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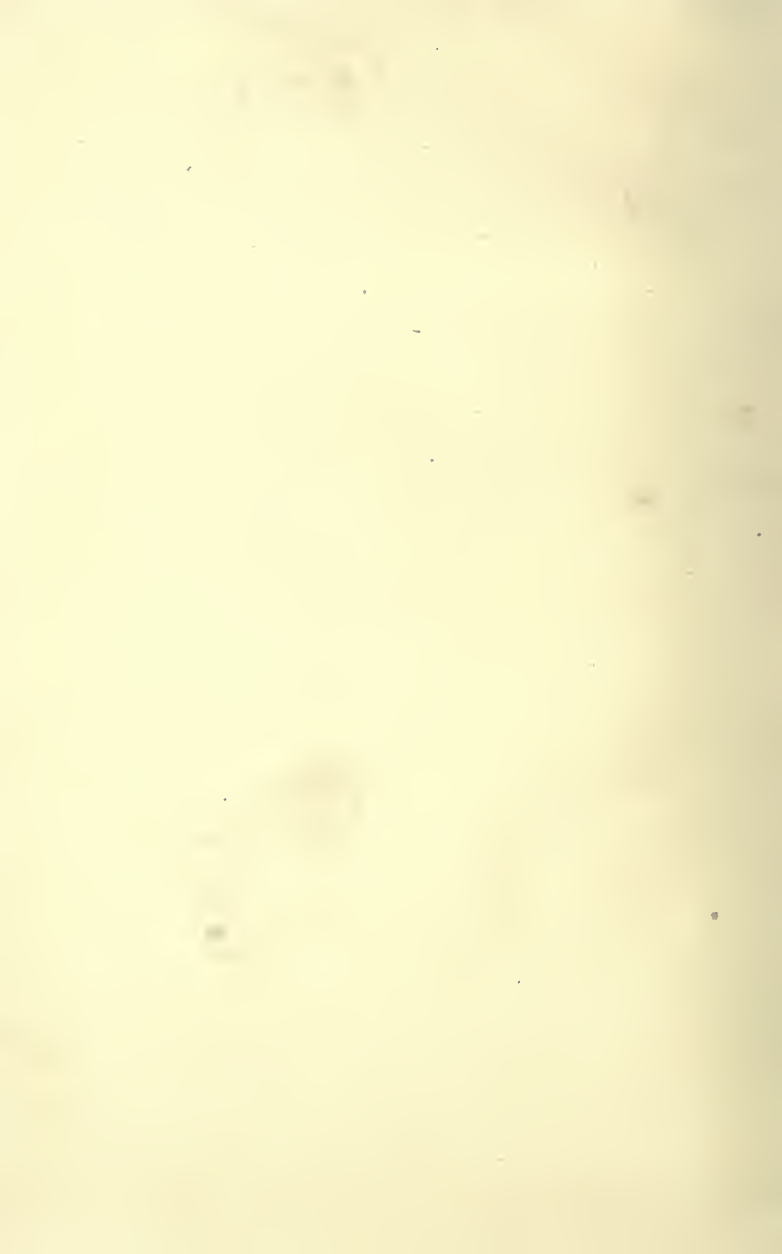
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IN THE MIDST OF PARIS







IN THE MIDST OF

PARIS

By ALPHONSE DAUDET

TRANSLATED BY
CÉLINE BERTAULT



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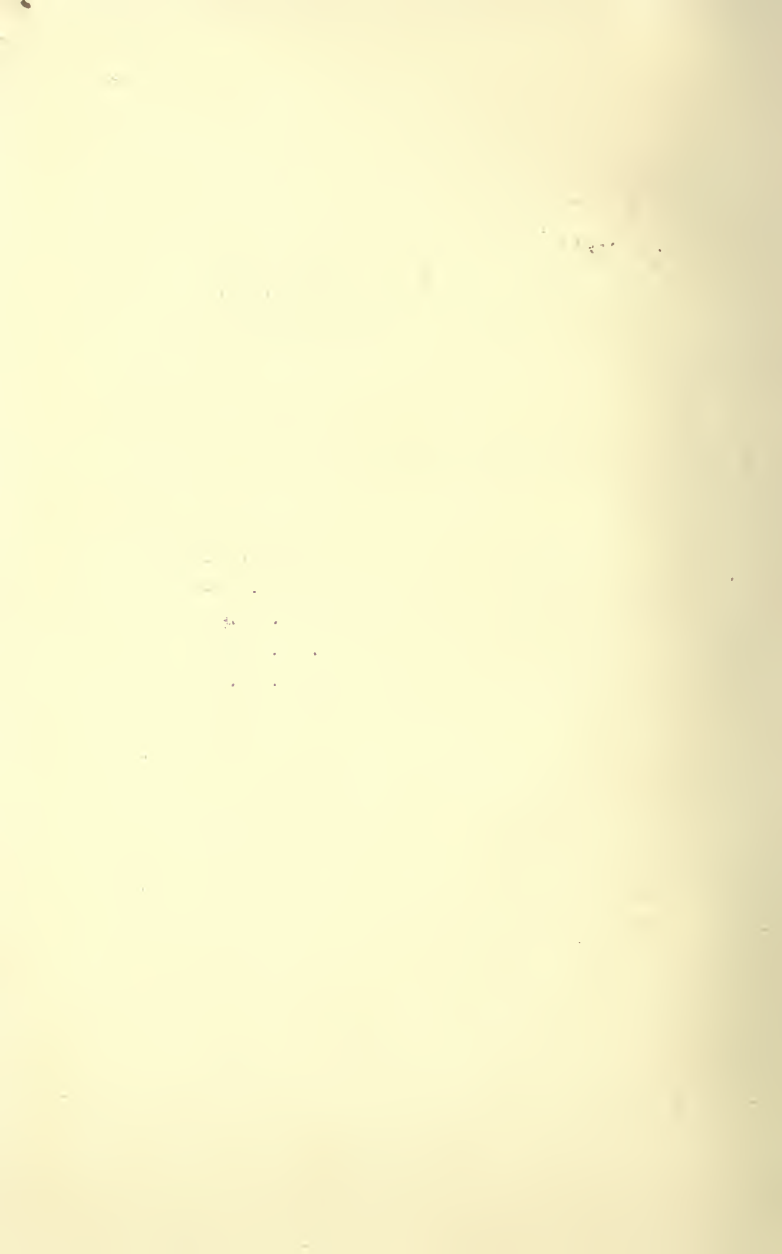
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IN THE MIDST OF

PARIS

CHAPTER I.

THE SIEGE.



WE were returning up the avenue of the Champs Elysées with Doctor V., asking him about the walls riddled with shells, the pavements torn up by grape-shot, in fact, the history of the Siege of Paris, when, just before we got to the Place de l'Etoile, the doctor stopped, and pointing out one of those handsome corner houses grouped around the Arc de Triomphe, said :—

“Do you see those four closed windows up there, over the balcony ?

“In the early days of the month of August—that terrible August of the year '70—so charged with storms and disasters, I was called in there to a frightful case of apoplexy. It was to Colonel Jouve, a cuirassier of the First Empire, an old man infatuated with patriotic pride who, at the commencement of the war, had come to lodge in the Champs Elysées, in a balcony apartment. Guess why ! To be present at the triumphant return of our troops ! Poor old man ! The news of Wissembourg came to him as he was rising from table. On reading the name of Napoleon at the foot of that bulletin of defeat, he fell thunderstruck.

“I found the old cuirassier stretched at full length on the carpet, his face

bloody and lifeless, as if he had been struck a blow on the head with a club.

“Standing, he must have been very tall; lying, he looked immense. With beautiful features, superb teeth, and a fine head of curly white hair, though he was nearly eighty, he looked like sixty years old. Near him, on her knees, was his granddaughter. She so resembled him that, seeing them side by side, you would have been reminded of two beautiful Greek medals struck from the same stamp; only the one was old, dull, and rather indistinct in the outlines; the other was resplendent and clean cut, with all the brilliancy and smoothness of a new impression.

“The grief of this child touched me. Daughter and granddaughter of soldiers, her father was at MacMahon’s headquarters, and the sight

of this grand old man stretched before her brought another no less terrible image to her mind.

“I endeavored to reassure her, but, in reality, I had little hope. We had to deal with a severe case of hemiplegy, and recovery was scarcely to be hoped for at eighty. For three days the patient remained in the same state of motionless stupor. In the midst of all this the news of Reischoffen arrived in Paris. You remember in what a strange fashion. Until evening we all believed in a great victory, 20,000 Prussians killed, and the Crown Prince a prisoner!

“I know not by what miracle, or by what magnetic current, an echo of the national joy penetrated to our poor deaf-mute, even to his paralyzed limbs; certain it is that, on approaching his bed that evening, I found him

a different man. His eye was almost clear, his tongue less stiff. He had strength to smile, and to stammer twice, 'Vic-to-ry!'

" 'Yes, Colonel, a grand victory!'

" And as I gave him details of MacMahon's brilliant success, I saw his features relax and his face light up. When I went out, the young girl was waiting for me, standing pale and sobbing at the door.

" 'But he is saved!' said I, taking her hands.

" The unhappy child had scarcely courage to answer me. They had just posted up the true version of Reischaffen — MacMahon put to flight, the whole army crushed. We looked at each other in consternation. She was distressed in thinking of her father.

" I trembled for the old man. It

was very certain he could not resist this new shock. And yet, what could we do? Leave him his joy—the illusions which had called him back to life? But then it would be necessary to lie!

“‘Very well, then, I shall lie,’ said the heroic girl, quickly drying her tears, and she returned radiant to her grandfather’s room.

“She had set herself a hard task. The first few days were got through without much difficulty. The good man’s head was weak, and he allowed himself to be deceived like a child. But with returning health, his ideas became clearer.

“We had to keep him acquainted with the movements of the armies and to draw up for him military bulletins. It was a sad pity to see that beautiful girl, night and day,

over her maps of Germany, marking out the battles with little flags, and trying to invent a glorious campaign : Bazaine descending upon Berlin, Frossard in Bavaria, MacMahon on the Baltic. For all this she asked my advice, and I helped her as much as I could, but it was the grandfather himself who served us best in this imaginary invasion. He had conquered Germany so often under the First Empire ! He knew all the moves beforehand : ‘ See, now they will go there, they will do that,’ and his forecasts were always realized, which did not fail to make him very proud.

“ Unfortunately it was in vain that we took towns and gained battles ; we never went fast enough for that insatiable old fellow ! Every day, when I arrived, I heard of a new feat of arms.

“ ‘Doctor, we have taken Mayence,’ the young girl told me, coming towards me with a heart-breaking smile, and I heard, through the door, a delighted voice crying:—

“ ‘We’re getting on! We’re getting on! . . . In a week we shall enter Berlin!’

“ At that moment the Prussians were not more than a week from Paris. . . . We asked ourselves at first whether it would not be better to remove him into the country; but, once outside, the state of France would have revealed everything to him, and I thought him still too weak, and too much stunned by the great shock he had already received, to know the truth. It was decided, therefore, to let him remain.

“ On the first day that Paris was investéd, I went up to their house, I

remember, much moved with the anguish of heart that the closing of all the gates of Paris, the battle under the walls, and the changing of our villages into frontiers brought us. I found the old gentleman jubilant and proud.

“ ‘Well,’ said he, ‘here is the siege begun!’

“ I looked at him in astonishment.

“ ‘What, Colonel, do you know ——?’

“ His granddaughter turned to me:—

“ ‘Ah! yes, Doctor. That is the great news. The Siege of Berlin has commenced.’

“ This she said, drawing out her needle with such a staid little air, and so tranquilly—how could he suspect anything?

“ The cannon from the forts! He could not hear them. This poor Paris, wretched and convulsed! He could not see it.

“ What he *could* see from his bed was a bit of the Arc de Triomphe, and in his room was a whole curiosity shop of the First Empire, well calculated to maintain his illusions. Portraits of Marshals, engravings of battles, the King of Rome in a baby’s robe; then large stiff consoles, ornamented with copper trophies, laden with Imperial relics, medals, bronzes, a stone from St. Helena, under a shade, miniatures—all representing the same lady, becurled, in ball costume, in a yellow dress with leg-of-mutton sleeves, and bright eyes—it was all this, the atmosphere of victories and conquests, much more than anything we could tell him,

that made the brave Colonel believe so naïvely in the Siege of Berlin.

“From that day our military operations were very much simplified. To take Berlin was now only an affair of patience.

“From time to time, when the old man became too impatient, a letter was read to him from his son—an imaginary letter, of course, since nothing could now get into Paris, and because, since Sedan, Mac-Mahon’s aide-de-camp had been drafted off to a German fortress. Imagine the despair of that poor child, without news of her father, knowing him a prisoner, deprived of every comfort, perhaps ill, and yet obliged to make him speak in those cheerful letters—they were rather short letters, as might be expected

from a soldier in the field—of advancing steadily into the conquered country.

“Sometimes strength failed her, and, consequently, there were weeks without any news. But the old man got uneasy, and could not sleep. Then promptly came a letter from Germany, which she brought and read gayly to him at his bedside, keeping back her tears. The Colónel listened religiously, smiled with an intelligent air, approved, criticised, and explained to us the difficult passages. But where he was especially fine was in the answers he sent to his son: ‘Never forget that you are a Frenchman,’ said he. ‘Be generous to those poor people. Do not make the invasion too heavy for them.’ And then there were endless recommendations, adorable twaddle about respect

for the proprieties, the politeness due to ladies—in fact, a complete code of military honor for the use of conquerors! He added also some general observations on politics, and the conditions to be imposed on the conquered. On that point, I must say, he was not unreasonable.

“ ‘A war indemnity, and nothing further. What is the good of taking their provinces? Can you make France out of Germany?’

“ He dictated all this with a firm voice, and one felt there was so much candor in his words, such a fine, patriotic faith, that it was impossible to listen to him unmoved.

“ All this time the siege was advancing—not that of Berlin, alas! It was a time of great cold, bombardments, epidemics, and famine.

But, thanks to our care, our efforts, and the indefatigable tenderness which surrounded him, the serenity of the old man was never for an instant disturbed. Up to the end, I was able to get him white bread and fresh meat.

“ There was only enough for him, and you can imagine nothing more touching than those breakfasts of the grandfather, so innocently selfish—the old man upon his bed, fresh and smiling, his serviette tucked under his chin ; near him his granddaughter, a little pale from her privations, guiding his hands, giving him drink, helping him to all those forbidden good things. Then, revived by the repast, in the comfort of his warm room, with the winter wind outside, and the snow whirling past his windows, the old cuirassier recalled his

campaigns in the north, and related to us for the hundredth time that sad retreat from Russia, in which they had nothing to eat but frozen biscuit and horse-flesh.

“ ‘ Do you understand, little one? We used to eat horses.’ ”

“ She understood only too well. For two months she had eaten nothing else. From day to day, however, as convalescence progressed, our task beside the invalid became more difficult. That paralysis of his senses, and of all his limbs, which had served us so well up to this time, began to disappear. Two or three times already the terrible volleys from the Maillot Gate had made him start, and prick up his ears like a greyhound; we were obliged to invent a last victory for Bazaine, under Berlin, and salvos fired in his honor at

the Invalides. Another day his bed had been moved to the window—it was, I believe, the Thursday of Rezonville—and he saw the National Guards massed together on the Avenue of the Grande Armée.

“ ‘What are those troops doing there?’ he demanded ; and we heard him mutter between his teeth : ‘ Bad form ! bad form ! ’

“ Nothing else happened ; but we understood that, in future, we must take great precautions. Unhappily, we were not cautious enough.

“ One evening when I arrived the child came to me full of trouble.

“ ‘ It is to-morrow they enter,’ she said.

“ Was the grandfather’s door open ? The fact is, that in thinking over it afterwards, I remembered that his face had, on that evening, an extraor-

dinary expression. It is probable that he heard us.

“Only *we* spoke of the Prussians, while *he* thought of the French, in that triumphal entry which he had so long expected—MacMahon coming down the avenue in the midst of flowers and the flourish of trumpets, his son beside the Marshal, and he, the old father, upon his balcony, in full uniform, as at Lutzen, saluting the torn flags and the eagles blackened with powder.

“Poor father Jouve! He doubtless fancied that we wished to prevent him from being present at this march-past of the troops to avoid too great an excitement for him.

“He took care to speak to no one; but the next day, at the very hour in which the Prussians were timidly entering on the long road leading from

the Maillot Gate to the Tuileries, the window just above there opened softly, and the Colonel appeared on the balcony, with his helmet, his big cavalry sword, and all the glorious equipment of a Milhaud cuirassier.

“I still ask myself what effort of will, what fresh spring of life, could have thus placed him again on his feet, and in harness! Be that as it may, there he was, standing behind the railing, wondering to find the avenues so wide, so silent; the shutters of the houses closed; Paris dismal as a lazaretto; flags everywhere, but so strange, all white with red crosses, and no crowd running before our soldiers.

“For a moment, he may possibly have thought he was mistaken——

“But, no! Yonder, behind the Arc de Triomphe, was a confused

noise, a black line advancing in the growing daylight. . . . Then, gradually, the peaks of the helmets shone, the little drums of Jena began to beat, and under the Arc de l'Etoile, accompanied by the heavy rhythmic steps of the troops, and by the clash of sabres, burst forth Schubert's Triumphal March.

“Then, in the mournful silence of the place, rang out a cry, a terrible cry: ‘To arms!—to arms!—the Prussians!’ And the four Uhlans forming the advanced guard saw yonder on the balcony a tall, old man wave his arms, totter, and fall, rigid.

“This time Colonel Jouve was really dead.”





CHAPTER II.

THE ENSIGN.

I.



THE regiment was engaged on the banks of a railway, and served as a target to the whole Prussian army massed in an opposite wood. They were firing on each other at a distance of eighty yards. The officers shouted, "Lie down!" but no one would obey, and the proud regiment remained standing, gathered round their colors.

In the great horizon of the setting sun, of cornfields, of pasture land, this confused group of men, enveloped in

smoke, were like a flock of sheep surprised in the open country by the first whirlwind of a terrific storm.

It rained iron on that slope! nothing was heard but the crackle of the volleys and the prolonged vibration of the balls which flew from one end of the battle-field to the other. From time to time the flag, which waved overhead in the wind of the mitrailleuse, disappeared in the smoke, then a voice grave and steady, dominating the firing, the struggles of the dying, the oaths of the wounded, would cry: "*Au drapeau, mes enfants, au drapeau!*" Instantly an officer, vague as a shadow in the red mist, would spring forward, and the standard, once more alive as it were, showed again above the battle.

Twenty-two times it fell. Twenty-two times its staff, still warm, slipping

from a dying hand, was seized and upheld, and when, at sunset, what remained of the regiment—scarce a handful of men—retreated slowly, firing as they went, the colors were mere rags in the hands of Sergeant Hornus, the twenty-third ensign of the day.

II.

SERGEANT HORNUS was a crusty old war-dog, who could hardly write his own name, and who had taken twenty years to gain his sergeant's stripes. All the miseries of a foundling, all the brutalizing effects of barrack-life, could be traced in the low projecting forehead, the back bent beneath the knapsack, that air of careless self-neglect acquired in the ranks.

Besides all this he stammered, but then eloquence is not essential to an





ensign. On the evening of the battle his colonel said to him, "You have the colors, my brave fellow; keep them." And on his coarse hood, frayed by war and weather, the vivandière stitched the gold band of a sub-lieutenant.

This had been the one ambition of his humble life. From that moment he drew himself up; he who was wont to walk with bent head and eyes fixed on the ground, henceforth looked proudly upwards to the bit of stuff which he held very straight, high above death, treachery and defeat. Never was there a happier man than Hornus on days of battle, holding his staff firmly in its leather socket with both hands.

He neither spoke nor moved, and was as serious as a priest guarding some sacred thing. All his life,

all his strength, were concentrated in the fingers grasping that gilded rag upon which the balls beat so persistently, and in his defiant eyes looking the Prussians full in the face, as if saying, "Try, if you dare, to take it from me!"

No one did try, not even death.

After Borny, after Gravelotte, those murderous battles, the colors came out, tattered, in holes, transparent with wounds, but it was still old Hornus who carried them.

III.

THEN came September with the army around Metz, the investment, and that long pause when the cannon rusted in the mud, and the finest troops in the world, demoralized by inaction, want of food and want of

news, died of fever and *ennui* beside their piled arms. No one, neither chiefs nor soldiers, had faith in the future; Hornus alone was still confident. His ragged *tricolor* was all in all to him, and as long as he could see that, nothing seemed lost.

Unfortunately, as there was no more fighting, the colonel kept the colors at his house in one of the suburbs of Metz, and poor Hornus was much like a mother whose child is out to nurse. He thought of it constantly. Then when the yearning was too much for him, he went off to Metz, and, having seen it still in the same place, leaning against the wall, he returned full of courage and patience, bringing back to his dripping tent dreams of battle and of advancing marches, with flying colors floating over the Prussian trenches.

An order of the day from Marshal Bazaine put an end to these illusions. One morning Hornus on awakening found the whole camp clamorous, groups of soldiers in great excitement, uttering cries of rage, all shaking their fists towards one side of the town as though their anger were roused against some criminal. There were shouts of "Away with him!" "Let him be shot!" And the officers did nothing to prevent them. They kept apart with bent heads as if ashamed of being seen by their men. It was indeed shameful. The Marshal's order had just been read to 150,000 fighting men, well armed and still efficient—an order which surrendered them to the enemy without a struggle!

"And the colors?" asked Hornus, growing pale. The colors were to be

given up with the rest, with the arms, with what was left of the munitions of war—everything.

“*To-To-Tonnerre de Dieu!*” stut-tered the poor man. “They shan’t have mine.” And he started at a run towards the town.

IV.

HERE also there was great disturbance: National Guards, civilians, *gardes mobiles* shouting and excited, deputations on their way to the Marshal; but of this Hornus saw and heard nothing. All the way up the Rue du Faubourg he kept saying to himself:

“Take my flag from me indeed! It is not possible. They have no right to it! Let him give the Prussians what is his own, his gilded

carriages, his fine plate brought from Mexico! But that, it is mine. It is my honor. I defy any one to touch it."

These fragments of speech were broken by his rapid pace and by his stammer, but the old fellow had his idea notwithstanding; a very clear and defined idea—to get the standard, carry it to the regiment, and cut his way through the Prussians with all who would follow him.

When he reached his destination he was not even allowed to enter the house. The colonel, furious himself, would see no one; but Hornus was not to be put off thus.

He swore, shouted, hustled the orderly!

"My flag, I want my flag." At last a window opened.

"Is it you, Hornus?"

“Yes, Colonel ; I——”

“The colors are all at the arsenal—you have only to go there and you will get an acknowledgment.”

“An * acknowledgment ! What for?”

“It is the Marshal’s order.”

“But Colonel——”

“Leave me alone,” and the window was shut.

Old Hornus staggered like a drunken man.

“An acknowledgment, an acknowledgment,” he repeated mechanically, moving slowly away, comprehending only one thing, that the flag was at the arsenal and that he must get it again, no matter at what price.

V.

THE gates of the arsenal were wide open, to allow the passage of the Prussian wagons which were drawn up in the yard. Hornus shuddered. All the other ensigns were there, fifty or sixty officers silent and sorrowful; those sombre carts in the rain, with the men grouped bare-headed behind them, had all the aspect of a funeral.

In a corner the colors of Bazaine's army lay in a confused heap on the muddy pavement. Nothing could be sadder than these bits of gay-colored silks, these ends of gold fringe and of ornamented hafts, all this glorious paraphernalia thrown on the ground, soiled by rain and mud. An officer took them one by one, and as each

regiment was named, its ensign advanced to receive an acknowledgment. Two Prussian officers, stiff and unmoved, superintended the ceremony.

And must you go thus, oh sacred and glorious flags!—displaying your brave rents, sweeping the ground sadly like broken-winged birds, with the shame of beautiful things sullied? With each of you goes a part of France. The sun of long marches hid in your faded folds. In each mark of a ball you kept the memory of the unknown dead falling at random around the standard, the enemy's mark!

“Hornus, it is your turn, they are calling you; go for your receipt.”

What did he care about a receipt!

The flag was there before him. It was his, the most beautiful, the most

multilated of all. And seeing it again, he fancied himself once more on that railway bank. He heard the whistling balls and the colonel's voice. "*Au drapeau, mes enfants ?*" He saw his twenty-two comrades lying dead; himself, the twenty-third, rushing forward in his turn to support the poor flag which sank for want of an arm. Ah! that day he had sworn to defend it to the death—and now!

Thinking of all this made his heart's blood rush to his head. Distracted, mad, he sprang on the Prussian officer, tore from him his beloved standard, tried to raise it once more straight and high, crying "*Audra—*" But the words stuck in his throat—he felt the staff tremble, slip through his hands. In that paralyzing atmosphere that atmosphere of

death which weighs so heavily on capitulated towns, the standard could no longer float, nothing glorious could live. And old Hornus, too, choked with shame and rage, fell dead.





CHAPTER III.

ARTHUR.



SOME years ago I was living near the Champs Elysées, in one of the small apartments in the back court of the Douze-Maisons. Imagine if you can such an out-of-the-way human live in the suburbs, nestling in the midst of those big aristocratic avenues that are so cold and quiet that it seems as if one could pass them complacently only in a carriage. I do not know what whim of a proprietor, what mania of an old miser it was thus to leave in the midst of these beautiful surroundings those

empty lots and small uncultivated gardens ; those low houses, all lopsided with creaky staircases on the outside ; and their wooden verandas full of clothes-lines, rabbit-cages, and dozing, emaciated cats. Here lived several households of work-people, retired small shop-keepers, and a few artists—the latter one finds in every place where there are trees. There were also here one or two boarding-houses of sordid aspect, covered with a crust of generations of misery. Amid the splendor and noise of the Champs-Elysées could be seen and heard a continuous rolling of carriage wheels, a clanking of harness-chains, and the tramp of horses' feet, filling the whole avenue ; while the slamming of front doors and half-smothered sounds of pianos and violins came from a long string of grand houses with rounded

architectural curves; their windows shaded by light silk curtains, through which one could perceive the gilded candelabra and the rare flowers in the jardinières.

This dark little street of the Douze-Maisons, lighted only by a single gas-lamp at the end, was like the stage wing of some grand theatre. compared with its beautiful surroundings. All the refuse of this luxurious quarter sought shelter here; clowns in tights, English stablemen, circus-riders, two little postilions of the Hippodrome, with their twin ponies, bill-posters, goat-carriage attendants, Punch and Judy men, sweetmeat-vendors, and, last but not least, a whole tribe of professional blind men, who came back at night bearing their chairs, accordeons, and little tin money-cups. One of these "blinds"

was married while I lived there. That meant for us a whole night of "music"; a medley of discordant sounds of clarionettes, flutes, hand-organs, and accordeons, in which one could easily recognize every bridge of Paris by the different melodies. Generally, however, the passage was as quiet as the majority of its residents, who, as I have said, came back after night-fall and were too tired to be noisy.

But late Saturday night there was always sure to be a great racket in the street, for it was then that Arthur received his week's pay.

Arthur was my neighbor.

A low wall, covered by a clinging vine, was the only separation between my apartment and the furnished rooms in which he lived with his wife and children. Therefore, in

spite of myself, his life was to a certain extent mixed with mine, and every Saturday night I heard without a chance of missing the least item, the horrible Parisian drama enacted in that household of work-people.

It would always begin in the same manner; the wife making ready the dinner while the children stood around, she talking to them while busy preparing the evening meal. The clock would strike seven and then eight o'clock, and still no Arthur had come. As the time passed, her voice would change in tone and become pathetic and full of tears. The children would get hungry and sleepy and begin to cry, and as the father had not yet come they would eat without him and then go to bed and sleep like a lot of little chickens.



The mother would come out on the piazza and mutter between sobs, "Oh, the scoundrel, the scoundrel!" Neighbors coming home would see her there and say, sometimes pityingly:

"Why don't you go to bed, Mrs. Arthur? You know he will not come home, as it is his pay-night."

Sometimes, they would linger awhile, mixing a little advice with much gossip.

"If I were you, I would do so and so."

"Why don't you tell his employer?"

"Your father ought not to allow it," etc., etc., till they had exhausted their stock of remedies for such cases as hers.

But all this pity and advice would only make her cry and lament the

more. She would still persist in her hope, in her waiting, until completely unnerved.

At last the street would become quiet, and all doors would close, but she still remained there with but the one idea, relating to herself, and alone, all her sorrows, with that abandon of the lower classes which always lives half its life in the street. She would speak of rent behind, of creditors tormenting her, the baker refusing bread.

What would she do if he again came home without his money?

At last, overcome with fatigue, exhausted by watching belated passers-by, she would go in. Long after, when I thought everything was quiet, I would hear her cough. She was again on the stoop, brought back by anxiety, straining her eyes to look

down the black street and seeing nothing there but misery and distress.

Towards one or two o'clock, and often later, some one would ring at the end of the passage. It was Arthur coming home. Usually he had a companion, dragging him to the very door and urging him to enter. Then he would loiter around, undecided whether to enter as yet, well knowing the reception that awaited him.

In climbing the stairs to his rooms, the silent house, sending back the sounds of his heavy footsteps, like so many remorsees, seemed to embarrass him. He would stop before every one of those misery-hovels, on his way up, and shout: "Good-evening, Madame Weber;" or "Good-night, Madame Mathieu." Then if he re-

ceived no answer he would fling at them an assortment of vile epithets and oaths until every one in the neighborhood had been aroused, and the doors and windows, open to answer him with insults and curses. That was exactly what he was waiting for. The wine he had drunk seemed to provoke quarrels and fights. When he had once worked himself into a rage then he had no fear in going home.

That home-coming was the climax of the affair. Approaching his door, he would find it locked and then he would shout: "Open! It is I!" Then I would hear the bare feet of the wife on the cold tiles; the scratching of matches; and, at last, the opening of the door. The man on entering would begin stammering out his story, always the same. He had

met comrade so and so, who worked on the railroad, or at the wharf, and they had spent the evening together. The woman would not even listen, but would interrupt him repeatedly with inquiries for money. At last he would answer :

“The money? Oh, I haven’t any left, you know I——”

“You lie!”

He was indeed lying. Even in the excitement of his debauch he would always reserve a few sous, thinking of the great thirst which would torment him on the following Monday. It was that small remainder of his pay which his wife was now trying to get from him.

She would hang on him, shake him, search him, and turn all his pockets inside out. After a few moments I would hear the money rolling over

the tiles and the woman throwing herself on it in triumphant glee.

Then I would hear swearing and smothered blows. The drunkard was revenging himself. Once beginning to beat her, he would not stop. The terrible suburban wines which he had imbibed, by this time mounted to his brain, had now crazed him. The woman would howl, the furniture would be smashed, the children would begin screaming, and then in the street the windows and doors would fly open again and I would hear:

“It’s only Arthur.” “He’s making a bigger row though than ever,” and such-like remarks.

Sometimes the father-in-law, an old rag-picker living in the next room, would come to his daughter’s assistance. Arthur would lock the door so as not to be disturbed in his opera-

tions, and then a most sickening and horrible dialogue would take place through the keyhole.

“Haven’t you had enough, with your two years in jail?” the old man would cry. Then the drunkard would reply in bantering tones :

“Well, yes, I have been in prison two years, but what of that? I’ve paid my debt to society; when will you pay yours?”

But if the old man would again speak of the prison-episode and dwell too long on that fact, Arthur would angrily open the door and fall heavily over his father-in-law, mother-in-law, and neighbors who had collected on the landing outside. Then would ensue a general *mêlée*, after which Arthur would be carefully picked up and put to bed, to sleep off his debauch.

Yet, with all this, he was not a bad man. Often on Sunday, the day following those awful scenes, the drunkard, now appeased, without a cent with which to buy drink, would spend the day at home. They would bring the chairs out of their rooms and spend the day on the balcony.

Madame Weber, Madame Mathieu, and the whole house would congregate there, and they would talk and gossip; Arthur of course being their leader.

You would have thought him one of those model working-men who patronize night-schools. He would speak in a low soft voice, eloquently putting forth fragments of ideas, which he had caught here and there, upon the rights of the working classes and the tyranny of capitalists. His poor wife, subdued by the

beating of the previous night, would look at him with new admiration, forgetting the wrongs he had inflicted on her.

The neighbors would ask him to sing, and he would render in his throaty voice full of false tears, "Les Hirondelles" by Belanger. Oh! that voice, and the stupid sentimentalism of the lower classes. It was enough to drive all but his devoted listeners indoors.

The neighbors looked tearfully out at the pale blue sky as Arthur finished, and wondered if he would now become the ideal man of their kind.

But no; this little scene of softness did not prevent him from coming home drunk the next Saturday night to beat his wife anew and arouse the neighborhood.

There, in the midst of that misery, was a small army of other Arthurs, waiting but for the years to pass that they might be old enough to drink their pay and beat their wives too.

And it is such a race that wishes to govern the world. "Ah, the evil of it!" as my neighbors of the passage would say.





CHAPTER IV.

DREAMS.



AS it ever happened to you to start out from home with light step and buoyant heart, and after a two-hours walk in the streets of Paris to return depressed and anxious, with a sudden and unaccountable sadness? On such an occasion you say to yourself : “ What ails me ? what is the matter ? ” but you find nothing, search as you may. Your walk has been pleasant, the sidewalks dry, the sun warm ; and yet you experience such a painful anxiety, that weighs upon

you like the impress of a newly-felt sorrow.

It is because in big Paris the crowd feels itself free and unobserved, so that one cannot walk a single step without encountering some fearful distress which, in coming in contact with, leaves its mark upon one. I do not speak solely of familiar misfortunes, the troubles of our friends, or the cares of people indifferent to us, to which we lend but a reluctant ear, but which nevertheless grieve us in spite of ourselves. I speak of afflictions, total strangers to us, of which we get but a glimpse, here and there, for one moment only perhaps, in the midst of our preoccupied walks and the bustle and confusion of the streets. They are either fragments of dialogues jerked out by passing carriages, deaf and blind preoccupa-

tions speaking to themselves and aloud, tired shoulders, wild gestures, feverish eyes, pallid faces swelled with tears, recent mournings clothed in black. And then, other slight details, scarcely noticeable ! A frayed collar, brushed, oh how often ! a velvet ribbon at the neck of a poor hunchback girl and cruelly and carelessly tied right between her deformed shoulders. All the visions of unknown misfortunes, passing quickly, which you forget almost immediately. But you have felt the swift touch of their sadness, your clothes have received the imprint of the misery they drag after themselves ; and at the end of the day, you feel that everything emotional your heart contains has been unconsciously touched, for you have been caught either at a street-corner or on some threshold by the invisible

thread which connects all misfortunes and sets them in motion at the least contact.

I was thinking of that the other morning (for it is especially in the morning that Paris shows its misery), watching a poor devil walking in front of me. His ill-fitting, shrunken trousers and thin overcoat seemed to exaggerate his gestures; while his big strides keeping pace with his big ideas, were all the more grotesque. Bent in two, his limbs crooked like those of an old tree during a heavy storm, the man was walking rapidly. Now and then his hand would dive into one of his coat-pockets and would take out a half-cent roll he was munching furtively, as if ashamed to be seen eating in the street.

Bricklayers and other working people generally give me an appetite

when I see them, seated on the sidewalk, bite into their scant though fresh crust. The office-boys also make me envious, running from the bakery to their offices, with a pen behind their ears, their mouths full, and rejoicing in their open-air meal.

But here one could feel the shame of real hunger; and it was such a pity to watch the poor creature, daring to eat his bread by stealth and only a few crumbs at a time.

I had been following him for a good while, when suddenly, as it often happens in those uncertain lives, he seemed to change his mind with his direction, and, turning about, found himself face to face with me.

“Ha! here you are! It is you.”

By chance I knew him a little. He was one of those business promoters of which there are so many

in Paris, inventors, founders of impossible dailies, etc., about whom, for some time past, there has been much spoken, and written, and who, for three months previously, had disappeared entirely from view. A few days after he had taken himself off, nobody spoke of him or gave him a thought. Seeing me, he became confused, and so as to cut short all questions, and probably also to avert my attention from the sordid aspect of his clothes, as well as from the roll he was eating, he began to speak in a rapid and mock-joyous strain. . . . Business was getting along well, really splendidly now. . . . It was only for a few days he had been embarrassed. . . . But now, he had got hold of a magnificent thing. . . . A big industrial illustrated paper. . . . A great deal of

money in it . . . famous advertising contracts! . . . And his face was full of animation as he spoke. He seemed to have grown taller. Little by little he assumed the air of a patron towards me, as if already in his editorial office, and he went even so far as to ask me for contributions: "And you know, it is such a sure thing," he added, with a triumphal air. "I am beginning with three hundred thousand francs Girardin promised me!"

Girardin!

It is always that name that comes first to those visionaries. When it is pronounced in my hearing it is as if I saw new cities, big unfinished buildings, freshly printed journals with long lists of stockholders and directors. How often have I heard them say, speaking of impossible

schemes: "We must speak to Girardin about this." And to him also, the poor creature, this idea of speaking to Girardin about it had come. All night long, probably, he had prepared his plans, made his estimates, then he had gone out, and thinking it over while eating his bread, the whole thing had become so beautiful, that when we met it appeared impossible to him that Girardin could refuse "the three hundred thousand francs." In saying that the money had been promised him, the unfortunate man was not lying; he was but continuing his idle dream.

While talking, we were pushed along by the crowd. It was on the sidewalk of one of the busy streets that run from the Exchange to the Bank of France, full of absent-minded people busy with their affairs;

anxious shopkeepers hurrying to pay their notes, small brokers with ill-looking faces, whispering figures in each other's ear in passing. And to hear his beautiful plans in the midst of this crowd, in this place of speculators, where one feels the haste and fever of chance-games, it gave me the shivers, as if he had told me the story of a shipwreck out on the open sea. I could really see before me all the man was telling me—see his catastrophes upon other faces, and his radiant hopes in others' wild looks. He left me as abruptly as he had accosted me, thrown once more into the whirl and folly of dreams, of lies, which those people term with such serious faces "business."

Five minutes later, I had forgotten him. But, in the evening, when I reached home, as I was shaking off


with its misery the street's dust, there rose before me a pale, painfully pinched face, with a small piece of bread in his hand, and I still could see his gesture when he emphasized those pompous words: "With the three hundred thousand francs Girardin promised me!"





CHAPTER V.

VOYAGE CIRCULAIRE.

T is eight days since Lucien Bérard and Hortense Larivière were married. Madame veuve Larivière, the mother, has for thirty years past kept a toy-shop in the Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin.

She is a stiff, sharp woman, with an overbearing temper, and not having been able to refuse her daughter to Lucien, the only son of a hardwareman of the quarter, she intends keeping a close watch over the young couple. Although by the contract

she has relinquished the toy-shop to Hortense, reserving to herself a room only in the apartment, she still, in fact, manages the house, under pretence of showing the children the details of the business.

We are in August, the heat is intense and transactions are very dull. Madame Larivière is, of course, more sour than ever. She will not allow Lucien to forget himself even a moment when beside Hortense. Did she not find them one morning kissing each other in the shop! A proper thing to be sure, and likely to bring customers to the place. She had never allowed M. Larivière to touch her so much as with the tips of his fingers during business hours. He, it is true, never dreamt of such a thing. And that is how they had built up a business.

Lucien, not daring as yet to revolt, sends kisses to his wife when his step-mother's back is turned. One day, however, he plucked up courage enough to remind her that the families, previous to the wedding, had promised them a honey-moon trip. At this Madame Larivière puckered her thin lips.

“Well,” she said, “take an afternoon walk in the Bois de Vincennes.”

The newly-married pair looked at each other dumfounded.

Hortense now begins to find her mother really ridiculous. Even at night she can scarce be left alone with her husband. At the least noise, up comes Madame Larivière in her bare feet, who knocks at the door to ask if they are not ill. And when they answer that they enjoy the best of health, she exclaims :

“ You had better go to sleep then. . . . I’ll catch you again napping to-morrow behind the counter.”

It is past endurance.

Lucien instances all the shopkeepers in the quarter who take short trips, while relations or trusty assistants are left behind to mind the shop. There is the dealer in gloves at the corner of the Rue Lafayette who is at Dieppe, the cutler of the Rue Saint-Nicolas who has just left for Luchon, the jeweler near the Boulevard who has taken his wife to Switzerland. Nowadays anyone who is anything allows himself a month’s holiday.

“ ’Tis the end of all business, monsieur, do you hear ? ” exclaims Madame Larivière. “ In the time of M. Larivière, we went once a year, on Easter Monday, to the Bois de Vincennes, and we were none the worse

off for it! Shall I tell you what it is? You will be the ruin of the house with tastes for voyaging like this! Yes, the house is ruined."

"But it was well understood we should have a trip somewhere," put in Hortense. "Remember, mamma, you said so."

"Perhaps I did, but that was before the wedding. . . . One is apt to say all sorts of nonsense before the wedding. What? Come, now, let us be serious."

Lucien walks out to avoid a quarrel. He harbors a ferocious inclination to throttle his step-mother. When he returns, however, after two hours' absence, he is quite another man, speaks in a soft voice to Madame Larivière and has a queer smile at the corner of his mouth.

In the evening, he asks his wife :

“Have you ever been in Normandy?”

“Of course you know I haven’t,” says Hortense. “I have never been anywhere except to the Bois de Vincennes.”

The following day, a thunderbolt burst in the toy-shop. Lucien’s father, père Bérard, as he is called in the quarter, where he is known for a bon-vivant with a sharp-eye to business, calls round and invites himself to breakfast. When coffee comes on the table, he exclaims:

“I’ve brought our children a present,” and triumphantly produces two railway tickets.

“What’s that?” inquires the step-mother in a husky voice.

“Two first-class places for a circular tour in Normandy. . . Well, my little ones, what do you say to that? A

whole month of fresh air! You'll come back fresh as roses."

Madame Larivière is astounded. She has a mind to protest, but does not care to pick a quarrel with père Bérard, who has always the last word. But when she hears the hardwareman speak of taking the travellers at once to the station, her amazement exceeds all bounds. He won't loosen his grip of them till he sees both off in the train.

"Very well," she mutters with inward rage, "take my daughter away from me. So much the better; they won't be kissing each other in the shop at least, and I can look after the honor of the house."

At last the married couple reach the Saint-Lazarestation, accompanied by their step-father, who has barely given them time to throw some linen

and clothing into a trunk. He bestows sonorous kisses on their cheeks, advises them to see everything, and tell him all about it when they come back. 'Twill amuse him.

On the landing where the train takes its departure, Lucien and Hortense hurry along in quest of an empty carriage. They have the good luck to find one; they jump into it and are just preparing for a tête-à-tête, when to their mortification a spectacled gentleman gets into the same compartment, who, as soon as seated, looks at them severely. The train starts; Hortense with a heavy heart turns her head and affects to scan the landscape; but tears well up into her eyes so that she cannot see even the trees outside. Lucien tries to hit on some ingenious plan where-by to get rid of the old gentle-

man, but his expedients are too high-handed.

A moment he hopes their follow-traveller will get down at Melun or Verdun, but he soon finds out his mistake; the gentleman is bound all the way to Havre. Lucien exasperated decides to take his wife's hand in his; they are married after all, and may openly avow their fondness. But the old gentleman's brow lowers more and more; it is evident he disapproves altogether any such outward mark of affection; so the young woman, blushing, withdraws her hand. The rest of the journey is got through with constraint and in silence.

Happily they are now at Rouen.

Lucien bought a guide-book on leaving Paris. They alight at an hotel which is recommended, and

become a prey to the waiters. At the table d'hôte they scarce dare exchange a word before the crowd of people staring at them. So they retire early to rest; but the partition walls are so thin, that the neighbors to left and right cannot budge without their being made aware of it. They no longer dare to move or even cough in their beds.

“Let us go see the town,” says Lucien on rising the next morning, “and start off quick for Havre.”

They are on foot all day, visit the cathedral, where they are shown the Tour-de-Beurre, a tower built from the proceeds of taxes imposed by the clergy on the butter of the country; go to the old palace of the Dukes of Normandy, enter the ancient churches now used as corn-lofts, see the Place Jeanne-d'Arc, the Museum, even the

Monumental Cemetery. They seem to be accomplishing a duty, nor do they neglect to look at every historic house. Hortense is especially bored to death, and gets so tired that she falls asleep in the train the next day.

On reaching Havre, a fresh annoyance greets them. At the hotel where they get down, the beds are so narrow that they must needs take a room with double bedsteads. Hortense feels this almost as an insult, and sheds tears. Lucien consoles her as best he can, assuring her that they shall stay at Havre no longer than is just necessary to see the town. And their wild walks recommence.

Then they quit Havre, and stop for a few days at every important town set down in their itinerary. They visit Honfleur, Pont-l'Evêque,

Caen, Bayeux, Cherbourg ; their heads get crammed with such a rigmarole of streets and monuments and churches that they confuse the whole, and grów dizzy with the rapid succession of a set of horizons devoid of all interest to them.

They no longer look at anything, keeping the tenor of their way, strictly as it were a task they know not how to get rid of; Since they have set out, they must needs somehow find their way back. One evening, at Cherbourg, Lucien let fall this ominous expression of his views: "I think I like your mother's place better."

The next day they start for Granville. Lucien remains sombre and casts wild eyes over the country, where fields on each side the carriage expand to view like a fan. Sud-

denly, as the train comes to a stop at a small station, the name of which does not reach their ear, but where a lovely corner of verdure is seen among the trees, Lucien cries out: "Get down, my dear, get down quick!"

"But this is no station marked on the guide-book," expostulates Hortense.

"The guide-book, say you? Wait a bit, I'll show you what we'll do with the guide-book! Come, quick, get down."

"What about the luggage?"

"A fillip for the luggage!"

And Hortense did get down, the train started and left them both in the lovely corner of verdure. On leaving the station, they were in the open country. Not a sound. Birds were singing in the trees; a clear stream flowed at the bottom of the

vale. Lucien's first care was to fling the guide-book into the middle of a pool of water as they went by. At last, it is over; they are free.

Three hundred steps off stands a secluded auberge or country-inn, where the housewife gives them a large room as cheerful to look at as sunshine in spring. The white-washed walls are a yard thick. Besides, there is not a traveller in the house, and the hens alone look at them with an inquisitive air.

“Our tickets are good for eight days yet,” says Lucien. “We'll spend the eight days here.”

What a delightful week! They go off in the morning by untrod paths, dive into the depths of a wood on the slope of a hill, and there spend the livelong day, lost among the tall grasses that hide their youthful love.

Anon they follow the stream; Hortense runs like an escaped school-girl, or pulls off her bottines and takes a footpath, while Lucien provokes her, so that she utters little screams when he comes up suddenly behind and smacks a kiss on the back of her neck. Their lack of linen, and dearth of everything generally, is highly amusing; they are, indeed, elated beyond measure to be thus left to themselves in a desert where none may think of looking for them.

Hortense has been obliged to loan some of the housewife's country underclothing, and the coarse stuff scratches her skin and makes her giggle. Their room is so gay! They lock themselves in at eight o'clock, when the dark, silent country no longer tempts them out. They give special directions not to be woke up

too early. Lucien at times goes downstairs in his slippers and brings up the breakfast, eggs and cutlets, allowing no one to enter the room. And the breakfast is exquisite thus eaten on the bedside and endless from the kisses which outnumber the mouthfuls of bread. The seventh day they are surprised and desolate to find that they have lived through the week so rapidly. And so they take their departure as they came, without even wishing to be told the name of the country where they have loved.

Now at least they have had a quarter of their honeymoon. Not until they reach Paris do they come across their luggage. When, however, père Bérard questions them as to their trip, they get mixed up. They saw the sea at Caen, and locate

the Tour-de-Beurre at Havre. "The deuce!" exclaims the hardwareman; "but you don't say a word about Cherbourg. . . What of the Arsenal?"

"Oh! a wee bit of an arsenal," quietly responds Lucien: "it lacks trees."

At which Madame Larivière, still sulky, shrugs her shoulders, and mutters: "'Tis worth one's while to go voyaging! why they don't even know what monuments they've seen. . . . Come, Hortense, enough of this: go to the counter, please."






CHAPTER VI.

IN THE STUDIO.

I.

“ OMEN certainly are a horrid invention!

“How I wish that a Black Plague or a second Deluge would carry you all off! What an abode of peace, what an oasis this world would then be!”

This chivalrous amiable sentiment is uttered by my cousin, a fine young man of five-and-twenty, about six-foot-two in height, and with an eye-glass always stuck in his eye, which seems to expand when he gives vent

to ferocious invectives against my sex. The above philippic is provoked by my determination to go and spend a few months in Paris in order to study painting at Madame Latour's *atelier*. I had been meditating some time upon this move, when a letter received that morning from my friend Olga Soultikoff, a young Russian, then in Paris, chiefly for painting purposes, decided me. This is the letter, which unfortunately, I had read to my cousin :

“ Chez Madame Dupont,

“ Quai des Grands Augustine, Paris.

“ MY DEAR LOUISA,—You must keep the promise you made me to come and spend some time in

‘ Ce cher pays de France,

‘ Berceau de ton enfance.’

Come at once, to brightness and sun-

shine. How can you remain so long in dreary, dirty, dismal, damp, depressing London? where the sun only shines through a thick yellow flannel dressing-gown, as if that luminary suffered from a cold in his head and gets up late, well muffled in blankets.

“ The London climate has upon me the effect of a pall, and the dismal grandeur, contrasted with the hideous poverty, makes me shudder. There is no lightness, no *abandon*, no grace; nobody seems to care for anybody else, and everybody tries to outshine his neighbor. Still there is much goodness in old England: roast beef, porter, and plum-pudding are the emblems of Great Britain; solid, heavy, respectable, wholesome. Perhaps champagne may be typical of France: light, airy, intoxicating; but

my artistic temperament prefers this to the respectable heaviness of England.

“ However, I must not speak too harshly about that mighty country, as I have only spent a few months there. Italy and France are the Promised Lands of the artist nature. This is a delightful *pension*, not far from the Louvre—that sanctuary consecrated to the *chefs-d’œuvre* of the great old masters! Madame Dupont is a nice little woman; never interferes with anybody, never asks indiscreet questions; *enfin*, this is Liberty Hall. There is a live Genius flourishing here, or rather, like most geniuses, on the brink of ruin. He wears his hair long, dresses very shabbily, has holes in his wide-awake—for the sake of ventilation, he declares; he is stuffed with queer,

strong, artistic ideas, and he and I are great friends.

“ There are about forty boarders, most of them odd, but come and judge for yourself. I go to Madame Latour’s studio; she is a great artist, coloring gorgeous, worthy of Rubens or Correggio; she is also a musician and a mathematician, is *originale* and eccentric, and is separated from her husband, simply because Monsieur Latour bored her and was always prowling about her studio; so she told him that her apartment was too small and he had better go off.

“ The meek husband obeyed, and he is now in Belgium, quite happy, for he fears his artist wife. They had one child, but Madame Latour one day, in a fit of absence of mind, sat upon her baby, and, as she is a very

stout woman, the baby never recovered being sat upon, and died a few days after. She did not feel the loss much, and now lives but for art; her enthusiasm, her love, are concentrated in that. In her early youth she loved passionately, was deceived, and so she threw her mind, her soul, her very body, into her painting. If I were a man, I should be devoted to such a woman.

“She has so much soul, so much power; her great black eyes shine like seas of light, with that sacred fire which seems to consume her. Such women are rare because genius is rare. Madame Latour, though a genius, is fond of the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; she intends giving a grand fancy ball in six weeks from this, and I want you particularly to be there. Write at

once to let me know what day I am to expect you, and do not be persuaded into not coming by that cousin of yours. Is he still a woman-hater? *Au fond*, I think he loves us all too much, and that to conceal his tender heart he puts on an armor of cynicism and indifference.

“Your affectionate friend,

“OLGA SOULTIKOFF.

“P.S.—Tell your cousin that I heard that he is already much in love. I am glad to hear it, for when he is married he will think better of all women, and will espouse our cause, stand up for and discuss our right and our wrongs, perhaps vote for our having the franchise.”

My cousin Horace scowls atrociously over this *post scriptum*.

“Fall in love indeed! No one will ever find me suffering from that complaint.”

“But you are certain to be in that condition some day or other, and the attack will be bad; for love is like the measles; if you get it early in life you recover easily, but once on the shady side of thirty you will suffer terribly.”

“There might have been some danger for me if I had lived a century ago, when there were a few charming woman on the earth—quiet, innocent beings, satisfied with the sphere of home duties; but now they are merely amphibious creatures struggling to the front, wanting to take our place, to govern the world, to vote, to become doctors, clergymen—I hate them all!

“There is an open antagonism be-

tween the sexes, an uncivil war. And you, instead of keeping in your orbit, which means happiness, want to join that horrid faction of strong-minded females—a third sex, a social excrescence. Do not be a blooming idiot. Remain at home ; you are more likely to marry than if you scamper about the Continent and become an artist. Men do not like independent women ; we do not want to be ruled by our wives. Women ought to have the qualities which are generally wanting in men ; to complete us, as it were.”

“ Ah ! you are getting afraid of us. You lords of the creation, you do not like to look up to, but down upon us ; but surely, Horace, you could not respect me if I remained at home forever, tatting and tatting, with a kind of label all over me, ‘ Waiting to be married. Fragile.’ I know a woman

who hates her sex ; her advice is, matrimony, *coûte que coûte*."

"Burn them alive," growls Horace, his eyeglass getting to look wicked and large, "and I think that I should begin with Mademoiselle Olga.

"She is a dangerous young person, very *exaltée*, enthusiastic, wild—an undetected young lunatic ; but I am sorry, though, for her ; she is young, alone, and extremely pretty," adds my cousin, relenting, and the eyeglass slips off. "She is an orphan too, poor girl ! no one to look after her. But you have no excuse, so I advise you to remain and take plenty of exercise, for you seem to me to be expanding fearfully, and that may spoil your chances in life."

Now this is a stab, a Parthian shot. The skeleton in my closet is the dread of growing like Falstaff, or a niore.

recent hero. I had tried Banting, but to no effect. However, I do not betray my mortification, only shrug my shoulders, leave the room in order not to hear any more unpleasant truths, and write off to Olga ; for if a thing has to be done let it be done quickly. Then I go out and post the letter, for I never believe that my letters reach their destination unless I drop them with my own hands into the letter-box.

* * * *

It is with a mixed sensation of pleasure and regret that later on I find myself at the station alone !

A sense of loneliness creeps over me, I almost wish to be back in the snug drawing-room, listening to Horace's invectives and sermons. Here all is turmoil, life, bustle, glare, glitter, restlessness, noise of cabs, porters

rushing about with big trunks, everybody and everything hurrying to and fro. Suddenly I hear my name called out, two arms are round my neck, and there stands bright, pretty little Olga, accompanied by two gentlemen.

“So delighted to see you, *chérie!* Welcome to la belle France! Let me introduce you to two of my friends who are staying at the boarding-house—both Englishmen—Mr. Morris and Mr. Blake.”

We all shake hands.

“Mr. Morris is evidently the Genius,” I mentally ejaculate; he looks helpless, bewildered, and inspired; he wears a velveteen coat quite clean, and his wideawake is guiltless of holes; he is rather handsome, very dark, just a dash of the demon about him.

Mr. Blake is a contrast—a short, spruce, dapper little figure, dressed most carefully, quite *un petit maître*; he has a lovely white flower in his buttonhole, and looks as if he had just stepped out of a bandbox.

I confide my keys to him, and he politely goes off and looks after my luggage, which has to undergo the process of being examined.

“Now, Mr. Morris, won't you go and get us a *voiture*?” says Olga, in her sweet, foreign accent. “I do wonder if he will be able to do that; for of course you have guessed that he is the Genius, always up in the heights—a great deal of power about him, but not much practicality.”

But Olga's remarks are cut short by the reappearance of Mr. Blake, followed by a porter carrying my trunk.

“The *fiacre* is waiting. What a wonder that it is not a hearse !” exclaims Mr. Blake, with a shrug of compassion. “I did not think that Morris could discern one vehicle from another.”

The trunk is placed on the roof, my innumerable parcels fill up nearly the cab, Olga and I squeeze into a corner, and the two men bid us good-evening.

Off we rattle through the brilliant streets. It is a lovely evening in May, the trees are clothed in delicate young green, the stars are just beginning to shine, the shops are beautifully lit, the streets are crowded. How poetical Paris looks from the Place de la Concorde on to the bridge !

The towers of Notre Dame and of St. Jacques la Boucherie, standing there like guardian angels protecting the

beloved city. The dismal prison of the Conciergerie, the ruins of the Tuileries, lend a solemnity to the scene. The Seine is twinkling with many lights, the bathing-houses are slightly lit up, giving it a weird appearance. A few dark barges are gliding warily by, like dreary, troubled spirits. The equestrian statue of Henri Quatre looks well in the evening light—the gay monarch there in effigy watching over his dear Paris. At last the cab stops.

Olga rings a bell ; the door is opened by a neat *bonne* in a very white cap and apron, holding a brass candlestick. The *bonne* ushers us into a large sitting-room furnished with crimson curtains, chairs, etc., gilt clock and ornaments on the mantelpiece; and the floor is so highly waxed that it is almost impossible to walk without

slipping. A tiny lady in black silk comes forward.

“This is my friend, Miss Louisa Larcom,” says Olga in French.

Madame Dupont makes a graceful *révérence*, is enchanted to see me, inquires after my journey, and says that she will send me up *du thé* in my room.

Olga says that I shall have tea with her in her own sitting-room. So, bidding the little lady good-night, we go upstairs to Olga’s apartment.

“What a lovely *sanctum sanctorum*!” I exclaim; and certainly it is a charming room worth describing. The furniture is of bright blue damask silk, white lace curtains, and the *fond* of the carpet is white, with wreaths of roses entwined with blue ribbon. A bookcase of carved oak filled with beautifully-bound books.

On all sides are statuettes of Dresden china. A Venus de Milo and a Venus de' Medici in bronze, mount guard on each side of the bookcase. A fine Erard piano stands in the middle of the room. On a rosewood easel is a study of a head in black and white just begun. Out of this is a small bedroom with a pretty bed and toilette all white. Engravings of Ary Scheffer's famous pictures—of "Les deux Mignons," "Ste.-Monique," and "St.-Augustin," decorate the walls, besides photographs of nearly all the great masterpieces in art.

"This is your room, leading out of mine," says Olga opening a door. "Of course yours is not so beautiful as mine, for mine is furnished out of my own pocket, and yours is Madame Dupont's taste. Still it is pretty and cosy, furnished in pink *perse*. You

have everything *couleur de rose*, and I am all in the blues. Still I am not going to exchange. Now take off your things, and let us make ourselves comfortable. I love luxury, ease, comfort."

So saying, she takes off her walking-dress and puts on a delicious gray soft cashmere dressing-gown, puts her tiny feet into lovely velvet slippers, and throws herself into a large arm-chair, forces me down into another, and rings the bell for tea.

How pretty she looks now, as she indolently reclines back. She is small; her figure is round, supple, graceful; her skin is clear and white; her hair, golden and wavy, is plaited round her small well-shaped head; her eyes are very dark and soft, but there is often a twinkle of mischief in them; her mouth is lovely and surrounded by dimples.

“What a luxurious creature! what an epicure you are, Olga!” I exclaim, half enviously, thinking of all the gifts and good things she had. “How thoroughly happy you ought to be! You have everything you want—beauty, wealth, talent, liberty, youth. You have indeed too much of the good things of this world, you spoilt child of fortune!”

“Yes, I ought to be very happy,” she slowly answers, with rather a sad smile; “and it may seem strange and ungrateful on my part to say that I am not so. Happiness is within ourselves, and not derived entirely from outward circumstances. At times I feel quite happy; at others I am low and depressed. I am lonely, for I have no one belonging to me alive. When I feel very low I rush off to Madame Latour, and her

influence, the feeling of her genius, seems to put new life into me; but there is a *void* within me. I do not care for people generally, so that I now live but for myself."

A knock at the door: the *bonne* comes in with a tray full of good things, which she deposits on a table close by, inquires if we require her services, and then retires.

"But, Olga, you are sure to be loved by some one worthy of you; you are so young—only two-and-twenty."

"Yes, that is my age; still, at times I feel middle-aged, for I have had great experience of life. Of course I have inspired love, and have tasted the bitterness of it, with little of its sweets!"

"You amaze me!" I exclaim. "You, so admired, so *recherchée*, to talk like this!—you, who seem such

a sunbeam, such a butterfly, is it possible that you have cause for talking so? The bitterness of love!—you almost make me laugh. It seems so incongruous for such *un enfant gâté* to talk thus.”

“Well, then, I shall give you a few details about my past life; and then you will see if all is gold that glitters, and if I have not reason at times to be a little *triste*. But before I tell you my unfortunate love affair, ‘let us eat, drink, and be merry.’ This is Russian tea—a treat for you.”

How charming she looks, as she gracefully pours out the delicious beverage from a small silver teapot into our two cups! I cannot imagine how so fascinating a girl can ever have had a love disappointment. Her movements, as she rushes about the room, remind me of those of a pet kitten—

soft, purring, graceful; the small head is well placed on the sloping shoulders, the eyes are so luminous, the light hair looks like an *auréole* of glory, shedding light around it. Olga has a wonderful inner smile—a smile that Leonardo da Vinci alone could have rendered, and which he has so inimitably painted in that famous portrait, “La Joconde,” or “Mona Lisa.”

“We shall get on together,” suddenly exclaims Olga, while she is cutting me a large slice of plum cake. “I require a certain kind of sympathy, not pity. As a rule I hate sympathy, for though surrounded by society I live in my own thoughts. I have such a horror of being bored. Liberty is my cry—liberty of ideas, of life; no shackles of any sort. I am a Republican at heart, and the convention-

alities of society and the lies of the world sicken me."

As she utters these words her eyes flash, her cheeks flush, and she looks like a young goddess of revolt.

Suddenly she rushes to the piano, and sings a wild Russian air, and evidently forgetting me, the tea, and everything else, pours her soul into her music. And then, in a low, tragic voice, with an intensity that appals me, she intones the "Marseillaise." It is almost terrible to hear her, her eyes seem to see beyond, and, as she utters these words,

"Amour sacré de la patrie !"

there are tears in her very voice ; then, not to give further vent to her emotion, she rattles off "Le Sabre de mon père," Schneider's famous song, from Offenbach's "Grande Duchesse." I look at Olga with astonishment.

“ You are an enigma, a sphinx, an imp, a creature from another world, are you not ? ”

“ Indeed I am not. I belong very much to this earth ; only at times I feel so lonely, so dissatisfied with myself, with everybody and everything, that I should like to get away from myself and my thoughts, to rush off to some wild spot, be blown about by the winds of heaven, and have new thoughts and ideas driven into me. Why is there not a Lethe—a wonderful stream where one could take a plunge and forget what one wishes to forget ? ”

“ Music is an intense resource to me, for I can pour out my wrongs and give way to my many moods in music. Sometimes, when painting, I take my brush and create a grotesque demon torturing some wretched soul, and,

you may laugh, but it does relieve me; or I tease my cat. I often wish that I could hire a slave, that I might bully him when those dreadful fits of revolt come over me. Of course you must be horrified, and no wonder; but how can I help it, if I have a *diavolina* within me?—perhaps seven devils, and they all kicking inside me. I feel the wretches are there, and some days they are so powerful, that if I did not take a ride on horseback, or some very violent exercise, I should do something wicked.”

“What an undisciplined young rebel you are, Olga!”

“It is inherited,” she answers. “My mother was an Italian prima donna, with a voice like Malibran. I have been told she had an unhappy home life; her step-mother tortured her by her despotism; her artist nature

could not stand the petty worries of a small narrow-minded household; she ran away, went on the stage, loved, was deceived. Disappointed, she married my father, who was a Russian merchant, for his wealth. He was (you know he died when I was quite a child) tyrannical, but generous; so my parents were not happy in their short married life.

“ I am the offspring of these two widely different natures: the warm, genial, artistic, imaginative, rebellious Italian on one side: the cruelty, perhaps, from my father’s side. So I am an odd mixture, and am not entirely accountable for my moods. I would gladly be different—glad to have no aspiration, no dreams of happiness, no longing for ideal love, no wish for something beyond—to be quiet, unemotional, unimaginative,

and satisfied with that state of life to which I have been called. But I am talking of nothing but my horrid self. The fact is, it does me good to give vent to my inner feelings: it is a great sign of friendship, my boring you thus."

"You are not boring me; on the contrary, dear Olga, I am deeply interested, and sympathize with your nature and understand it. You are capable of feeling great unhappiness and great happiness; but you must try and discipline yourself, and not let yourself be run away with. Put a bridle on your wild feelings."

"Yes, you are very wise, Miss Minerva; and I am an ungrateful wretch. Some days, when the sun is bright, I feel so happy that I should like to live on forever and do some good; but to-day I am *ajacée*, mis-

chievous. I should like to scratch some one."

"I shall run away," I exclaim laughing. "But now be sensible, Olga, and tell me all about these little love-affairs that seem in a measure to have altered your nature; for when I knew you five years ago you had no bitterness, no cynicism."

"Well, perhaps I had better confide this tale of woe, though, as a rule, I hate talking about myself."

So, leaving the piano, she threw herself upon the soft rug, and placing her pretty perfumed head on my lap, related what follows:

"Don't you remember, four years ago, meeting at mamma's apartments on the Boulevard des Italiens a young Pole, Stanislas Marilski?"

"Oh yes, very well, for I was much struck with his appearance; he was

distingué looking, handsome, and artistic ; but I only saw him that one evening. Is he the hero ?”

“ Yes ; he was the first man who inspired a new feeling. Before I met him I was a joyous, light, merry, thoughtless girl, *insouciant*. Sufficient for the day is the evil or the good thereof, was certainly my motto. But Stanislas Marilski’s advent changed the course of my thoughts, and I was no longer as joyous as a bird. I felt that life was a mystery ; nature was different, and art was different, from what they had been to me before. I felt a capacity for greater happiness and for greater pain. He was certainly good-looking ; but it was not his handsome features that attracted me, so much as the peculiarity of his disposition and the originality of his mind. He was an

orphan, a rebel, a revolutionist : he believed in nothing that was past ; history was a lie to him, he cared but for the future.

“Melancholy, cynical, passionate, we were both strongly attracted towards each other the minute we met. I met him for the first time at a *bal* at the Hôtel de Ville. I had been dancing merrily about with a very insipid polite Frenchman. I was resting, enjoying thoroughly the bright scene, the music, the lights, the wonderful dresses, the diamonds ; when, looking around, I was suddenly attracted by that very pale face and those large, dark, melancholy eyes, gazing at me so keenly.

“I looked at him, and from that moment I really did feel a different being ; a new interest had come into my life. He got introduced to my

mother, called at our house ; we had long talks together—curious to say, chiefly on political topics. But that ceased. We used to meet out of doors, and have long walks together in unfrequented parts of Paris. He told me that he loved me, but that for a few months he could not make a regular offer of marriage. I did not mind that ; to be cared for by such a man was sufficient happiness. And as my mother, who was then in extremely delicate health, allowed me entire liberty, I saw Stanislas every day for five months. One day, calling at a friend's house, she informed me that several people had seen me walking with Mr. Marilski—that remarks were passed ; so that my friend had made inquiries ; and did I know that Mr. Marilski was engaged to be married to a

Polish young lady?—and she mentioned the name.

“I shall never forget what I felt when she told me this horrible piece of news. The room seemed to whirl round and round; the blood rushed to my throat and head. I tried to conceal my emotion. My friend was shocked at having told me this so abruptly. To cut a long, sad story short, I wrote to Stanislas, telling him what I had just heard. I received a miserable letter from him, confessing that there was an engagement, but that he had ceased to care for the girl, and only loved me, begging me to run away with him, and that he would gladly give up everything for my sake.

“I was considering what I had better do, when I received a letter from the mother of the girl, saying

that if I married Mr. Marilski it would certainly cause her daughter's death, she was so desperately attached to him; and that Stanislas' late behavior had made her seriously ill. This piece of news decided me. I broke off entirely from him, and my poor mother took me to Dresden for change of air, scene and people.

“Strange to say, that instead of dreading love, I longed for it.

“Life seemed to me so stale, dull, and unprofitable, so uninteresting without it. I did everything to forget Stanislas, to drive away his image. I did my best even to think ill of him, to picture him in a ludicrous light. I really felt as if my soul had left me, for my body simply vegetated; but I resolved to fight against my misfortune, and not allow this dull oppression to warp my existence.

Always fond of art, I resolved to devote myself to painting. I went to the Dresden Gallery, that ideal of a picture gallery, a perfect little temple; where every picture is a gem. It was at the Dresden Gallery that I met my fate number two, in the shape of an artist who was copying the same picture (curious coincidence) that I had begun—'Kinder' von C. L. Vogel.

My easel was close to his, and from the very first he became most attentive, prepared my pallet, gave me valuable hints about the mixing of colors, how effects were produced—impossible to be kinder. He was a great contrast to Stanislas, but there was something about him which attracted me. I shall repeat to you some of his remarks, and you will judge what sort of man number two was.

“ After having looked at several of the *chefs-d'œuvre* in the Gallery, I remarked rather petulantly to him that he was too fond of analyzing the different manners in which the pictures were painted; that he was completely absorbed by the technical process and missed the spiritual idea, the soul, the genius of the conception. A picture to him was a kind of plum-pudding. Why not chiefly admire the thought, and not merely how an effect is produced ? ”

“ ‘ You are an *exaltée* enthusiastic young girl, ’ he said to me after a few hours’ talk. You must calm yourself. You have a dash of genius, but you require a rudder. I shall be your rudder. ’

“ Cool, *n'est-ce pas ?* ” said Olga, looking up at me with an arch smile. He went on :

“ ‘Those high-flown ideas are very youthful. You must not allow your imagination to run away with you.’ And, fixing his cold gray eyes upon me: ‘I can read your character in your face, for you are very transparent. I can read the inner workings of your mind. You have suffered, young lady; you are disappointed; you are not now in your normal condition. You have been taken out of your small orbit, and you are in a feverish state, and are trying to fling yourself into another sphere. I know the sensation well, for I have been in that condition. I have loved and lost.’

“ ‘His impudence took me by storm. ‘What right have you to form such a conclusion?’ I said to him.

“ ‘Do not be offended with me; I understand your nature, and see it

all in your face ; do not contradict me, but take my fatherly advice, for I am over forty and know life. Fly from love ; never let a man know how much you care for him. Devote yourself to Art ; that will never deceive or disenchant you, and the labor you bestow upon it will be recompensed in this world. You will have hours of real joy over your own creations—that is my experience. I looked for love, and while under the fatal spell I felt intoxicated, and like the sunflower basked in sunshine ; but I have never met with a being that satisfied my heart and my soul ; whilst the beauties of Nature and of Art are unfailing sources of happiness.’

“Do you mean to say, Olga, that this man spoke to you thus, on so short an acquaintance ?”

“Yes, exactly,” she replied, slightly coloring, and tossing back her wavy hair.

“What is his name, and who is he?”

“His name is Crawford, and he is half Irish, half English; a very clever artist, musician and poet, with just a dash of mystery to make him interesting. We met every day for several months at the Dresden Gallery. I felt myself alive again. Mr. Crawford made it a point to copy the same picture I copied, and the hours spent in his society were hours of happiness. At times he would recite to me ballads of his own composition, weird, strange, grotesque, and full of fancy. His voice was deep, strong and yet soft. This man puzzled and fascinated me.

“Outwardly he seemed calm, con-

ceited, vain, obstinate ; at other times he was full of tenderness, flavored with cynicism. He had a dramatic, powerful way of expressing himself, and an utter absence of ideality. We grew confidential, and I told him about Stanislas. I do not know if he was actuated by a feeling of jealousy or if he really wished to cure me entirely, but he turned the whole affair into ridicule. ‘Fancy Mr. Marilski with a bad cold in his head, red nose, eyes swimming, no pocket-handkerchief, sneezing, etc. ; or, in a dozen years, with a big stomach like an alderman, gouty, with a dozen children ! No ; analyze the feeling, and you will find that love is built on a very slight foundation. You excite an interest ; there is some objection in the way, your imagination is at work, and that object becomes a dire necessity as long

as you cannot possess him or her ; but when you do possess, illusion vanishes, love often flies, and you find yourself tied down for life to a log.' Though Mr. Crawford talked to me thus, he did everything to excite my interest in himself : he spoke to me of his plans, his aspirations, his doubts, fears,—and ended by confessing that he loved me.

“ Now comes wound number two.

“ One evening at an artistic party where I went with a lady friend, somebody mentioned Mr. Crawford's name, speaking in great praise of his artistic merit and general fascination. Then somebody else remarked, and I still hear the words as if they were words of fire—

“ ‘ Yes, poor fellow, what a miserable thing for him, that wife of his being such a confirmed drunkard ! and

though separated, he cannot marry again. There ought to be a divorce in such cases. Married and not married! What a sad position for a man still in the bloom of his life.'

“ ‘I never knew that Crawford was a married man,’ said a fat, elderly gentleman. ‘He has dined several times at my house in London, and I have often asked him why he did not enter the blessed state of matrimony; and he simply said he could not, and I thought perhaps it was because his means did not allow him.’

“ ‘He is very well off,’ answered speaker number one. ‘I met him yesterday, and he told me that he felt restless and unhappy. He is getting on splendidly as an artist, but I hear that he has fallen in love with a pretty girl who is studying Art and copying at the Gallery here.’

“ I could stand it no longer. Rushing off to my *chaperone*, I complained of a sick headache ; once home, I burst into tears, felt the world again to be a wide desert, and did not return to the Gallery. My mother soon after this died ; so that month was indeed a black epoch in my life, and made lovely Dresden a perfect nightmare.

“ A few days after my mother’s funeral, when I was trying to pack up my things in order to get away from the now hateful place, and come to Paris, where I had, at all events, a few friends, I received a long, touching letter from Mr. Crawford, telling me all about his unfortunate marriage, his love and sympathy for me.

“ I wrote back to bid him adieu, and telling him that my wish was that we should never meet or correspond any more. This is the end

of my love stories, so you see that I have not been lucky in that department."

"Poor little Olga!" I said, taking her soft white hand in mine, "you have indeed suffered; but you are still very young, and will be more fortunate another time."

"Oh, no, no more love-affairs! *C'est fini*. I have made a firm resolve to work hard to become a great artist if possible. Adieu to romance, it is a waste of time—

"I slept and dreamt that life was beauty:
I woke, and found that life was duty."

We part for the night, both of us vowing and declaring that we should throw ourselves heart and soul into the Art career, and give up all idea of marriage. "Yes," says Olga, "all men are deceivers; false, vain, con-

ceited, jealous, wicked, etc., etc., etc. I shall be a nice, clever, artistic old maid. That is my final decision."

II.

NEXT morning Olga comes into my room, looking so sweet and fresh in the pretty lavender muslin, and passing her arm through mine we go down the staircase together.

On our way to the dining-room we meet several boarders, issuing from their respective bedrooms. No need to inquire after the nationality of these beings. Alas! Englishwomen cannot be mistaken on the Continent; their want of taste and tact in dress is an unmistakable badge. This thought shot across my brain as I perceive a large family preceding us downstairs; the mother, tremendously

stout and beefy-looking, is in ill-fitting many-colored garments ; with such feet ! encased in immense boots. She wears two large brooches, evidently family portraits—one pinning a collar, the other doing nothing, just for show. Four pretty daughters follow her closely, guiltless of any attempt at style. Perhaps this want of taste in dress is made more conspicuous by the presence of two young American girls, elegantly attired in the very last new fashion.

“How are you, Mademoiselle Soultikoff ?” they both exclaim, in strong nasal accent. “I guess this is the friend you have been expecting all along ?” and on receiving from Olga an affirmative nod they shake hands cordially with me. “So glad to see you. Are you come to Paris alone ? I reckon that you are one of our sort ;

you find your family an inconvenience?

“I told my people,” said the elder of the two, “all very well to stay under the maternal and paternal wing when one is a chicken, but once that period over we want our liberty. How well you have fixed your hair, Mademoiselle Soutikoff. That’s the style, I guess, that Mr. Morris likes. Now do not blush, no harm having a genius for an admirer, though he ought to fix himself better, cut his hair short ; but he is a lovely fellow, and you need not be ashamed of your conquest ; he never takes any notice of any one but of you. You are both kindred spirits.”

I could not help laughing, but Olga seemed rather annoyed and confused.

At the bottom of the staircase we

were greeted by a very fat *bonne* in a very white frilled cap; her round face beams with good nature. She stands at the door of the *salle à manger*, and as I am the last new arrival she indicates my place, which is quite at the end of the long table. Olga is near the top, and sits close to the genius, Mr. Morris.

About fifty people sit on each side of a very long table. At a sideboard the fat *bonne*, whose name is Uranie, pours out tea and coffee, with wonderful celerity, serves everybody right and left; she darts from one to another with a quickness of step that is delightful to witness; while serving she has a funny, witty repartee always ready. At my right sits an Irish girl, as I instantly discover by her rich musical brogue. She is pretty; large gray eyes and auburn

hair. Her mother sits next to her: they are on their way home from Italy. Opposite to me is a large tribe of Americans. "Well! do they call that breakfast on this side of the pond?" exclaims the man of the party, putting up his eyeglass. "I really see nothing. In our country, madam," addressing the Irish girl, "we have for breakfast stewed beefsteaks, chops, tongue, ham, eggs, potatoes dressed in a dozen different ways, oat-meal cakes, pumpkin pie, jams, jellies, creams, and hot bread of different kinds; but here I just spy a few unhappy-looking sardines and some eggs. Call this breakfast? Well, I suppose we must make the best of it, but I pronounce this starvation.

"In the States we breakfast at seven o'clock, for every man goes to business at eight; but Europe is a slow

place, and the French have nothing to do but smoke and go to *cafés*, I guess. In England we always get the same food; no variety, and everything so greasy."

The two American young ladies are flirting desperately with a fair young Englishman.

"I guess," says the prettier of the two, "that you like better travelling without your mother."

This speech is accompanied by a look that cannot be described. The young man blushes, and says that his mother is old, and naturally prefers the quiet of her country home in England.

A little higher up the table sits the funny man of the boarding-house. His name is Mr. Smiles. He is a fine, tall, good-looking man, with splendid teeth, loud voice, and such a

ringing laugh! It shakes the room, and is so infectious that everybody joins in it. He is sitting by the side of a very ugly old lady with a brown wig on one side, and we hear him all over the room saying,

“Now, dear Mrs. Kingsley, you have not done your hair properly this morning; you know that it hurts my feelings to think that you no longer care to appear charming in my eyes. Are you beginning to care less for Theophilus Smiles?” And he puts his hand on his heart, and turns his eyes up in a sentimental comical way, which is diverting.

Mrs. Kingsley titters and seems pleased.

Not far from Olga sits a pretty English girl, with brown eyes and brown hair. This young lady is having a hot altercation with a gentle-

man opposite, who is evidently more amused than excited. This young lady is a red-hot republican. She is declaring that the only thing worth living for is the republic; that is her chief thought, her first principle. She would give up life readily for that glorious cause. She has come over to Paris on purpose to see Gambetta. She takes in all the American and Spanish papers, so that she may be well *au fait* with passing events in republican countries. She argues that England is republican at heart; that the Queen is merely an ornament, but that the masses are democrats. Of course this speech is a bomb-shell. Miss Hutchinson is called to order.

The Americans scream out nasally that royalty is mere fancy-work, and everything and everybody appertain-

ing to it a mistake, a nuisance. Yes, democracy is making rapid strides. In less than twenty years the republic will be established everywhere.

Miss Hutchinson is so pleased at finding herself thus supported that she gets up from her chair, rushes to the American camp, and they all shake hands. Then Mr. Smiles solemnly rises, stretches out his long fingers, and says "Bless you, my children."

This causes general laughter, and for the present the discussion is at an end.

Mr. Blake is sitting next to a nice ladylike widow, who my pretty neighbor tells me is on the look out for a third husband.

Breakfast is over; the boarders disappear. I join Olga, who is still talking to Mr. Morris. This man is

evidently under her spell : his look, his manner, denote that profound admiration which cannot be acted. Mr. Morris advances towards me, and asks me if I will honor his small studio with a visit, and accompany Mdlle. Soultikoff. I gladly consent, and we both follow him upstairs to the top of this very big house.

“ It is an honor that he is paying you,” whispers Olga. “ He has never, with the exception of myself, invited any one to his studio, and nearly all the people entreat him to let them have a peep ; but no use. So he is not a favorite in this house ; people generally think him conceited. But really he is not so : he is conscious of his power, and is sensitive and refined.”

Mounting a queer little back staircase we enter a kind of garret in the



roof of the house. What a delightful view ! The Seine is twinkling at our feet ; steamers are rushing by ; we can just see the towers of Notre Dame and the Sainte Chapelle, the quays, and old book stalls, and curiosity shops. The room is hung all round with sketches in oils and water colors.

One of the first things that attracts my attention is the picture of a girl in white standing in an autumnal landscape ; the tints of the foliage are of a golden brown, at her feet are crisp brown leaves, while she holds some dead leaves in her white hands. There is a listless, lonely look in the face, but the likeness to Olga is striking : the same graceful figure, the same light, untidy, wavy masses of fair hair, the same concentrated thought, and just a tinge of sadness

in the large dark gray eyes. Same sweetness in the mouth, but a little more determination in the chin, and slightly knitted eyebrows. The painting of the face is beautiful; there is a tenderness of treatment which is remarkable, and the coloring is full of harmony. The background is a sunset, the clouds are purple and gold.

“This picture is the only production of mine which gives me any sort of pleasure,” says Mr. Morris; “and I shall never part with it.” And he gives Olga a tender look, but she does not respond to it, and calls my attention to some of the sketches which are sufficient to show that Mr. Morris is a man of genius. Some striking landscapes are lying about—a dark pool of water, illuminated by one streak of strong, rippling light,

long tall willows, and a stork sleeping and standing on one leg; a sea-piece, gray sky, gloomy shore, a white bird fluttering sadly over the white-crested waves; studies of rocks by moonlight, in deep purple shadows and strong silvery lights.

The charm in these various productions is the intense feeling, the pathetic striving after a something beyond—unattainable. They are the productions of a man that has evidently suffered acutely. He has, I suspect, loved deeply and has been disappointed. These are my thoughts as I see on all sides heads full of sadness, wistfulness, and even despair.

“I suppose you do not care to make money by your art?”

“No. In my opinion art is a religion, a creed, a faith. The creation of the beautiful ought to be the

highest ambition of an artist. Our notions of the beautiful vary according to our temperament and education. Perfection of form, harmony of color, depth of expression, is what I strive to render. When I shall be satisfied, then perhaps I shall send to the different exhibitions."

"And now, before we leave this delightful studio, play something on the piano for my friend," says Olga, opening the instrument.

"You know that I must obey my queen," he answers, bowing; "but as a rule I do not play for any one. The music I enjoy is not popular, for it is generally found incomprehensible by the masses, but I firmly believe that it will be the music of the future. Gounod is my favorite master."

He sits down, and after a few

strange, wild preludes, plays portions of that ideal masterpiece, "Faust." I feel transported into a world of strange fancies, inhabited by mystical visionary beings. It is all vague, striking, original.

I am roused by Olga, who taps me on the shoulder and tells me it is time to leave. Mr. Morris makes us promise to return soon again, and we bid him *au revoir*.

"It is curious how much genius, power, and passion are contained in this small room, and how much *ennui*, stupidity, nonsense, shallowness, and gossip, inhabit the remainder of this large house," remarks Olga, as we descend the staircase and enter our room. "Lunch with me in my sitting room; I find it such a tremendous bore to assist at the general luncheon; one gets so tired of seeing

always the same people, hearing the same jokes, and eating the same food."

"Well, Yankee is right," I remark, "when he said that money is power, and gives liberty; if you had not plenty of filthy lucre you could not afford to have your own way, and eat *pâté de foie gras* in your own room instead of joining at the common table and partaking of more homely fare. I like money, though I admire Mr. Morris's views—he is so full of imagination, that he must be quite happy."

"No," answers Olga, "Mr. Morris is not really a happy man. Of course he must have moments of intense gratification, but his ideal of beauty is so elevated that he is miserable when he cannot attain it."

"There is no doubt, Olga, that

Mr. Morris is in love with you : his manner, his look show that you occupy his thoughts, and that beautiful picture is an expression of his feelings."

"Yes, I think Mr. Morris admires me very much. Why should he not do so?

"I am pretty, artistic, and with all my faults, I am attractive; but his nature is rather like mine, so I simply feel sympathy and admire his lofty views; but I have not a bit of love for him; my heart does not beat any quicker, my pulse is just the same when he approaches me. I think quite calmly of him, and would not be at all jealous if he fell in love with any other girl. He is very odd; his mother was a German, and I fancy that she was rather queer—in fact, I imagine that she was slightly insane;

he has inherited from her unhealthy, odd notions. He has often told me that he would rather not marry a woman he was in love with; love is such a strange feeling that he would like to feel eternally the pleasure and pain it occasions, and to enjoy the torture of not possessing what he longs for. It is a curious idea, but I daresay he is right; marriage must, in a way, destroy the poetry of love.

“A sincere attachment and quiet happiness follows, but many illusions vanish. He told me, that as a young fellow, he fell in love with a beautiful girl, who sang and danced like an angel, and whose face was a vision of beauty—well, she loved him; they met often at a country house and she promised to marry him. Strange, the idea frightened and disenchanted him so much that, for fear his love should

vanish, he went away engaged to her. In his absence, she caught a fearful cold, and three weeks after his departure she was lying in her grave. He was travelling about, and did not know of her death till he returned. His grief was intense, and still he confesses that to him there is a melancholy pleasure in the idea that she died loving him entirely, without having belonged to him. He is an eccentric creature, and as he has frankly spoken to me about his odd notions, he cannot expect me to wish to marry him. He is a poet, an artist, and a musician, utterly unfitted for the prose of married life."

III.

WHAT a clamor, clatter, and babel of tongues!

The musical English of America,

the rich brogue of Ireland, some nasal English voices—all talking and laughing at once, so loudly.

Miss Magee is laughing musically, and making fun of Mr. Smiles, who had been flirting vigorously in the vaults underneath the Pantheon, and had proposed to a wrong lady in the dark.

Mr. Blake sits this evening at my right hand, and Mrs. Merriman, the widow, at Mr. Blake's left.

A deaf elderly gentleman sits opposite to me, and is talking out loud to himself. I hear him muttering, "Why will that silly old woman, Mrs. Kingsley, wear a brown wig instead of her own white hair, and why will she bob her foolish head up and down, while that idiot Smiles makes an ass of himself? If that fellow could only see himself as others see

him he would stop. I hate to see a man grimacing, gesticulating, and behaving altogether like his ancestors, the monkeys." I laugh; but the uproar at dinner is so great that nobody listens to anybody else.

"I like that old boy," remarks Mr. Blake. "I often go and smoke in his room. Old Douglas is a chip of the old block; he is a great reader, a traveller; but, he is as cynical as Diogenes, and generally rude to his equals; but he is fond of animals, children; but curiously enough, despises women."

"I suppose Mr. Douglas has had a disappointment in his youth, poor man! I am sorry for him," lisps Mrs. Merriman with a gentle sigh.

"The devil take her," mutters out loud Mr. Douglas. "There! she has just carried off my favorite bit of

chicken, just the slice I have had my eye upon. What a greedy woman she is, to be sure !”

This ebullition of deaf Mr. Douglas, is intended for Mrs. Melligrew, a fat, ruddy faced Englishwoman, in military mourning, scarlet and black, who is just depositing upon her plate the wing of a chicken, some stuffing, etc., unconscious of Mr. Douglas's remarks.

The dinner is over, and we all go up to the drawing-room.

Olga, Mrs. Blake, and I, go and sit in the balcony, and from that observatory watch the different boarders. Mr. Morris disappears to his den. All the old ladies sit together at one end of the room. The girls cluster round Mr. Smiles and a Mr. Chambers, a mild disciple of Mr. Smiles, who laughs at all his jokes,

and is his shadow. Mr. Smiles is now in his element, he stalks off to the piano, and with great *entrain* sings the famous couplet "L'amour est un enfant de bohême." All the young ladies join in this chorus, even Olga and Mr. Blake chime in from the balcony. Mr. Smiles sings this very comically, and with all the appropriate gestures of an artist.

"Do you see that nice-looking old lady sitting there?" says Olga, pointing out an old lady with soft brown eyes and white hair, "that is Miss Peleg. If anybody feels at all poorly—it does not matter about the symptoms, those are of no consequence—we go to Miss Peleg, and she gives everybody the same medicine: two teaspoonfuls of Birch's Salts. A cold in the head, indigestion, neuralgia, rheumatism, etc., etc.,

treated in the same way ; for Miss Peleg believes implicitly in this un-failing remedy and when any of the boarders feel queer, they go up to Miss Peleg to be *Birched* ; and if anybody dies, it is because they have not taken those wonderful salts in time. Since I am at Madame Dupont's, I have had Birch's Salts, at least forty times, and I live ! ”

Mr. Blake is now called upon to play. He is very obliging—does not make a fuss. He plays the “ Coulin,” that grand, pathetic, old Irish air, and he plays it so exquisitely that he is made to play it a second, and even a third time. He then accompanies Miss Magee, who sings “ Kate Kearney,” “ My Love is like a red, red Rose,” and “ The Wearing of the Green.” Olga and I remark that Mrs. Merriman's smile is no longer child-

like and bland, as she watches the pretty Irish girl sing those wild pathetic airs as only an Irish girl can sing them. Perhaps the widow feels a little jealous as she perceives the admiration that Mr. Blake evidently has for this charming Hibernian, with her sunny smile, her ringing laugh, and musical brogue.

“I am sure that Mr. Blake is a little bit in love with Miss Magee,” whispers Olga to me on the balcony; “and I fancy that the widow does not like it. I should like Mr. Blake to marry Mary Magee; they would be so well suited. They are both musical, very Irish, and she is such a bright, unaffected girl. Now Mrs. Merriman is a kind of female Blue Beard—a wolf in sheep’s clothing. I should not like her to kill Mr. Blake, for he is a nice little fellow.”

“ You and Miss Magee are hard upon this unfortunate widow. I think her rather attractive ; she has a low sweet voice ; her manners are good. I confess that this eternal sweet smile, provokes me.”

“ Now let us retire to our bedroom,” says Olga. “ We have had a good dose of gossip and scandal, let us go before we either of us have said something that we shall regret profoundly the next morning. I do envy those quiet people, who never do, say or write an impulsive thing ; who never get into scrapes. They may be a little dull, perhaps, but how safe they are—how respectable ! ”

IV.

OLGA and I now go regularly to Madame Latour's studio. An old

man with a long white beard, furrowed face, attired in the costume of a monk, is our model. I feel that I make great strides in art, Madame Latour is such a good teacher. She comes into our studio once a-day for about an hour; but her advice is so good, her corrections so conscientious, that the progress we make is remarkable. My study of the monk is the second best; Olga's is the best. She signs those two works, as a proof of her approbation.

Madame Latour allows us now and then to come into her studio and watch her process of working. She is painting a Bacchante: the head thrown back, vine leaves encircling the red-brown hair, and eyes full of voluptuousness and fire; the throat and neck are beautifully modelled, and over the bosom is a gorgeous

leopard skin. One hand presses a bunch of grapes, the other hangs listlessly at her side.

At four o'clock the pupils leave the studio. Olga and I usually saunter through the streets of Paris, look into the shops, and often drop into some of the beautiful old Roman Catholic churches. The quiet, the subdued light pouring in through the colored windows, the paintings, the incense, the solemn peals of the organ, the fresh voices of *les enfants du chœur* in their white and colored garments, the harmony of the architecture, is an attraction to the artistic temperament.

One afternoon we had a sort of religious discussion. I said that I found the so-called Low Church cold, unsympathetic, and even very dull; and going to pray at stated hours and days formal and unnatural.

Now, in Catholic communities the churches are always opened; and when you need prayer, and would desire repose, it is a comfort to drop into one of those old churches; and even if no service is going on, it is soothing to listen to the silence, to be in an atmosphere of subdued light. There is more poetry in the Roman Catholic faith, with all its grievous errors.

“I am a pagan,” says Olga. “Nature is my god; the sun, the stars, and the yellow moon are my deities. On Sundays I generally take long rambles in the country with Fido, my dog, and my little maid Nina. Sometimes, when the spirit moves me, which is seldom, I go to hear the celebrated *pasteur*, Monsieur Bonchemin, *le pasteur à la mode*. All the ladies run after him,

and that is one of the reasons I go so seldom to his chapel, for it makes me ill to see how women turn the heads of those servants of God! Monsieur Bonchemin is a man of great eloquence.

“His sermons are great intellectual treats: he never reads his sermons, and that is such an advantage! His utterance is delightful, voice beautiful; he never hesitates for a word. He is very handsome, like a St. John, with a slightly melancholy *rêveur* expression, which is fascinating. His hands are beautiful, and he knows it, for one of these appendages he lets hang gracefully down the pulpit cushion. He is the woman's *pasteur*—a kind of Protestant Pope: his power is great, his appeals to the conscience are searching and keen, and he certainly makes

me feel horribly uncomfortable ; but when I see all those elegant toilettes, those wonderful Paris bonnets. I do not feel at all as if I was worshipping an unseen God—merely listening to a handsome, eloquent preacher.

“So I prefer nature : I feel more elevated looking at a fine sunset, or at the sea, than kneeling upon a hard footstool, surrounded by silks, satins, and prosperity. *Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas!* Do you know Mr. Morris is a Positivist, a follower of Comte? He worships humanity. He tells me he does his duty, and tries to love his neighbor. As far as I know, his notion of duty is to paint pictures, and I do not think he cares for his neighbors. He is often much depressed ; and really I do not wonder at it, for it is hard to have

little in this world, and to think he will have nothing at all in the next."

At this point of the conversation, who should we see but Mr. Morris, in an old battered wide-awake, a very shabby coat, and a portfolio under his arm. Olga taps him on the back with her parasol. He starts, and looks uncomfortable. We tell him that we were just talking about him, and saying that it was a pity he did not believe in a future state.

"The boulevards are scarcely a fit place for a discussion upon the immortality of the soul," answers Mr. Morris smiling; "but if you are anxious to know my belief, all I can say is, that my mind is not made up. I feel that I have a soul, and do not think it will perish."

"Let us leave the soul alone," ex-

claims Olga, looking into a cake shop. "I shall perish if I do not eat. Let us enter this *pâtisserie*, and fill our inner beings!"

Mr. Morris tries to escape. He declares that he is not in a fit state to be seen walking in ladies' society; he has been sketching all day at the Jardin des Plantes.

"You know, Mr. Morris, that I am also a Bohemian, and do not mind how shabby you look."

We insist so much that he consents to remain with us, and so we enter the shop, devour a number of cream *éclairs*, and Olga orders a parcel of cakes, biscuits, and *bonbons* to be made up for a small *protégé* of hers, a cripple boy, whom she is going to visit the following day.

We walk through the Tuileries Gardens. How imposing the ruins

of this once mighty palace look in this twilight!

There is something very grand about the old Château now, as it stands there mutilated. What pages of history have been enacted there! —a whole past swept away! The Gardens are at this hour deserted. The statues seem quite mournful, and look like ghosts in this dim gray light. A solitary white swan is gliding warily in a dismal pond; the trees make a dark background; the clouds are purple; there is a thin mist over everything, and just over the ruined helpless palace peeps a young crescent moon. The sentinel looks like an uneasy spirit, as he stands at the gate of the Garden.

We cross the bridge, down the Quai Voltaire, and peep leisurely into all the bric-a-brac shops, and lastly

we enter an old curiosity shop, full of quaint odd pieces of furniture, old china, old plate, etc. It is a queer little den. The shopman is a Jew, named Solomon—a thin, wiry old fellow, with a few scanty white hairs brushed carefully over his narrow head, spectacles falling down his long thin nose. In his wrinkled hand he holds a lamp, which casts mysterious shadows here and there in the small shop. “A picture for Rembrandt,” I think, as I watch the old Jew ferreting out his antique wares, beautiful bronzes, laces, old books, prints, etc.

“What a splendid bit of old tapestry! It would look well in my little studio,” exclaims Mr. Morris, “but I must not be tempted to buy it.”

Olga goes up to the shopman, whispers something mysteriously,

and the piece of tapestry is folded up and presented to Mr. Morris. "A souvenir from me," says Olga to him, "in remembrance of this charming walk."

Mr. Morris changes color, looks bewildered, refuses, but Olga insists, so he naturally ends by gratefully accepting it.

I am presented with a pair of antique gold earrings, which in the innocence of my heart I had admired.

"You see what it is to go out with this Lady Bountiful; one dare not express a wish," says Mr. Morris.

"The pleasure is greater in giving than in receiving, so say nothing more about it."

We meet Uranie at the door of the *pension*, who tells me, to my great amazement, that my cousin, Mr. Hor-

ace Dashwood, "a varie prettie boy," is upstairs, waiting to see me.

"How very absurd!" Olga and I both exclaim, and before we can make any further remark my cousin stands before us.

"Glad to see you both," Horace shouts, shaking hands with us heartily; "what wild Bohemians you are to be sure!—meandering about Paris, not coming in to dinner, and not telling anybody where you go."

"I am the culprit," says Mr. Morris, "I really thought it a pity to go indoors such a lovely evening, so I begged the young ladies to dine at a restaurant."

Mr. Morris looks much confused, bids us good-night, and Horace follows us upstairs.

"Who on earth is that fellow? in such a shabby old coat and battered

wide-awake? An artist, of course. I cannot understand how two fashionably dressed girls could walk out with a man in such a beggarly costume. You consider him a genius, innocent young creatures, simply because he looks dirty."

"Now, Mr. Dashwood, I will not allow you to call Mr. Morris dirty; he is a great artist, and no doubt a man of genius too. You think, evidently, that the coat makes the man. Some men do depend entirely upon their tailor for success in the world; Mr. Morris is above such a consideration. He has a soul above buttons."

"Well, I wish he had some more buttons to his coat. I am sorry, Mademoiselle Olga, if I have hurt your feelings. All I can say is, that if artists are all like Mr. Morris then I would rather not know any. But let us drop

this very unpleasant topic. You look very cross, Mademoiselle Olga."

Olga pouts, and disappears from the room.

"I suppose I have annoyed her. Is she engaged to that wild Bohemian in the old wide-awake?"

"No, she is not; but he is a very great admirer of hers—in fact, I am sure the man is in love with her. So you ought to be more careful, and not give vent to all your notions about artists. Mr. Morris will one day make his mark in the world."

Horace gives a long contemptuous whistle: "I do not pretend to understand artists; they are a race apart."

After a little talk about family affairs Olga returns. To my amusement she has changed her dress, and put on a most becoming lilac silk dress, and placed a coquettish lilac

ribbon in her wavy hair. I, of course, make no outward and visible sign of my astonishment; but evidently this inconsistent little maiden is a flirt, and consequently, bent upon making a conquest of my cousin, the famous woman-hater!

“Wou’t you and Mr. Horace come into my parlor and have some supper?—but you must not abuse Mr. Morris, or we shall quarrel dreadfully.”

An exquisite little supper is laid out on the table. A couple of lamps shed a soft light. The water is hissing in the urn. Comfort, luxury, and artistic objects make this room a little Paradise. The windows are open, and in the balcony stand masses of roses, heliotropes, and lilies of the valley.

“What a lovely room!” exclaims Horace. “Paris taste, good English

comfort: what more can a mortal require?"

"Yes, Mr. Dashwood, though I am an artist and a Bohemian, I do like pretty things, and no end of luxury. I hope that you admire my dress? it is made by a very fashionable dress-maker." And she makes him a profound courtesy.

"I have been admiring you; such a toilette could only come out of the hands of a Parisian dressmaker, and those dear little shoes that I spy are works of art."

Olga takes off her slipper, and hands it to Horace for nearer inspection. It is very small, of lilac satin, embroidered with silver braid.

"Cinderella's slipper; and you, Horace, are the Prince," I remark.

"Oh no, Mr. Dashwood is not gallant enough for that: his chief failing

is not to admire us poor women, alas ! But I think we can do without his admiration. Have some sparkling moselle or champagne, or both, and eat some of the *pâté de lièvre*, Mr. Horace, and tell me what you have been-doing with your great self since I had the pleasure of seeing you, more than a year ago."

"Well, I have been doing what most of us Englishmen spend the greater part of our lives in doing, that is, killing beasts, birds, and fishes, viz., hunting, shooting, and fishing. You foreigners can hardly understand or appreciate this mode of life."

"Well, I do think," answers Olga, "that hunting and shooting is very cruel sport : to see a number of big, burly men, spending their energies running after a poor fox, or a little hare, it seems wicked ; and as for deer-

stalking, I simply think it is a crime. I cannot understand how any man can wound a beautiful deer, with its splendid horns and lovely piteous eyes, looking so pleading; no, I think it cowardly. I do not think fishing so bad," says Olga. "It is rather nice sport; one sits in a boat, with a pretty landscape all about, for the scenery is generally lovely, the water delicious, and one has merely to wait for the fish; and when it is caught the poor thing does not seem to dislike it so very much, he does not scream or bleed. No, fishing is rather a poetical pastime."

Horace laughs heartily. "You know little about fishing if you imagine that one has merely to wait quietly for the fish to be hooked; but it is no use my trying to initiate you into the mysteries of fishing in your

drawing-room. When you come over to England we shall have some fishing together, I hope."

"Oh, that will be so jolly! I shall be mad with delight if I can just fish up a salmon." And Olga claps her hands at the mere anticipation of such a triumph.

"We shall not begin by salmon-fishing, I assure you; but I must retire, Mademoiselle Olga. I have much enjoyed my evening here. We shall meet to-morrow at breakfast, for I am staying in this house. So *bon soir*."

The next morning, at breakfast, Horace sits between Olga and me, to the evident disgust of poor Mr. Morris, who watches us gloomily from his side of the table. Mr. Blake is sitting near Mary Magee, in close confabulation, to the dismay of the

widow. Mr. Smiles is between the two young American girls, flirting cleverly with the two. Miss Hutchinson is smiling radiantly upon a red-hot Radical: We can overhear a little of their conversation.

“Why should not women be in Parliament? they are more eloquent, more tenacious than men.”

“Did you ever hear such rubbish?” says Horace. “If that fellow goes on talking such arrant bosh I shall surely have an indigestion. I hate Radicals; they never look gentlemanly. Now look at this man, his coat does not fit him properly, his nails are black. Now a Conservative always looks a gentleman.”

Immediately after breakfast we all three decide upon going to Asnières to see Olga's little *protégé*, the cripple boy.

V.

IT is a glorious morning. We got out of the train at Asnières. The river looks so tempting, that we get into a little boat and Horace rows us.

He decidedly looks to great advantage in the boat. He is attired in a well-made suit of light gray cloth; his bright, deep blue eyes are full of fun and honesty; his chest is broad and well-developed; he is the best type of the "muscular" school. We get out of the boat and walk across a field full of wild flowers. We all pick some daisies and buttercups to give to poor little Victor.

"I am afraid that he is not long for this world," says Olga. "I fear

he is slowly pining away. His mother died during the siege of Paris, literally of starvation, for she could not swallow either horseflesh, rats, or cats ; so little Victor is living with his old *grand'mère*. The little boy is a cripple, and in a consumption ; but his father, a most intelligent, honest workman, will not believe that his child is seriously ill. There is the house, that little white place amongst the trees ; it is a kind of modest inn, where one can have fish, or rather *friture*, bread and butter, and cheap wine.

“All right,” shouts Horace ; “I am hungry. I shall order all the fish in the house to be fried ; besides, it will put some money into those poor people’s pockets.”

The old *grand'mère* is standing at the door of the small inn ; a fine type

of old age. Her hair is snowy white, a colored *fichu* is pinned across her broad chest ; by her side totters a pale, thin, emaciated little boy, so transparent looking, that one could almost fancy a strong breath of wind would waft him away, holding to his *grand-mère's* skirts. On seeing Olga a bright sunny smile illuminates his wan, white face.

“ He has been inquiring after you, mademoiselle,” says the *grand-mère*, “ *n'est-ce pas*, Victor? You are glad to see Mademoiselle Olga?”

The child creeps to her, and Olga gives him some toys, cakes, and *bons-bons*.

Horace takes him on his knees, and gives him a box of soldiers ; the child at first seems a little frightened, but my cousin soon makes friends with him, and they chatter quite gayly to-

gether. *La mère* Gigun looks sadly at her delicate grandchild, and tells us with a big sigh that he is getting weaker and weaker.

“What a lovely face he has!—such long, soft brown, curly hair, large hazel eyes, with such a wistful expression in them. How I should like to have a good picture of him!” mutters *mère* Gigun, “for no photograph can do justice to him.”

“That is an idea! Let us come and paint him,” says Olga.

“I will do his portrait and give it to you and his father; but you must allow my friend, Miss Larcom, to paint you and the child also. She wants a *sujet* for a picture.”

“Only too happy to think that my old face can be of use. I am quite at your *disposition*, mademoiselle.”

I thank the old woman. We ar-

range to come the following day with our easels, canvases, and paint-boxes. Before leaving we order some fried *goujons* for our lunch. Horace compliments the old woman upon her cookery, and insists upon her accepting a twenty-franc piece, in order that she may get a few delicacies for the child.

Before leaving, Olga takes Victor upon her knee and tells him a story. That is his greatest treat; for he is an imaginative child, and likes to hear about fairies, imps, elves, etc. Victor exists in a kind of Wonderland, and firmly believes that he is always surrounded by fairies. His *grand-mère* tells us that he often says he will be glad to go and live among the fairies: that is his notion of death; a change from what he is now to a beautiful being who lives among flowers,

feeds upon honey and fruits, has wings, and visits the stars.

* * * *

Upon returning to the boarding-house that evening we find our invitations from Madame Latour; it is for the promised fancy ball to take place that day fortnight.

No one can make up their minds as to who or what he or she will personate.

Olga first thinks of going as a star, next as a dryad, or as a sea-nymph.

“Do go as an Ophelia,” suggests Mr. Morris.

“Oh, I should have to look melancholy all the evening! A lively Ophelia would be so absurd.”

“You would be an ideal Ophelia,” continues Mr. Morris. “You have

just the right hair, the eyes, the figure, and the expression."

"The crazy look in the eyes," barks out Horace. "Do take my advice, Mademoiselle Olga, and go in a costume that suits your general mood and disposition."

"Happy thought!" exclaims Olga. "I shall go as a *diavolina*—an imp from the regions downstairs."

"That's right. Hurrah!" shouts Horace; "and I shall attend the ball as his infernal majesty himself, with a long tail, horns, and a pitchfork."

"*Convenus*," laughs Olga.

Mr. Morris looks pale and very cross, and scowls furiously at my cousin, who screams out:

"Louisa, you might as well dress as an Ophelia; only your fat, red cheeks and tendency to *embonpoint* might be a little incongruous."

“You are very rude! I mean to go as a *vivandière des zouaves*. In a blue vest, scarlet knickerbockers, white waistcoat, a gold *képi* on my head, and a little barrel filled with cognac at my side.”

“Delightful idea. We shall all have a drop now and then to revive our drooping spirits.”

“Now, Mr. Morris, how will you dress? I particularly wish you to look to advantage,” says Olga, going up to him. Let me think what would suit your character as an artist, a poet, a philosopher.” (Olga darts a saucy look at Horace, who is studying pertinaciously the pattern of the carpet.) “I have it. You must go as Hamlet in the ‘Inky cloak.’ I order you, Mr. Morris. Now, will you? won’t you obey me?”

“I should have gladly gone as

Hamlet if you had consented to be Ophelia," whispers Mr. Morris.

"Oh, that would have been too remarkable! Besides which, I should very likely be in wild spirits, and that would not do for Ophelia. No, go as Hamlet, and I shall dance the first dance with you."

Mr. Morris promises, and bidding us good-night, disappears to his den upstairs.

"I do not like that man," growls out my cousin, the moment the door closes upon Mr. Morris; "he is so unhealthy in all his views and notions of life. That artist nature seems unnatural to me. It would do Mr. Morris a vast deal of good to hunt, shoot, and fish. It would make him manly; his notions of everything are sickly, false, and absurd."

"Well, Mr. Dashiwood, I am sur-

prised at your disobedience!" exclaims Olga, standing up and flushing with excitement. "I did tell you several times that nothing can annoy me more than to hear Mr. Morris abused. Your idea of life is sport. All right. Mr. Morris loves art; he is a great artist and musician. He might dress better, but it is not affectation on his part; simply he does not care about the cut of his coat nor about the particular shade of his neck-tie, etc. Mr. Morris will, I am sure, be a great man one of these days. Meanwhile, let him alone, or we shall quarrel seriously. You are a naughty boy; the more you abuse Mr. Morris the more I shall like him."

"Well, I shall not mention Mr. Morris's name again."

When Horace is gone, I ask Olga if she thinks that my cousin is improved.

“I have not thought much about him, one way or the other.” (‘What a story!’ I inwardly ejaculate.) “He has good qualities, but he is fearfully prejudiced. He is a type of the modern young man; no feeling for Art, but fond of sport. He is generous and manly.”

“I wonder if he will ever fall in love?”—saying this I peep slyly at Olga through the corners of my eyes.

She colors up. “I do not think that it is in him to care much for any one.”

“Well, I think you are mistaken, and I sometimes think that he does actually care for some young lady.”

“Really? Oh! do tell me all about it: he is your cousin, so it is natural that I should take some interest in him.”

“Ask no questions and I shall tell you no stories. I cannot say anything for certain, it is a supposition on my part. I should like Horace to marry; he would make a first-rate husband.”

“Have you seen the girl you think he is in love with?”

“I have seen her, she is a great friend of mine.” And I look hard at Olga, who pretends not to understand, gets very red, rushes off to the piano and plays deliciously a valse of Chopin.

The next morning Olga and I go to Asnières. We have our easels, canvases and painting materials. When we reach the quiet inn, we perceive *mère* Gigun at the door, looking very dismal; the child is sleeping.

“I am afraid that before next month

he will be lying by his poor mother's grave, in the little *cimetière* over there, he is ebbing away."

We both go up to the bedroom. In a small white bed lies the child, a feverish spot on each cheek : he opens his big eyes and smiles a welcome.

"We are come to paint your picture," Olga says, kissing him. "Here are some flowers for you."

Victor brightens up, he is propped by pillows. The old *grand'mère* sits close to him, the window is open, and an acacia tree in full bloom casts a delicious fragrance ; a cage with two canaries stands on the sill.

I sketch the room as it is ; the sick child sitting up playing with the flowers, the *grand'mère* with her wrinkled face and sweet, sad gray eyes and snowy hair, making such a contrast to the spiritual, unearthly face of the wee

grandson. The old woman knits a brown woollen stocking, and a tear now and then drops on her hands as she looks at the child.

Olga, while painting, tells Victor a story of a little boy who was carried away by the fairies, and is still living with them in a beautiful blue palace up in the clouds ; he is the only little boy there, the fairies are very fond of him, pet him much, so he is quite happy.

Victor's expression gets more and more ideal and Olga's portrait is growing wonderfully like.

“ What a treasure it will be to us ! ” exclaims the old woman. “ We shall prize it, oh so much, mademoiselle ! ”

“ Why do you look so *triste*, *grand-mère* ? Suppose the fairies take me away up in their blue palace, you, papa, and mademoiselle must come also.”

A tap at the door ; a fine stalwart *ouvrier* in a blue blouse comes in ; his face is sunburnt, but very handsome. He bows respectfully to us, hopes that he does not disturb us, and going up to Victor kisses him.

“ How are you, *mon fils ?* ”

“ Better, *petit père*. Look at the pictures the ladies are painting of me.”

“ With your permission, mademoiselle,” and he looks at Olga’s work. “ It is a very good likeness ; the expression is perhaps a little more sad, *mais, c’est bien lui !* The eyes are perfect, just the color and the expression.”

Then he comes round to look at mine.

“ Ah, that will make a capital picture, old age and childhood. I compliment you upon your artistic talent.”

“ Is he not a type of the best kind of French workman ? so intelligent, refined, and so artistic ? ” whispers Olga to me. “ Well, how are you getting on, Monsieur Lenoir ? ” she continues, addressing the *ouvrier*.

“ Pretty well, mademoiselle, the *commerce* is just beginning to get on, and we must work hard.”

“ I do admire the French workman so much ! ” says Olga. “ Lenoir is not an exception ; no, as a rule, the *ouvriers* are honest, intelligent, and refined ; such a contrast, so superior to those horrid little men one meets on the boulevards, sipping *café*, absinthe, and *eau de vie*.”

But it is now getting too dark to work, so kissing Victor, we go down stairs and have a quiet little dinner in the garden.

VI.

A FEW evenings after this sad visit Horace comes into my room, looking rather meek, and, indeed, sheepish.

“I know,” he says, “that you are going to laugh at me. Can you guess what I have done?” and he stares uncomfortably out of the window.

“Well, I think I can guess,” I reply laughing.

“Oh yes! you can laugh. Go on. Well, what is it?”

“Why, you silly old boy, you have of course fallen head over ears in love with that little sprite, Olga, though she is a Bohemian, a Radical, an artist, independent; in fact, the

very contrary of what you pretend to admire."

"Well, you have found me out!" and he colors up very much; "but the wonder of wonders is, that she cares a little for me, also, and has consented to become my wife!"

"Nothing surprises me, she is such an inconsistent little damsel. She declared to me not many weeks ago that she would never marry; but I am so glad that she has so soon changed her mind. You are to be congratulated, for she is a charming girl, though she is fond of art, and a Radical."

"It was at the funeral of poor little Victor that I decided upon proposing to her. A look she gave me, a general something in her demeanor that morning, made me feel that I was not indifferent to her; and Olga

tells me that my kindness to the child made her care for me against her will."

So the poor little fellow was the unconscious means of making up a match.

I rush off to Olga's room. I find her lying full length upon the hearth-rug; her cheeks are very flushed and her eyes sparkling.

On seeing me she throws a handkerchief over her face, saying, "What will you think of me, Louise? I am really ashamed, and cry peccavi; but I really feel so happy. I did not think it possible for me ever to care for any one again, and I now find that I never really loved either number one or number two. I have told your cousin all about those previous affairs; he is such a good fellow, he does not mind at all. Don't laugh

at me too much, I am sure you must think me a very odd girl."

"Indeed I do; that is your charm—so unlike everybody else. But I congratulate you, you and Horace will be very happy together."

"I shall leave the boarding-house as soon as I have packed up all my pretty things, and have them all sent to London."

"You will come and stay at our house till the wedding?"

"Just what I should like. I have no home, no relatives, no one in the world. Horace will now be everything to me."

* * *

THE fancy ball at Madame Latour's studio is a great success. It is a picnic ball; the ladies send the eatables, the men the wines. Olga and

I sent a tremendous *pâté de foie gras* and a boar's head.

The *atelier* looks quite grand, brilliantly illuminated and festooned with flowers and evergreens, and a long table laden with all the delicacies of the season. Olga is the belle of the ball, as a *diabolina* in scarlet, gold, and black skirts; little gold horns in her hair, a pitchfork in her hand, and black and red flames worked into the patterns of her dress.

Horace changed his mind, and disguised himself as a wolf. His tail was constantly trodden upon, and then he would roar lustily, to the great amusement of everybody. He and Olga were in high spirits. Naturally, poor Mr. Morris, having heard of their engagement (such secrets always get known), did not

appear at the ball; a sure sign that he really cared for Olga.

Mr. Blake is disguised as an orange-tree, Miss Magee as a shepherdess. It is noticed by many that she rests continually under that particular tree, and that the tree hovers continually over her.

My costume of *vivandière* is a great success. One particular gentleman, whose name I shall not divulge, drank more cognac out of my barrel than was good for him.

Madame Latour looks very fine as Queen of the Night, all in black tulle, with silver stars, a crescent moon in her dark hair, and a stuffed owl perched upon her shoulder.

“Well, Olga, so you are going to give up art for matrimony? I am grieved to hear this piece of news; you cannot serve two masters. You will fail.”

“Yes, madame, I shall paint more than ever. I do not see why a woman should become a nonentity when she marries. I shall have a studio in our town-house; besides we shall be six months every year on the Continent.”

“We shall see,” growls Madame Latour. “Do not believe the promises made before marriage. Tell me what Mr. Dashwood says after the ceremony is over. No, I am disappointed; you ought not to have promised me to give yourself entirely to art, and then, when a handsome young fellow comes over here, you give up everything for him. *Viola les femmes!*—no tenacity, no decision of character, no strong will.”

“I am catching it,” whispers Olga to me; “but it is no use my trying to persuade Madame that I shall paint

pictures after my marriage ; but I *will*, and very likely I shall make Horace study art."

A few days after the ball, Horace departs, Uranie calling him a "varrie naughtie boy." He feels he deserves the reproach ; he gives Uranie twenty francs to pacify her, and tells her that she must not abuse him when he is gone.

Mr. Morris leaves the *pension* without bidding Olga or me good-bye. There is a report that he is engaged to be married to the wily widow, who has been making herself strong in Art, and copying at the Louvre.

Mr. Blake goes to Cork to visit his family ; it is rather a curious coincidence that Miss Magee and her mother should be going over to Erin at that particular time. Miss Hutchinson has gone to New York

to study the institutions of the mighty republic. Olga and I, with great regret, bid adieu to Madame Dupont, and all the inmates of the *pension*.

We leave on a sultry morning at the end of June. Uranie has tears in her eyes as she bids us adieu, and declares that we really are “varrie naughtie” to leave. When we reach the station we do not find either Mr. Morris or Mr. Blake awaiting us; and it is with mixed feelings of pleasure and pain that Olga and I leave bright, beautiful Paris for dreary London; but Olga declares, with a blush, that it will no longer be dismal, but delightful.







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