through the sand of the beach. As we crossed, we saw the island on which the Cambremers had lived; but we turned away our heads.

Arriving at the hotel, we noticed a billiard-table, and finding that it was the only billiard-table in Croisic, we made our preparations to leave during the night. The next day we went to Guerande. Pauline was still sad, and I myself felt a return of that fever of the brain which will destroy me. I was so cruelly tortured by the visions that came to me of those three lives, that Pauline said at last,—

"Louis, write it all down; that will change the nature of the fever within you."

So I have written you this narrative, dear uncle; but the shock of such an event has made me lose the calmness I was beginning to gain from sea-bathing and our stay in this place.

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THE RED INN

In I know not what year a Parisian banker, who had very extensive commercial relations with Germany, was entertaining at dinner one of those friends whom men of business often make in the markets of the world through correspondence; a man hitherto personally unknown to him. This friend, the head of a rather important house in Nuremburg, was a stout worthy German, a man of taste and erudition, above all a man of pipes, having a fine, broad, Nuremburgian face, with a square open forehead adorned by a few sparse locks of yellowish hair. He was the type of the sons of that pure and noble Germany, so fertile in honorable natures, whose peaceful manners and morals have never been lost, even after seven invasions.

This stranger laughed with simplicity, listened attentively, and drank remarkably well, seeming to like champagne as much perhaps as he liked his straw-colored Johannisburger. His name was Hermann, which is that of most Germans whom authors bring upon their scene. Like a man who does nothing frivolously, he was sitting squarely at the banker's table and eating with that Teutonic appetite so celebrated throughout Europe, saying, in fact, a conscientious farewell to the cookery of the great Careme.

To do honor to his guest the master of the house had invited a few intimate friends, capitalists or merchants, and several agreeable and pretty women, whose pleasant chatter and frank manners were in harmony with German cordiality. Really, if you could have seen, as I saw, this joyous gathering of persons who had drawn in their commercial claws, and were speculating only on the pleasures of life, you would have found no cause to hate usurious discounts, or to curse bankruptcies. Mankind can't always be doing evil. Even in the society of pirates one might find a few sweet hours during which we could fancy their sinister craft a pleasure-boat rocking on the deep.

"Before we part, Monsieur Hermann will, I trust, tell one more German story to terrify us?"

These words were said at dessert by a pale fair girl, who had read, no doubt, the tales of Hoffmann and the novels of Walter Scott. She was the only daughter of the banker, a charming young creature whose education was then being finished at the Gymnase, the plays of which she adored. At this moment the guests were in that happy state of laziness and silence which follows a delicious dinner, especially if we have presumed too far on our digestive powers. Leaning back in their chairs, their wrists lightly resting on the edge of the table, they were indolently playing with the gilded blades of their dessert-knives. When a dinner comes to this declining moment some guests will be seen to play with a pear seed; others roll crumbs of bread between their fingers

and thumbs; lovers trace indistinct letters with fragments of fruit; misers count the stones on their plate and arrange them as a manager marshals his supernumeraries at the back of the stage. These are little gastronomic felicities which Brillat-Savarin, otherwise so complete an author, overlooked in his book. The footmen had disappeared. The dessert was like a squadron after a battle: all the dishes were disabled, pillaged, damaged; several were wandering around the table, in spite of the efforts of the mistress of the house to keep them in their places. Some of the persons present were gazing at pictures of Swiss scenery, symmetrically hung upon the gray-toned walls of the dining-room. Not a single guest was bored; in fact, I never yet knew a man who was sad during his digestion of a good dinner. We like at such moments to remain in quietude, a species of middle ground between the reverie of a thinker and the comfort of the ruminating animals; a condition which we may call the material melancholy of gastronomy.

So the guests now turned spontaneously to the excellent German, delighted to have a tale to listen to, even though it might prove of no interest. During this blessed interregnum the voice of a narrator is always delightful to our languid senses; it increases their negative happiness. I, a seeker after impressions, admired the faces about me, enlivened by smiles, beaming in the light of the wax candles, and somewhat flushed by our late good cheer; their diverse expressions producing piquant effects seen among the porcelain baskets, the fruits, the glasses, and the candelabra.

All of a sudden my imagination was caught by the aspect of a guest who sat directly in front of me. He was a man of medium height, rather fat and smiling, having the air and manner of a stock-broker, and apparently endowed with a very ordinary mind. Hitherto I had scarcely noticed him, but now his face, possibly darkened by a change in the lights, seemed to me to have altered its character; it had certainly grown ghastly; violet tones were spreading over it; you might have thought it the cadaverous head of a dying man. Motionless as the personages painted on a diorama, his stupefied eyes were fixed on the sparkling facets of a cut-glass stopper, but certainly without observing them; he seemed to be engulfed in some weird contemplation of the future or the past. When I had long examined that puzzling face I began to reflect about it. "Is he ill?" I said to myself. "Has he drunk too much wine? Is he ruined by a drop in the Funds? Is he thinking how to cheat his creditors?"

"Look!" I said to my neighbor, pointing out to her the face of the unknown man, "is that an embryo bankrupt?"

"Oh, no!" she answered, "he would be much gayer." Then, nodding her head gracefully, she added, "If that man ever ruins himself I'll tell it in Pekin! He possesses a million in real estate. That's a former purveyor to the imperial armies; a good sort of man, and rather original. He married a second time by

way of speculation; but for all that he makes his wife extremely happy. He has a pretty daughter, whom he refused for many years to recognize; but the death of his son, unfortunately killed in a duel, has compelled him to take her home, for he could not otherwise have children. The poor girl has suddenly become one of the richest heiresses in Paris. The death of his son threw the poor man into an agony of grief, which sometimes reappears on the surface."

At that instant the purveyor raised his eyes and rested them upon me; that glance made me quiver, so full was it of gloomy thought. But suddenly his face grew lively; he picked up the cut-glass stopper and put it, with a mechanical movement, into a decanter full of water that was near his plate, and then he turned to Monsieur Hermann and smiled. After all, that man, now beatified by gastronomical enjoyments, hadn't probably two ideas in his brain, and was thinking of nothing. Consequently I felt rather ashamed of wasting my powers of divination "in anima vili,"—of a doltish financier.

While I was thus making, at a dead loss, these phrenological observations, the worthy German had lined his nose with a good pinch of snuff and was now beginning his tale. It would be difficult to reproduce it in his own language, with his frequent interruptions and wordy digressions. Therefore, I now write it down in my own way; leaving out the faults of the Nuremburger, and taking only what his tale may have had of interest and poesy with the coolness of writers who forget to put on the title pages of their books: "Translated from the German."

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THOUGHT AND ACT

Toward the end of Venemiaire, year VII., a republican period which in the present day corresponds to October 20, 1799, two young men, leaving Bonn in the early morning, had reached by nightfall the environs of Andernach, a small town standing on the left bank of the Rhine a few leagues from Coblentz. At that time the French army, commanded by Augereau, was manoeuvring before the Austrians, who then occupied the right bank of the river. The headquarters of the Republican division was at Coblentz, and one of the demi-brigades belonging to Augereau's corps was stationed at Andernach.

The two travellers were Frenchmen. At sight of their uniforms, blue mixed with white and faced with red velvet, their sabres, and above all their hats covered with a green varnished-cloth and adorned with a tricolor plume, even the German peasants had recognized army surgeons, a body of men of science

and merit liked, for the most part, not only in our own army but also in the countries invaded by our troops. At this period many sons of good families taken from their medical studies by the recent conscription law due to General Jourdan, had naturally preferred to continue their studies on the battle-field rather than be restricted to mere military duty, little in keeping with their early education and their peaceful destinies. Men of science, pacific yet useful, these young men did an actual good in the midst of so much misery, and formed a bond of sympathy with other men of science in the various countries through which the cruel civilization of the Republic passed.

The two young men were each provided with a pass and a commission as assistant-surgeon signed Coste and Bernadotte; and they were on their way to join the demi-brigade to which they were attached. Both belonged to moderately rich families in Beauvais, a town in which the gentle manners and loyalty of the provinces are transmitted as a species of birthright. Attracted to the theatre of war before the date at which they were required to begin their functions, they had travelled by diligence to Strasburg. Though maternal prudence had only allowed them a slender sum of money they thought themselves rich in possessing a few louis, an actual treasure in those days when assignats were reaching their lowest depreciation and gold was worth far more than silver. The two young surgeons, about twenty years of age at the most, yielded themselves up to the poesy of their situation with all the enthusiasm of youth. Between Strasburg and Bonn they had visited the Electorate and the banks of the Rhine as artists, philosophers, and observers. When a man's destiny is scientific he is, at their age, a being who is truly many-sided. Even in making love or in travelling, an assistant-surgeon should be gathering up the rudiments of his fortune or his coming fame.

The two young had therefore given themselves wholly to that deep admiration which must affect all educated men on seeing the banks of the Rhine and the scenery of Suabia between Mayenne and Cologne,—a strong, rich, vigorously varied nature, filled with feudal memories, ever fresh and verdant, yet retaining at all points the imprints of fire and sword. Louis XIV. and Turenne have cauterized that beautiful land. Here and there certain ruins bear witness to the pride or rather the foresight of the King of Versailles, who caused to be pulled down the ancient castles that once adorned this part of Germany. Looking at this marvellous country, covered with forests, where the picturesque charm of the middle ages abounds, though in ruins, we are able to conceive the German genius, its reverie, its mysticism.

The stay of the two friends at Bonn had the double purpose of science and pleasure. The grand hospital of the Gallo-Batavian army and of Augereau's division was established in the very palace of the Elector. These assistant-surgeons of recent date went there to see old comrades, to present their letters

of recommendation to their medical chiefs, and to familiarize themselves with the first aspects of their profession. There, as elsewhere, they got rid of a few prejudices to which we cling so fondly in favor of the beauties of our native land. Surprised by the aspect of the columns of marble which adorn the Electoral Palace, they went about admiring the grandiose effects of German architecture, and finding everywhere new treasures both modern and antique.

From time to time the highways along which the two friends rode at leisure on their way to Andernach, led them over the crest of some granite hill that was higher than the rest. Thence, through a clearing of the forest or cleft in the rocky barrier, they caught sudden glimpses of the Rhine framed in stone or festooned with vigorous vegetation. The valleys, the forest paths, the trees exhaled that autumnal odor which induced to reverie; the wooded summits were beginning to gild and to take on the warm brown tones significant of age; the leaves were falling, but the skies were still azure and the dry roads lay like yellow lines along the landscape, just then illuminated by the oblique rays of the setting sun. At a mile and a half from Andernach the two friends walked their horses in silence, as if no war were devastating this beautiful land, while they followed a path made for the goats across the lofty walls of bluish granite between which foams the Rhine. Presently they descended by one of the declivities of the gorge, at the foot of which is placed the little town, seated coquettishly on the banks of the river and offering a convenient port to mariners.

"Germany is a beautiful country!" cried one of the two young men, who was named Prosper Magnan, at the moment when he caught sight of the painted houses of Andernach, pressed together like eggs in a basket, and separated only by trees, gardens, and flowers. Then he admired for a moment the pointed roofs with their projecting eaves, the wooden staircases, the galleries of a thousand peaceful dwellings, and the vessels swaying to the waves in the port.

[At the moment when Monsieur Hermann uttered the name of Prosper Magnan, my opposite neighbor seized the decanter, poured out a glass of water, and emptied it at a draught. This movement having attracted my attention, I thought I noticed a slight trembling of the hand and a moisture on the brow of the capitalist.

"What is that man's name?" I asked my neighbor.

"Taillefer," she replied.

"Do you feel ill?" I said to him, observing that this strange personage was turning pale.

"Not at all," he said with a polite gesture of thanks. "I am listening," he

added, with a nod to the guests, who were all simultaneously looking at him.

"I have forgotten," said Monsieur Hermann, "the name of the other young man. But the confidences which Prosper Magnan subsequently made to me enabled me to know that his companion was dark, rather thin, and jovial. I will, if you please, call him Wilhelm, to give greater clearness to the tale I am about to tell you."

The worthy German resumed his narrative after having, without the smallest regard for romanticism and local color, baptized the young French surgeon with a Teutonic name.]

By the time the two young men reached Andernach the night was dark. Presuming that they would lose much time in looking for their chiefs and obtaining from them a military billet in a town already full of soldiers, they resolved to spend their last night of freedom at an inn standing some two or three hundred feet from Andernach, the rich color of which, embellished by the fires of the setting sun, they had greatly admired from the summit of the hill above the town. Painted entirely red, this inn produced a most piquant effect in the landscape, whether by detaching itself from the general background of the town, or by contrasting its scarlet sides with the verdure of the surrounding foliage, and the gray-blue tints of the water. This house owed its name, the Red Inn, to this external decoration, imposed upon it, no doubt from time immemorial by the caprice of its founder. A mercantile superstition, natural enough to the different possessors of the building, far-famed among the sailors of the Rhine, had made them scrupulous to preserve the title.

Hearing the sound of horses' hoofs, the master of the Red Inn came out upon the threshold of his door.

"By heavens! gentlemen," he cried, "a little later and you'd have had to sleep beneath the stars, like a good many more of your compatriots who are bivouacking on the other side of Andernach. Here every room is occupied. If you want to sleep in a good bed I have only my own room to offer you. As for your horses I can litter them down in a corner of the courtyard. The stable is full of people. Do these gentlemen come from France?" he added after a slight pause.

"From Bonn," cried Prosper, "and we have eaten nothing since morning."

"Oh! as to provisions," said the innkeeper, nodding his head, "people come to the Red Inn for their wedding feast from thirty miles round. You shall have a princely meal, a Rhine fish! More, I need not say."

After confiding their weary steeds to the care of the landlord, who vainly called to his hostler, the two young men entered the public room of the inn. Thick white clouds exhaled by a numerous company of smokers prevented

them from at first recognizing the persons with whom they were thrown; but after sitting awhile near the table, with the patience practised by philosophical travellers who know the inutility of making a fuss, they distinguished through the vapors of tobacco the inevitable accessories of a German inn: the stove, the clock, the pots of beer, the long pipes, and here and there the eccentric physiognomies of Jews, or Germans, and the weather-beaten faces of mariners. The epaulets of several French officers were glittering through the mist, and the clank of spurs and sabres echoed incessantly from the brick floor. Some were playing cards, others argued, or held their tongues and ate, drank, or walked about. One stout little woman, wearing a black velvet cap, blue and silver stomacher, pincushion, bunch of keys, silver buckles, braided hair,—all distinctive signs of the mistress of a German inn (a costume which has been so often depicted in colored prints that it is too common to describe here),—well, this wife of the innkeeper kept the two friends alternately patient and impatient with remarkable ability.

Little by little the noise decreased, the various travellers retired to their rooms, the clouds of smoke dispersed. When places were set for the two young men, and the classic carp of the Rhine appeared upon the table, eleven o'clock was striking and the room was empty. The silence of night enabled the young surgeons to hear vaguely the noise their horses made in eating their provender, and the murmur of the waters of the Rhine, together with those indefinable sounds which always enliven an inn when filled with persons preparing to go to bed. Doors and windows are opened and shut, voices murmur vague words, and a few interpellations echo along the passages.

At this moment of silence and tumult the two Frenchmen and their landlord, who was boasting of Andernach, his inn, his cookery, the Rhine wines, the Republican army, and his wife, were all three listening with a sort of interest to the hoarse cries of sailors in a boat which appeared to be coming to the wharf. The innkeeper, familiar no doubt with the guttural shouts of the boatmen, went out hastily, but presently returned conducting a short stout man, behind whom walked two sailors carrying a heavy valise and several packages. When these were deposited in the room, the short man took the valise and placed it beside him as he seated himself without ceremony at the same table as the surgeons.

"Go and sleep in your boat," he said to the boatmen, "as the inn is full. Considering all things, that is best."

"Monsieur," said the landlord to the new-comer, "these are all the provisions I have left," pointing to the supper served to the two Frenchmen; "I haven't so much as another crust of bread nor a bone."

"No sauer-kraut?"

"Not enough to put in my wife's thimble! As I had the honor to tell you just now, you can have no bed but the chair on which you are sitting, and no other chamber than this public room."

At these words the little man cast upon the landlord, the room, and the two Frenchmen a look in which caution and alarm were equally expressed.

["Here," said Monsieur Hermann, interrupting himself, "I ought to tell you that we have never known the real name nor the history of this man; his papers showed that he came from Aix-la-Chapelle; he called himself Wahlenfer and said that he owned a rather extensive pin manufactory in the suburbs of Neuwied. Like all the manufacturers of that region, he wore a surtout coat of common cloth, waistcoat and breeches of dark green velveteen, stout boots, and a broad leather belt. His face was round, his manners frank and cordial; but during the evening he seemed unable to disguise altogether some secret apprehension or, possibly, some anxious care. The innkeeper's opinion has always been that this German merchant was fleeing his country. Later I heard that his manufactory had been burned by one of those unfortunate chances so frequent in times of war. In spite of its anxious expression the man's face showed great kindliness. His features were handsome; and the whiteness of his stout throat was well set off by a black cravat, a fact which Wilhelm showed jestingly to Prosper."

Here Monsieur Taillefer drank another glass of water.]

Prosper courteously proposed that the merchant should share their supper, and Wahlenfer accepted the offer without ceremony, like a man who feels himself able to return a civility. He placed his valise on the floor and put his feet on it, took off his hat and gloves and removed a pair of pistols from his belt; the landlord having by this time set a knife and fork for him, the three guests began to satisfy their appetites in silence. The atmosphere of this room was hot and the flies were so numerous that Prosper requested the landlord to open the window looking toward the outer gate, so as to change the air. This window was barricaded by an iron bar, the two ends of which were inserted into holes made in the window casings. For greater security, two bolts were screwed to each shutter. Prosper accidentally noticed the manner in which the landlord managed these obstacles and opened the window.

As I am now speaking of localities, this is the place to describe to you the interior arrangements of the inn; for, on an accurate knowledge of the premises depends an understanding of my tale. The public room in which the three persons I have named to you were sitting, had two outer doors. One opened on the main road to Andernach, which skirts the Rhine. In front of the inn was a little wharf, to which the boat hired by the merchant for his journey was moored. The other door opened upon the courtyard of the inn. This courtyard

was surrounded by very high walls and was full, for the time being, of cattle and horses, the stables being occupied by human beings. The great gate leading into this courtyard had been so carefully barricaded that to save time the landlord had brought the merchant and sailors into the public room through the door opening on the roadway. After having opened the window, as requested by Prosper Magnan, he closed this door, slipped the iron bars into their places and ran the bolts. The landlord's room, where the two young surgeons were to sleep, adjoined the public room, and was separated by a somewhat thin partition from the kitchen, where the landlord and his wife intended, probably, to pass the night. The servant-woman had left the premises to find a lodging in some crib or hayloft. It is therefore easy to see that the kitchen, the landlord's chamber, and the public room were, to some extent, isolated from the rest of the house. In the courtyard were two large dogs, whose deep-toned barking showed vigilant and easily roused guardians.

"What silence! and what a beautiful night!" said Wilhelm, looking at the sky through the window, as the landlord was fastening the door.

The lapping of the river against the wharf was the only sound to be heard.

"Messieurs," said the merchant, "permit me to offer you a few bottles of wine to wash down the carp. We'll ease the fatigues of the day by drinking. From your manner and the state of your clothes, I judge that you have made, like me, a good bit of a journey to-day."

The two friends accepted, and the landlord went out by a door through the kitchen to his cellar, situated, no doubt, under this portion of the building. When five venerable bottles which he presently brought back with him appeared on the table, the wife brought in the rest of the supper. She gave to the dishes and to the room generally the glance of a mistress, and then, sure of having attended to all the wants of the travellers, she returned to the kitchen.

The four men, for the landlord was invited to drink, did not hear her go to bed, but later, during the intervals of silence which came into their talk, certain strongly accentuated snores, made the more sonorous by the thin planks of the loft in which she had ensconced herself, made the guests laugh and also the husband. Towards midnight, when nothing remained on the table but biscuits, cheese, dried fruit, and good wine, the guests, chiefly the young Frenchmen, became communicative. The latter talked of their homes, their studies, and of the war. The conversation grew lively. Prosper Magnan brought a few tears to the merchant's eyes, when with the frankness and naivete of a good and tender nature, he talked of what his mother must be doing at that hour, while he was sitting drinking on the banks of the Rhine.

"I can see her," he said, "reading her prayers before she goes to bed. She won't forget me; she is certain to say to herself, 'My poor Prosper; I wonder

where he is now!' If she has won a few sous from her neighbors—your mother, perhaps," he added, nudging Wilhelm's elbow—"she'll go and put them in the great red earthenware pot, where she is accumulating a sum sufficient to buy the thirty acres adjoining her little estate at Lescheville. Those thirty acres are worth at least sixty thousand francs. Such fine fields! Ah! if I had them I'd live all my days at Lescheville, without other ambition! How my father used to long for those thirty acres and the pretty brook which winds through the meadows! But he died without ever being able to buy them. Many's the time I've played there!"

"Monsieur Wahlenfer, haven't you also your 'hoc erat in votis'?" asked Wilhelm.

"Yes, monsieur, but it came to pass, and now—"

The good man was silent, and did not finish his sentence.

"As for me," said the landlord, whose face was rather flushed, "I bought a field last spring, which I had been wanting for ten years."

They talked thus like men whose tongues are loosened by wine, and they each took that friendly liking to the others of which we are never stingy on a journey; so that when the time came to separate for the night, Wilhelm offered his bed to the merchant.

"You can accept it without hesitation," he said, "for I can sleep with Prosper. It won't be the first, nor the last time either. You are our elder, and we ought to honor age!"

"Bah!" said the landlord, "my wife's bed has several mattresses; take one off and put it on the floor."

So saying, he went and shut the window, making all the noise that prudent operation demanded.

"I accept," said the merchant; "in fact I will admit," he added, lowering his voice and looking at the two Frenchmen, "that I desired it. My boatmen seem to me suspicious. I am not sorry to spend the night with two brave young men, two French soldiers, for, between ourselves, I have a hundred thousand francs in gold and diamonds in my valise."

The friendly caution with which this imprudent confidence was received by the two young men, seemed to reassure the German. The landlord assisted in taking off one of the mattresses, and when all was arranged for the best he bade them good-night and went off to bed.

The merchant and the surgeons laughed over the nature of their pillows. Prosper put his case of surgical instruments and that of Wilhelm under the end of his mattress to raise it and supply the place of a bolster, which was lacking.

Wahlenfer, as a measure of precaution, put his valise under his pillow.

"We shall both sleep on our fortune," said Prosper, "you, on your gold; I, on my instruments. It remains to be seen whether my instruments will ever bring me the gold you have now acquired."

"You may hope so," said the merchant. "Work and honesty can do everything; have patience, however."

Wahlenfer and Wilhelm were soon asleep. Whether it was that his bed on the floor was hard, or that his great fatigue was a cause of sleeplessness, or that some fatal influence affected his soul, it is certain that Prosper Magnan continued awake. His thoughts unconsciously took an evil turn. His mind dwelt exclusively on the hundred thousand francs which lay beneath the merchant's pillow. To Prosper Magnan one hundred thousand francs was a vast and ready-made fortune. He began to employ it in a hundred different ways; he made castles in the air, such as we all make with eager delight during the moments preceding sleep, an hour when images rise in our minds confusedly, and often, in the silence of the night, thought acquires some magical power. He gratified his mother's wishes; he bought the thirty acres of meadow land; he married a young lady of Beauvais to whom his present want of fortune forbade him to aspire. With a hundred thousand francs he planned a lifetime of happiness; he saw himself prosperous, the father of a family, rich, respected in his province, and, possibly, mayor of Beauvais. His brain heated; he searched for means to turn his fictions to realities. He began with extraordinary ardor to plan a crime theoretically. While fancying the death of the merchant he saw distinctly the gold and the diamonds. His eyes were dazzled by them. His heart throbbed. Deliberation was, undoubtedly, already crime. Fascinated by that mass of gold he intoxicated himself morally by murderous arguments. He asked himself if that poor German had any need to live; he supposed the case of his never having existed. In short, he planned the crime in a manner to secure himself impunity. The other bank of the river was occupied by the Austrian army; below the windows lay a boat and boatman; he would cut the throat of that man, throw the body into the Rhine, and escape with the valise; gold would buy the boatman and he could reach the Austrians. He went so far as to calculate the professional ability he had reached in the use of instruments, so as to cut through his victim's throat without leaving him the chance for a single cry.

[Here Monsieur Taillefer wiped his forehead and drank a little water.]

Prosper rose slowly, making no noise. Certain of having waked no one, he dressed himself and went into the public room. There, with that fatal intelligence a man suddenly finds on some occasions within him, with that power of tact and will which is never lacking to prisoners or to criminals in

whatever they undertake, he unscrewed the iron bars, slipped them from their places without the slightest noise, placed them against the wall, and opened the shutters, leaning heavily upon their hinges to keep them from creaking. The moon was shedding its pale pure light upon the scene, and he was thus enabled to faintly see into the room where Wilhelm and Wahlenfer were sleeping. There, he told me, he stood still for a moment. The throbbing of his heart was so strong, so deep, so sonorous, that he was terrified; he feared he could not act with coolness; his hands trembled; the soles of his feet seem planted on red-hot coal; but the execution of his plan was accompanied by such apparent good luck that he fancied he saw a species of predestination in this favor bestowed upon him by fate. He opened the window, returned to the bedroom, took his case of instruments, and selected the one most suitable to accomplish the crime.

"When I stood by the bed," he said to me, "I commended myself mechanically to God."

At the moment when he raised his arm collecting all his strength, he heard a voice as it were within him; he thought he saw a light. He flung the instrument on his own bed and fled into the next room, and stood before the window. There, he conceived the utmost horror of himself. Feeling his virtue weak, fearing still to succumb to the spell that was upon him he sprang out upon the road and walked along the bank of the Rhine, pacing up and down like a sentinel before the inn. Sometimes he went as far as Andernach in his hurried tramp; often his feet led him up the slope he had descended on his way to the inn; and sometimes he lost sight of the inn and the window he had left open behind him. His object, he said, was to weary himself and so find sleep.

But, as he walked beneath the cloudless skies, beholding the stars, affected perhaps by the purer air of night and the melancholy lapping of the water, he fell into a reverie which brought him back by degrees to sane moral thoughts. Reason at last dispersed completely his momentary frenzy. The teachings of his education, its religious precepts, but above all, so he told me, the remembrance of his simple life beneath the parental roof drove out his wicked thoughts. When he returned to the inn after a long meditation to which he abandoned himself on the bank of the Rhine, resting his elbow on a rock, he could, he said to me, not have slept, but have watched untempted beside millions of gold. At the moment when his virtue rose proudly and vigorously from the struggle, he knelt down, with a feeling of ecstasy and happiness, and thanked God. He felt happy, light-hearted, content, as on the day of his first communion, when he thought himself worthy of the angels because he had passed one day without sinning in thought, or word, or deed.

He returned to the inn and closed the window without fearing to make a noise, and went to bed at once. His moral and physical lassitude was certain to

bring him sleep. In a very short time after laying his head on his mattress, he fell into that first fantastic somnolence which precedes the deepest sleep. The senses then grew numb, and life is abolished by degrees; thoughts are incomplete, and the last quivering of our consciousness seems like a sort of reverie. "How heavy the air is!" he thought; "I seem to be breathing a moist vapor." He explained this vaguely to himself by the difference which must exist between the atmosphere of the close room and the purer air by the river. But presently he heard a periodical noise, something like that made by drops of water falling from a robinet into a fountain. Obeying a feeling of panic terror he was about to rise and call the innkeeper and waken Wahlenfer and Wilhelm, but he suddenly remembered, alas! to his great misfortune, the tall wooden clock; he fancied the sound was that of the pendulum, and he fell asleep with that confused and indistinct perception.

["Do you want some water, Monsieur Taillefer?" said the master of the house, observing that the banker was mechanically pouring from an empty decanter.

Monsieur Hermann continued his narrative after the slight pause occasioned by this interruption.]

The next morning Prosper Magnan was awakened by a great noise. He seemed to hear piercing cries, and he felt that violent shuddering of the nerves which we suffer when on awaking we continue to feel a painful impression begun in sleep. A physiological fact then takes place within us, a start, to use the common expression, which has never been sufficiently observed, though it contains very curious phenomena for science. This terrible agony, produced, possibly, by the too sudden reunion of our two natures separated during sleep, is usually transient; but in the poor young surgeon's case it lasted, and even increased, causing him suddenly the most awful horror as he beheld a pool of blood between Wahlenfer's bed and his own mattress. The head of the unfortunate German lay on the ground; his body was still on the bed; all its blood had flowed out by the neck.

Seeing the eyes still open but fixed, seeing the blood which had stained his sheets and even his hands, recognizing his own surgical instrument beside him, Prosper Magnan fainted and fell into the pool of Wahlenfer's blood. "It was," he said to me, "the punishment of my thoughts." When he recovered consciousness he was in the public room, seated on a chair, surrounded by French soldiers, and in presence of a curious and observing crowd. He gazed stupidly at a Republican officer engaged in taking the testimony of several witnesses, and in writing down, no doubt, the "proces-verbal." He recognized the landlord, his wife, the two boatmen, and the servant of the Red Inn. The surgical instrument which the murderer had used—

[Here Monsieur Taillefer coughed, drew out his handkerchief to blow his nose, and wiped his forehead. These perfectly natural motions were noticed by me only; the other guests sat with their eyes fixed on Monsieur Hermann, to whom they were listening with a sort of avidity. The purveyor leaned his elbow on the table, put his head into his right hand and gazed fixedly at Hermann. From that moment he showed no other sign of emotion or interest, but his face remained passive and ghastly, as it was when I first saw him playing with the stopper of the decanter.]

The surgical instrument which the murderer had used was on the table with the case containing the rest of the instruments, together with Prosper's purse and papers. The gaze of the assembled crowd turned alternately from these convicting articles to the young man, who seemed to be dying and whose half-extinguished eyes apparently saw nothing. A confused murmur which was heard without proved the presence of a crowd, drawn to the neighborhood of the inn by the news of the crime, and also perhaps by a desire to see the murderer. The step of the sentries placed beneath the windows of the public room and the rattle of their accoutrements could be heard above the talk of the populace; but the inn was closed and the courtyard was empty and silent.

Incapable of sustaining the glance of the officer who was gathering his testimony, Prosper Magnan suddenly felt his hand pressed by a man, and he raised his eyes to see who his protector could be in that crowd of enemies. He recognized by his uniform the surgeon-major of the demi-brigade then stationed at Andernach. The glance of that man was so piercing, so stern, that the poor young fellow shuddered, and suffered his head to fall on the back of his chair. A soldier put vinegar to his nostrils and he recovered consciousness. Nevertheless his haggard eyes were so devoid of life and intelligence that the surgeon said to the officer after feeling Prosper's pulse,—

"Captain, it is impossible to question the man at this moment."

"Very well! Take him away," replied the captain, interrupting the surgeon, and addressing a corporal who stood behind the prisoner. "You cursed coward!" he went on, speaking to Prosper in a low voice, "try at least to walk firmly before these German curs, and save the honor of the Republic."

This address seemed to wake up Prosper Magnan, who rose and made a few steps forward; but when the door was opened and he felt the fresh air and saw the crowd before him, he staggered and his knees gave way under him.

"This coward of a sawbones deserves a dozen deaths! Get on!" cried the two soldiers who had him in charge, lending him their arms to support him.

"There he is!—oh, the villain! the coward! Here he is! There he is!"

These cries seemed to be uttered by a single voice, the tumultuous voice of

the crowd which followed him with insults and swelled at every step. During the passage from the inn to the prison, the noise made by the tramping of the crowd and the soldiers, the murmur of the various colloquies, the sight of the sky, the coolness of the air, the aspect of Andernach and the shimmering of the waters of the Rhine,—these impressions came to the soul of the young man vaguely, confusedly, torpidly, like all the sensations he had felt since his waking. There were moments, he said, when he thought he was no longer living.

I was then in prison. Enthusiastic, as we all are at twenty years of age, I wished to defend my country, and I commanded a company of free lances, which I had organized in the vicinity of Andernach. A few days before these events I had fallen plump, during the night, into a French detachment of eight hundred men. We were two hundred at the most. My scouts had sold me. I was thrown into the prison of Andernach, and they talked of shooting me, as a warning to intimidate others. The French talked also of reprisals. My father, however, obtained a reprieve for three days to give him time to see General Augereau, whom he knew, and ask for my pardon, which was granted. Thus it happened that I saw Prosper Magnan when he was brought to the prison. He inspired me with the profoundest pity. Though pale, distracted, and covered with blood, his whole countenance had a character of truth and innocence which struck me forcibly. To me his long fair hair and clear blue eyes seemed German. A true image of my hapless country. I felt he was a victim and not a murderer. At the moment when he passed beneath my window he chanced to cast about him the painful, melancholy smile of an insane man who suddenly recovers for a time a fleeting gleam of reason. That smile was assuredly not the smile of a murderer. When I saw the jailer I questioned him about his new prisoner.

"He has not spoken since I put him in his cell," answered the man. "He is sitting down with his head in his hands and is either sleeping or reflecting about his crime. The French say he'll get his reckoning to-morrow morning and be shot in twenty-four hours."

That evening I stopped short under the window of the prison during the short time I was allowed to take exercise in the prison yard. We talked together, and he frankly related to me his strange affair, replying with evident truthfulness to my various questions. After that first conversation I no longer doubted his innocence; I asked, and obtained the favor of staying several hours with him. I saw him again at intervals, and the poor lad let me in without concealment to all his thoughts. He believed himself both innocent and guilty. Remembering the horrible temptation which he had had the strength to resist, he feared he might have done in sleep, in a fit of somnambulism, the crime he had dreamed of awake.

"But your companion?" I said to him.

"Oh!" he cried eagerly. "Wilhelm is incapable of—"

He did not even finish his sentence. At that warm defence, so full of youth and manly virtue, I pressed his hand.

"When he woke," continued Prosper, "he must have been terrified and lost his head; no doubt he fled."

"Without awaking you?" I said. "Then surely your defence is easy; Wahlenfer's valise cannot have been stolen."

Suddenly he burst into tears.

"Oh, yes!" he cried, "I am innocent! I have not killed a man! I remember my dreams. I was playing at base with my schoolmates. I couldn't have cut off the head of a man while I dreamed I was running."

Then, in spite of these gleams of hope, which gave him at times some calmness, he felt a remorse which crushed him. He had, beyond all question, raised his arm to kill that man. He judged himself; and he felt that his heart was not innocent after committing that crime in his mind.

"And yet, I am good!" he cried. "Oh, my poor mother! Perhaps at this moment she is cheerfully playing boston with the neighbors in her little tapestry salon. If she knew that I had raised my hand to murder a man—oh! she would die of it! And I am in prison, accused of committing that crime! If I have not killed a man, I have certainly killed my mother!"

Saying these words he wept no longer; he was seized by that short and rapid madness known to the men of Picardy; he sprang to the wall, and if I had not caught him, he would have dashed out his brains against it.

"Wait for your trial," I said. "You are innocent, you will certainly be acquitted; think of your mother."

"My mother!" he cried frantically, "she will hear of the accusation before she hears anything else,—it is always so in little towns; and the shock will kill her. Besides, I am not innocent. Must I tell you the whole truth? I feel that I have lost the virginity of my conscience."

After that terrible avowal he sat down, crossed his arms on his breast, bowed his head upon it, gazing gloomily on the ground. At this instant the turnkey came to ask me to return to my room. Grieved to leave my companion at a moment when his discouragement was so deep, I pressed him in my arms with friendship, saying:—

"Have patience; all may yet go well. If the voice of an honest man can still your doubts, believe that I esteem you and trust you. Accept my friendship,

and rest upon my heart, if you cannot find peace in your own."

The next morning a corporal's guard came to fetch the young surgeon at nine o'clock. Hearing the noise made by the soldiers, I stationed myself at my window. As the prisoner crossed the courtyard, he cast his eyes up to me. Never shall I forget that look, full of thoughts, presentiments, resignation, and I know not what sad, melancholy grace. It was, as it were, a silent but intelligible last will by which a man bequeathed his lost existence to his only friend. The night must have been very hard, very solitary for him; and yet, perhaps, the pallor of his face expressed a stoicism gathered from some new sense of self-respect. Perhaps he felt that his remorse had purified him, and believed that he had blotted out his fault by his anguish and his shame. He now walked with a firm step, and since the previous evening he had washed away the blood with which he was, involuntarily, stained.

"My hands must have dabbled in it while I slept, for I am always a restless sleeper," he had said to me in tones of horrible despair.

I learned that he was on his way to appear before the council of war. The division was to march on the following morning, and the commanding-officer did not wish to leave Andernach without inquiry into the crime on the spot where it had been committed. I remained in the utmost anxiety during the time the council lasted. At last, about mid-day, Prosper Magnan was brought back. I was then taking my usual walk; he saw me, and came and threw himself into my arms.

"Lost!" he said, "lost, without hope! Here, to all the world, I am a murderer." He raised his head proudly. "This injustice restores to me my innocence. My life would always have been wretched; my death leaves me without reproach. But is there a future?"

The whole eighteenth century was in that sudden question. He remained thoughtful.

"Tell me," I said to him, "how you answered. What did they ask you? Did you not relate the simple facts as you told them to me?"

He looked at me fixedly for a moment; then, after that awful pause, he answered with feverish excitement:—

"First they asked me, 'Did you leave the inn during the night?' I said, 'Yes.' 'How?' I answered, 'By the window.' 'Then you must have taken great precautions; the innkeeper heard no noise.' I was stupefied. The sailors said they saw me walking, first to Andernach, then to the forest. I made many trips, they said, no doubt to bury the gold and diamonds. The valise had not been found. My remorse still held me dumb. When I wanted to speak, a pitiless voice cried out to me, 'You meant to commit that crime!' All was against me,

even myself. They asked me about my comrade, and I completely exonerated him. Then they said to me: 'The crime must lie between you, your comrade, the innkeeper, and his wife. This morning all the windows and doors were found securely fastened.' At those words," continued the poor fellow, "I had neither voice, nor strength, nor soul to answer. More sure of my comrade than I could be of myself, I could not accuse him. I saw that we were both thought equally guilty of the murder, and that I was considered the most clumsy. I tried to explain the crime by somnambulism, and so protect my friend; but there I rambled and contradicted myself. No, I am lost. I read my condemnation in the eyes of my judges. They smiled incredulously. All is over. No more uncertainty. To-morrow I shall be shot. I am not thinking of myself," he went on after a pause, "but of my poor mother." Then he stopped, looked up to heaven, and shed no tears; his eyes were dry and strongly convulsed. "Frederic —"

["Ah! true," cried Monsieur Hermann, with an air of triumph. "Yes, the other's name was Frederic, Frederic! I remember now!"

My neighbor touched my foot, and made me a sign to look at Monsieur Taillefer. The former purveyor had negligently dropped his hand over his eyes, but between the interstices of his fingers we thought we caught a darkling flame proceeding from them.

"Hein?" she said in my ear, "what if his name were Frederic?"

I answered with a glance, which said to her: "Silence!"

Hermann continued:]

"Frederic!" cried the young surgeon, "Frederic basely deserted me. He must have been afraid. Perhaps he is still hidden in the inn, for our horses were both in the courtyard this morning. What an incomprehensible mystery!" he went on, after a moment's silence. "Somnambulism! somnambulism? I never had but one attack in my life, and that was when I was six years old. Must I go from this earth," he cried, striking the ground with his foot, "carrying with me all there is of friendship in the world? Shall I die a double death, doubting a fraternal love begun when we were only five years old, and continued through school and college? Where is Frederic?"

He wept. Can it be that we cling more to a sentiment than to life?

"Let us go in," he said; "I prefer to be in my cell. I do not wish to be seen weeping. I shall go courageously to death, but I cannot play the heroic at all moments; I own I regret my beautiful young life. All last night I could not sleep; I remembered the scenes of my childhood; I fancied I was running in the fields. Ah! I had a future," he said, suddenly interrupting himself; "and now, twelve men, a sub-lieutenant shouting 'Carry-arms, aim, fire!' a roll of

drums, and infamy! that's my future now. Oh! there must be a God, or it would all be too senseless."

Then he took me in his arms and pressed me to him with all his strength.

"You are the last man, the last friend to whom I can show my soul. You will be set at liberty, you will see your mother! I don't know whether you are rich or poor, but no matter! you are all the world to me. They won't fight always, 'ceux-ci.' Well, when there's peace, will you go to Beauvais? If my mother has survived the fatal news of my death, you will find her there. Say to her the comforting words, 'He was innocent!' She will believe you. I am going to write to her; but you must take her my last look; you must tell her that you were the last man whose hand I pressed. Oh, she'll love you, the poor woman! you, my last friend. Here," he said, after a moment's silence, during which he was overcome by the weight of his recollections, "all, officers and soldiers, are unknown to me; I am an object of horror to them. If it were not for you my innocence would be a secret between God and myself."

I swore to sacredly fulfil his last wishes. My words, the emotion I showed touched him. Soon after that the soldiers came to take him again before the council of war. He was condemned to death. I am ignorant of the formalities that followed or accompanied this judgment, nor do I know whether the young surgeon defended his life or not; but he expected to be executed on the following day, and he spent the night in writing to his mother.

"We shall both be free to-day," he said, smiling, when I went to see him the next morning. "I am told that the general has signed your pardon."

I was silent, and looked at him closely so as to carve his features, as it were, on my memory. Presently an expression of disgust crossed his face.

"I have been very cowardly," he said. "During all last night I begged for mercy of these walls," and he pointed to the sides of his dungeon. "Yes, yes, I howled with despair, I rebelled, I suffered the most awful moral agony—I was alone! Now I think of what others will say of me. Courage is a garment to put on. I desire to go decently to death, therefore—"

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A DOUBLE RETRIBUTION

"Oh, stop! stop!" cried the young lady who had asked for this history, interrupting the narrator suddenly. "Say no more; let me remain in uncertainty and believe that he was saved. If I hear now that he was shot I shall not sleep

all night. To-morrow you shall tell me the rest."

We rose from table. My neighbor in accepting Monsieur Hermann's arm, said to him—

"I suppose he was shot, was he not?"

"Yes. I was present at the execution."

"Oh! monsieur," she said, "how could you—"

"He desired it, madame. There was something really dreadful in following the funeral of a living man, a man my heart cared for, an innocent man! The poor young fellow never ceased to look at me. He seemed to live only in me. He wanted, he said, that I should carry to his mother his last sigh."

"And did you?"

"At the peace of Amiens I went to France, for the purpose of taking to the mother those blessed words, 'He was innocent.' I religiously undertook that pilgrimage. But Madame Magnan had died of consumption. It was not without deep emotion that I burned the letter of which I was the bearer. You will perhaps smile at my German imagination, but I see a drama of sad sublimity in the eternal secrecy which engulfed those parting words cast between two graves, unknown to all creation, like the cry uttered in a desert by some lonely traveller whom a lion seizes."

"And if," I said, interrupting him, "you were brought face to face with a man now in this room, and were told, 'This is the murderer!' would not that be another drama? And what would you do?"

Monsieur Hermann looked for his hat and went away.

"You are behaving like a young man, and very heedlessly," said my neighbor. "Look at Taillefer!—there, seated on that sofa at the corner of the fireplace. Mademoiselle Fanny is offering him a cup of coffee. He smiles. Would a murderer to whom that tale must have been torture, present so calm a face? Isn't his whole air patriarchal?"

"Yes; but go and ask him if he went to the war in Germany," I said.

"Why not?"

And with that audacity which is seldom lacking to women when some action attracts them, or their minds are impelled by curiosity, my neighbor went up to the purveyor.

"Were you ever in Germany?" she asked.

Taillefer came near dropping his cup and saucer.

"I, madame? No, never."

"What are you talking about, Taillefer"; said our host, interrupting him. "Were you not in the commissariat during the campaign of Wagram?"

"Ah, true!" replied Taillefer, "I was there at that time."

"You are mistaken," said my neighbor, returning to my side; "that's a good man."

"Well," I cried, "before the end of this evening, I will hunt that murderer out of the slough in which he is hiding."

Every day, before our eyes, a moral phenomenon of amazing profundity takes place which is, nevertheless, so simple as never to be noticed. If two men meet in a salon, one of whom has the right to hate or despise the other, whether from a knowledge of some private and latent fact which degrades him, or of a secret condition, or even of a coming revenge, those two men divine each other's souls, and are able to measure the gulf which separates or ought to separate them. They observe each other unconsciously; their minds are preoccupied by themselves; through their looks, their gestures, an indefinable emanation of their thought transpires; there's a magnet between them. I don't know which has the strongest power of attraction, vengeance or crime, hatred or insult. Like a priest who cannot consecrate the host in presence of an evil spirit, each is ill at ease and distrustful; one is polite, the other surly, but I know not which; one colors or turns pale, the other trembles. Often the avenger is as cowardly as the victim. Few men have the courage to invoke an evil, even when just or necessary, and men are silent or forgive a wrong from hatred of uproar or fear of some tragic ending.

This introsusception of our souls and our sentiments created a mysterious struggle between Taillefer and myself. Since the first inquiry I had put to him during Monsieur Hermann's narrative, he had steadily avoided my eye. Possibly he avoided those of all the other guests. He talked with the youthful, inexperienced daughter of the banker, feeling, no doubt, like many other criminals, a need of drawing near to innocence, hoping to find rest there. But, though I was a long distance from him, I heard him, and my piercing eye fascinated his. When he thought he could watch me unobserved our eyes met, and his eyelids dropped immediately.

Weary of this torture, Taillefer seemed determined to put an end to it by sitting down at a card-table. I at once went to bet on his adversary; hoping to lose my money. The wish was granted; the player left the table and I took his place, face to face with the murderer.

"Monsieur," I said, while he dealt the cards, "may I ask if you are Monsieur Frederic Taillefer, whose family I know very well at Beauvais?"

"Yes, monsieur," he answered.

He dropped the cards, turned pale, put his hands to his head and rose, asking one of the bettors to take his hand.

"It is too hot here," he cried; "I fear—"

He did not end the sentence. His face expressed intolerable suffering, and he went out hastily. The master of the house followed him and seemed to take an anxious interest in his condition. My neighbor and I looked at each other, but I saw a tinge of bitter sadness or reproach upon her countenance.

"Do you think your conduct is merciful?" she asked, drawing me to the embrasure of a window just as I was leaving the card-table, having lost all my money. "Would you accept the power of reading hearts? Why not leave things to human justice or divine justice? We may escape one but we cannot escape the other. Do you think the privilege of a judge of the court of assizes so much to be envied? You have almost done the work of an executioner."

"After sharing and stimulating my curiosity, why are you now lecturing me on morality?"

"You have made me reflect," she answered.

"So, then, peace to villains, war to the sorrowful, and let's deify gold! However, we will drop the subject," I added, laughing. "Do you see that young girl who is just entering the salon?"

"Yes, what of her?"

"I met her, three days ago, at the ball of the Neapolitan ambassador, and I am passionately in love with her. For pity's sake tell me her name. No one was able—"

"That is Mademoiselle Victorine Taillefer."

I grew dizzy.

"Her step-mother," continued my neighbor, "has lately taken her from a convent, where she was finishing, rather late in the day, her education. For a long time her father refused to recognize her. She comes here for the first time. She is very beautiful and very rich."

These words were accompanied by a sardonic smile.

At this moment we heard violent, but smothered outcries; they seemed to come from a neighboring apartment and to be echoed faintly back through the garden.

"Isn't that the voice of Monsieur Taillefer?" I said.

We gave our full attention to the noise; a frightful moaning reached our ears. The wife of the banker came hurriedly towards us and closed the window.

"Let us avoid a scene," she said. "If Mademoiselle Taillefer hears her father, she might be thrown into hysterics."

The banker now re-entered the salon, looked round for Victorine, and said a few words in her ear. Instantly the young girl uttered a cry, ran to the door, and disappeared. This event produced a great sensation. The card-players paused. Every one questioned his neighbor. The murmur of voices swelled, and groups gathered.

"Can Monsieur Taillefer be—" I began.

"—dead?" said my sarcastic neighbor. "You would wear the gayest mourning, I fancy!"

"But what has happened to him?"

"The poor dear man," said the mistress of the house, "is subject to attacks of a disease the name of which I never can remember, though Monsieur Brousson has often told it to me; and he has just been seized with one."

"What is the nature of the disease?" asked an examining-judge.

"Oh, it is something terrible, monsieur," she replied. "The doctors know no remedy. It causes the most dreadful suffering. One day, while the unfortunate man was staying at my country-house, he had an attack, and I was obliged to go away and stay with a neighbor to avoid hearing him; his cries were terrible; he tried to kill himself; his daughter was obliged to have him put into a strait-jacket and fastened to his bed. The poor man declares there are live animals in his head gnawing his brain; every nerve quivers with horrible shooting pains, and he writhes in torture. He suffers so much in his head that he did not even feel the moxas they used formerly to apply to relieve it; but Monsieur Brousson, who is now his physician, has forbidden that remedy, declaring that the trouble is a nervous affection, an inflammation of the nerves, for which leeches should be applied to the neck, and opium to the head. As a result, the attacks are not so frequent; they appear now only about once a year, and always late in the autumn. When he recovers, Taillefer says repeatedly that he would far rather die than endure such torture."

"Then he must suffer terribly!" said a broker, considered a wit, who was present.

"Oh," continued the mistress of the house, "last year he nearly died in one of these attacks. He had gone alone to his country-house on pressing business. For want, perhaps, of immediate help, he lay twenty-two hours stiff and stark

as though he were dead. A very hot bath was all that saved him."

"It must be a species of lockjaw," said one of the guests.

"I don't know," she answered. "He got the disease in the army nearly thirty years ago. He says it was caused by a splinter of wood entering his head from a shot on board a boat. Brousson hopes to cure him. They say the English have discovered a mode of treating the disease with prussic acid—"

At that instant a still more piercing cry echoed through the house, and froze us with horror.

"There! that is what I listened to all day long last year," said the banker's wife. "It made me jump in my chair and rasped my nerves dreadfully. But, strange to say, poor Taillefer, though he suffers untold agony, is in no danger of dying. He eats and drinks as well as ever during even short cessations of the pain—nature is so queer! A German doctor told him it was a form of gout in the head, and that agrees with Brousson's opinion."

I left the group around the mistress of the house and went away. On the staircase I met Mademoiselle Taillefer, whom a footman had come to fetch.

"Oh!" she said to me, weeping, "what has my poor father ever done to deserve such suffering?—so kind as he is!"

I accompanied her downstairs and assisted her in getting into the carriage, and there I saw her father bent almost double.

Mademoiselle Taillefer tried to stifle his moans by putting her handkerchief to his mouth; unhappily he saw me; his face became even more distorted, a convulsive cry rent the air, and he gave me a dreadful look as the carriage rolled away.

That dinner, that evening exercised a cruel influence on my life and on my feelings. I loved Mademoiselle Taillefer, precisely, perhaps, because honor and decency forbade me to marry the daughter of a murderer, however good a husband and father he might be. A curious fatality impelled me to visit those houses where I knew I could meet Victorine; often, after giving myself my word of honor to renounce the happiness of seeing her, I found myself that same evening beside her. My struggles were great. Legitimate love, full of chimerical remorse, assumed the color of a criminal passion. I despised myself for bowing to Taillefer when, by chance, he accompanied his daughter, but I bowed to him all the same.

Alas! for my misfortune Victorine is not only a pretty girl, she is also educated, intelligent, full of talent and of charm, without the slightest pedantry or the faintest tinge of assumption. She converses with reserve, and her nature has a melancholy grace which no one can resist. She loves me, or at least she

lets me think so; she has a certain smile which she keeps for me alone; for me, her voice grows softer still. Oh, yes! she loves me! But she adores her father; she tells me of his kindness, his gentleness, his excellent qualities. Those praises are so many dagger-thrusts with which she stabs me to the heart.

One day I came near making myself the accomplice, as it were, of the crime which led to the opulence of the Taillefer family. I was on the point of asking the father for Victorine's hand. But I fled; I travelled; I went to Germany, to Andernach; and then—I returned! I found Victorine pale, and thinner; if I had seen her well in health and gay, I should certainly have been saved. Instead of which my love burst out again with untold violence. Fearing that my scruples might degenerate into monomania, I resolved to convoke a sanhedrim of sound consciences, and obtain from them some light on this problem of high morality and philosophy,—a problem which had been, as we shall see, still further complicated since my return.

Two days ago, therefore, I collected those of my friends to whom I attribute most delicacy, probity, and honor. I invited two Englishmen, the secretary of an embassy, and a puritan; a former minister, now a mature statesman; a priest, an old man; also my former guardian, a simple-hearted being who rendered so loyal a guardianship account that the memory of it is still green at the Palais; besides these, there were present a judge, a lawyer, and a notary,—in short, all social opinions, and all practical virtues.

We began by dining well, talking well, and making some noise; then, at dessert, I related my history candidly, and asked for advice, concealing, of course, the Taillefer name.

A profound silence suddenly fell upon the company. Then the notary took leave. He had, he said, a deed to draw.

The wine and the good dinner had reduced my former guardian to silence; in fact I was obliged later in the evening to put him under guardianship, to make sure of no mishap to him on his way home.

"I understand!" I cried. "By not giving an opinion you tell me energetically enough what I ought to do."

On this there came a stir throughout the assembly.

A capitalist who had subscribed for the children and tomb of General Foy exclaimed:—

"Like Virtue's self, a crime has its degrees."

"Rash tongue!" said the former minister, in a low voice, nudging me with his elbow.

"Where's your difficulty?" asked a duke whose fortune is derived from the

estates of stubborn Protestants, confiscated on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

The lawyer rose, and said:—

"In law, the case submitted to us presents no difficulty. Monsieur le duc is right!" cried the legal organ. "There are time limitations. Where should we all be if we had to search into the origin of fortunes? This is simply an affair of conscience. If you must absolutely carry the case before some tribunal, go to that of the confessional."

The Code incarnate ceased speaking, sat down, and drank a glass of champagne. The man charged with the duty of explaining the gospel, the good priest, rose.

"God has made us all frail beings," he said firmly. "If you love the heiress of that crime, marry her; but content yourself with the property she derives from her mother; give that of the father to the poor."

"But," cried one of those pitiless hair-splitters who are often to be met with in the world, "perhaps the father could make a rich marriage only because he was rich himself; consequently, the marriage was the fruit of the crime."

"This discussion is, in itself, a verdict. There are some things on which a man does not deliberate," said my former guardian, who thought to enlighten the assembly with a flash of inebriety.

"Yes!" said the secretary of an embassy.

"Yes!" said the priest.

But the two men did not mean the same thing.

A "doctrinaire," who had missed his election to the Chamber by one hundred and fifty votes out of one hundred and fifty-five, here rose.

"Messieurs," he said, "this phenomenal incident of intellectual nature is one of those which stand out vividly from the normal condition to which sobriety is subjected. Consequently the decision to be made ought to be the spontaneous act of our consciences, a sudden conception, a prompt inward verdict, a fugitive shadow of our mental apprehension, much like the flashes of sentiment which constitute taste. Let us vote."

"Let us vote!" cried all my guests.

I have each two balls, one white, one red. The white, symbol of virginity, was to forbid the marriage; the red ball sanctioned it. I myself abstained from voting, out of delicacy.

My friends were seventeen in number; nine was therefore the majority.

Each man put his ball into the wicker basket with a narrow throat, used to hold the numbered balls when card-players draw for their places at pool. We were all roused to a more or less keen curiosity; for this balloting to clarify morality was certainly original. Inspection of the ballot-box showed the presence of nine white balls! The result did not surprise me; but it came into my heard to count the young men of my own age whom I had brought to sit in judgment. These casuists were precisely nine in number; they all had the same thought.

"Oh, oh!" I said to myself, "here is secret unanimity to forbid the marriage, and secret unanimity to sanction it! How shall I solve that problem?"

"Where does the father-in-law live?" asked one my school-friends, heedlessly, being less sophisticated than the others.

"There's no longer a father-in-law," I replied. "Hitherto, my conscience has spoken plainly enough to make your verdict superfluous. If to-day its voice is weakened, here is the cause of my cowardice. I received, about two months ago, this all-seducing letter."

And I showed them the following invitation, which I took from my pocket-book:—

"You are invited to be present at the funeral procession, burial services, and interment of Monsieur Jean-Frederic Taillefer, of the house of Taillefer and Company, formerly Purveyor of Commissary-meats, in his lifetime chevalier of the Legion of honor, and of the Golden Spur, captain of the first company of the Grenadiers of the National Guard of Paris, deceased, May 1st, at his residence, rue Joubert; which will take place at, etc., etc.

"On the part of, etc."

"Now, what am I do to?" I continued; "I will put the question before you in a broad way. There is undoubtedly a sea of blood in Mademoiselle Taillefer's estates; her inheritance from her father is a vast Aceldama. I know that. But Prosper Magnan left no heirs; but, again, I have been unable to discover the family of the merchant who was murdered at Andernach. To whom therefore can I restore that fortune? And ought it to be wholly restored? Have I the right to betray a secret surprised by me,—to add a murdered head to the dowry of an innocent girl, to give her for the rest of her life bad dreams, to deprive her of all her illusions, and say, 'Your gold is stained with blood'? I have borrowed the 'Dictionary of Cases of Conscience' from an old ecclesiastic, but I can find nothing there to solve my doubts. Shall I found pious masses for the repose of the souls of Prosper Magnan, Wahlenfer, and Taillefer? Here we are in the middle of the nineteenth century! Shall I build a hospital, or institute a prize for virtue? A prize for virtue would be given to scoundrels; and as for hospitals, they seem to me to have become in these days the protectors of vice.

Besides, such charitable actions, more or less profitable to vanity, do they constitute reparation?—and to whom do I owe reparation? But I love; I love passionately. My love is my life. If I, without apparent motive, suggest to a young girl accustomed to luxury, to elegance, to a life fruitful of all enjoyments of art, a young girl who loves to idly listen at the opera to Rossini's music,—if to her I should propose that she deprive herself of fifteen hundred thousand francs in favor of broken-down old men, or scrofulous paupers, she would turn her back on me and laugh, or her confidential friend would tell her that I'm a crazy jester. If in an ecstasy of love, I should paint to her the charms of a modest life, and a little home on the banks of the Loire; if I were to ask her to sacrifice her Parisian life on the altar of our love, it would be, in the first place, a virtuous lie; in the next, I might only be opening the way to some painful experience; I might lose the heart of a girl who loves society, and balls, and personal adornment, and me for the time being. Some slim and jaunty officer, with a well-frizzed moustache, who can play the piano, quote Lord Byron, and ride a horse elegantly, may get her away from me. What shall I do? For Heaven's sake, give me some advice!"

The honest man, that species of puritan not unlike the father of Jeannie Deans, of whom I have already told you, and who, up to the present moment hadn't uttered a word, shrugged his shoulders, as he looked at me and said:—

"Idiot! why did you ask him if he came from Beauvais?"