THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

JEAN AND JEANNETTE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

AD. LALAUZE

PREFACE BY LÉO CLARETIE

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PREFACE.

On the ninth of July, 1850, the newspaper *La Presse* commenced the publication of a story written by Théophile Gautier, "Jean and Jeannette, an old-fashioned story."

In a memorandum of 1852, in which the author recapitulates his accounts, "Jean and Jeannette" is put down at three hundred francs. Must it be confessed that it was not paid? Yes, to console the mortifications and moderate the unreasonableness of our authors.

This little romance is a jewel, engraved with love, and elegantly set by artist fingers.

If one had asked him how the idea came to him to write this story, he would have probably replied, "For two reasons: the subject pleased me, and it will please the public." That would have been a correct forecast; for to the public of that time, as well as of to-day, the eighteenth century was the

fashion. The infatuation for it was all the more intense because it was just beginning. It would seem to be a law for epochs to renew their lease of life sixty years after their disappearance. To-day we have returned to the tastes of 1830.

"Jean and Jeannette" dates from the time when people were beginning to look with favour on the past century, to study it, to revivify it, and to refix in the public view its image, that had become commonplace. There is a stereotyped idea of the eighteenth century, as there is of Spain, of the Middle Ages, of Italy under the Borgias. The public itself stereotypes its impressions. The image is often inexact, but it prevails even against truth. It is thus that at the theatre the spectator accepts unwillingly an archæological or learned restoration which overturns or reverses his preconceived ideas.

This period has remained in the public mind somewhat as here sketched by Gautier:

"The eighteenth century was never tired of its grotesque figures, its porcelains, its concave mirrors, its little suppers, its easy conquests, its sprightly couplets, its licentious water-colours, its sofas, its snuff-boxes, its nymphs, its pug-dogs, and its philosophers."

People returned to it, and the movement has lasted a long time; it is still far from having stopped. That was the time when Alfred de Musset wrote the exquisite nothings of *La Mouche;* while Paul de Musset dipped his pen in the inkstand of the younger Crébillon, to describe the lives of the beautiful sinners of the Regency, thus inaugurating a luxuriant, graceful, and erudite literature, which has opened to us every corner of that century, from the boudoirs and the salon to the cafés and the greenrooms.

If the public had a taste for the period of Louis the Fifteenth, Gautier himself did not dislike it. He had a predilection for that century of affectations, and sometimes borrowed its manners, as when he sent to his friends presents wrapped up in courtly madrigals:

Vous recevrez pour votre fête,
Si le chemin est diligent,
Un globe de rondeur parfaite,
Tout étamé de vif argent.

Dans sa sphère pure et brillante
Le ciel reproduit ses couleurs;
Votre villa blanche et riante
S'y mirera parmi les fleurs.

Par malheur la courbe polie
Des gens déforme les reflets;
Mais vous saurez rester jolie
Où les autres deviennent laids.[1]

His first sketches were the illustrations for "*Estelle et Némorin*," and for "*Paul et Virginie*." The playful carelessness and scepticism of the eighteenth century were calculated to seduce those who considered it degrading to be affected by anything. The Goncourts have recorded a curious incident regarding Gautier:

"Monday, November 9th. — Dinner with Magny. — Théophile Gautier propounded the theory that a man ought not to show himself affected by anything; that it is shameful and degrading; that he

[1] Upon your birthday you'll receive —
If on the way no mishap wait —
A globe of perfect rounded form,
All silvered o'er with brightest plate.

In this pure sphere, so shining bright,
The sky repaints its hues serene;
Your villa, white and smiling, too,
Amid its flowers may there be seen.

Unluckily this polished curve
Deforms the one who looks therein;
But you will beautiful remain
Though others ugly be as sin.

ought never to let himself relapse into sentimentality in his work; that sentiment is an inferior side in art and in literature.

"'That strength,' said he, 'which I have, and which has made me suppress feelings of the heart in my books, I have reached by stoicism of the muscles.

"'There is one thing that has served as a lesson to me. At Montfaucon they showed me one day some dogs. It was necessary to walk in the middle of the road, and to hold close to one the skirts of one's overcoat. They were very vigilant watch-dogs, trained to guard the château and farms. When they put an ass in the road and let out the dogs on it, the ass was picked clean in five minutes, and there remained only a carcass.

"'After that they took me to another room full of dogs; these were extremely timid, grovelling around us and licking our boots. "Is this another breed?" I asked of the man. "No, sir, they are exactly the same; but the others have been fed on meat, while these have had nothing but sops."

"'That enlightened me. I used to eat six pounds of mutton a day, and go to the gate on Mondays to

await the passing of the workmen so as to fight with them.' "

We are familiar with his motto:

"Nothing is nothing. And from the first there is nothing. However, everything happens; but that is quite immaterial."

He had even rhymed it in an "extra-romantic profession of faith" which appeared in 1831, of which Jules Claretie, in the course of a study on "Petrus Borel," cited several verses, which he attributes to Gérard de Nerval:

C'est qu'il faut être aussi bête à manger du pain,
Rentier, homme du jour et non du lendemain,
Garde national, souscripteur ou poète,
Ou tout autre animal à deux pieds et sans tête,
Pour ne pas réfléchir qu'il n'est au monde rien
Qui vaille seulement les quatre fers d'un chien.[1]

He jokingly expressed his idea of sentiment in this heartless sally:

"I am strong: I can bring down 357 on the

[1] One must be so stupid as to eat bread,—
Capitalist, man of to-day and not of to-morrow,
National guard, subscriber or poet,
Or any other animal with two feet and no head,—
Not to reflect that there is nothing in the world
Worth even the four shoes of a dog.

Turk's head,[1] and I make metaphors accordingly; that is all there is to it!"

As for matters of the heart, one can judge the part they played in his mind from this rather ungallant definition:

"Women, — they are things that hinder one from smoking."

It is in this spirit that he has written "Jean and Jeannette," a romance full of wit, learning, humour, ingenuity, imagination, and fancy, but from which all affection is absent. It is a love-story, but yet without a single page of passion or a glimpse of tender feeling. Gautier describes these lovers to us from the outside; he tells us of what they do, their promenades in the streets, their walks in the woods, the decoration of their little apartment, the fashion of their clothes; but he never analyses their emotions. He assures us that they love one another, but omits telling us how.

It is the reverse of classic art. Racine, or even Pradon, searched the heart, scrutinised the soul, described passions by the study of the thoughts, without caring for the exterior of a person, his

[1] Probably referring to a strength-tester in the form of a Turk's head.

attitude, or his surroundings. Gautier neglects the inner life, leaving it to us to divine. He has only eyes for gay trimmings, for decorations, for street-corner scenes, for verdure, to which he adds much wit and charming humour; but do not look for passion, for it is lacking. The declarations of the Vicomte de Candale are witticisms, facile mannerisms, affectations in which the heart has no part. Once only has Gautier found or simulated feeling; still he does not attribute it to his chief character. It is a poor devil of a druggist who has noticed, at a ball at the Moulin-Rouge, the charming Marquise de Champrosé, disguised as a little seamstress, Jeannette.

The marquise, at the moment of selecting a name, perhaps recalled that in this same month of July, 1850, the "*Métamorphoses de Jeannette*," of which Gautier had made a brilliant *feuilleton*, had been played with success at the Variété. The druggist immediately falls desperately in love with Jeannette; he can think of nothing but her. He summons up sufficient hardihood to seek her out in her lodging. The scene between this booby, whom love has rendered more boorish, and the dainty lace-maker is one of the most delightful. It is the

only scene in the whole romance where pure passion speaks without artificiality.

"No, Mlle. Jeannette, I was not passing by, as I told you just now. I have come expressly with my mind fully made up. I suffer too much from not seeing you. It is the ball at the Moulin-Rouge that has caused it all. You were so pretty that evening, so fine, so smart-looking, that I lost my heart immediately. Up to the present I have had only likings, but now it is love in earnest. I know it from what I suffer. I have lost all desire to eat, to drink, or to sleep, much as I wish to sleep that I might dream of you. And it would always be thus. Before knowing you, I passed for a man of intelligence among my circle, — one who did not lack wit; for my jokes were repeated from the Rue de la Verrerie to the Rue des Vieilles-Audriettes. Now I cannot weigh correctly; I weigh everything. I make up packages that unroll; I give vanilla for cinnamon, and am constantly mistaking the syrups. I can no longer distinguish an alkali from an acid, and lately I spoiled a tincture of sunflower in which I used to excel. I used to have a joke or something droll to say to customers or to young girls, but it is no

longer so. I have become awkward, stupid, and quite out of sorts: all of which proves, mademoiselle, that I love you. In short, it is not natural, and I am sure the spiteful little god has had something to do with it."

Under his strange pharmaceutical terms one feels there is sincerity, and that love among the marshmallow flowers is more touching than the pompous little posies of the vicomte.

As for the rest, everything takes place amidst agreeable descriptions of decorations, of styles, of scenes, and witticisms, imitation paintings, and polite affectations. All the personages practise, like their author, the *nil admirari*, which is pushed to the point of that amusing humour which inspired the scene in the old Breton castle.

In the old castle of Madame de Kerkaradec the visitors' bell has not sounded for fifteen years; but this day it rings four times in succession, and each time a traveller presents himself, asking for lodgings, under the pretext that his carriage has broken down. The old dowager receives without emotion these unexpected visitors, and contents herself with saying, with an accent of profound jubilation:

"Heaven did not intend that I should die without once more playing a game of whist. Here are four of us, — the needed number; Providence is good!"

They are never more moved nor more startled; if the heavens should fall on them, they would say, "God bless you!"

This secret affinity between the period and the man explains the great liking Gautier has shown for the eighteenth century, which he has studied thoroughly and knows to a miracle.

In this little romance the whole storehouse has been used, and Gautier has drawn upon it with a free hand: the toilet of a young widow, seated before her dressing-table; the love-lorn exclamations of the little abbé; the coaches in the crowded streets, — the only thing wanting is the tones of a harpsichord.

The recital is interspersed with the familiar forms that usually frequented the Paris of that period: Guimard and her ostentatious suppers, Rameau and his music, Chardin and his pictures, Clodion and his statuettes, Jean Jacques Rousseau, behind whom smiles the gracious physiognomy of Mlle. Gallet, Lancret with his shepherdesses in

satin, Moncade and his gallant adventures, and all that "*clique encyclopédique*," and all the artificers of the period, from Germain, the silversmith, to Payot, the lace-maker. As for the little pavilion rendezvous, where Rosette goes twice vainly in search of Candale, does it not seem as if you have already met there Valmont and the Marchioness of Merteuil, who introduced Laclos there?

When the country shepherdess, with her mop of tangled tow, her patched skirts, has a complexion speckled like a trout, she gives us the measure of the knowledge of her portrait painter. He borrows here from the Abbé Raynal a neologism, which he had applied to the cracked porcelain, and which had not met with much favour. His information as well as his memory was enormous.

How many times, relates Maxime du Camp, did his friends, uncertain on some point of history, of language, of geography, of anatomy, or art, address themselves to him and receive satisfactory answers immediately!

They used to say, "It is only necessary to consult Gautier." The man was a living encyclopedia.

Apropos of this is a curious anecdote which Gautier frequently related:

It was at a hospitable château in the country, where a select group of artists and savants gathered each summer. The park was traversed by a fish-pond, in which were kept some ancient carp, with rings in their gills, — venerable fiancées of time.

One day the whim seized one of the guests to eat one of the carp for his breakfast.

Unaccustomed for a hundred years to the fear of nets, besides being nearly blind, the oldest allowed himself to be caught, and was immediately carried to the kitchen.

But, a few moments later, the court of the château was filled with scullions, crying out with affright, and showing signs of the most abject terror. The head cook appeared, looking like a corpse, his face greatly disturbed, his hands trembling, and as in "*Riquet à la Houppe*," an extraordinary excitement was manifest throughout the basement, where the great cooking ranges were gleaming. Every one ran up, forming a group around the *chef*, who related that the carp, as soon as it was put into the broiler, uttered cries fit to break one's heart, and that he never heard such heartrending sounds. The assistants, who had collected around their master, confirmed his

story, and all declared they would rather give up their places than have anything to do with cooking such an extraordinary fish.

"Extraordinary?" said Gautier. "By no means! All fish cry out when they are cooked; that carp had a stronger voice than the others, that is all."

To this remark of the poet the savants demurred, saying that it was some mystification or acoustic illusion which had deceived the cooks, because it is well known and well established that fish have no vocal organs.

"That fact," concluded they, "is taught in even the smallest and most elementary treatises on natural history.

"*Savantissimi doctores*," said Gautier, "it is the naturalists who make natural history!"

"But how can fish cry out unless they have vocal organs?"

"They have them," replied he; "that is where you are mistaken." And thereupon he began to give the assembly such a lesson on ichthyology, with that power of realisation which he possessed, that it seemed as if all the fish of all the rivers and oceans protested with him against the ignorance and malevolence of the savants. He detailed,

dissected, anatomised the smallest fibres of their vocal organisms. He made them vibrate, sing, cry, howl, murmur, according to the passions which animated them, — anger, joy, despair, grief, or pleasure. He unveiled their mysterious life, their loves, their wars, and arriving at last at the abominable torment man inflicted on them in having them cooked alive, he painted them in such terms that the poor scullions burst into tears, and the savants themselves could not touch fish for a week, so that it was no longer served at table.

The next day after the adventure, one of the savants, who had returned to Paris, wrote to him:

"My dear friend, I have passed the night in verifying your assertions; they are all wonderfully exact. It is you who are the savant; we are the poets."

If one had further pressed the good Théophile to tell how the idea of his old-fashioned love-story came to him, it is not difficult to surmise that he would have designated the source as Marivaux's plays, in that spirited Danish comedy the "*Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard.*"

The recollection of Marivaux haunts one in this romance, where Jean and Jeannette, both of noble

condition, love under borrowed garb, each believing the other to be of plebeian estate, as Dorante loved Sylvia in the long, coarse coat of the stable-boy Bourguignon. This disguise served to make them know each other better.

The Marquise de Champrosé spoke from experience, as Sylvia had spoken before:

"In the world dominated by fashion and frivolity, in the midst of a whirlpool of pleasures, we should not have been able to reveal to each other our true characters. We should have passed by without understanding one another. Notwithstanding your reputation as a fop and lady-killer, you are affectionate and frank. Let us tell no one of it, but always be for each other simple Jean and Jeannette."

This is how Justine, whom Marivaux would certainly have introduced into one of his comedies under the name of Lisette, expresses herself: "I know my own value, and M. de Marivaux has put in his pieces for the Théâtre Français, soubrettes who are not my equals."

One recalls the mannerism of Dorante and Sylvia in their disguise:

"DORANTE. — You have a very distinguished air. Sometimes one is well-born without knowing it.

"Sylvia. — Ha, ha, ha! I would thank you for your praise, if my mother did not bear the expense for it."

Gautier so far remembers the passage that he repeats the thought twice within a few pages:

"As for Monsieur Jean, he had beneath his plain and neat habiliments an air of distinction which made one doubt the virtue of his mother; for it was difficult to suppose that such an Adonis could come of provincial stock, and it must have been that some fine gentleman, in passing by, had made love to Madame Jean."

And later, when Candale is discovered, he speaks to the false Jeannette as did Bourguignon to the false Lisette:

"You are a queen by your virtue. And besides, from the manners and morals now in vogue, no one is sure of the blood which he has in his veins."

"— Oh, for pity's sake, Candale, do not calumniate my mother!"

Listen to the Marquise de Champrosé planning her scheme so as to make the most of it: "She took the notion, after having commenced this intrigue, to get from it all there was in it. She had this ambition, since she had fallen into the roman-

tic idea of being loved for herself, of owing only to her natural charms a triumph which she could so easily have won with her title, her wealth, and her high position."

Say whether the marquise was not a near relative to Sylvia, who declares:

"Sylvia. — He thinks he is betraying his fortune and his birth; this is a grave subject for reflection. I shall be delighted to triumph; but I must win my victory, and not have him give it to me. I want a struggle between love and reason.

"Marie. — And may reason lose!

"M. Orgon. — That is to say, you wish that he should feel the full extent of the impertinence he will think he is committing. What insatiable vanity of self-love!"

Sylvia exclaims, "Ah! I see clearly into my own heart! I had great need that it should be Dorante." And Jeannette, with less delicacy, acumen, and vivacity, makes the commentary on that celebrated exclamation:

"She was well satisfied with the perspicacity of her choice; she loved her blood for not being deceived, and paid a compliment to her heart for not having aided in that plebeian caprice."

What is there in this romantic story, besides

these erudite reminiscences? The man who confessed one day to Maxime du Camp, "I was born romantic," would have been utterly disgusted if he had not introduced a touch of romanticism into his little love-story, — so there it is. He had declared elsewhere, "Since 1833, I have buried the Middle Ages;" not so deeply, however, but that from time to time he could make exhumations. So he took great care to go post-haste to the ends of Brittany in order to land us before the old castle of Kerkaradec, which is a joy to him to describe:

"The manor of Kerkaradec, an old ruin which has come down to us from barbaric times, is a Gothic fortress with walls fifteen feet in thickness, in which the windows form deep recesses; with battlements, spy-holes, protecting galleries, loop-holes; with drawbridge and portcullis, and all such feudal apparatus. Four turrets with roofs like pepper-boxes flank the angles, and are surmounted by swallow-tail weathercocks, tarnished by the wind from the sea, which breaks on the rocks at the foot of the castle walls, and whose monotonous and tiresome moan may be heard night and day. Clouds of noisy martins circle around

this ancient remnant of gentility, striving to impart a touch of life to its walls blackened by centuries."

Is there still more? "I am corrupted with modernisms," said Gautier. A few of these appear in "Jean and Jeannette," where one is surprised to already come across the negro of the Porte Saint Denis with his clock in his stomach, or words whose youthfulness takes away all idea of imitation, such as a "*superlicocantieux*" tone, or a coach which had become a "hack," or a flutist who makes "quacks."

But in spite of these there are delightful pages, — delicate and exquisite, — which make one forget some evidences of careless haste. Certain passages seem written a little too quickly, with the habit of a journalist whose work is printed merely by measure, and who said, "The odour of printing-ink is the only thing that makes me move."

This precipitation, far from injuring, was useful to him, since it did not hinder him from writing these brilliant and — as he himself called those of Flaubert — "truculent" pages. One forgets the traces of haste or of bad taste, the "sylphs of the air flogged by the coachmen's whips," the violinist

"scraping the guts of his instrument," or "Rosette tracing hieroglyphic letters which she could have written better by dipping the end of her toe in the ink."

We cannot, however, pass by without condemnation some awkwardness of style and infelicity of expression.

More than once, in writing "Jean and Jeannette," the chiseller of "*Camées*" gave place to the prolix journalist, who dreams of installing himself on the ground floor of some popular journal and there stretching one of those immense spider's webs that they call a "*roman-feuilleton.*" [1]

Émile Bergerat has told us what a gigantic and frightful *feuilleton* we should have had if the author had realised his dreams of a worn-out invalid, when he projected utilising the memoranda and studies of his friend Clermont Ganneau to write the legend of "Prince des Haschischins" with all its details; a colossal and foolish undertaking of a kind with "*l'Histoire de France à partir de Teutobochus*" by Anatole France's little Fontanet. "I would have as many secretaries as the old scheik counted of *feidawi* or

[1] The bottom part of a newspaper, reserved for continued stories.

initiate, and we would pile the work on to you, Nono and I, until you cried for mercy. But we would make you millionaires. They would write everywhere here, — in the attic, in the kitchen, on the stairs, in the cellar, near the furnace, — according to temperament. In the summer I would have immense tables set up in the garden, and hammocks hung under the trees for the quarter-hour of rest. Refreshments, alternating with light meals, would be served among these green tables; and when evening came, from every corner orchestras would perform most entrancing music to the sound of gentle cascades. There should be yachts and canoes and gondolas moored to the railings, in the moonlight, for those who wished to smoke and enjoy the fresh air or the water; and for the voluptuaries I would buy of Rothschild the island that lies opposite.

"Nono and I would remain in the centre, within reach of the voice, like a dictionary at one's hand, he for scientific research, I for inventions, for effects, and for technical words, so that the most ignorant would never be embarrassed.

"Thursdays and Sundays we would let off fireworks, and censers of hemp powder would be of-

fered to those who had charge of the description of visions, ecstasies, and hallucinations, and who wished to work according to nature. All day the avenue would be filled with couriers in different colours, carrying copy and bringing back proofs, and brandishing in the breeze streamers announcing the adventures to be contained in the *feuilleton* of the day."

Another thing that one must admire in "Jean and Jeannette" is its marvellous limpidity of style, which resembles water checkered and irradiated by the reflections of a prism. It is the astonishing facility of adaptability which allows Gautier to dip his pen in the inkstand of Dorat and of Crébillon the younger, of Lesage and Marivaux, to transcribe ingenious imitations from them:

"Abbé, you are an intolerable barbarian! I am dying, and you insult me with pointblank compliments on my freshness and my air of health. Go on; tell me at once that I am plump and ruddy; compare me with some mythological divinity on the ceiling, with cheeks like apples and the figure of a nurse!"

There are felicities in style: one is pleased with the platitude of Mlle. Guimard, since it gave us

that delicious pastel, of which I can reproduce the last sentence:

"Her audacious *décolletage* showed only a sweet, childlike suggestion of womanly form which convinced one that nothing could be more beautiful."

One is stupefied by the sparkling vocabulary of this nabob in words, "this sultan of epithets," who found fault with the language of the seventeenth century for being too poor, and who said to Renan, "I defy you to write the article which I am going to write Tuesday, on Baudry, with words of the seventeenth century!" Not that he had neither turgidity nor bombast. He was pitiless towards the timorous enemies of the proper word. In "Hernani" the classicists protest against the word "midnight:"

"Don Carlos. — What o'clock is it?

"Ricardo. — Midnight."

He laughingly proposed a variation, which had been used almost literally by André Chénier:

"Don Carlos. — On what point of the enamel rests the foot of the hour?

"Ricardo. — In its flight it touches the twelfth resting-place."

But what one must admire above all is his fascinating talent as colourist, where his pen becomes a brush: "Pen Pictures," as he once wrote at the head of one of his literary collections. In truth, it is in this that he excels. He knows how to see, and to make others see. He has senses rather than sentiments. He has remained the pupil of the painter Rioult. One of his familiar metaphors for saying that he was going to work was, "I am going to put black on white."

He loved to stop before an object of art, to make it again, so to speak, with his pen, adding to it with his impressions rare tints and unlooked-for details.

It was like a new creation. The object furnished him the first idea, which he chiselled in his turn, working it up, and making it his own. Whether he describes a calèche of pale lilac decorated by Martin, silver vases engraved by Germain, a group of bronze by Clodion, or the Nymph Syrinx pursued by the great god Pan, he shows a worship of line, of contour, of colouring. It is like a glass focussed on nature and on the street-corners. He has collected thus a charming gallery of landscapes, of genre miniatures, of views, of subjects, varied and

picturesque as the water-colour sketches in a tourist's album:

"This interior, which the painter Chardin — so justly praised by M. Diderot — would have been delighted to reproduce, formed, with its gray woodwork, its floor covered by a worn carpet, its mantelpiece of imitation marble surmounted by a camaieu, its window of narrow panes, some of which had a bull's-eye in the middle, the jar of Vincennes faience in which a flower was placed, its sober, tranquil light discreetly concentrated on the work-table, a setting most favourable to beauty."

That is the little chamber as painted by Chardin. Here is the window: "The window, for this had been the chamber of a veritable grisette, was surrounded by a frame of sweet peas, of convolvulus, and of nasturtiums, some of them in flower, others about to be, or waiting to climb higher with their heart-shaped leaves, and to twine their tendrils about the threads stretched for them by some thoughtful hand."

The description evokes in one's mind a concrete and complete vision; he sees with the inward eyes what he has described. It might be said that he

paints after nature, so intense, luminous, and precise is the picture evoked. They are beautiful panels.

"The farmhouses with their rustic roofs, the windmills turning their languid wings, the little tea-gardens with their laughter and singing, animated the landscape, which, while neither wild nor picturesque, was not wanting in pretty details and unexpected charms." And this delicious sketch:

"The White Rabbit Inn made a fairly good figure at the side of the road. Its sign, known from time immemorial, had been daubed by a very distant relative of Apelles, on both sides of a plate of sheet iron, which swung in the wind, shaded by a long branch of pine; but the innkeeper, not quite sure of the talent of the artist, and doubting the fidelity of the representation of the white rabbit, had judged it best to establish in a cage a living sign, which the most uncultivated could not mistake. An enormous white rabbit, with disproportionate ears and great red eyes, worked its chops, nibbling at a carrot, side by side with its fallacious image, which one might have taken for either a horse, a deer, or an elephant.

"The front of the White Rabbit Inn was illuminated, like the complexion of a drinker, with a joyous coat of red, which indicated to the worshippers of the bottle a temple, or at least a chapel of Bacchus.

"Upon the roof of mossy old tiles, where a few leeks had flourished, wandered pigeons of all colours, — poor birds of Venus, never dreaming of the broiler and green peas, and making love as if the spit were not ceaselessly turning in the kitchen.

"The fowls in the back yard showed the same thoughtlessness, although some cook's helper, in his white frock and knit cap, with his cleaver at his side, would saunter from time to time into the poultry-yard and seize one by the wing, notwithstanding its cries; for the tavern had many customers, and the bluish spiral of smoke from its chimney could be seen rising ceaselessly against the background of verdure.

"Around the house stretched trellises, forming little arbours, covered with hop and Virginia creepers, climbing roses and honeysuckle. It was rustic and charming as possible.

"The perfume of flowers neutralised the more

substantial but less sweet odours from the kitchen, and a rose-leaf fell into a glass, as if to mingle Venus with Bacchus."

Let us enter the house of the druggist, who opens his door to us:

"I place the Silver Mortar at your feet, divine Jeannette, with its oak counters, its shining scales, its labelled porcelain pots, its shelves and drawers filled with cochineal and saffron and mastic, with ultramarine, dragon's-blood, and bezoar, gum-tragacanth, sandalwood, and cinnamon, and with all the aromatic spices of India, as precious as gold."

One might fill an album with these delicious sketches: the carriage of Rosette the danseuse, the ball at the Moulin-Rouge, and the poetic promenade of the lovers in the woods at dawn, after the dance, — for which he borrowed this time the brush of Lancret:

"These loving groups, scattered here and there along the narrow paths, would have made a most charming subject for the brush of M. Lancret, painter of lovers' fêtes. The petticoats of silk and pekin of brilliant colours, trailing over the grass; the corsages which, without being cut with the noble impudence of the women of the court, left one to

perceive or divine the new-born charms already ripe for love; the arms thrown lightly about waists, and heads so near together under pretext of a whisper — the lips addressing to the cheek confidences intended for the ear; all this invited the pencil of an artist accustomed to sacrifice to the Graces, and formed an ensemble as agreeable to the eye as to the heart.

"A little behind walked groups of parents and middle-aged persons: the papas in long-tailed coats with large, bright buttons, with an air of good-fellowship, and leaning heavily on a cane with a raven's-beak handle, while their hats were set firmly on their heads; the mammas, fat and ruddy, still attractive, dressed in their enlarged wedding dresses of gay flowered stuffs, as was the fashion at the beginning of the reign. They listened smilingly to the broad jokes of their companions, keeping careful watch at the same time over their daughters, however sure they were of the modesty of their children. These groups, to which the painter might have given warmer and riper tones, formed a most harmonious background for the fresh and sparkling youth which the dawn was bathing in her roseate light.

"M. Lancret would assuredly have put Jean and Jeannette in the centre of the composition. To protect herself from the morning dampness, Jeannette had flung over her shoulders the cloak of shot-coloured silk, but the garment had slipped down, and as she bent her head the white and polished nape of her neck could be seen where several little curls nestled in spite of the steel comb which held the knot of her hair. She held herself closely pressed against Monsieur Jean to avoid the dew-spangled branches, which shed pearls over her dress and seemed to wish to bar her passage and keep her longer amongst themselves."

One has rarely seen such beautiful panels, depicted with a precision so true, a realism so delightful, a fidelity so astonishing that one really sees the groups that served as models. It is by this marvellous and powerful faculty of evocation, by this ingenious facility of painting the image in its least details, — thanks also to his subtle qualities of style, — that Théophile Gautier will remain a master among our descriptive writers, a pen-painter, an artist who has given to us dolorous sighs when it became necessary for him to write

by the line for the bourgeois, and, as he said, "to suppress his sculptural and creative side."

One can easily imagine the pleasure an artist must feel in interpreting by illustration subjects which the text itself so strongly suggests. To gain an idea of it, one has only to glance over the delightful pages in which the eminent illustrator Lalauze has rendered visible the principal scenes in "Jean and Jeannette." With dexterity and variety, well supplemented by a broad erudition and an exact knowledge of surroundings, his pencil has caused the picturesque Paris of the joyous eighteenth century to live again for us, — her salons, her street-corners, her boudoirs, and her cafés. With the Marquise de Champrosé we descend the staircase of the Opéra, which is brilliant with the ornate tunics of the noblemen, and the satin petticoats of the women of the court. We penetrate into the Hôtel de Champrosé; our indiscretion leads us even to the bathing-hall, where the marquise leaves the alabaster basin in the elegant rotunda where a refreshing jet of water is thrown from a bronze monster mouth between the finely chiselled marble arches. We follow her to her chamber, where her maid places the last trinkets in her hair, with

her titled adorers about her, while the little abbé flutes his honeyed compliments, and the monkey gambols over the velvet carpet. We listen to the marquise's dolorous complaints to her maid, of her terrible ennui, and watch as she throws herself on her reclining-chair of gilded wood, in the midst of the rich adornment of her boudoir with its wood carvings, its fine frames of shell designs, and coquettish Boule cabinets.

Then we enter another world, — that of the *demi-monde* of actresses, and we seat ourselves at one of Mlle. Guimard's gay supper parties, while the complaisant soubrettes pour champagne and tokay for sympathetic couples under the brilliant lights from the great bronze candelabra chiselled by Clodion; we go with the jealous Rosette into the mysterious little pavilion which sheltered the ephemeral loves of the Vicomte de Candale, where everything breathes of voluptuousness, comfort, and wealth, from the tapestries of mythological subjects, the copies of antique statues, to the rich, softly coloured carpets, and the great hospitable sofas.

The whim of the pretended Jeannette leads us into the streets, — those picturesque streets lined by low houses with steep-sloping roofs and wide,

heavily moulded doors, and where passed and repassed spacious coaches decorated with gold, and the vendor of lemonade pushed his cask, mounted on a wheelbarrow, — the wheelbarrow of the vinegar-maker.

Mounting the white wooden staircase, we come into the modest little chamber where the marquise plays the rôle of a lace-maker, — before her bed hung with Indian calico, her brass-ornamented chest of drawers, and her window, enlivened by a pot of geranium and a bird in a cage, — some cousin of Jean Jacques Rousseau's canary.

The dulcimers and the fifes resound on the platform under the luminous torches, above the couples who flit through the minuet and gavotte, — it is the ball at the Moulin-Rouge, where the sons of the shopkeepers pay their court to the fair ones of the faubourgs. Still further in the distance, on the village roadway in the environs of Paris, stands the little White Rabbit Inn, with its weather-worn front, its narrow-paned windows, its high gable covered with moss-grown thatch, where lovers come on donkey-back to eat fricassees under its flowery trellises.

But it is necessary to examine for oneself the

exquisite engravings in which the artist has rendered, in the most piquant fashion, with a rare happiness of expression, a great variety of figures, etched with a subtle delicacy and an ever-sustained gracefulness, — the triple attraction, like the triple character of this charming romance, which is a seductive restoration of three divisions of old society, — the nobility, the *demi-monde*, and the humbly born.

One cannot praise too much M. Lalauze's intelligence and the skill which he has displayed in his interpretation. He has produced a strongly original work; the series of engravings does not merely complete the text, — it is one beautiful work of art by the side of another.

LÉO CLARETIE.

Villennes, August 1, 1894.

CHAPTER I.

THE Marquise de Champrosé is at her toilet, patient under the fingers of her maids, who are toiling at the elaborate construction, which nears completion.

The puffs of swan's-down let fall a cloud of powder *à la maréchale*, from which the marquise protects her eyes by hiding her charming face in an extinguisher of apple green morocco, to the great despair of Monsieur l'Abbé, who protests

against this eclipse. At last the operation is finished. The light auburn hair of the marquise is turned back and piled on top of her head, the structure powdered so heavily over each ripple that the natural colour of the hair is lost under the white, which harmonises so perfectly with the creamy tones of her flesh.

A long lock of hair, loosely curled, falls down her neck, and plays upon her slightly exposed bosom. Madame de Champrosé lowers the fatal extinguisher, and her lovely face, fresh as a Burgundy rose, appears in all its beauty.

The abbé does not feel himself at ease. He rises abruptly from the couch, where he had been stretched at his leisure, and wanders aimlessly about the chamber.

In his excitement, he knocks against the furniture, overturns the china, inconveniences the maids, and causes madame's little dog to yelp and the monkey to scream with fright at the disturbance he creates. He throws into a corner the unlucky leather head-covering, which he designates the extinguisher of the graces, and places himself in a good position to view the charms of the marquise.

"Of a truth, marquise," said the abbé, in his enthusiasm, "that coiffure suits you in a ravishing fashion; the loves have tinted your cheeks, and your eyes are to-day wonderfully luminous."

"Do you think so, abbé?" replied the marquise, simpering, and throwing a glance at herself in the lace-draped glass hanging above her toilet-table. "Nevertheless, I have passed a frightful night, and have a horrible headache."

"I could wish the baroness many of these headaches, which bring roses to her cheeks and render her fresher than Hebe. True headache dulls the eye and makes the complexion yellow as a quince; and so, madame, on the contrary, I insist that you have none."

"Very well, so be it! I have not had a headache, but the blues."

"By the cherry of your lips, by the roses of your cheeks, by the limpid brilliancy of your eyes, I hold that you are well, and that your blues are purely imaginary."

"Abbé, you are an intolerable barbarian! I am dying, and you insult me with pointblank compliments on my freshness and my air of health. Go on; tell me at once that I am plump and

ruddy. Compare me with some mythological divinity on the ceiling, with cheeks like red apples, and the bosom of a nurse."

"There! there! marquise, don't get into a temper. I have misunderstood your symptoms — in short, I perceive that you have a worn and fatigued air, as of the effects of a ball. Come, now; hold out your little white hand, that I may feel your pulse. I flatter myself that I am somewhat of a physician, and I give advice that is not to be despised."

With a languishing air, in utter contrast with the perfect tints of her complexion, Madame de Champrosé extended to the abbé, who took it delicately between his thumb and forefinger, a beautifully rounded arm emerging from a heavy fall of lace. The abbé appeared to listen, and count the pulsations with profound attention, and if his amiable, plump face, where laughter hid itself in dimples, was able to assume a grave expression, it was most serious at this moment.

The marquise looked at him with assumed agitation, holding her breath with the air of a person waiting for her doom.

"Are you convinced now?" cried she, seeing a look of compunction on the abbé's face.

"Hum! hum!" replied the abbé, "this pulse tells nothing good; this pretty blue vein jumps about under my finger like [1] the devil."

"Can I be seriously ill?" inquired the marquise.

"Oh, not at all," replied the abbé, in a reassuring tone. "I do not discover any symptoms of a dangerous nature, such as cold, fever, inflammation of the lungs, or a disease which might make Tronchin or Borden necessary, but I strongly suspect you of some moral illness."

"Moral! That is it!" cried the marquise, enchanted at being so well understood.

"There is, underneath, some heart affection," continued the abbé, "and Cupid has been up to his pranks; that mischievous little god does not always respect duchesses."

At this assertion Madame de Champrosé assumed a supremely disdainful air, and replied to the abbé:

"Heartache! for shame! Do you take me for one of the lower orders? Do I look like an amorous grisette?"

"It was only a supposition; I withdraw it."

[1] *Pouls capricant* or *caprisant:* a caprizant or goat-leap pulse.

"I fear you have been in bad company of late, and cultivate the bourgeois, to accuse me of such things," retorted the marquise.

"Perhaps widowhood weighs upon you, and you are suffering from the melancholy which arises from being alone in the evening in a vast residence?"

"Decidedly your wit is on the decline, abbé," said the marquise, breaking into a clear and rippling laugh, silvery sweet, yet full of the frank insolence of the *grande dame*.

"What is the matter with you, then, if my diagnosis deceives me, and my science is at fault?"

"I am bored," replied the marquise, with a languid air, and throwing herself back in her armchair.

At this word, the face of the abbé assumed an expression of extreme astonishment, his dimples disappeared, and his eyes remained fixed on those of Madame de Champrosé with an expression of profound consternation and interrogation. The eighteenth century was never bored, with its grotesques, its porcelains, its hollowed[1] pier-glasses, its little suppers, its easy conquests, its sprightly couplets, its licentious sketches, its sofas, its snuff-

[1] *Tarabiscotés:* provided with little cavities which separate one moulding from another.

boxes, its nymphs, its pug-dogs, and its philosophers. It had no time to be sad, this joyous eighteenth century; thus the words of the marquise threw the abbé into consternation, and appeared to him incomprehensible.

"When a marquise with an income of 200,000 livres, charming, and a widow at eighteen of such a husband," said the abbé, pointing at an oval pastel, where, under the trappings of the god Mars, grinned a yellow, withered, wrinkled sexagenarian, "says she is bored, it lacks all probability."

"That is, nevertheless — "

"You, marquise, whose existence flows amidst laughter, play, and pleasures — you bored!"

"But what can I do to get out of such a melancholy state?" demanded the duchess.

"If you change your monkey for a marmoset, and your pug for a lap-dog — "

"That gives me an idea! I will try it, but I am afraid it will hardly suffice — "

"In your place," continued the abbé, "I should change the colour of this boudoir; the blue has something too languorous about it, and entices to reverie. A gayer colour would suit the condition of your mind better, — *rose tendre*, for instance."

"Yes, *rose tendre*, and frosted with silver; that would draw me away a little from my sombre thoughts. I will send for my upholsterer. But in the meantime, discover something that will amuse me."

"Shall I read to you? The table is covered with pamphlets, books, and 'anas' of all sorts of authors; not that I care the least for these scribblers, these quill-drivers, but sometimes, among the absurdities which these people draw from their misshapen craniums, there are to be found drolleries at which one can laugh immoderately.

"Behold '*Le Grelot*,' '*L'Écumoire*,' '*Les Matins de Cythère*,'" said the abbé, turning over the volumes. "Would it amuse you to listen to the conversation of the fairy Moustache (changed into a mole by the jealousy of the fairy Jonquille), enumerating to Tanzaï and to Néadarné the perfections of Prince Cormoran, her lover? It is a charming passage."

The marquise nodded acquiescence, settled herself in her easy chair, stretched out upon a footstool her tiny feet, encased in slippers a Chinese woman would not have found too large, and appeared to resign herself to listening to this *chef-d'œuvre*.

The abbé commenced reading the panegyric of Cormoran, by Moustache, in an affected and pompous manner:

"'He was the most beautiful dancer in the world; no one could bow with more grace. He guessed all enigmas, played all games well, those that demanded strength as well as those of skill, from bagatelle to football. His countenance was charming, and packed with the rarest and most charming expressions. He also possessed a delightful voice, and could accompany himself upon all sorts of musical instruments. Besides the talents which I have enumerated, he wrote pretty verses. His conversation, gay or grave, satisfied equally by its grace and its solidity. Austere with the prude, free with the coquette, melancholy with the tender, there was not at the court a woman who was not roused to interest in him. The superiority of his wit did not render him unsociable; with great tact he adjusted himself to every one. He was master, above all, of a brilliant wit, that overcame all adversaries; and although this shy, curious being, entitled good sense, did not always trouble himself to be civil in what he said, the undeniable grace of his conversation caused him to be no loser by it; and but for this airy grace, his elaborately chosen words and marvellous phraseology might have hidden the sound good sense of the man from his most ardent followers, and would have appeared nauseously insipid.'"

An imperceptible yawn, smothered out of politeness, contracted Madame de Champrosé's lips, which

at first had been full of smiles at the amiable qualities of Cormoran.

"'In short,'" continued the abbé, "'reason is vulgar; she appears always unveiled. She fears to drown herself in cheerfulness, and does not hesitate to take a step backward when an originally turned thought presents itself, or when a brilliant imagination takes possession of her heart. After all, if she triumphs, it is in a fashion so insulting to humanity that the best bred self-respect finds so much discredit in it, loses in it so much of its grace, takes on such a bad opinion of itself, that it would have to be very ridiculous, not to fly in its face.'"

"Thanks, abbé," said the marquise, showing all her white teeth in a coquettish yawn; "what you are reading is without doubt the most charming tale in the world, but I do not understand a word of it, and I do not care to take the trouble to comprehend it."

The volume was replaced upon the table, and visitors were announced, among them the little Chevalier de Verteuil, the big Commander de Livry, the financier Bafogne, a Midas who had not the ass's ears, however much he merited them, and who changed into gold everything that he touched. They all agreed in the opinion that

Madame de Champrosé's eyes looked slightly fatigued, and that her manner was restless, although she was as bewitching as ever; only the little chevalier protested that it was a disgrace to the youth of France that a charming marquise should be dying of ennui in the midst of the joyous reign of Louis XV., the well-beloved.

It was decided that a little walk would be beneficial, and that the air of the boudoir, heavy with the perfume of amber, caused nervousness, brought on the blues, and invested mere nothings with peculiarities, which the fresh air would infallibly dissipate.

The chevalier promised to be the merriest in the company; the commander swore he would not allude to his conquests; Bafogne declared he would understand the puns of the chevalier, if they were only repeated three times. As for the abbé, an engagement called him elsewhere. He was to rejoin them at the guard-house of the swing-bridge, where they would dine together on returning from the Cours-la-Reine, before going to the Opéra.

No sooner was it suggested than it was accomplished. The four cream-coloured horses were har-

nessed to the soft lilac-coloured *calèche*, varnished by Martin, which in its shape represented the shell of Venus.

The languishing beauty shone resplendent on the white velvet background of her cushions. The chevalier said extraordinary things in the most piquant terms, and with marvellously unexpected turnings; he dissected anybody and everybody, the court and the city; related scandalous stories and their details in an incredibly vivacious manner, and just enough veiled to prevent the modesty of the marquise from seeking refuge behind her fan. The commandant began a tale of one of his intrigues with a young lady of the ballet,[1] but stopped at the right moment. The financier was only sufficiently stupid to exert himself a little more than usual. The coachman passed all carriages with the supreme impertinence of a servant knowing his value to his masters, and feeling himself a member of a great and fashionable household. All went delightfully. The guard surpassed himself in his cooking; the dishes were pronounced exquisite, and the wines of the choicest, by the abbé, who

[1] *Demoiselle d'espalier:* one of the dancers who kept close to the scenery, not in the front row.

prided himself even more on his reputation as a *gourmet* than on his devotion to religion.

At the Opéra "*Les Indes Galantes*" was sung with less robustness than usually, thanks to the criticisms of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a citizen of Geneva, who had ridiculed in his writings *le urlo francese;*[1] and a ballet was performed, in which the sentiment of love was depicted by the most voluptuous though decent attitudes, which cast a soft languor into the soul, reaching it by way of the eyes. Yet, in spite of all this, when Madame de Champrosé returned to her hôtel late in the evening, she still felt bored to death!

Was it that the marquise possessed a peevish and sullen disposition, looking upon life cross-grained, and imagining in solitude lugubrious visions? One could not be better born than she, and having always lived in the best of company, free from old-fashioned prejudices, which would have forbidden her asking for happiness from pleasure, Madame de Champrosé did not indulge in romantic whims; nevertheless, she could not dissemble that she knew in advance the pleasantries of the chevalier, or the arias of "*Les Indes Galantes.*"

[1] French howling.

Many a time she had taken this same promenade in Cours-la-Reine in her open carriage, preceded by her running footman Almanzor, a light-footed Basque, and swift as a deer. Neither was it the first time she had taken supper at the guard's, and without having absolutely wished for something in less good taste, the marquise would have liked something a little more lively by way of entertainment.

When Justine came to put her mistress to bed, she found her excessively dispirited, and after the fashion of most maids, to whom long service has accorded a certain familiarity, she hazarded a number of questions. The marquise responded by pouring out all her sufferings. For two years she had been a widow. Her husband had been so much older than she, that she had entertained for him only a sentiment of respect, and while, during this time, the marquise had had no declared lover, several had paid assiduous court to her. Justine, if she had not been discretion itself, might have affirmed that, if her mistress resembled any woman of antiquity, it was certainly not the beautiful Artemisia, widow of Mausolus.

After having listened to the recital of her mistress's griefs, she said, in a most respectful tone:

"It seems that madame has not a lover at this present moment."

"No, my poor Justine," replied Madame de Champrosé, with a dejected air.

"That is madame's fault, for there are many aspirants, and I do not know a prettier lot than those who dance attendance upon her perfections."

"Oh, without doubt, I am not yet ugly enough to keep them away," said the marquise, giving a sly glance at herself in the mirror.

"The Chevalier de Verteuil is madly in love with madame."

"How many louis has he given you, Justine, to whisper that in my ear, when I go to bed, or when I get up?"

"Madame knows I am disinterestedness itself. The passion of the chevalier touches me, that is all. But if he does not please madame, there is the Commander de Livry, who adores her."

"Yes, he loves me a little more than Rose or Désobry," replied the marquise. "If the commander and the chevalier lose their heads for me, it is all the same to me if I do not lose mine for them. I should like to love some one young, fresh, pure, innocent, who still believes in senti-

ment, and whose first love I can be. It bores me to share with opera singers and the *demi-monde*."

"That which madame wishes is difficult, not to say impossible."

"And why so, Justine?"

"Messieurs the dukes, marquises, vicomtes, and chevaliers have not merit enough to make them love as madame wishes."

"Do you believe that?"

"Oh, I am sure of it. The women throw themselves at their heads from vanity, coquetry, or interest. These lordlings have their pockets full of love-letters, miniatures, and locks of hair, and, as madame says, the Opéra is a terrible emporium for the sale of sighs!"

"So, according to you, Justine, men of rank are not capable of the sort of love I wish."

"Most certainly not; and unless madame condescends to stoop lower, I am afraid that she will not be able to satisfy her imagination."

"Stoop lower! What are you thinking of, Justine?"

"It is not advice that I am giving, only a reflection that I made."

"I cannot descend lower than a baron."

"Barons are totally lacking in innocence; some of them are even worse than dukes."

"Ah, well! Must I choose my love from among the squires?"

"The squires are so cunning in the present state of morals."

"However, I could not love a plebeian!"

"A plebeian alone will love you."

"What ridiculous folly!"

"Love is our wealth; it belongs to us who have no titles, no châteaux, no equipages, no jewels, no country houses."

"What is that you say?"

"It is necessary to cling to love; pleasure is too dear."

"You have a lover, then, who is smitten with you, who is faithful and tender?"

"Madame has said it; I will not deny it."

"Without doubt, some prince in livery — my runner, Almanzor, or the marquis's huntsman, Azolan?"

"Pardon me, madame, but the domestics of a great house become almost as vicious as their masters."

"Who is it, then?"

"A poor, very ordinary youth, a counter-jumper by profession, and whose only beauty is ruddy health, and his only merit, that he loves me to distraction."

"This love is the best! How happy you ought to be, Justine!"

"Yes; above all, on those days when madame does not need me, and gives me permission to go out. This evening, for instance, if you give me leave, I shall go to a little ball at the Moulin-Rouge, in honour of the marriage of my cousin."

"Is she pretty, your cousin?"

"Ravishingly — blue eyes, long, sweeping lashes, and the air of a *rosière*."[1]

"What sort of people will go to this ball?"

"Oh, leading men, the rich shopkeepers with houses of their own, the sons and daughters of merchants, bailiffs, and attorneys' clerks. There will be a violin, a fife, and a tambourine; there will be a supper, and in the dawn they will go and gather lilac in the fields of Saint Gervais."

"You make me long to go to this ball; it would amuse me. What a droll look all those people must have!"

"If it would amuse madame, nothing would be

[1] A village girl who wins a rose for good behaviour.

easier. I could let her put on one of my dresses, and pass her off as one of my friends. With my short skirt and jacket of stout striped pink and white silk, a lawn fichu, a smooth coil of hair, and a little fall of lace, she would be perfectly disguised, and as beautiful as ever."

"Flatterer! And do you believe those clothes would look well on me?"

"We are very nearly of the same figure, only madame has a smaller waist than I; but a tuck and a few pins will arrange all that."

Madame de Champrosé, roused by the piquancy of this suggestion, was no longer the indifferent woman of a moment ago. She had lost her languishing air and her sleepy attitude. Her eyes grew brilliant, and her little pink nostrils trembled. She herself aided Justine in drawing over her beautifully rounded legs the fine pearl gray stockings clocked with red, the tiny shoes with silver buckles. The great edifice on her head, raised that morning with so much care, was demolished by several thrusts of the comb, and Madame de Champrosé was not the less pretty for it.

Justine's wrap was becoming to the marquise. At this time waiting-maids modelled themselves

after soubrettes of comedy, and made themselves up as well, or even better than their mistresses. This, however, was not the case with Justine, for the Marquise de Champrosé did not owe her beauty to the mysterious resources of the toilet. She had nothing to conceal, nothing to repair, and remained beautiful even to her waiting-maid, in spite of the old adage that a man is not a hero to his *valet de chambre.* Justine sent for a cab to wait for them at the little gate in the garden, and the marquise, well muffled in a cloak of shot-coloured silk, the hood of which covered her eyes, sprang joyously into the cab, and the coachman whipped his old hacks in the direction of le Moulin-Rouge, believing he was carrying two chambermaids to a frolic.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT the time that Madame de Champrosé left her hotel disguised as a soubrette in her Sunday dress, a supper was taking place at the house of Guimard, a celebrated member of the Royal Academy of music and dancing.

This supper brought together a number of lords bearing the most distinguished names of France,

who did not disdain to unbend themselves for a time in the house of this beautiful devil, as they dubbed the protégée of Monsieur de Marmontel, to rid themselves of the boredom caused by more respectable society.

The dining-room was decorated with a taste which did honour to the talent of this famous dancer, and with a richness which paid tribute to the magnificence of Monsieur de S——. It united all that delicate luxury could put at the service of refined elegance. The most precious marbles had been gathered at great expense, to form supports for the heavily gilded ceiling. Under all this surfeit, where one felt the rich financier; in the framing of pictures, each designed for a certain spot, and due to the light and mellow brush of Fragonard, the pupil of the Graces, and the painter in ordinary of Terpsichore; under all beauty of form, of Cupids, and Gods and Goddesses, in the delicate touch of fruits and flowers, one felt the artist had put his soul, in honour and love of his gentle protectress, the beautiful Guimard.

The table was decorated with unheard-of daintiness, and served only with rarities, the earliest of fruits, exquisite dishes in profusion, the wine of Aï

and Sillery, — that truly French wine, which laughs in the bottle, and seems to sparkle with *bons mots*, — which was cooling on ice in the silver urns engraved by Germain, and which, frequently renewed, animated the convivial gathering. Persons less accustomed to similar magnificence would have forgotten the delicate viands to contemplate the epergne, a marvel of workmanship by Clodion; for this artist, who excelled in designs of this kind, had truly outdone himself. This epergne of gilded bronze represented the history of the nymph Syrinx, pursued over the reeds by the god Pan. The stems and leaves which formed the charming ornamental designs were covered by a flight of satyrs, fawns, and nymphs. These little figures had a freedom in execution, a voluptuousness in their attitudes, a passion in their gestures, which made them lifelike, and revealed in the sculptor a fire of imagination, and a marvellous facility touching matters of gallantry. The nymphs especially were charming in their modest attempts at concealing their beauty. In her fright Syrinx betrayed the very loveliness she was seeking to cover; the reeds and the herbage, opportunely opening and closing up, allowed all to be seen without showing anything.

In the features of the nymphs connoisseurs pretended to discover the well-known faces of noted society women, and in the masks of the satyrs were recognised the features of successful financiers and even of some old noblemen celebrated for their luxurious manner of life. The gathering was not large, but it was select: four or five men, and about the same number of women, composed it.

As we have said, the men belonged to the highest circles, to the most influential families at court. As for the women, they were of the fashionable *demi-monde*, dancers and comediennes, for whom this gathering was but a pretext. One cannot tell why, when well-bred people seek to amuse themselves, they resort to evil: this would almost make one believe vice is more fascinating than virtue, a conclusion which morality should condemn.

La Guimard presided over this supper with the intellectual grace, that voluptuousness and fire which crowned her the high-priestess of pleasure, a religion which found few dissenters in the gallant eighteenth century.

Her celebrated slenderness explained itself by the enthusiasm of the dancer, who had willingly sacrificed the roundness of womanly perfection to

the lightness of the dancer's art. This slenderness suggested nothing disagreeable; on the contrary, it was elegant, full of grace and fine lines such as a sculptor loves. Her lightly clothed figure nestled into its corsage with the flexibility of a butterfly, of which her glittering skirts seemed the wings. Her fragile and transparent hand was covered with jewelled rings, which would have been too small for a child of ten.

Her audacious décolletage showed only a sweet childlike suggestion of womanly form, which convinced one that nothing could be more beautiful. Her slender white throat, with its noble proportions, made her carry her head with the lightness and grace of a bird or a flower.

Millions had been thrown to the winds, and fortunes dissipated, in arriving at this ardent consummation of slenderness; one could reckon them in the devouring glances of her brilliant eyes, in the impossible fantasies of her face, which paint reddened, without altering its delicate pallor.

Many women have had the taste for luxury and pleasure — Guimard had the genius for it.

The three other women had that pink and white regularity, veined with blue, those ogling eyes melt-

ing from mockery to love, the irregular nose neither Greek nor Roman, showing as much caprice as intelligence. Their pursed-up mouths were formed for kisses or for satire, and their dimples offered hospitality to laughter and to the loves. In short, their mobile and piquant physiognomy was well in accord with the manners, the arts, and the fashions of their age, and represented a type that has now disappeared. Their draperies were charmingly arranged, full of knots of ribbon and butterflies, of precious stones and of flowers. The eyes were bewildered by the profusion of agreeable and tender colours, for, to be in keeping with the season, these women were clothed in the green of early springtime, in rose, and heaven's own blue.

Guimard alone wore white, gowned like a vestal, without doubt ironically. On her whole person there was no touch of colour, save for her scarlet lips and the touch of rouge on her cheeks. All the light concentrated itself on her, proclaiming her queen of the festival.

If Monsieur Fragonard had wished to paint this fête, he would not have altered the grouping, or the contrast of colours.

Certainly, if one were to ask any young man, or

even a man of ripe age, if he knew a more agreeable way of killing time than to eat a delicious supper in a brilliantly lighted and well-appointed room, in company with the wits of the court and the most beautiful women from the Opéra and Comédie, he would reply, no; that nothing is comparable to drinking to beauty in brimming glasses of champagne, seated between two gorgeously dressed nymphs, whose rippling laughter and pink cheeks, in spite of paint, give one a sense of ease and pleasure.

Ah, well! this diversion appeared to amuse the Vicomte de Candale but little. Tipped back in his chair, he waited, with a sad and nonchalant air, for the bubbles in his glass to break, before carrying it to his lips in reply to a toast. Standing with one beautiful hand resting on the table, the incomparable Guimard drank to him in these words: "To M. the Vicomte de Candale, known otherwise as 'the gloomy exquisite.'"

"Yes, to the health of the new Amadis of Gaul!" cried the other revellers in chorus, clinking their glasses with that of the vicomte.

Candale, after having touched each glass offered him with his own, silently emptied it, and put it down.

"The dear vicomte," said a pretty young woman smilingly, whose sparkling eye was rendered more so by its touch of paint below the lid; "has the dear vicomte received bad news? Is it by any chance that the old uncle from whom the vicomte will inherit, and who appeared to feel the absurdity of living after seventy years, has decided to send for his physician and take a new lease of life?"

"Hold your tongue, Cidalise!" replied a tall girl in apple green taffeta frosted with silver, and who was in perfect contrast with her neighbours. "Monsieur de Candale is not so badly off as to be sighing after his inheritance. This incomparable son of the family has only spent what belonged to him, and he still has enough of his own for him to be loved at the Opéra for another five years."

"Oh!" said Cidalise, "when he has no more money, we will give him credit, and love him on notes payable from the dot of his future wife."

"And I," said a beautiful blonde, leaning towards the ear of the vicomte, with voluptuous abandon, "I will love him for nothing!"

"That is very costly, Rosette," replied Candale, giving a little friendly tap to the bare and trembling shoulder of the young girl. "I think I should

prefer to declare my passion to Cidalise, and mortgage my inheritance in such an extremity. But reassure yourself, I am not more ruined than usual, and I always keep some thousands of louis in reserve for useless things."

"What is the matter with you, Candale?" said Guimard, breaking into the conversation. "You are so unusually mournful, that one does not recognise you. You, generally so quick at repartee, are frightfully grave. You sit at this supper like a magistrate seated in judgment. We are not judging any one, my dear!"

"It is true that poor Candale has the most piteous face in the world, and mopes before wine and beauty," cried the Marquis de Valnoir from the other end of the table. He was already beginning to feel the effect of his numerous libations to Bacchus, and had received several reprimands on his fingers from the fan of his rather more sober neighbour.

"I am going to confess him," said the fair Rosette; and taking the vicomte by the hand, she drew him to a rich divan, with twisted rock-work feet, at the end of the hall, which offered to lovers every facility for an interview.

"Dear brother, it is necessary first to go on your knees, for that is the proper attitude for a penitent at confession," said Rosette, with an edifying air of compunction.

"I do not object," replied the vicomte, "especially when the confessor has such a soft voice and gentle eye." And he knelt before Rosette, who inclined towards him her charming head.

"Vicomte, what remorse is gnawing at your heart, that you carry into the world such a sad and doleful face? What conquests have you missed, what innocence have you spared, what husband have you respected, in an impulse of ridiculous virtue? for these are the faults for which there is no consolation."

"I have nothing of that sort to reproach myself with. Innocence! I have not even met it; while as for husbands, they are too much like Vulcan for me to feel much pity for them. My conscience is in good order so far as these are concerned."

"Since you have committed none of these crimes, I absolve you, and it is not necessary you should remain on your knees; come and sit by me, and kiss my hand in token of penitence."

Candale rose and gallantly pressed his lips upon Rosette's beautiful and dimpled hand.

"Now explain to me your funereal expression. If it is not remorse that makes it gloomy, it is chagrin, and what chagrin can you have? an unsuccessful love? That certainly ought not to be yours."

"You flatter me, Rosette; but I am not in a situation for such unhappiness, since I love no one."

"Do you know that what you are saying is neither gallant, nor French, monsieur? Learn that, in Paris, a man of the world is always supposed to be in love with the woman to whom he is talking."

"But you are not a woman, since you are my confessor."

"Not at all; you are released from the confessional, and we are talking. Fie, monsieur, I am a woman, and very much a woman."

"Ah, well, little one, if I were in love with you, that would not render me miserable; for you would not receive me, like a Hyrcanian tigress, if I can believe what you just whispered in my ear."

"What did I say, then, just now?"

"That you would love me even if I were ruined."

"Yes, but as you are not ruined, I love you no longer. I would have shown that generosity to your indigence. We who receive always, are sometimes pleased to give. There is nothing so sweet." While she said this, the mocking voice of Rosette took a tender tone, and her beautiful blue eyes were illuminated by a soft light that struck Candale.

"How I regret that I am not as poor as a poet! I should like, so as to put myself in a position to be loved by you, to play every night."

"You might gain by it."

"To marry *rosières*, to endow academies, to build cascades in my château garden, — which ruins even kings."

"All that would not be necessary," continued Rosette, shaking her wide-spread skirts; "if you loved me a little, I would resign myself to endure your wealth; but you have not the least interest in me."

"That was very true a short time ago; now, perhaps, it is no longer so," replied Candale, drawing as near to Rosette as her train admitted, and seizing her hand, which she yielded to him without resistance.

"Well! do you know Candale's secret?" cried the Marquis de Valnoir, advancing with an uncertain drunken step towards the group, which had for some time been withdrawn from the general uproar of the orgie.

"Yes, I know it," said Rosette, rising without withdrawing her hand, which the vicomte still held; "he has confided to me his unhappiness, and I bring him back to you quite consoled."

"The deuce! what a consoler! It will now be necessary to confide in her for the cure of all cases of despondency," grumbled the Marquis de Valnoir, as with an ironical air he conducted the couple back to the table.

If the Vicomte de Candale was not really cured of his blues, he certainly had the air of being less melancholy. His eye had regained its brilliancy, and he replied with great grace and wit to all the pleasantries launched at him from the four corners of the table. Guimard declared that the indisposition that had eclipsed the young man's gaiety was completely dissipated, and that she once more recognised her Candale of old.

A toast to Rosette was voted, in honour of her having worked this miracle, and the glasses were

carefully emptied to the last drop, thanks to the vigilant care of the Marquis de Valnoir, who placed great solemnity on these libations, and never permitted a guest to be less drunk than himself.

In the midst of the tumult which followed this toast, while each was occupied with his own affairs, Candale and Rosette disappeared, without being noticed.

Rosette, who should not have left until later, with the friend who had brought her, stepped into the *vis-à-vis* of the Vicomte de Candale. This kind of carriage seems to have been invented to facilitate vows of love and gallant larcenies. Many a timid lover has obtained from their joltings a fleeting happiness they had not the audacity to demand.

Foot touched foot, knee pressed against knee, hands met, lips and cheeks were constantly brought in contact, so that when the enormous coachman, a little more drunk than usual, drove recklessly across the gutters, less rigid virtue stepped out of the *vis-à-vis* than had entered it.

Rosette, as one may have noticed during the evening, was not of a prudish disposition; neither did Candale sin in excess of austerity; yet with all

these opportunities, we can affirm, what will appear inconceivable to most persons, that in spite of the long ride, — and Candale's coachman knew better than to hurry his horses when his master was alone with a young and beautiful woman, — in spite of all, Candale did not allow himself the slightest liberty, not even when Rosette leaned towards him, showing such emotion that her sighs shook the bouquet on her bosom.

Yes, such was the fact, inconceivable in the eighteenth century, which occurred that night. Candale conducted Rosette to her home without having taken a single kiss, and left her at her door with a courteous salutation.

When he had reëntered his carriage he said, yawning, "Heavens! how these girls and suppers bore me! How am I going to finish this night? Suppose I were to lower myself a little and go incognito to the ball of which Bonnard has told me, and where he says I shall find among the bourgeoisie fresher, prettier faces than amongst these celebrated puppets, who glisten with their pomade, and shine like idols polished by the kisses of their worshippers."

Rosette, who had never before experienced such

treatment, resigned herself to her maids, who put her to bed in a solitude that astonished and dismayed her.

"Ah! Candale! Candale!" murmured she, as she fell asleep.

CHAPTER III.

MADAME DE CHAMPROSÉ, whom we left in a cab with her faithful Justine, was greatly amused with the joltings of the coach, as it swung on its worn springs, and during the journey, which took some time, — although the highly paid coachman whipped his jades conscientiously, — she uttered little shrieks of laughter, as the carriage swung from one side to the other, following the inequalities of the pave-

ment, because monsieur, the lieutenant of police, occupied himself much more in hunting out scandalous stories to amuse the king, his master, than in serving the convenience and attending to the comfort of the citizens.

At last they arrived, for one always ends by reaching one's destination, even in a cab. A little Savoyard, holding a lantern, gallantly offered his arm to the ladies, who stepped down the slippery foot-board with affected awkwardness, giving to the men gathered about the entrance a chance glimpse of neatly turned ankles and tight stockings.

The ball had begun. The brilliantly illuminated windows of the tavern, the Moulin-Rouge, showed that the directors of the fête, although shopkeepers, were not stingy with their oil, which was furnished by a number of their members of the noble profession of grocers; the upholsterers had contributed seats and festoons of paper flowers, so that the hall was not as unattractive as one might at first have imagined.

The orchestra, perched on a platform that was covered with a spangled saddle-cloth, occupied the recess of a door from which the doors had been removed. It was composed of three performers: a

violinist, who, after having scraped his part in the spectacle of "*Audinot, ou les Grands Danseurs du Roi,*" was not sorry to earn three livres more by playing quadrilles and dances the remainder of the night; a tambourine player, who marked time vigorously for the benefit of careless dancers; and a flutist, who only allowed himself a certain number of "quacks."

Certainly, Monsieur Rameau, who invented such clever musical combinations, might have found this orchestra a little meagre and barbarous; but it sufficed for all purposes, and made up in zeal what it lacked in numbers. The violinist scraped the strings of his instrument furiously, with the most extraordinary flourishes, accompanied by grimaces, like one possessed. The flutist puffed out his cheeks as if he were an imp of Æolus in the Ballet of the Winds, and blew into his instrument with such force that his face was of a most beautiful crimson; as for the tambourine player, he flung his arms about like a maniac, beat the drum of his instrument as if he intended to break it; and all the three, as if fearful of losing the time, beat it with their feet like village fiddlers, raising a cloud of dust from the platform which supported them.

A jug of wine, from which in turn they drank large bumpers, stood by these Amphions, and the host of the Moulin-Rouge complacently refilled it, having learned by experience that nothing creates thirst like music, judging from the inextinguishable appetites of the musicians. This harmony, which could be heard down the staircase, greatly amused Madame de Champrosé, who, playing well on the harpsichord herself, could distinguish the license which this untrained orchestra allowed itself with the rules of music.

During the drive, Madame de Champrosé had commanded Justine not to treat her with more respect than was natural amongst cousins. She even ordered her to call her by the name "Jeannette," which, because it was a simple and pastoral one, she had chosen for this occasion.

When Justine appeared, accompanied by Jeannette, every one surrounded them with great eagerness. Justine presented her pretended cousin in the most natural manner possible; and the gallantries of the assembly broke into compliments, which, if not so well turned, were accepted with none the less pleasure. The gods, kings, and pretty women swallow everything of the kind, and Ma-

dame la Marquise discovered that the bourgeois were men of greater taste than she had supposed, a little absurd in their madrigals, but that did no harm — it only proved their sincerity; for too much familiarity inspires distrust. Thus Madame de Champrosé, who felt but little flattered at hearing the abbé or the commander compare her to Hebe, reddened with pleasure when a young druggist of the Rue Sainte Avoie said, in passing her, "What a peach-like cheek! one would like to bite it!"

It is true it would have been difficult to find anything daintier, fresher, or prettier than the pretended Jeannette.

Although she carried her court dress with the proud bearing of a princess and a person nobly born, the simple costume of a grisette suited her even better. The short skirt gave her more grace than the exaggerated pannier.

Freed from all the headgear that fashion piles up, she was a hundred times more charming; her beautiful blond hair, instead of being crimped, pomaded and powdered, built up into an extravagant edifice on a wire frame and filled with flowers, knots of ribbon, and porcelain butterflies, was simply coiled above her white neck and drawn directly

back in Chinese fashion, showing the pretty waves of hair on her perfectly formed forehead.

Madame de Champrosé was not one of these wearisome beauties of the Greek or Roman type, formed rather to put into marble than to be loved. Her charming eyes, full of expression, animated a keenly intelligent face, which, by reason of its extreme youth, was capable of playing the *ingénue* to perfection. Her nose, *à la Roxelane*, lacked happily the extreme of regularity, which is so celebrated, but does not please; as for her mouth, it was in form a miniature Cupid's bow, and in colour like one of those double cherries that Jean Jacques Rousseau threw from the tree into the bosom of Mlle. Gallet. Although Madame was markedly the great lady, there was nothing about her incompatible with the bearing of a grisette. Her feet were very small and daintily shod; but one must recollect that the Parisian grisettes, who ran like partridges, equalled the Spanish noblewomen in the smallness of their feet, and showed much coquetry in the manner of their adornment. As for her hands, the rosy and taper fingers of which peeped out from black silk mitts, their delicacy was easily explained. Mlle. Justine had said that her cousin

was a lace-maker, and it was not in trimming the delicate threads of Arachne that one would roughen one's fingers, or break one's nails.

Jeannette became immediately the belle of the ball. Scarcely had she seated herself on the bench against the wall, by the side of Justine, than she was invited to dance. A gallant had fetched for her a great bouquet of *roses du roi*, which she held while dancing, and of which she had put one bud in the bosom of her dress, where the points of her fichu joined. Dorat, the musketeer-poet, would have said it was to perfume the flower. Another, a bailiff's clerk, had regaled her with two oranges, and presented a green paper fan, on the back of which was printed an air from "*Ernelinde*."

These gallantries amused Jeannette exceedingly, who received them all with a laughing air, especially the languishing looks and affected sighs of the young druggist and the bailiff's clerk. She had not imagined that people of this kind would resemble men of her own class so closely.

These shopkeepers and smaller gentry, of whom she had hitherto only had a glimpse from the height of her carriage, crowded into the mud or splashed by her coachman, or fleeing in a deluge of rain, sur-

prised her by their simple, almost human manners. She would not have believed that such animals could have expressed themselves in such intelligible language, not to mention the sensible, and even polite, things they said. She felt the same sort of astonishment she would have experienced if her pug-dog, instead of barking, or her marmoset had suddenly joined by words in a conversation; perhaps in an even greater degree, for had not her dog and her marmoset been brought up in a most proper manner by Monsieur l'Abbé?

It was not that Madame de Champrosé affected haughtiness, or was in the least degree contemptuous. She was not infatuated with her nobility, and never spoke of her ancestors, nor did she care much for her genealogical tree; it was only that she had never been brought in contact with others than her own class, who all believed themselves to be of a chosen clay and a particular blood.

She noticed that the third clerk of the bailiff had as well turned a leg as that of the Chevalier de Verteuil, who dandled his perpetually to have it noticed. What astonished her profoundly was that the druggist's son, although he did not laugh at everything without reason, had teeth as beautiful

in colour as those in which Monsieur l'Abbé took such pride that, to show them, he would have laughed at the most disastrous news.

"These churls are as well made as gentlemen, and do not say many more foolish things," thought Madame de Champrosé, in accepting an invitation for the following quadrille. Carried away by the impulse and simplicity of the general pleasure, the pretended Jeannette abandoned herself with all her heart to the dance, and held out without affectation her white aristocratic hands to the grasp of the red fists of her partners, when they formed a circle in the dance, surprised to find, notwithstanding her good birth, that she was vulgar enough to be able to amuse herself as if she had been of little or no position.

One would have said that, with her petticoats, her diamonds, and rouge, she had also put off that languor which only attaches itself to people of quality, and disdains the more solid constitutions of the working classes. The naïve admiration of these vulgarians flattered her. If it was not most delicately expressed, it at least had the merit of sincerity. To all these good people she was simply Jeannette, cousin of a waiting-maid, a soubrette in high life, it is true, but with no title.

Here she had no marquisate but her beautiful eyes, and no riches but those of her person. She was happy in not having lost by her incognito, which is not always favourable, even to those in high places.

She danced the gavotte, the minuet, *la bourrée*, striving not to show too many of the graces Marcel had taught her, but restraining herself to naturalness, which suited her even better.

However, although she amused herself extremely well, she had as yet seen no one who answered to her ideal, and among all these worthy faces she had not found one that produced the desired effect.

Thunderclaps were the fashion in these times, when they had so abridged the old-fashioned formalities with which the prudery of our ancestors had surrounded themselves, and it was generally agreed that hearts made for one another could understand each other at first sight, without languishing under all these terrible attentions.

But Madame de Champrosé, however great her desire to be enchanted, did not find any such charm in the amiable druggist-presumptive, or in the amorous glances of the bailiff's clerk, that checked her perfect freedom of mind or of heart; and

when, during a figure in the quadrille, Justine, in passing her mistress, demanded by an interrogation of the eye if her fancy had made a choice among all these gallants, an imperceptible motion of the head signified that she had not.

If she herself remained insensible, she had made frightful ravages in the hearts of these bourgeois; and the beauties of this quarter, who had sparkled quite brilliantly before the rising of this new planet, found themselves half extinguished by her light.

Mlles. Javotte, Nanette, and Denise, almost abandoned by their habitual admirers, remained in sulky loneliness, as if they had been dowagers or antediluvians, destined by their years to be only wallflowers. They had, however, colour in their cheeks like the deep red of apples, their corsages were full to bursting, and they wore red clocked silk stockings drawn over their chubby legs. They were greatly astonished that a little person, scarcely plump, almost pale, should be able to stand against their robust charms and palpable advantages.

To regain for themselves their vanished lovers, they made the most marked advances, ogling, throwing loving glances, laughing noisily, and rather bitterly; and even Denise could not help

giving what is commonly called a "pinch" to the young druggist, who till now had been her admitted wooer, and acquitted himself very regularly of this duty, but who did not now trouble himself to give her the most distant attention: the passionate druggist, who was speaking at the time to Jeannette, was as stoical as the Spartan boy who allowed himself to be torn in his vitals by a fox, without admitting by a cry or gesture that he was being tortured.

He did not even turn his head, and Denise was obliged to return to her seat without gaining so much as a glance from his eye, or a smile. In vain Javotte extended her foot under the eyes of the bailiff's clerk, and made the rhinestone buckles glitter to attract the compliments of this young client of Themis, who never before had neglected his opportunities. But it was of no avail; his looks were all turned in another direction, too absorbed to lower themselves to her foot, and Mlle. Javotte got nothing for her coquetry. Nanette, who ordinarily had no time to sit down, lost at least half a dozen quadrilles. Although no one in this gathering suspected the rank of the marquise, it must be said that the power of high birth and pure

blood produced a strong effect on these worthy people, who paid to the false Jeannette involuntary and delicate attentions which a grisette of equal beauty would not have won from them. To please people of this kind was not the end sought by the marquise, however much she might be flattered by the admiration she excited.

The most severe queens have sometimes been more pleased with the blunt compliments of a sailor than with the most carefully studied sonnets of the court poets. There is in certain brutalities something which is not displeasing to the most delicate persons, and Madame de Champrosé enjoyed highly the compliments paid to Jeannette. The grisette answered to the marquise for the sincerity of the compliments of the chevalier, the commander, and the abbé.

However, to turn the heads of plebeians was not sufficient for her; she wished to be touched herself by caprice or passion, and did not bound her escapade by a few simple dances in a public house. The modest air of the bride, in whom shyness veiled her love, and who strove to check the ardour of her young husband, whose resounding kisses drew laughter from the assembly and made

her blush up to her eyes, brought back the imagination of the marquise to ideas of the true and simple happiness of those who do not despise nature's laws.

She thought of that hand, twisted by the gout, in which she had placed hers on leaving the convent; of the dull, wrinkled, and cold face of the Marquis de Champrosé, — a sort of mummy dried by ambition and debauchery, — whom she had found so hideous and so ridiculous without his wig under the canopy of the bed on their wedding night, and she could not refrain from thinking that her maid's cousin had been better treated by Hymen than herself.

It is true that the cousin's husband did not possess sixty quarterings, but neither did he count sixty winters, which was a compensation.

While the marquise made these reflections, waving her green paper fan with a grace that would have betrayed her to more experienced eyes, the son of the druggist and the clerk meditated their *bons mots*, which had now become complicated, meantime standing fixed before her like so many posts, with the most pitiful and ridiculous air in the world.

Madame de Champrosé was secretly amused, and from a malicious cruelty did not aid them in the least, so that they rolled their eyes like negroes with a clock in their stomach.

Justine, seeing her mistress cornered in this manner, went to her and, taking her arm, made a tour of the ballroom, talking in a low voice. "Is madame bored at my cousin's ball, and how do these simple folk seem to her?"

"No, I amuse myself like any woman who dances, and these bourgeois seem very happy to me."

"Is this all?"

"Yes."

"The druggist's son is well thought of in the Rue Sainte Avoie, and the most beautiful girls do not disdain his salutation when he raises his hat."

"That is possible, but he does not inspire me with the least desire to lower my dignity."

"And the third clerk?"

"He may become a second clerk, nothing more."

"I am disappointed to think that madame has only this for her pains."

"I almost feel inclined to call the cab, and return to the hôtel."

"If madame would permit me to advise her, I should say wait a little."

"You are amusing yourself then so much?"

"I am not amused if madame is bored; but it might happen that, when we had left, the person we are looking for might arrive. They still expect a number of young men, and besides, a ball, like fireworks, is always most beautiful at the end."

Madame de Champrosé submitted to so many good reasons, and made no mistake in doing so, as we shall see later. On such slight accidents turn the making of events! If Madame de Champrosé had left the ball a quarter of an hour earlier, she might never have been in love.

CHAPTER IV.

THE anticipations of Justine were not long in proving justified, and showed all the astuteness of this model lady's maid, whom Monsieur de Marivaux would not have failed to introduce into one of his comedies under the name of Lisette; and Madame de Champrosé had to congratulate herself on having listened to the

advice which her faithful domestic had given her on this occasion.

The ball had lasted half as long as a reasonable ball, that is to say, until two o'clock in the morning, and already they were passing the refreshments, consisting of sweet cider, wine of Suresnes, and roast chestnuts, when there was a great commotion at the door, and a person who seemed to be of importance entered in a superb and triumphant fashion. It was the steward of the Marquis de ——, who, being a good fellow this evening, did not disdain to come and unbend himself an instant and rest from the cares of greatness at this festival. The steward, who approached the fifties, had a red face under his little wig with close curls, which showed that the "cult" of Bacchus had in him a devotee full of fervour; at the same time his thin, sinuous legs, encased in variegated stockings, and his back and shoulders, which were sharply outlined in a large coat of chestnut-coloured cloth, showed that he was still, in spite of his age, a perennial beau, — whom they call in Cytheria "a payer of arrears."

To this personage the assembly paid much deference; and also to another whom Monsieur de

Bonnard brought with him, and whom he introduced under the modest name of Monsieur Jean, a relative from the provinces, who had come to Paris in the hope of becoming an excise commissioner, under Monsieur de Bonnard's all-powerful protection.

"He is a little timid," explained M. de Bonnard, with the greatest benignity, shaking off, with an air of aristocratic ease, — after the manner of great lords whom he aped,—some grains of Spanish snuff which had fallen on his frill; "but," he added, "I hope these ladies will not treat him too much as a provincial, and will be indulgent over the *début* of a youth who has just been set down by the coach from Auxerre, and who asks nothing more than to model himself after the good manners of Paris."

This little speech completed, M. de Bonnard pirouetted on his heel nimbly enough, and believing that he had done all in his power, abandoned his protégé to his own devices — left the cock among the young hens — while he himself went to make broad jokes with the mothers, and pinch the cheeks of their daughters, with that air half paternal, half libertine, of which the secret is lost.

Monsieur Jean, whom Jeannette regarded from

her corner with much interest, had not as awkward an air as one would have expected from a provincial. He carried himself with ease, if one thought of his natural embarrassment at finding himself alone at a ball where he knew no one at all; in the midst of shopkeepers, druggists, lawyers' clerks, maids from the great houses dressed like princesses, and rich shop-women decked in gay silks, with pearls in their ears. He had a well-set-up figure for a youth from the provinces. His coat was of dove-coloured cloth with steel buttons, and opened over a vest of striped lilac silk, and was of a style that was not bad for a small town. Jeannette also noticed that the new-comer had a beautiful leg and a small foot; his shoes, blacked to perfection and brilliant with steel buckles, fitted him to a marvel. As for his face, it was full of charm, not spoilt by a certain air of ingenuousness which all women, even the least experienced, do not object to finding in young men. His eye, though soft, did not lack fire, and from the vivacity of his looks one divined that, if he had not been restrained by timidity, he would have shown himself to be very witty. This timidity, however, had nothing in it of the awkwardness

that confuses débutants, making them commit blunder after blunder, and rendering them the most ridiculous of objects.

Although from the provinces, he did not appear to suffer from that overwhelming shyness which forces an unhappy young man, burning with a desire to invite a pretty cousin with whom he is in love to dance, to ask instead some hideous creature whom he abominates. He went with the most humbly polite air in the world, but at the same time without the slightest confusion, to the prettiest, the most elegant, and the most admired young lady at the ball, that is to say, to Mlle. Jeannette herself. This sublime audacity stupefied three or four boobies with figures like hop-poles, with flaxen locks and red hands, who had been hovering around Jeannette for an hour, like uneasy herons, changing from one foot to another, meditating the presumptuous project of inviting the beautiful lace-maker for the *next* dance. Sighs full of melancholy escaped from the breasts of the four imbeciles, who, although born in the streets of Puits-qui-Parle, Femme-sans-Tête, l'Homme-Armé, and Petit-Musc, could not free themselves from envy at the manner in which this nobody just

arrived from Auxerre presented himself to pretty girls.

The amiable druggist, who believed he had made a not disagreeable impression on Mlle. Jeannette, and who, since the beginning of the ball, had been torturing his wits to compose a madrigal and compliments not too redolent of the Rue Sainte Avoie, could not see this newcomer enter into competition with him without a sense of displeasure. Although one may say that self-love renders a man blind, it does not blind druggists enough to make them have no fear of the presence of a good-looking youth near the object of their preference.

Neither was the third clerk able to prevent himself from regarding his rival with a fierce eye, and cursing secretly M. de Bonnard for having brought this puppet just out of a bandbox, who gained with one sentence more than he had in two hours of attention and gallantries ; for the smile with which Jeannette granted the request of Monsieur Jean had something in it so gracious, so soft, and so benevolent, that the *basochien*[1] was filled with jealousy. He had obtained from Jeannette only slight

[1] Literally, "member of the *basoche*," an old term for a "corporation of lawyers."

cold smiles, given by courtesy; and yet her inexhaustible gaiety would have enlivened even the dead themselves, and this evening had been an evening of evenings to him.

Monsieur Jean took Mlle. Jeannette by the tips of her pretty fingers and conducted her to her place in the dance. He did not acquit himself badly in the figures, showing not the slightest awkwardness, and if M. de Bonnard had not said that the young man had just arrived from the provinces, no one would have suspected it.

"You have never seen Paris, Monsieur Jean?" said Jeannette to her partner, in an interval of the dance.

"No, mademoiselle; it is the first time I have been in this great city."

"And what do you think of it? does it come up to your idea of it?"

"Yes and no; I find in it superb monuments, which attest the power of our kings and the wealth of individuals; but with it all is mingled so much misery, dirt, mud, and smoke, that I do not know if I ought to admire or censure. The most wonderful thing I have seen in Paris up to the present moment is yourself; I may say this without flattery."

"Oh! If you have seen nothing more wonderful than me in Paris, it is because you have but just come, and have not had time to carry your observations very far."

"I have succeeded. I shall not search further. Although from the provinces, I know how to appreciate delicacy, beauty, and grace at their true value."

"Be quiet, naughty flatterer, you make me blush."

"What more beautiful paint could tint your cheeks than your heart's blood, moved by the honest emotion of a youth who loves you?"

"In the case of one whom I please, I am quite agreeable. Although modest, I know that I am so made as not to inspire with dislike; but how can you say that you love me — you who have known me scarcely an hour!"

"An hour! It does not want so long as that. I had no sooner perceived you than I felt that I belonged to you. I not know you, great gods! Have I not seen the celestial expression of your glances, the charming grace of your smile, heard your silvery voice? Have I not touched your hand with a light pressure? Have I not in dancing breathed the odour of your bouquet, which

your bosom has perfumed? Do I not know that you have blond hair, a supple and willowy figure, and that you dance in a ravishing fashion? What could I know more of you, after I had followed you for months, like your dog or your shadow? A clear and simple life like yours reveals itself in a single glance."

"Do you think so?" replied the false Jeannette, who could not repress a slight smile at the last words of Monsieur Jean. "I have blue eyes and blond hair, as you have noticed, but how do you know that I am not perfidious, peevish, bad, insupportable? All young girls are charming at balls, and dancing softens the most peevish characters."

"Calumniate yourself at your pleasure; divinities alone can speak so of themselves without blaspheming; but you cannot make me change my opinion."

"Ah, well, so be it! I am a compound of perfections; I will not dispute that with you, although there is much exaggeration in all you have just said; but for all that, it does not follow that I am going to accept your love in the sudden fashion in which it was born."

"Who has demanded that of you? I wish, if you will permit me, to prove to you how durable

a sentiment can be that needed but a moment for its birth, and an hour for its development."

"Oh! I forewarn you, if this fantasy born of the ball does not die with it, and if you still think of the little lace-maker, whom you found pleasing by contrast with a few ugly faces, that you will be obliged to make your court after the regular fashion, to show yourself a sentimental lover like a hero of old romances; and no one can tell but that, after all your proofs of devotion, I shall laugh in your face, and, making you a courtesy, simply say, 'Your servant.'"

A new dance interrupted this conversation, and Justine, who had kept apart and very negligently chaperoned her pretended cousin, understood at once, with that deep comprehension of the human heart in general, and of their mistress's in particular, which all true waiting-maids possess, that Madame de Champrosé was extremely interested in Monsieur Jean, and that she would soon see her desire gratified.

The ball drew to its end; the musicians, tired of playing, vainly strove to moisten their throats and rouse their flagging energies in the intermissions of the music. Sleep and drunkenness overtook them; the lamps began to flicker from lack of oil, and the

candles to sputter in their sockets. Dawn, just quitting the couch of the aged Tithonus, threw across the window-shades tones of pastel blue.

Some energetic person proposed that, before returning home to bed, they should all go to the meadows of Saint Gervais to see the sun rise, drink milk at the dairy, and gather lilac. It was early May, the season of these flowers so dear to Parisians, who rightly admire their beautiful purple. The proposition was received with applause; and all the participants of the ball, even old men to whom bed would have been more fitting than a walk in the dews of morning, set out with shouts of pleasure for the celebrated meadows, one of the freshest pieces of verdure around Paris.

Monsieur Jean offered his arm to Mlle. Jeannette, who accepted it, but under the protection of Mlle. Justine, who acted as chaperon. The druggist offered his to Denise, who, happy at recovering her captive, thought it wise not to indulge in useless recriminations. The third clerk was quite happy, with Nanette, the beauty with the buckles, to walk by his side; and thus arranged, the party wandered in pairs along the little by-paths which separated the groups of odorous blossoms.

The greater portion of these groups consisted of lovers and fiancés, and in the turns of the walks many kisses were given and received. Monsieur Jean did not dare become so bold, but he pressed against his heart Madame de Champrosé's arm, and plucked for her the most enormous bouquet of lilac and violets that ever a grisette carried home to her attic. He had overturned for her the treasures of Flora.

These loving groups, scattered here and there along the narrow paths, would have made a most charming subject for the brush of M. Lancret, painter of lovers' fêtes. The petticoats of silk and of pekin, of brilliant colours, trailing over the grass; the corsages which, without being cut with the noble impudence of the women of the court, left one to discover or divine the new-born charms already ripe for love; the arms thrown lightly about waists, and heads so near together under pretext of a whisper,—the lips addressing to the cheek confidences intended for the ear: all this invited the pencil of an artist accustomed to sacrifice to the Graces, and formed an *ensemble* as agreeable to the eye as to the heart.

A little behind walked groups of parents and

of middle-aged persons: the papas in long-tailed coats, with large bright buttons, with an air of good-fellowship, and leaning heavily on a cane with a crow's beak handle, while their cocked hats were set firmly on their heads; the mammas, fat and ruddy, still attractive, dressed in their enlarged wedding dresses, of gay flowered stuffs, as was the fashion at the beginning of the reign. They listened smilingly to the broad jokes of their companions, keeping an oversight at the same time of their daughters, however sure they were of the prudence of their children. These groups, to which the painter could not have given warmer and riper tones, formed a most harmonious background for the fresh and sparkling youth, which dawn, the youth of day, was bathing in her roseate light.

M. Lancret would have assuredly put Jean and Jeannette in the centre of his composition. To protect herself from the morning dampness, Jeannette had flung over her shoulders the taffeta cloak of shot-silk; but the silk had slipped off, and as she bent her head the white and polished nape of her neck could be seen, where several wanton curls nestled in spite of the steel comb which held the knot of her hair. She held herself closely pressed

against Monsieur Jean to avoid the dew-spangled branches, which shed pearls over her dress and seemed to wish to bar her passage, and keep her longer amongst themselves. At least that was the reason she gave to herself, for it is certain she leaned more heavily on Monsieur Jean's arm than a perfectly smooth path and her natural lightness demanded. To hide a slight embarrassment, she gave her face a bath of flowers, plunging it in the great bouquet he had gathered for her, drowning thus the roses in the lilac.

They found the dairyman, who hastened to milk his cows, — astonished at seeing their stable invaded by this joyous band, —who turned their heads towards the invaders, while the frothing milk fell in marvellously clean bowls. As the dairyman had not a sufficient quantity of cups, Jean and Jeannette had but one between them. Jeannette drank first, and Jean strove to find on the edge of the cup the imprint of the charming lips of the little lace-maker. The older ones and M. de Bonnard supplied themselves with wine, preferring the juice of the vine to this Arcadian drink, only fit for youngsters recently weaned.

Then came the time for separating. At the

moment of parting, Monsieur Jean asked whether he might again have the pleasure of seeing Mlle. Jeannette, and she, after consulting for some minutes with Justine, told him that the day after to-morrow she should go to take back some work to a customer, and if Monsieur Jean would be in the Rue Saint Martin, at three o'clock in the afternoon, they could take the walk together.

Then the cab which had brought them came to take them home, and Madame de Champrosé entered her apartment by the secret stairway, which was never lacking in even the most virtuous establishments of the eighteenth century, and under the armorial blazoning of her canopied bed went to sleep and dreamed more than once of Monsieur Jean.

CHAPTER V.

THE beautiful sleeper did not awake till past midday, which was not unusual, for before that time she rarely rang for her maid.

To all the world, excepting the faithful Justine, she had really passed the night in her hôtel, and no one would suspect her escapade; besides which, no one had a right to criticise, as she was a widow, and free to do as she chose. Still, it is so easy to do what one wishes, and yet guard the most nar-

row conventionalities, that it is only the awkward ones who voluntarily remove the varnish of good reputation, always agreeable and necessary.

Justine's discretion was assured, for the marquise possessed a secret which her waiting-woman would not have had divulged for all the world; besides, she had promised a considerable income to Justine, if she continued satisfied with her, after a certain number of years. Thus she felt certain of her fidelity, and ran no risk with her.

The double curtains and padded shutters which protected this temple of sleep from light and noise were opened, and Phœbus, admitted to the informal reception of the marquise, hastened to pay her his court. Justine got her mistress up, fatigued, or rather languid, after her great achievements at the ball; for Terpsichore, who gives such stiff joints to men, has never succeeded in really tiring a woman, whose lightness and grace have formed them for the dance. A bath was prepared; Justine plunged her mistress into it, and if some indiscreet person could have found himself there, without being crowned by antlers and devoured by dogs, like Actæon, he would have discovered more perfect charms than those of Diana, for it is quite

incredible that a goddess so perfectly made should have flown into a passion at being discovered naked. It must have been that she would have lost by it, and was not at all anxious that any one should be able to make a category of her charms not altogether favourable.

This was not the case with Madame de Champrosé, of whom one could say that adornment added nothing to her charms, but rather detracted from them. As soon as Madame de Champrosé was seated in her warm and perfumed bath, a conversation commenced between the mistress and maid; we may imagine that it turned on the subject of Monsieur Jean.

"Did you not notice," said the marquise to Justine, "how that young man differed from all the others at the ball, and did you not think that he had the most distinguished air of society?"

"I am of madame's opinion," said the complaisant Justine; "the youth was really most prepossessing."

"He was neither brusque nor awkward in his manners."

"Oh, as for that, no; he had extremely good manners."

"He expressed himself most agreeably; his words, although simple, were not less well chosen."

"As for that, I must trust to the judgment of madame, who knows so much more about that than I; besides, this young man spoke too low, and too near the ear of Mlle. Jeannette for me to hear."

"Do you think he is in love with me?"

"I believe that madame does not need to be enlightened by me upon that point."

"He said many gallant things to me; he even made me a declaration; but that is not enough; I wish to know if he feels for me one of those strong and lasting passions, such as you tell me plebeians experience."

"As far as I can judge from my slight knowledge, Monsieur Jean seems to me to have in his heart the germs of sincere love."

"The germs only?"

"A little virtue and resistance will increase it to one of those passions of which I spoke to madame, and which do not exist in the great world."

"Justine, it appears to me that you are a little impertinent. It would seem from your remarks

that we duchesses, marquises, and the like, do not hold ourselves sufficiently on the defensive in matters of love."

"Oh! it is not for great ladies to trouble themselves about such matters; the rules of morality are made for the common herd; they contain nothing to inconvenience a person of quality; but I simply wished to insinuate that it was for this reason that the vicomtes and chevaliers and marquises only love superficially."

"So, then, if I am to be loved by Monsieur Jean, you counsel me to be virtuous?"

"I should not dare to say that formally to madame for fear of being absurd, but madame has my idea."

"What a singular girl you are, Justine! Truly, you have the imaginings of another world; but I will conform to them if only to see what will happen."

"Does madame wish to leave her bath?"

"Yes, wrap me in a dressing-gown and put me to bed, and we will continue the conversation."

When Madame de Champrosé was settled on her pillows, which Justine shook up with a deft hand, the conversation was resumed between mistress

and maid: "Justine, it may be contrary to your ideas of virtue, but I have made an appointment with Monsieur Jean — in the open air, it is true, and so of no importance, but still a rendezvous."

"Madame, I do not blame you at all for that. Since you desire to continue this adventure, it is necessary not to lose all traces of him. Without this appointment, how should we find Monsieur Jean, at least without asking his whereabouts of M. de Bonnard, who knows him?"

"You have a quick wit, Justine, but this project, although well conceived, will still be embarrassing in its execution."

"If Madame la Marquise will deign to leave to me the details and fatigue of execution, I will disclose to her my plan of procedure; but first she must give me twenty-five louis."

"Take them; there is plenty of gold in the little rosewood bureau near the window."

"I have them."

"Continue now."

"With these twenty-five louis, I am going to rent a pretty, modest little apartment, fit for a prudent girl, and furnish it with such belongings as the nimble fingers of an accomplished lace-maker

could earn; for if you wish to meet Monsieur Jean later, with more ease and secrecy than in the street, you would completely destroy his illusion by receiving him at the Hôtel de Champrosé, where your porter would be greatly astonished at having to announce so ordinary a name."

"You reason wonderfully, Justine. This room appears to me the most necessary thing in the world."

"I will engage it to-day, since madame agrees. It will also be necessary to have a complete trousseau, dresses, wrappers, jackets, and mob-caps — for the wardrobe of Madame de Champrosé, well furnished as it is, will not serve Mlle. Jeannette: too much of the world's goods is sometimes injurious!"

"You are as sententious as a philosopher, but you are right, Justine, and every philosopher is not that. The trousseau is granted, but everything must be in good taste. I do not wish to push this disguise to the point of not looking pretty."

"Rest content; you will have only fine linen that will not chafe you, of striped pink and white or blue and white, sprigged Indian muslins and other fresh, springlike stuffs which the season ad-

mits of and which cost little. Then, as madame is blonde and her hair without powder will show more, we will make her some simple and coquettish little caps, and seeing that Jeannette is a lace-maker, we will have them of lace."

"That will be charming," cried the marquise, clapping her hands in her enthusiasm over these toilets, of which the idea was as delightful to her as a repast of brown bread, strawberries, and cream, spread on a fresh lawn before a farm-house in the spring, would appear to a gourmet.

"Madame would look her very best if dressed in rags; she adorns all that she wears, and, besides, things need not always cost much to be pretty, and let us hope she will not disdain her grisette's wardrobe."

"That which troubles me most is not to wear silk stockings."

"There are thread and cotton stockings so fine that madame will not notice the difference. You might even risk silk stockings without being out of keeping, for the most stylish grisettes permit themselves this luxury."

"You reassure me, Justine, but how shall we arrange about the interview for to-morrow? I

cannot leave my hôtel at three o'clock dressed as a grisette."

"Certainly not; but madame can drive in her carriage to some church or shop which has another entrance, where a cab can wait for us. We will enter it and go to Jeannette's apartment, where I will dress madame in such a fashion as to make her believe she has all her life been a lace-maker."

These preliminaries being arranged, Justine assisted the marquise in rising, and, after putting her in the hands of the maids who completed her toilet, she left her, having obtained permission to go out.

The abbé was introduced and admitted, as usual, to pay his court; and notwithstanding the suffering which he complained of as caused by ardent love, his clear colour appeared very fresh for a man who was roasted, burned, and reduced to ashes, as he expressed his condition.

The chevalier appeared a little later, followed by the commander, who preceded the financier, so that the ordinary household of Madame de Champrosé was present in full muster.

They were all enchanted to find the marquise in better spirits, which they unanimously attributed to the excursion to Cours-la-Reine. But among all

these acute observers, no one divined that the freshness of Madame de Champrosé came from having passed the night at a ball, and that the fire of her eyes came from a love which was for none of them.

Justine did not lose any time, and in truth there was none to lose, since all had to be ready by the next day. She rented, near a church, a room with a closet, at the price of a hundred and forty francs a year, of which she at once paid a quarter's rent. Then she sought out a shop for second-hand furniture, and took great care in selecting the furnishings for the apartment of Mlle. Jeannette, choosing only what was perfectly clean, but did not look as if it had been too recently bought. Then, with the aid of two expert upholsterers, she soon had the nest ready to receive the bird. She also bought at a linen shop kept by one of her friends, ready-made linen, and four well-paid dressmakers cut, tacked, and sewed the various fabrics she brought them, after a pattern fitted to Madame de Champrosé's slender form.

The next day all came off as arranged. Leaving her house in her carriage and in her customary clothes, Madame de Champrosé was driven to the Church of Saint R——, where she entered by one

door and passed out by another, and found in the cab waiting for her a mantle which Justine had brought to throw over her fashionable costume, so that she might ascend to her little apartment without attracting attention.

The stairway was rather steep, built like a ladder in a mill: a heavy balustrade of wood bordered it on one side, on the other was a rope by which to aid oneself in ascending. It differed widely from the staircase of Madame de Champrosé's hôtel, so conveniently arranged by the architect Ledoux, ornamented by bas-reliefs of infant revelries, and protected by an open-flowered balustrade, the work of the celebrated locksmith, Amour; but this contrast rather pleased the marquise, who rested tremblingly on these rough steps a foot accustomed to polished marble and velvet carpets.

In entering her chamber, Madame de Champrosé could feel only the greatest satisfaction in Justine's zeal, for this little nest, although nothing in it was beyond mediocrity, seemed created as the resting-place of innocence and love.

If Madame de Champrosé had been a philosopher, which she was not, she might have made a thousand wise reflections on the folly of mortals

who torment themselves in a thousand ways to obtain luxuries not at all necessary to happiness. In short, this interior, which the painter Chardin, so rightly praised by M. Diderot, would have loved to reproduce, formed, with its gray wood, its worn carpet, its mantel of imitation marble surmounted by a camaieu, its narrow windows, some of whose panes had a bull's-eye in the centre, with its flower-pots of blossoms, and its tranquil, sober light, a much more effective background for the beauty of the marquise than her opulent boudoir encumbered with china grotesques, Sévres bisques, imposts by Boucher, water-colours by Baudoin, and a thousand costly superfluities.

The furnishings were of the simplest, but Justine had forgotten nothing. A little bed of gray wood, set off with white, was half concealed under modest Persian curtains; several chairs with hinds' feet; an armchair of Utrecht green velvet, slightly worn but free from spots or holes, where, one would swear, the grandmother had sat for the last ten years; a marquetry chest of drawers with a marble top, furnished with drawers with wrought brass handles; a little well-polished table, doing honour to the cleanliness of some Flemish house-

keeper, and on which rested the bits of board, skeins of thread, pincushions, and bobbins which are the lace-maker's paraphernalia. These, with a looking-glass, completed the furnishings of a little home, which subsequently caused Madame de Champrosé to see that lavish expenditure was by no means necessary for the housing of happiness.

The window, for this little chamber had not long since been the home of a veritable grisette, was wreathed about with sweet peas, blindweed, and nasturtiums, some in flower, some in bud, others yet waiting to spread out their heart-shaped leaves, and twist their tendrils about the threads fastened for them by some provident hand. This window looked out on the gardens of a large hôtel in the neighbourhood, and by this happy accident the window of Jeannette escaped the ordinary Paris horizon of roof angles, and chimney-pots, and ugly walls discoloured by rain, not built as could be wished in order to give pleasure to the eye.

The tops of the chestnut-trees, variegated with flowers, were swaying, and the breeze wafted their bitter perfume on the tips of its wings.

The examination of the lodgings being finished, she turned her attention to her toilet, which was

soon completed. It consisted only in the changing of a dress and a coiffure for more simple ones.

Thanks to the consummate ability of Justine, the metamorphosis was complete. It is not, perhaps, as easy as it appears, to change a marquise into a grisette — the contrary would, perhaps, be easier.

Justine averred later that this toilet had been the supreme effort of her genius, and that not one of madame's court dresses had cost half the effort to conceive, or seemed so difficult in its execution.

Madame de Champrosé now threw a look into her mirror, which she had disregarded till this moment, as Justine had begged her to wait and see the entire change in her appearance, rather than watch the transformation in detail, so that the surprise might be greater.

The marquise was at the same time astonished and charmed. She found herself of an unimagined beauty, more distracting than ever, and hardly recognisable, everything about her being changed, even to the colour of her hair and her complexion. From the absence of rouge and powder, her air, her expression even, was no longer the same; instead of her piquant grace, grand air, and insolent beauty, she had a gentle, modest, virginal, almost infantine

appearance, for this fresh simplicity had made her look younger by several years. She was even more beautiful than at the ball of the previous evening, when, dressed in Justine's clothes, she had taken with them something less pure and less distinguished; for clothes mould themselves after the character of those who wear them, the souls of their wearers giving them a certain individuality. Justine's was the soul of a waiting-woman.

"Madame sees that she can lose her fortune without risking her beauty, and that her charms need neither fashion, nor jewels," said Justine, with a legitimate feeling of pride. "All that madame wears did not cost thirty francs."

"But, then, it is Justine who has dressed me," said Madame de Champrosé, willing to pay her maid a compliment.

"But it is past three o'clock; give me that bandbox, and conduct me to the corner of the Rue Saint Martin, where you may leave me to my fate."

CHAPTER VI.

HER disguise completed, Madame de Champrosé descended the stairs, followed by her loyal maid, who held her by the arm with obsequious carefulness. It seemed very strange to the marquise to be walking in the streets. For the first time she found herself in contact with the pavement of Paris, so muddy, so uneven, so slippery, and yet so full of charm to the ob-

server and moralist who know how to glean a thousand strange or philosophical anecdotes from it.

She met the common people on the same footing, — she who till now had regarded them only from the height of her coach, — and was astonished at discovering among these sad and wan faces, on many of which misery had set its imprint, the counterparts of many faces she had met at the large or small receptions given at Versailles.

Contrary to the habit of grisettes, who move in and out of embarrassing crowds, the marquise walked with adorable awkwardness. She hesitated at each step, and seemed to try each bit of pavement, as a new dancer tests the rope with her chalked slipper. The carriages frightened her and made her utter little cries. Her heart beat strongly, as that of all pretty women going in search of an adventure, for without being as rigorous as a vestal, the marquise had never been in the habit of committing serious indiscretions, and she felt considerable disturbance.

It is true that evil tongues might have said that Madame de Champrosé was not yet twenty, and that without doubt she would mould herself after

the Duchesse de B——, la Baronne de C——, and the Présidente de T——.

While walking, she thought over the boldness of her undertaking, which had appeared so simple while planning it,—so greatly does a scheme differ from its execution. The dream is always charming; but reality brings out certain coarse exigencies of a situation calculated to wound delicate souls, which the thought of the same would not alarm. Passers-by stared at her with a curiosity that annoyed her, until Justine reminded her that these glances, which would be impertinent if directed at Madame de Champrosé, ought not to offend Mlle. Jeannette, who was carrying work home in the city.

After passing a few streets, the false Jeannette entered with more spirit into her rôle, springing along the pavement without spotting her pretty pearl-coloured silk stockings with mud, and meeting the admiring glances and words of passers-by in a more composed fashion. Justine, bold and sharp as a soubrette in a comedy, formed the wings and rear-guard, and kept at a distance the brusque attempts of young libertines and of those luxurious old men who had not changed their character since the bath of Susannah. In this manner, they reached

the Rue Saint Martin, the scene of the rendezvous. There Justine was to leave her mistress, for it is not the custom for grisettes to have maids or companions to follow them in walking about the city. However, she did not go far, but kept on one side, watchful in case her mistress should need her.

Madame de Champrosé, after Justine had left her, felt, in spite of the crowded street, more alone than in an African or American desert; then, summoning up all her courage, she commenced passing along the house fronts like a furtive swallow.

Her solitude did not endure long. Monsieur Jean, although the hour for the appointment had not yet struck from the clock of the church, had been for some time waiting. For if punctuality is the politeness of kings, the courtesy of lovers is to be before the time; if one does not arrive too early, one arrives too late.

Monsieur Jean, who had perceived Jeannette in the distance, while pretending to examine a miserable signboard, with the legend the "Cat Fishing," as an apparent reason for standing there, advanced quickly towards the beautiful lace-maker, whom he saluted very respectfully when he found himself face to face with her.

Jeannette pretended to be astonished when Monsieur Jean addressed her, as if the meeting had been the result of chance, and the most beautiful blush tinted her cheeks; for, although she was a society lady, Madame de Champrosé had the peculiarity of blushing at the slightest emotion.

When Justine saw Monsieur Jean walking towards Jeannette, and the couple turn their steps towards the boulevard, with an air of perfect understanding, she believed that her supervision was useless, and discreetly retired, leaving the field clear to her mistress.

Nothing could be more charming than this group. One would have said that Love, disguised as a clerk, was seeking the conquest of Psyche playing at being a grisette. The men passing them remarked, "How beautiful she is!" the women, "How well-formed he is! It is Cupid, it is Venus!" And each wished for such a mistress, or such a lover.

The occupants of the Rue Saint Martin, although accustomed to see so many beautiful working girls and charming seekers after adventure pass their shops, seemed astonished at so much grace.

In short, it was difficult to dream of anything

more charming than Jeannette. The coming of Monsieur Jean, although she had expected him, had brought to her cheeks roses which Flora might have envied for her basket. A soft fire animated her blue eyes veiled by their long blond lashes, like fans of gold, and her bosom, agitated by the beating of her heart, stirred slightly the lawn of her corsage.

As for Monsieur Jean, he bore under his neat and simple clothes such an air of distinction as to make one doubt the honour of his mother, for it was difficult to believe that such an Adonis could come of provincial stock, and it seemed as if some man of fashion, passing by, must have made love to Madame Jean. This was the way Madame de Champrosé explained the matter to herself, persuaded as she was of the plebeian family of Monsieur Jean.

As for the reader, he will not be at all astonished at the fine appearance of the young man when he recalls the ennui of the Vicomte de Candale at the supper given by Guimard, his coldness to Rosette in the *vis-à-vis*, and the whim which had taken him to the Moulin-Rouge, to end his night in a less fashionable but more entertaining manner.

"I was afraid that you would not come," said Jean, entering into the subject without the slightest embarrassment.

A look from Jeannette, full of soft reproach, and which it was impossible to translate other than, "You knew very well that I would come," was her sole reply.

"My heart beats very strongly, for it is more than an hour since I have been pretending to examine the signs above the shops."

"However, I was not late," replied Jeannette, raising a taper finger towards the church steeple, which the couple were at this moment passing.

"Love is always ahead of time, and for him the best regulated clocks are those which stop as soon as they have to strike the hour for an appointment."

"Monsieur Jean, you have a gallantry —"

"I am gallant, no — in love, yes. The fine men of society are gallant, and know how to say a thousand amiable impertinences, but we people of common clay are impassioned and sincere; it is not our minds, but our hearts that speak."

At these words, uttered with fire, Madame de Champrosé thought that Justine had reason for

pretending that, to be loved in this fresh and nice fashion, it was necessary to go lower in the social scale.

"Ah, well, yes, I admit that you are in love, but it is not necessary to gesticulate in such a fashion as to make all passers-by look at us."

"Pardon, mademoiselle, permit me to offer you my arm; in walking near you, I have the air of a stranger who seeks to jostle, perhaps insult you. If you accept it, you are under my protection, and if your beauty attracts comment, at least my presence will force it to be respectful."

The Marquise de Champrosé, who felt that this reasoning was correct, and who would even have agreed to it if it had not been, leaned her delicate hand in its thread mitten on the well-brushed sleeve of Monsieur Jean; thus guided, she walked with a more assured step over the slippery pavement, and soon found herself on the boulevard.

"But I should like to return home now," said Jeannette, in the most artless and modest manner. She was not sorry to prolong this interview, nor to give in such a simple manner her address to Monsieur Jean.

"Go home! nothing easier; but where is your home?"

Jeannette named the street, but as she only knew the streets of Paris from passing through them in her carriage, it was impossible for her to find the way.

It would have appeared inconceivable to one less in love, and less preoccupied than Monsieur Jean, that a young lace-maker should not know the way to her own house. The young woman gave as an excuse that a friend went habitually with her, who knew the way about the city intimately, but that to-day she did not bring her, for a reason that Monsieur Jean, without doubt, appreciated. No young man could find fault with such an excuse, and Monsieur Jean was more than content with it.

As for him, his position as one recently arrived from the provinces prevented his knowing anything of the streets of Paris; there was no way but to ask the direction from crossing to crossing, which would be very tedious, or else take a cab; and it must be confessed that, however reserved and modest Monsieur Jean might be, the prospect of a *tête-à-tête* in the rolling boudoir, as they called

a cab, and not in such a conspicuous manner, appealed to him very strongly. He proposed this last way to Jeannette, who accepted it with a blush; but she was beginning to feel fatigue, for never before in her life had she walked so far.

To find a cab was only the work of a moment, for one was passing slowly, the body painted a deep blue and the upholstering of old yellow Utrecht velvet. To lovers, at times, a cab may be as delightful as a grove of Cythera.

Our two lovers mounted within, and during the journey, which unhappily was not long, Jean, with respectful hardihood, seized the hand of Jeannette, which she did not withhold too strongly, and covered the rosy tips with kisses. The carriage stopped, and the word "already!" naïvely escaped the lips of Madame de Champrosé — an exclamation that pleased Monsieur Jean extremely, for with her it seemed an avowal, or at least the preface to one.

Monsieur Jean, who had given his hand to Jeannette to assist her in descending from the cab, did not let go the pretty little fingers, which he held delicately pressed between his own.

Strict propriety would have demanded that he

salute her and retire; but Monsieur Jean, although from the provinces, and with the most respectful manners in the world, was not a man to let an opportunity slip through his fingers when he felt himself to be master of the situation. He followed Jeannette to assist her in ascending the stairs, although she pretended to be able to do it very easily alone, grisettes not keeping squires to help them.

With a gentle but obstinate insistance, and despite the courtesy which Jeannette made him on reaching the door, he entered the room; and with such an air of frankness, respectfulness, and reserve that Jeannette could not feel offended.

"Ah! what will Justine say?" thought the marquise. "At the second interview the enemy has entered the citadel, and my heart is sounding a parley."

A little fatigued by her walk, and even more moved than she dared to own to herself, Madame de Champrosé threw herself into her armchair, and fanned herself with her handkerchief, although the day was not hot.

Taking a little footstool, Monsieur Jean proceeded to seat himself at the feet of Jeannette, which was

not at all awkward, thought the marquise, for one from Auxerre; for this position, so respectful in appearance, and which may be taken opposite to queens, has the advantage of lending itself not less to audacity than to adoration. It is only a great strategist in the war of love who could place himself there so early in the battle, and authorities in such matters have always recommended it. It showed then in Jean a master-hand.

"You are extremely well lodged, Mlle. Jeannette," said Monsieur Jean, looking about him.

"Yes," answered Jeannette, negligently; "there is room enough to work and to sing in."

"And to love!"

"Oh, as for that, I know nothing. My Aunt Ursula had principles; and, with her repulsive manner, she used to meet the advances of the gallants very harshly. Unhappily she died this last year; poor aunt!" and here Jeannette raised towards the ceiling an eye as dry as possible.

"God keep her soul!" exclaimed Jean, with an air of commiseration. In fact, he did not regret the death of this cross old aunt — this dragon, who guarded the apples of the Hesperides. "And you live alone here?"

"I see only my cousin Justine; you know, it was she who took me to the ball; she is a very good girl. I only go out during the week to carry home my work, and on Sundays, to go to mass and to vespers."

"Heavens! but virtue lives here," thought Monsieur Jean, applying to the grisette the words of Molière to the beggar.

"My father and mother have been dead since I was very young, and now I have only Justine. You are the first stranger who has set foot in this retreat. My cousin will scold me well for having let you enter."

"And I thank you for it as for a precious favour. One cannot watch the warbler fly without longing to see its nest, and it will be a very sweet satisfaction to me, in thinking of you, to place behind your image the natural background belonging to it. By day, I shall see you seated in that great armchair near the window, a ray of sunlight gilding your hair, and those fingers made to hold a sceptre occupied with work. At night, I shall imagine your maidenly head, filled with childlike dreams, asleep on the pillows of that little blue and white bed, and I shall know in the morning that

those are the flowers whose perfume you breathe, when, to shame Aurora, you go and open your casement window."

"Oh, Monsieur Jean, you talk like a writer and a poet. Are you an author, and are you writing a piece for the Comédie?" said Jeannette, with an air of alarm.

"Reassure yourself, Mlle. Jeannette, I am not sufficiently devoid of poetry to write verses."

"Oh, so much the better! If I loved any one, I should wish him to have talent only for me."

"So, then, you live contented?"

"Yes; my work in lace, which has nothing in it painful or repugnant to me, and which I do even for amusement, gives me enough to live upon. It is true I see but little."

"And do you not feel that you lack something?"

"Nothing. Do I not have good milk for my breakfast, and a kind neighbour who prepares my humble dinner, for we lace-makers are obliged to keep our hands clean? Is not my furniture nice, above all, since my Aunt Ursula left me her great armchair with ears, and her beautiful bureau with its brass handles? There are very few grisettes

who live so proudly and independently as I. I have a morning wrapper for each season of the year — green for the springtime, rose for summer, lilac for autumn, and golden brown for winter, without counting my frocks for every day. While as for my caps, that need not embarrass me; I make myself what is necessary to trim them, and I treat myself like a good customer."

In making this enumeration of her riches, Jeannette rose and displayed her dresses, with a childish coquetry admirably well assumed, or, perhaps, natural.

These garments, although so simple, were in good taste, coming from the best hands, and were able to flatter the marquise, for they rendered her pretty in the eyes of Monsieur Jean.

"You have no need of all that to be beautiful," said this gallant young phœnix from Auxerre, after having admired Jeannette's riches.

"Oh, no, indeed! That is all very nice, but you can never make a young girl believe that a pretty bonnet spoils a pretty face, or that a new dress adds nothing to a fine figure."

Monsieur Jean, recalling to himself a little too clearly the Vicomte de Candale, had on the tip of

his tongue a broad, mythological retort, much more appropriate in Guimard's house, or in the foyer of the Opéra, than in the chaste attic of a modest grisette, but he limited himself to saying that a fine setting embellished beauty,—an axiom which women have always received favourably, and which was well illustrated a century later by a famous writer of comic operas.

This concession made, he returned to his first idea, and continued: "A chair with ears, a bureau with brass handles, cannot fill the heart, above all a heart of seventeen. Justine is an agreeable companion, but to be two women together is to be alone. Have you never desired to have a friend?"

"Oh, yes; but my aunt has always taught me that men were only wheedlers of women, and that there could never be a friendship between a young man and woman."

"A friendship, no; but love?"

"Love is a sin."

"The most charming sin in the world, and the one which Heaven pardons most easily," said Monsieur Jean, drawing Jeannette towards him, who repulsed him with such a feeble "Let me alone," that he did nothing of the kind, but kissed the rosy

forehead of the young girl, which was just on a level with his lips.

The sound of a step on the stairs recalled Jeannette to a sense of virtue. Monsieur Jean, thinking that such an occasion might come again, let go the dove he was holding by the wing, and made his adieux with the most courteous air in the world, after having made a rendezvous for the following Sunday.

To keep herself in countenance, Madame de Champrosé took an imperfect book from the shelf, — "Huon de Bordeaux," or the "Four Sons of Aymon," we do not know which, — and threw herself into the armchair, her feet on the footstool, and waited patiently for Justine; for the noise on the stairway had been only a false alarm.

CHAPTER VII.

JUSTINE, having seen her mistress safely under the care of Monsieur Jean, had profited by the occasion to pay a visit to her counter-jumper, a fresh, silly fellow, who seemed to her the type of true love, and whose solid gallantries pleased her more than the affected graces of the chevalier. If he did not choose his words, he had, when with women, a certain sort of eloquence which persuaded, and Justine found

him a Cicero in a *tête-à-tête*. So then they had a long conversation together, and when the maid went in search of Madame de Champrosé, in the chamber of Jeannette, it was already the dusk of evening.

Her mistress held a book in her hand, more to look occupied than for amusement, for she had been too much aroused for that. To a woman the romances she makes are more amusing than those she reads, be they those of the citizen of Geneva, of Monsieur Voltaire, or of M. de Crébillon, the younger.

The wary Justine, who had arranged on her way back an excuse for her rather prolonged absence, had no need of it. Madame de Champrosé had not perceived Justine's tardiness; she did not even notice the brilliant eyes and reddened cheeks of her maid, nor that her hair, which she had readjusted, looked still somewhat awry, which might have made her suspect that Justine's time had not all been given up to acting as sentinel. Besides, the marquise, kind and indulgent, would never have taken exception to it, especially at this moment, when she had no need of her.

"Ah! It is you, Justine," said the marquise,

starting out of her reverie with a little cry, which rather indicated surprise than impatient waiting.

"I am at madame's orders," replied the soubrette, courtesying with a most contrite and respectful air.

"Get me out of these clothes," said the marquise, putting herself into the hands of her waiting-woman.

"That can easily be done; I have everything here to reproduce Madame de Champrosé."

The skilful Justine with a few touches of the comb caused the lace-maker to disappear and Madame de Champrosé to take the place of Jeannette. The striped skirt, the lawn fichu, the gray silk stockings, and the little shoes with buckles disappeared as by magic, giving place to the garments of a person of rank, who does not care to attract the eye. Thus accoutred, Madame de Champrosé, followed by Justine, entered the cab which awaited them and was driven to her hôtel, where her absence, having been satisfactorily explained, had called forth no comment.

During the drive, Justine had respected the silence of her mistress, who, with her heart agitated by these new emotions, gave herself up to

their sweetness; a fresh astonishment rendered her at the same time absent-minded and joyous. Although she said nothing, her charming face was alive with thoughts. The financier and the abbé, who this evening dined with her, found her most charming, without knowing why, and of a beauty they had never seen in her before; for it may be said, without making a disrespectful comparison, that a woman is like a race-horse: to see her at her best you must excite her.

And certainly Madame de Champrosé had a soul this evening. She smiled agreeably on the financier, and treated the abbé much better than usual. She laughed at their pleasantries, which gave her a chance of pouring out a little of her inward gaiety, as if they said the most piquant and witty things, notwithstanding the financier Bafogne had about as much wit as one of his coffers, and the grace of a sack; and the abbé, although he knew Latin as well as the jargon of the street, did not sufficiently equalise the two to make an entertaining talker. But, as certain philosophers have said, who, in spite of their obscurity, are wise, nothing exists but in ourselves. It is our gaiety or our sadness that renders the horizons smiling or

gloomy; a person having a joyous soul finds enjoyment where others less happy find nothing to interest them. Madame de Champrosé, being in this light-hearted frame of mind, could have amused herself very well with men less agreeable than the abbé and the financier.

However, towards the end they fatigued her, for their noisy bursts of laughter became uproarious and inconvenient, distracting her from thoughts too agreeable to be lost in the conventionalities of a trifling conversation.

To indicate to her guests, who seemed inclined to prolong their evening, that the hour for departure had come, she made one of those little faces which men of the world comprehend at once, although sometimes the idea of leaving a rival alone with the lady of their thoughts makes them turn a deaf ear to the plea.

The marquise contracted her rosy mouth into a little nervous yawn, checked politely by the palm of her hand, but significant enough for any one who would understand to comprehend. As the financier, who had risen and taken his hat at the second yawn, saw that the abbé did not stir, he reseated himself with obstinate jealousy. Seeing

Bafogne take up his position in his easy-chair like a man who had arranged himself for the remainder of the night, and the abbé posed opposite him like a china dog, Madame de Champrosé felt she must make a decided move, and demanded the hour in a bored and fatigued tone of voice.

The abbé, who was more accustomed to society than the financier, understood that it was bad taste to remain longer, and by a dexterous manœuvre seized the arm of Bafogne, saying, in a light and off-hand manner:

"Come along, my dear fellow, don't you see the dear marquise has need of rest?" Bafogne, although greatly put out, could do nothing but imitate the abbé in the profound salutation he made the marquise.

These two men gone, Madame de Champrosé, over whom Morpheus seemed but just now to have distilled his strongest poppy juices, composed of expositions of tragedies and academic discourses, now found herself of a sudden as wide awake as a cat watching a bird.

She rose from the *duchesse* where she had been nonchalantly extended with the dying graces of a woman tired out, took two or three turns around

the room, then going to the fireplace, pulled the silk cord of the bell.

At the silvery tinkle of the bell Justine appeared at once, for she felt that the hour for confidential conversation had arrived; and she held herself in readiness in the antechamber, to appear at the first summons.

Justine was too much a waiting-woman of a great house to ignore the advantages to a soubrette of consultation in the love affairs of her mistress.

When she had undressed Madame de Champrosé, who put on a great bed-wrap of India muslin trimmed with quantities of deep Malines lace, and placed on the pillow a little coquettish cap, with butterfly wings, producing a most charming effect, Justine, pretending to retire, put the decisive question:

"Does madame need anything further?"

"Remain, Justine, I am not at all sleepy," said the marquise, raising herself on her pretty pink elbow, sunk in the batiste pillow cover.

"Madame has something to tell me?"

"Look at the cunning wretch with her air of astonishment! Certainly I have something to tell you."

"I am listening," replied Justine, crossing her arms adorned with mitts.

"It seems I must commence myself, for you affect a very close mouth. What is your opinion of Monsieur Jean?"

"I have the highest opinion of him."

"He has beautiful teeth!"

"Very beautiful!"

"A fine form!"

"Very fine!"

"Ah, Justine, is your part of the conversation to be only an echo?"

"I am only of the same opinion as madame. Monsieur Jean appears to me to be a most accomplished young man; he is graceful, dresses becomingly, and dances ravishingly. As for his intellect, I have nothing to say, as he talked only to Mlle. Jeannette; but intellect is not necessary in love."

"He has much of it, I assure you, and of the finest."

"So much the worse."

"Why so much the worse? It spoils nothing."

"I believe that madame wishes a love of the freshest order."

"Yes; but is it necessary to be a fool to love?"

"There is a saying: 'To love like a simpleton;' and proverbs contain the wisdom of nations."

"What have these poor young men of wit done, that you should malign them at every turn?"

"Madame, they have done nothing to me at all."

"And is that the reason you prefer the simpletons?"

"Is not that a reason?"

"Reassure yourself. Monsieur Jean has not that wit which you fear."

"I will not conceal from madame that, at first, I suspected he might be a poet, from a certain melancholy air that he has."

"For shame! His nails are too well kept, his hair in too good order, his stockings too well drawn up for that; and, besides, I have remarked nothing nonsensical in his way of expressing himself."

"Since madame is sure he is not a scribbler, I find him charming at every point."

"Do you think that he loves me after the fashion I desire?"

"I believe it; one would judge him distractedly in love with madame — with Mlle. Jeannette, I should say."

"Oh, certainly! he would never have the ef-

frontery to raise his eyes to the Marquise de Champrosé."

"Perhaps! I find a certain fire in his eye, and he has the air of possessing a courageous heart."

"But it is necessary that he remain ignorant that Mlle. Jeannette is a marquise."

"Nothing is easier, for the young man will not go in the places madame frequents, and assuredly does not ride in the coaches of the king."

"Besides, if he should meet me he would not recognise me. You have certainly made two different beings of me, so that, when I have on my back Jeannette's jacket, I do not know truly who I am."

"And when does madame expect to see him again, this handsome young gallant?"

"Sunday, the day when I am supposed to have no task to fulfil, and no work to do in the city."

"If I could dare give madame any advice, I would recommend her, for the truthfulness of the rôle, to be a little shy with Monsieur Jean, and when he shows a disposition to be tender, if he is too free, give him a little slap on his fingers. That is the fashion of the common people."

"As if I would say to him, '*finissez!*' in a tone of the Opéra Comique."

"I said this, madame, because if Jeannette, who in her lowly sphere ought to have old-fashioned ideas about virtue, allows herself at once the privileges of a lady of rank and fashion, Monsieur Jean will at once suspect a marquise."

"But do you know that what you say is an impertinence?"

"Oh, madame cannot form an idea of the importance attached to these things among the lower classes. Any defeat is not possible before six weeks or three months of courtship; and then, in forcing Monsieur Jean to be the perfect lover as among the bourgeois, madame will discover many things that she does not dream of to-day."

"*Mon Dieu*, Justine! but you are metaphysical this evening!"

"Have you ever been hungry?"

"What a singular question to ask me! Never! Are people hungry?"

"The peasants and working people declare so."

"Nothing tempts me at the table. I touch a blanc-mange; I nibble the wing of a partridge; I taste different stuffs; I drink a drop of Barbadoes cream, and that is all."

"Ah, well, if madame will go a day or two

without eating, she would eat the top of a brown bread ravenously, and think it delicious, although she might find it full of sticks and bran."

"Good! You advise me to put myself on a low diet to give me an appetite?"

"Precisely."

"There may be something true in what you say about that."

"Fifteen days of resistance, and I predict that madame will find herself as much in love as a dressmaker."

"And Monsieur Jean, what will he say of this regimen?"

"He will become infatuated with Mlle. Jeannette to the point of committing all sorts of folly."

"You tell me things that are extraordinary, but they seem to have a certain sense about them. You do well to strengthen me in these ideas, for this very day I nearly made a mistake, forgetting for the moment that Jeannette was not the Marquise de Champrosé. It was time, for my virtue, for you to return, and my romance was within an ace of commencing at the last chapter; but for me to conform to your plans, I will henceforth be of a wonderful and plebeian modesty."

While carrying on this small talk, Madame de Champrosé allowed herself to be put to bed, and Justine retired when she saw that Morpheus was scattering his golden powder over the eyes of her beautiful mistress, which was not long in happening.

The Marquise de Champrosé was not the only one who interested herself tenderly in the doings of Monsieur Jean. Rosette, the dancer, had also, since the supper at Guimard's, thought with the greatest persistency of the Vicomte de Candale. Rosette, who had a faithful heart, notwithstanding her life *à la Manon Lescaut* (and one must say in her favour that it was then only possible in that way to reach the Opéra), experienced emotions rare enough in a member of the ballet but recently promoted: she loved!

That which had been most seductive to her in the vicomte was a certain sad grace, a vague air of ennui which, behind his wit, made one suspect a soul, a thing about which very few disquieted themselves in the joyous eighteenth century. In these times it was necessary to have one's heart on one's lips, the nose in air, red on the cheek, either natural or false, a strut of the leg, the sword in a

sheath, the opera-hat under the arm, the hand in a frill of lace, with the air of the Marquis de Moncade, offering sweetmeats from his *bonbonnière*, paying insipid compliments, or equivocal ones, singing the last couplets about the favourite,— to be gay, lively, smart, superficial, and above all laughing, for this was the epoch of Laughter, of Amusements, and Pleasures, which had become the reigning power in life, as in the ballets and the frieze-panels. Melancholia, that delicate flower of the soul, was considered a malady which, according to its etymology, had to do with M. Purgon and M. Fleurant.

So Rosette needed a more affectionate and more refined disposition to love the vicomte at a moment when her companions and even women of elevated rank would have found that he was addicted to bitterness, and bored them by lack of wit and smartness. When he had glittered like artificial fire under the brilliant adornment of his costumes and his wit, and when, in the first moments of his conquests, he had not recognised their emptiness, Rosette had not felt herself touched by his merit, as she had been since; a circumstance which tended to prove this enormous paradox, that,

during the reign of Cotillon III. at the Opéra, a dancer had possessed a soul, — that which seems simply impossible, since women of this sort only love gold, contracts of rents, diamonds, silver plate, coaches, lackeys six feet in height, and other substantial benefits, and find their only amusement in indelicate pleasantries, in the slang of the foyer, or of debauchery.

Poor Rosette had been profoundly astonished that Candale, after having conducted her home in his coach, had so virtuously bid her good-bye at the door of her chamber; for without vanity she believed herself made in a fashion not to deserve to be treated with such respect, and in all the reign of Louis XV. a similar act had probably never occurred. Rosette said nothing about it, for if this story had been divulged, it would have lost Candale his reputation.

The next morning, much disturbed at this misadventure, she made a detailed examination of her charms; she unrolled her hair, which was luxuriant, she looked at her teeth, examining them to their rosy gums. Never a young wolf, devouring his first lamb in the woods, had purer. She examined her skin, smooth like satin or marble, the

smoothest in the world; and she did not find a crease, a wrinkle, a crack, or a red spot or a streak of dust. Hebe, the goddess of youth, Hygeia, the goddess of health, had assuredly less freshness. By a happy privilege, which comes more often to vice than to virtue, the cheeks of Rosette, notwithstanding the paint and the kisses, preserved that peach-like bloom which the lightest contact injures. She passed in review her arms, which were most beautiful, and her limbs, which all Paris admired, brilliant like marble under their silken covering, in the ballets of Dauberval. The result of this inspection was a smile. Rosette found herself beautiful. She was reassured, and gave herself, as explanation, that Candale had that evening some care on his mind, or that he had been fatigued, although the eighteenth century did not allow such a feeling.

She formed a great resolution for a dancer, who was much more adroit with her feet than with her hands: she would write to the Vicomte de Candale.

The danseuses, and even the great ladies of the eighteenth century, were not particularly brilliant by reason of their writing or spelling. The letters preserved of Madame de Pompadour, of Madame la

Popelinière, have a charming style, but are written in a manner a cook would be ashamed of to-day.

Rosette knew neither more nor less than the pretty women of her time about it. She took a great sheet of paper and traced on it, in letters long as your thumb, and in characters like hieroglyphics, the following note, which she would have written better had she dipped the end of her toe in the ink:

My dear Vicomte:

I am very uneasy about you, for without doubt you were ill the other evening, or troubled with remorse of conscience, when you withdrew so brusquely and so ill-humouredly. I suspect that you were hiding from me some great sin, when you were at my knees at the house of that great, bony Guimard. Come and finish your confession, and fear nothing; the penance will be sweet. I am at home to you all night and all day, except from noon till two, when I practise a new step, with motions[1] which will please you. It suits me much better than the rigadoons, the tambourines, and the reels.

Adieu, my heart.

Rosette,

Second danseuse at the Opéra.

P. S. Is not Guimard too thin; and when she dances does she not look like a daddy-long-legs?

[1] *Gargouillades:* specially dances on the entrance of demons, fire-spirits, and comic dances generally.

This letter was carried to the Hôtel Candale, and given to the vicomte on a beautiful silver platter, chased by Reveil.

Candale was not surprised at the bold strokes and fantastic spelling, which he quite readily deciphered, and said to the tall lackey who awaited the reply, with that conceited air characteristic of the old-time lords of creation, half bored, half patronising: "Very well, I will call."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Madame de Champrosé awoke, her first thought was of Monsieur Jean. All her dreams had been of him. All night long, under the canopy of her bed, the noble marquise pictured herself in the little chamber rented by Justine, dressed in the costume of Jeannette, seated in the armchair, — which looked exactly as if it had belonged to an aged person, — holding on

her knees the narrow board used by lace-makers, and weaving with her slender fingers invisible threads, which became badly tangled under the kisses of Monsieur Jean, devoutly kneeling on the little footstool before her.

With change of sphere, Madame de Champrosé seemed to have changed soul and character. The constant attentions of the danglers, who bored her with insipid verses and sugared compliments, had produced on her the effect of sweets, of whipped creams, of iced meringues, which fill one without nourishing, and destroy the taste for wholesome food. With too many suitors to make any choice, too prejudiced to feel any desire, she passed her life in capricious nonchalance. Her amours had banished Cupid; since she had met Monsieur Jean, Cupid had banished the amours.

As soon as she was dressed, the desire to go to the little chamber became strong within her; but Justine, who was prudent, notwithstanding her giddy airs, respectfully reminded her mistress that it would not be always possible to leave the hôtel incognito, and that stratagems that succeeded once or twice, because they were improvised, might end by getting abroad and being discovered.

"Madame had better make a pretext of a visit to some château in the country for six weeks."

"Nothing would be easier; but if I announce that I am going to one of my country places, I shall be expected there. Then my Paris friends would want to come and visit me, and all would be discovered."

"It is not to one of madame's own châteaux that I should advise her to go."

"With one of my friends the thing would be found out even more quickly."

"Have I not heard madame say she had a relative in Brittany?"

"It is true; I never thought of her; an everlasting old aunt, perched like an owl in an ancient donjon, in company with a pack of lesser owls, and with a name that hurts one's mouth, it is so hard to pronounce. They say that one has to pass over regular break-neck roads to reach this old castle, which overhangs the ocean at a height of some two or three hundred feet."

"Ah, well, so much the better; madame had better pay a visit to her aunt for a month or two."

"Why do you say that, Justine?"

"This relative of madame never comes to Paris or Versailles?"

"Oh, no; she thinks she still lives in the time of Anne of Brittany and of the parliaments, and looks upon Paris as a Babylon of abominations."

"That is exactly what we want; madame, accompanied by the faithful Justine, will engage a post-chaise, excusing herself for not taking more servants on account of the peevish and whimsical temper of the old lady, and will start off with a great noise of bells and whips, ostensibly to visit her; then at the first change of horses, we will don our shepherdesses' dresses, and return to Paris by another gate."

"That is delicious!" cried the marquise, clapping her hands joyously; "in that way I shall have six weeks of liberty before me. Justine, you are truly a treasure!"

"Since Madame la Marquise deigns to say it, I will not contradict her," said Justine, with a comic courtesy. "I am well worth my price, and M. de Marivaux has put into his pieces at the Théâtre Français soubrettes who are not my equals."

Madame de Champrosé made a little sign of assent, and everything was arranged as Justine had planned.

The departure having been duly announced, the post-chaise left the hôtel courtyard drawn by three vigorous horses, to the noise of the cracking of whips, which made the flogged sylphs utter pitiable cries that rent the air.

The carriage soon traversed the dirty streets of the great city, covering those on foot with mud, running over dogs, overturning the philosophers who, after the manner of Rousseau, tried to get themselves run over, so as to be able to print in their papers declamations against the rich on behalf of the rabble, who always rejoice in that sort of invectives.

They passed through the gate and entered the country. Although rain had fallen in the morning and the roads were soaking, the sky was brilliantly clear, and some pretty dappled clouds, as light as those painted on a ceiling by Fragonard, floated on a background of pale blue, as pure as that of the choicest Sèvres china. The foliage was of a gay and tender green, — for it was still early spring, and Flora had not yet seen her flowers changed into fruits to fill the baskets of Pomona. This soft colouring rendered the horizon pleasant and smiling, like some rural scene painted for the

Opéra by Boucher. The landscape, although less blue and apple green in the distance, had no less charm; for Nature, although at times lacking in grace, and a little coarse, knows very well how to hold the palette and to manage the pencils, and if she were only a little more academic, there would be nothing to reproach her with.

It is true that the personages who people these country places are not dressed in dove-coloured taffetas and in sea-green satin, like those in frescoes or in pastoral pictures; the feeding sheep hardly merited the term white, which Madame Deshoulières lavishes on them; they looked as if they had not been washed for many a day, if, indeed, they ever had been. The tender lambs did not wear on their necks any pink or blue favours, and if beautiful Phyllis had wished to press one to her heart, it would have inevitably soiled her corsage,[1] for nothing could be dirtier than were these lambs. These sheep astonished the marquise somewhat, for she had formed, from the verses of the abbé and the paintings on her fans, an entirely different idea of the ovine family.

[1] *Corsage à echelle:* body with a stomacher.

"What in the world is that heap of tatters sauntering on two great, flat, ugly red feet?"

"That, madame, is a shepherd."

"That! What are you telling me, Justine? You are joking with me! A shepherd, that clumsy lout! Impossible!"

"He does not much resemble those at the Opéra."

"And he is quite wrong, Justine. The reality should copy the imitation."

"Without doubt, Marcel and Vestris, when they dance the gavotte in the shepherds' scenes, are got up much better than that."

"And that other horrid-looking creature, who is driving the turkeys with a pole?"

"You have just seen Thyrsis; now you see Phyllis."

"Justine, you are taking advantage of my want of knowledge of the country, to tell me such incredible stories. That frightful piece of ill-formed flesh, that mop of tangled tow, that spotted complexion, those great patched petticoats, that frightful tattered cape, — no, that is never Phyllis!"

"It is Phyllis in person; there are thousands of Phyllises in France as ugly as that."

"Oh, you are upsetting all my pastoral ideas!"

While conversing thus, Madame de Champrosé turned her head from side to side, now to the right, now to the left, marvelling at everything she saw, quite happy in the idea that, while appearing to separate herself from Monsieur Jean, she was in reality drawing nearer to him.

When the chaise stopped to change horses, Madame de Champrosé pretended to feel fatigued, and asked for a chamber, with a languishing air, like a person who felt herself attacked with some unforeseen indisposition, and did not wish to continue her journey. The horses were unharnessed, and Madame de Champrosé said she would see in a couple of hours whether she could continue her journey. As you may well suspect, her illness grew more serious; and Justine, with the authoritative tone of a person who understands medical matters, decided that it was necessary to return, and so they set out again, not in a post-chaise this time, but in a light carriole hired in advance by Justine. A stocky Percheron horse attached to the carriole carried the marquise and the soubrette at a smart pace back to the Saint Denis gate, where the trunks were put in a cab, and soon the two women found

themselves in the little lodgings to which Monsieur Jean, although he had not written down the address, and had only been there in the evening, was perfectly able to find the way again.

One reads in certain Indian tales of persons — either gods, or genii, or perhaps simply magicians —who can with facility change their body and their existence, without changing their soul. Thanks to the industry of Justine, who had been able to put the whim of her mistress into action, Madame de Champrosé, without talisman and without help of the black art, found herself in the position of those fabled persons. The transformation, or, if it please better, the metamorphosis, was complete. Nothing in this retreat recalled to Jeannette the Marquise de Champrosé. It was an entirely new existence. It sometimes happens that one can change places under well-arranged conditions, but the person always carries something of his real self into the new situation; it may be only the dress, it may be only the name. Here all was different, and Madame de Champrosé did not know exactly whether she were marquise or grisette.

A rendezvous had been made for Sunday, and you may be sure Monsieur Jean did not forget it.

As it was a holiday, the young *protégé* of M. de Bonnard, who had come early and barely missed surprising Jeannette in bed, as she was accustomed to late rising, proposed, as is the fashion among clerks and grisettes, an excursion into the country, with a lunch of strawberries, a donkey-ride in the woods, and a dinner at the White Rabbit Inn.

The plan was accepted, only Jeannette wished to take Justine with her; but the latter preferred her shop-walker to the most amiable company. He was a young man with little eloquence, 'tis true, but quite expressive in *tête-à-têtes*, so she excused herself by saying she had important visits to make that could not be put off. Jean heard her excuses with great pleasure, and Madame de Champrosé was not at all displeased.

They drove to the outskirts of the city in a hack. Monsieur Jean, although only a supernumerary excise clerk, appeared to have brought from Auxerre a sufficient number of crown pieces in his leather purse, and could allow himself these extravagances, which would have frightened and ruined petty law clerks, or even druggists' sons.

The environs of Paris, while not possessing as much beauty as travellers attribute to the suburbs

of other cities, offer, nevertheless, an agreeable mixture of cultivated fields, gardens, swamps, and groves, where birds and lovers may find nests. The farmhouses with their rustic roofs, the windmills turning their languid sails, the tea-gardens, with their laughter and singing, animate the landscape, which, without being wild or especially picturesque, possesses pretty details and unexpected charms. And besides, it does not need the woods and the green pastures of Tempe to enshrine the love-making of a Parisian grisette and a clerk.

So Jean and Jeannette wandered through the fields; along the hedges, where the young woman was always seeing some new flower to pick; beside the wheat-fields, still too young to afford a screen with their sheaves to amorous couples.

Thus, chatting as they walked, they reached the woods, where Jeannette was hoisted on to the back of a donkey, to her great amusement, and made the tour of several paths accompanied by Jean and the donkey-driver, who whacked his animal for company. The long-eared beast did not mind that at all, but snatched, as he jogged along, at every bunch of foliage or thistle-stalk within reach, scattering a

cloud of butterflies, who were as ready to pay court to the prickly flower as to the rose, with which they are usually represented as so enamoured in paintings.

The conversation between them would be rather difficult to report. Insignificant phrases take so much meaning from the glance of the eye, the tremor of the voice, or the blushing of the cheek. Jean and Jeannette already loved each other too much to talk about it, and enjoyed, without the need of expressing what they felt, the happiness of being together in the country, among the flowers and verdure, this beautiful spring day.

As love is a primitive passion, perhaps one feels it with more keenness when in the bosom of Nature. Human and social conventionalities are more easily forgotten when there is nothing factitious to recall them, and often a virtue which would have remained wild in the city, becomes human among the fields. It is for this reason that the poets, who under their imagery sometimes conceal philosophical ideas, have peopled the mountains, the valleys, the woods, the fields, and the fountains with Oreads and Dryads and Naiads, with Pans and Satyrs and Fauns, all amorous and gallant, while nothing of the kind has ever been imagined for the cities.

Madame de Champrosé, however, did not succumb to this charm; and if she heard the advice of the birds who billed in their nests, or the flowers which leaned towards each other with half-open calyxes, she did not heed them. Was it from prudery, or the advice of Justine? or did Monsieur Jean, rendered timid by emotion, hesitate to profit by the protecting shade of the woods or the facilities offered by the undergrowth? No; it was none of these. The position in which these two young people found themselves was so delightful that they feared to alter it by any new element, which, while it might add to their happiness, might also disturb it.

It was thus that a marquise and a vicomte, the one disguised as a grisette and the other as a clerk, ate strawberries in the woods, without Virtue having to sigh over more than a few pressures of the hand and some kisses on the forehead or the hair, at which the most prudish shepherdess would hardly have been shocked.

If it seems strange to the reader that Monsieur Jean, who had seemed more lively and deliberate at his first appearance, should appear to be indifferent now, we reply that at first he was merely taken by

fancy, but now he is in love. The intelligent lady reader will understand, we do not doubt, this delicate difference.

Lovers pretend to live on air, after the fashion of the sylphs, of whom Crébillon, the younger, and the Comte de Gabalis relate the most astonishing things; but this assertion seems to us very bold; for it is a fact that Jean and Jeannette, notwithstanding the pleasure they had derived in gathering violets, eating strawberries, and kissing in the woods, arrived with a certain satisfaction at the White Rabbit Inn.

This White Rabbit Inn presented a pleasing appearance at the side of the road. Its sign, known from time immemorial, had been daubed, by a very remote descendant of Apelles, on both sides of a plate of sheet iron, which swung in the wind under the shade of a long pine branch; but the innkeeper, not quite sure of the talent of the artist, and doubting his fidelity in representing the white rabbit, had thought best to place in a cage a living sign, that the most ignorant could not fail to understand. An enormous white rabbit, with immense ears and great red eyes, wagged his chops over a carrot by the side of his fallacious

image, which might have been taken for a horse, a stag, or an elephant.

The front of the inn was, like the face of a jovial drinker, brightened by a gay coating of red, which indicated to the worshippers of the bottle a temple, or at least a chapel of Bacchus.

Upon the roof of old moss-grown tiles, where some leeks had flourished, wandered pigeons of all colours, — poor birds of Venus, never dreaming of the broiler and green peas, and making love the same as if the spit was not incessantly turning in the kitchen. The poultry in the back yard showed the same indifference, notwithstanding that the cook's helper, in his white blouse and cotton cap, with cleaver in hand, went out from time to time, and seized one of them by the wing despite his cries, for the inn was well patronised, and the spiral of bluish smoke from its chimney could be seen rising incessantly against the background of foliage. Around the house extended trellises, forming arbours covered with hop and Virginia creeper, climbing roses and honeysuckles. Everything was as countrylike and charming as possible. The perfume of the flowers corrected agreeably the more substantial but less sweet odours of the kitchen,

and a rose-leaf which fell into a glass seemed to commingle Venus and Bacchus.

The two lovers established themselves in one of these bowers, facing each other at a table garnished with a coarse but clean table-cloth crossed by a broad red stripe, on which were placed pewter plates and ribbed glasses, with a jug of mild home-brewed Argenteuil wine, somewhat tart, and which had not yet been baptised, — a very rare thing among the innkeepers, for they are great converters, and only suffer wine of a good Christian quality in their cellars.

The repast was one of the gayest imaginable. The dishes, although simple, were well cooked, and they were accompanied by the sauce of a good appetite. Certainly, if any one had passed by on the road and looked through the openings of the foliage at this clerk and grisette, eating and laughing so heartily, they would never have suspected that the clerk was a vicomte, and the grisette a marquise, — that Monsieur Jean was M. de Candale, and Jeannette, Madame de Champrosé.

They returned to the city by a clear and beautiful moonlight, and Jeannette, who entered fully into the spirit of her rôle, graciously saluted Mon-

sieur Jean at her door, which she at once resolutely closed against him. It was thus that this day, which began under the auspices of Venus, goddess of love, ended under those of Minerva, goddess of wisdom.

CHAPTER IX.

POOR Rosette waited vainly for the Vicomte de Candale, who found the sustaining of a double character somewhat difficult. She was astonished at the lack of gallantry in such an accomplished gentleman, and became so ill-humoured from her disappointment as to make her treat very shabbily an officer of musketeers, a young clergyman, and even a farmer-general, who had tried to take liberties at her toilet,

although the latter had always been in favour at the Opéra, and had not usually found heartless beauties there, as they claimed.

That evening she danced all out of measure, lost the step, confused the time, and barely escaped being hissed, so intent was she in trying to discover if the vicomte was in the house. Not finding him in his usual box, she sought him in the pit, thinking to find him in company with some rival.

She discovered nothing, and returned out of temper to the greenroom, without even thinking of the "gargouillade," which, we must say, she did rather badly, and which, had she executed it with her usual spirit, would have drawn plaudits enough to have enraged her friend Guimard.

The supper which she always gave after the representation was as dull and stupid as possible, although the guests and the hangers-on, always to be found at such feasts, made some effort to keep up an appearance of gaiety. It was, perhaps, the first time any one had been bored at Rosette's house.

The next day, seeing that Candale did not appear, she resolved upon a singular freak: she

would go and hunt him up, although her womanly self-esteem might suffer by it; but true love, which is stronger than death, has no difficulty in conquering vanity.

She dressed herself like a woman who wishes to be irresistible, — with unusual grace and richness. It seemed as if the fairies must have arranged with their hands the delicate marvels of her coiffure, and made her dress from the petals of flowers, so fragile and delicate was its beauty, although adorned with trimmings of various kinds. Her hair, dressed after the charming fashion introduced by the favourite Du Barry, and which had a seductive air of negligence, as if some bold hand had loosened her locks and they had been replaced in haste, was fastened by a gold pin having a great diamond for a head. This was thrust crosswise through the loose mass, after a fashion not followed by prudes, but which is delightfully becoming, and which gave her the mien of a conquering nymph, whom old Priam himself, in spite of the snows of age, could not have resisted.

She got into a superb carriage, which she owed to the sentimentality and prodigality of the Prince de R——, and which could not have cost less than

fifty thousand livres, — a magnificence which does not surprise one when it is remembered that Guimard used to drive in Longchamps in a carriage whose wheels had tires of silver, while the six horses that drew it were shod with the same metal; nothing seeming good enough for these depraved women, who took pleasure in the most wasteful extravagance, in order to set poor virtue at defiance.

Nothing could be more magnificent or more elegant than the carriage in which Rosette the danseuse was seated; a queen could not have wished a more luxurious one. Rosette's monogram, traced in flowers, formed the centre of the four principal panels, on a gold ground, while on the side panels the same design was repeated. In one place was a basket of roses, on which two doves were billing and cooing; in another was a heart transfixed by an arrow, the whole enriched with quivers, flaming torches, and all the attributes of the God of Love. These ingenious emblems were surmounted with garlands of flowers in mother-of-pearl, of most exquisite design. The entire coach was correspondingly elegant. The hammer-cloth, the supports for the lackeys behind the wheels, the

naves, the steps, were all finished with such elegance that one would never tire of admiring them, and bore the stamp of the graces possessed by the divinity who occupied such a voluptuous chariot. Every one who saw it passing by declared that art could be carried to no higher degree of perfection, nor elegance go further.

It was in this superb equipage that Rosette repaired to the Hôtel de Candale, calling forth the admiration of the men and the despair of the women, indignant that such a *creature* should display so much luxury while they were forced to go on foot, or ride in out-of-date vehicles, superannuated and ridiculous, but good enough for spiteful ugliness and virtuous mummies.

The huge porter, red and pimpled, shaking the powder out of his wig at every moment, and with his enormous queue fastened with a *crapaud*,[1] opened the gate with great officiousness, and the coach, drawn by four magnificent horses, whose manes were ornamented with knots of rose colour and silver, turned into the gravelled court and drew up before the vestibule of the staircase,

[1] *Crapaud:* a little bag of silk in which the hair was fastened behind.

which equalled that of a royal château in the grandeur and taste of its decorations.

Then a footman, seated on a bench, playing cards with a groom, replied to Rosette's lackey that the Vicomte de Candale was not at home.

Disconcerted at this reply, which dashed her dearest hopes, Rosette called the valet and questioned him herself. "Lafleur or Labrie?" said she, in a tone of interrogation.

"Lafleur, at your service, madame," replied the valet, saluting her.

"Tell me truly, Lafleur, is your master at home?"

"No, madame; he is not here."

"You are certain he is not concealing himself?"

"If he conceals himself from disagreeable people, he would still be at home to madame. M. le Vicomte has told us to always admit pretty women," replied the knave, who prided himself on his wit, and sometimes read romances in the anterooms.

"You are as gallant, Lafleur, as a valet in a comedy; there are two louis for your compliment. You say that your master has ordered you to admit pretty women, unless he has one already with him. Is there not one here already?"

"Oh, no, madame. When M. le Vicomte is engaged in a regular affair of that kind, he goes to his little house in the faubourg."

"That is so," said Rosette; "where are my wits?"

"Shall I say to M. le Vicomte that madame called?"

"Yes; do not forget it."

"Madame — de — what?" said the valet, maliciously, though preserving an air of respect.

"Rosette only; or, if you need a title, Rosette of the Opéra; that is as good as the title of a duchess."

"Very well, madame; I will take care not to forget it; and I shall drink the two louis to your health with my friend Champagne."

Rosette directed her coachman to drive to the Faubourg de ——, where the little house of the Vicomte de Candale was hidden, and which she knew through the stories of his companions, without, alas! having ever been there herself.

It is not customary for persons to visit these mysterious retreats in such dashing equipages, but rather in plain carriages with gray livery, enveloped in a large *therèse*,[1] or the face closely veiled,

[1] *Therèse:* an old kind of head-gear.

or, perhaps, in a sedan-chair, hermetically closed, which drops one right at the door, opening and closing quickly, and permitting the curious passer-by to see only the tip of a satin shoe, or a gloved hand reaching to the knocker or drawing the bell-pull.

As Rosette had no one to be careful about, — she had neither fierce brother nor jealous husband, nor regular protector, — she risked nothing in showing herself openly, and knocked bravely at the door of the little house.

A valet dressed in a fanciful livery, who lived here all the time, in case of a rendezvous bringing the vicomte by day or by night, opened the door immediately and admitted Rosette into the sanctuary.

This venerable porter of Cythera had a grave, stiff, and discreet air; fully impressed with the importance of his position, which was not a sinecure, for till now the vicomte had lived a somewhat gay life. He did not appear at all astonished at the appearance of Rosette, although he did not expect her; but M. de Candale had such a persuasive and triumphant way with the beauties that he often had not time to warn the ministers of his pleasures, so that the lackey judged this to be an

impromptu rendezvous, and supposed the vicomte would arrive immediately.

This little house, which nothing betrayed on the outside, and which was concealed behind great unsightly walls, purposely made to look old not to attract the eye, was one of the most elegant in the faubourg: everything about it was arranged for pleasure and secrecy. It consisted of four or five rooms, roofed like a cupola and lighted from above. Everything that voluptuousness could invent in the way of luxury or rarity was there collected. Amorous mythologies, painted by the light and agreeable brush of Boucher, that painter of Graces and Cupids, adorned the ceilings and panels over the doors. The elaborate wainscoting was decorated with fantastic carvings which glistened with gilt and colours, representing rock-work and palms and flowers mingled with bagpipes, Pandean pipes, doves' nests, love-knots, arrows, hearts, flagons, and other attributes of gallantry, sculptured with great art and delicacy. The furniture was most luxurious and magnificent. Great mirrors seemed placed to multiply the images of the charming visitors which these enchanting rooms had the privilege of receiving. Great vases of

Chinese craquelé-ware contained the rarest flowers, constantly renewed and fresh; thick carpets figured with roses deadened the sound of footsteps. But especial care had been bestowed in selecting the sofas, the easy chairs, and the divans. The boudoir sofa was of deep sky-blue, trimmed with lace and silver tassels, and offered a resting-place rich and luxurious enough to delight the heart of Amanzei, the favourite story-teller of Shahabam, and might alone have furnished him as many adventures as all the divans of Agra.

The quiet of the place pleased Rosette, who, although she longed to see Candale, feared to meet him there. To leave a sign of her visit, she unfastened a superb cameo bracelet, representing Terpsichore dancing while Euterpe played the flute, and placed it on the sofa-pillow, in such a position that it could be readily seen and found; but she withdrew after looking at her watch, like a person who did not care to wait longer.

"I shall come again," said she to the lackey.

"Very good, madame," replied he, bowing.

On leaving the little house she called upon Guimard, whom the vicomte often visited, and who might be able to give her some news of him; but

the celebrated danseuse had not seen Candale since the night of her supper. M. de Valnoir had sought for him in vain, to attend a party which he was to give, and where they were to have a burlesque farce, very free and very amusing.

Rosette returned home discontented and sad. There was but one thing she could do, — wait until the vicomte, moved by repentance, should come and see her himself, — a melancholy, pitiful situation, which one in love finds it extremely hard to accept.

The next day she returned to the little house in the faubourg, and found her bracelet in the same spot where she had left it, — a proof of the wisdom of Candale. The affair looked serious: a vicomte of twenty-five, handsome, rich, and prudent. That was not natural.

After wandering a half-hour in the voluptuous solitude, by which it would have been so sweet to her to profit, Rosette withdrew, to the great surprise of the gray-headed valet, who could not comprehend how his master could forget two rendezvous which ought to be so agreeable. He could understand why the vicomte might not come to the second rendezvous, but that he should have forgotten the first wounded all his principles as a

valet Don Juan, who had had the honour of belonging to M. de Richelieu and of working with M. Lebel, minister to the pleasures of His Majesty, so he took upon himself to write to M. le Vicomte all that had occurred. Here is the old servant's letter:

Monsieur le Vicomte:

I have always filled with great zeal the position monsieur has deigned to confide to me, and I think I have shown myself worthy of his confidence. Without presuming at all to judge of the intentions of monsieur, who is the master, and can do whatever pleases him, I think it my duty to let him know that twice a very beautiful woman, in a magnificent equipage, without the slightest mask or concealment, has called at the house of which I have the care and management. She appears to me to belong to the Opéra, and seemed to have a great desire to see monsieur. Perhaps among all the affairs that monsieur has on his hands with duchesses, princesses, marquises, and others, he may have forgotten this one. I know that this is not much of a triumph for monsieur, seeing that he has all those titled ones; but besides being most attractive in her person, she is truly taken with monsieur and goes away with a very heavy heart. We who have seen many love affairs pass off are able to judge, and we recognise it as genuine; and I warn monsieur of it, that he may act as seems best to him.

Roux, called Hector,
confidential valet and servant of M. le Vicomte.

This letter was carried to Candale, who at once recognised Rosette from the description, and promised himself to go to her; but man proposes and love disposes, and the Vicomte de Candale, clothed in the homespun garments of Monsieur Jean, found himself in the room of the little lace-maker instead of in the boudoir of the danseuse, as he had intended.

Disturbed greatly by the lack of success in her undertaking, Rosette felt so badly that she believed herself to be ill; she complained that she had an attack of nerves and the vapours, and settled herself in a reclining-chair. Her friends came to see her, among others Guimard, who was at heart a good-souled little creature. As a woman of experience, she discovered at once the trouble of Rosette, and without seeking for a long list of barbarous names, as a member of the four faculties would doubtless have done, she said, without further preamble:

"Rosette, you are in love."

"Alas, yes!"

"Why, alas? One who wishes it is never in love. That is a happiness which has come to me but once, and I would give the thousand crowns a week that the prince gives me, to be so again!"

"But to love without being loved!"

"What does that matter? When one is in love, it is so good! — and besides, made as you are, you ought not to find any one cruel to you. But say! I don't know why the word 'cruel,' applied to a man, makes me laugh, — it seems only suitable to women."

"What is there to laugh at?"

"Is it necessary to cry because some one has inspired you with this passion? Is he then a Hippolytus, a rough and savage being, who enjoys nothing but hunting, and prefers the stags and bucks to the fair sex, like the one described by Racine?"

"Oh, no! he is not so boorish as that."

"And may I ask his name?"

"M. le Vicomte de Candale."

"Then the situation is not desperate, for he is not an utter barbarian; and the other evening, at my supper, you appeared to be doing extremely well."

"Yes, I thought he was a little affectionate towards me; but since then I have not seen him."

"It is, I presume, not impossible to find him. One sees nobody but him at Versailles, at Cours-

la-Reine, at the Palais-Royal, at the Tuileries, at the Opéra, at the Comédie, at the sacred concerts."

"Ah, well! for some days he has become only a chimera."

"He may have gone to one of his estates, or he may have gone with the king to Marly."

"Not at all; I have inquired of Lafleur, his valet. He has not taken any of his baggage; and although he appears from time to time at his house, it is only for brief intervals, and very irregularly."

"That is very singular!"

"What can he be doing?"

"If it had been an affair with some woman of rank, the supplanted husband or lover would have told us, for it is always to us they come for consolation in such disasters."

"That is true!"

"If he had fallen into the snares of some beauty of the theatre, she would have proclaimed it from the housetops. If it were a chorus-girl, or even a leading lady, she would not conceal a Vicomte de Candale."

"Where, then, has he lost his heart?"

"I am afraid he may have become caught in

some bourgeois love affair, or with some lady of the robes at the Marais, or at the île Saint Louis."

"You frighten me, dear Guimard!"

"Otherwise it is not natural, my poor Rosette, that you, one of the most beautiful girls at the Opéra, should be sighing in vain."

"I feel the truth of what you say; but what ought I to do under the circumstances?"

"Let a couple of other gallants pay attention to you. That will, at least, distract you a little."

"Never! I will listen to your advice on condition that they do not ask me to renounce my love."

"Very good! We will be entirely frank, and I shall advise you as you desire. First, it is absolutely necessary to know what M. de Candale is doing. You are sure your mind is made up?— for you are not one of those vacillating spirits who prefer uncertainty to the truth."

"No, certainly not! But how shall we know what he is doing? I have tried in vain to find out."

"That is a nice way of discovering a man's secrets,— to go and ask him himself."

"Then how would you go about it?"

"M. de Sartines, who is a great friend of mine, has rendered me several little services in his line, and that in the most polite manner imaginable."

"What! the lieutenant of police?"

"Yes."

"What connection can there be between the police and love?"

"Very close connection. I had a lover whom I suspected of playing me a trick. I did not care especially, but I did not like to be duped. M. de Sartines, to enable me to find out what he was up to, lent me two of his best detectives, first-class men for underhand plots and intrigues, more than a match for all the Scapins of comedy, — men of genius, who could read the letters in your pocket, recognise masked people, see through walls, and tell all your secrets."

"And what was the result of it?"

"My *Sbrigani* showed me in twenty-four hours that I had been basely deceived, and I had the pleasure of confounding the perjurer with such evident proofs of his treason, that he believed there was some devilry, or at least white magic, connected with it."

"Admirable!"

"I will go with you to ask M. de Sartines to put these two Arguses at your service, which he will grant, I am sure, unless they are employed on matters of state."

Rosette agreed to this plan with the fury of a jealous and loving woman, who sees a way of clearing up her doubts, and the two dancers called on M. de Sartines, whom they found in a closet full of wigs, just about to try on a new one. The magistrate received them in a most affable and gracious manner, and made it a pleasure to place at the temporary service of Rosette, the Messrs. Clochebourde and Pincecroc, who, as experts in their calling, could not suppress a smile when Rosette explained to them what she desired to find out.

The next morning a short, neatly written report was found under Rosette's pillow, placed there by an unknown hand. It contained these words:

"M. le Vicomte de Candale goes every day to the house of M. de Bonnard, his steward, where he changes his fashionable clothes for those of a young excise clerk; then he goes in this disguise to Rue ——, number ——, third floor, the lodgings of Mlle. Jeannette, a lace-maker, who has moved there but lately. He remains there about two hours.

"Last Sunday, M. le Vicomte and Mlle. Jeannette went out into the country and dined at the White Rabbit Inn. We do not know exactly what they ate, but if madame wishes, we will make an effort — "

"Ah! great heavens!" sighed Rosette, after reading the fatal report; "a grisette is worse than a bourgeoise!" and falling back, she fainted away, and they could only bring her to with the water of the Queen of Hungary and some of Général la Mothe's drops, — sovereign remedies on such occasions.

CHAPTER X.

THE caprice of Madame de Champrosé in transforming herself into Jeannette was destined to trouble more than one heart. The susceptible druggist of the Rue Sainte Avoie had received, at the ball at the Moulin-Rouge, an arrow from Cupid which struck him full in the heart. Every one knows that this little god shoots at mortals with two kinds of arrows. The first have points of gold, the second points of lead; the

former inspire love, the latter antipathy, or at least coldness. The unhappy druggist had been so hard hit by one of the first kind that the dart came out at his back, so tightly had the string been stretched and the bow bent. One of the other kind had been aimed at Madame de Champrosé, who thought no more of the druggist than if he had never existed.

To be the heir-presumptive of a fine drug-shop in the Rue Sainte Avoie, with the sign of a silver mortar hanging above it, and to be dying of love for a grisette without a sou, was an extremely humiliating situation. But that was the case of young Rougeron, the Alcibiades, the Hamilcar, the Galaor of the quarter, whom the Denises, the Nicoles, and the Javotes sighed for and regarded affectionately while passing his shop, where, seated at a beautifully polished counter, he compounded medicine, spices, or aromatic drugs, or, when resting himself after the cares of the day, dexterously made little paper cones from the works of Messieurs So and So, of whom several were members of the Académie Française.

More than one pretty girl of the Rue Maubuée, of the Rue du Plâtre, of Rue Geoffroy-l'Angevin

and Bar-du-Bec, dreamed of being seated at this triumphal counter dressed in a gorgeous Siamese robe; for if the drug-store approaches being a grocery on one side, it comes near being an apothecary-shop on the other, which sets it off wonderfully, and gives it great dignity. But they dreamed and sighed in vain. Rougeron had no thought for any one but Mlle. Jeannette, while she, owing to the different effect of those arrows of which we have just spoken, gave him not a second thought.

How did he again find the pretty lace-maker? That is a bit of history which has not yet been made clear. It is probable that he met her by chance and followed her to her lodgings, or perhaps the shop-walker, Justine's lover, who was his friend, may have been indiscreet. All we can say is, that one morning Jeannette saw the druggist's son enter her apartment, with the most pitiful, embarrassed, and stupid look imaginable, turning his hat nervously between his fingers, bowing like a choir-boy, and as awkward with his arms and legs as a village lover before the grandparents of his intended. This individual, who bore himself like a conqueror, with so much coolness and aplomb, at the dancing garden-parties, almost sat on the

floor when Jeannette invited him to sit down, so badly had he calculated his distance; for love, which renders girls more sprightly, makes boys stupid. No one can say why.

Jeannette, seeing him red and panting and his forehead damp with perspiration, pitied his embarrassment, and began the conversation with a commonplace phrase.

"What chance brought you here, my dear sir?"

"I was passing by, and thought I would take the opportunity to call, as I have not seen you since the night of the famous ball."

"You do me a great honour, which I appreciate fully," replied Jeannette, in such a cold tone as to quite counterbalance whatever friendliness or attractiveness her words might have possessed.

Conversation was about to drop again, when the unfortunate druggist, making a violent effort at self-control, continued with warmth and vehemence:

"No, Mlle. Jeannette, I did not pass by chance, as I just told you. I came purposely, with my mind fully made up. I suffered too much from not seeing you. It is the ball at the Moulin-Rouge which did it all. You were so pretty, so charm-

ing, so piquant, that you took my heart captive at once. Up to this time I have had only passing love affairs, but now it is love in earnest. I know it by the torments I suffer. I cannot eat or drink or sleep, although I long to sleep, to dream of you; it would always be that. Before knowing you I passed for a well-informed person in my circle, who did not lack for wit. They quoted my jokes from the Rue de la Verrerie to the Rue des Vieilles-Audriettes; but now I cannot give correct weights; I weigh everything wrongly; the cornucopias I make, unroll; I give vanilla for cinnamon, and I make mistakes without end in the syrups. I can no longer distinguish between an alkali and an acid; and quite recently, I spoiled a tincture of sunflower in which I used to excel. Hitherto, I have always had a joke ready, and used to say to customers and young girls the most amusing things in the world; but it is no longer so. I am awkward and stupid and all out of sorts, which proves, mademoiselle, that I love you; for this is not natural to me, and shows that the malignant little God of Love is mixed up with it."

During this strange declaration, Jeannette longed to laugh, but the unfortunate druggist had such

warmth and conviction, his feeling was so serious, in spite of his comical words, that she stifled her laughter and replied gently, so as not to aggravate this sincere although ridiculous grief.

"M. Rougeron, all that without doubt is very trying, but what can I do about it?"

"The one who has done the mischief can remedy it."

"I would be very glad to assist you, but not in the manner you wish."

"And how?"

"By asking you not to think any more about me, as a respectable girl should do on such an occasion."

"You do not love me, then?"

"No; and that ought not to mortify you. One is not mistress of one's feelings. Denise loves you, and yet you do not care for her."

"That is true; but it seems to me that if you would receive me now a little more favourably, you would end by having affection for me."

"One does not end by having affection; one must commence with it."

"For a love affair, perhaps, but for marriage that is not necessary. There is the power of mat-

rimony; then habit, kindness, and children bring the rest. Yes, Jeannette, such is the strength of my passion for you that I will marry you if you will have me, notwithstanding the distance that separates a well-established druggist from a simple lace-maker. My parents will object at first; they will say it is a *mésalliance* in the Rue Sainte Avoie; but your beauty will triumph over all, and every one will understand my resolution. Divine Jeannette, I place the Silver Mortar at your feet, with its oaken counter, its glittering scales, its labelled porcelain pots, its shelves and its drawers filled with cochineal and saffron and mastic, with ultramarine, blood-wort, bezoar, gum tragacanth, sandarac, cinnamon, benzoin, and all the aromatic spices of India, as precious as gold; to that I add the three thousand livres income which comes to me by right through my mother, and my house in the Rue Culture-Sainte Catherine, which is a good property, and a vineyard near Orleans, from which I make a very good wine, — without counting clothes and jewels."

"All that is very fine," replied Madame de Champrosé, very little surprised by this persuasive inventory, which ought to have overwhelmed Jean-

nette, and upon which the amorous druggist counted more than on the most irresistible eloquence; "but I could not consent to a marriage so distasteful to your parents."

"If that is the only obstacle, it is one I can easily remove," said the druggist, pale with emotion.

"And besides," continued Jeannette, "notwithstanding all the advantages it presents, and the honour with which it overwhelms me, I do not feel any inclination."

"If you refuse me in that fashion, Mlle. Jeannette, it is because you love another."

"Well, supposing that to be the case, can I not dispose of my heart as I fancy?"

"And Monsieur Jean is the happy mortal! A little countryman from Auxerre, whose only prospect is to have twelve hundred livres as a salt-excise clerk, — a fine match!"

"Very good for me, who have nothing. But I beg you, dear M. Rougeron, do not allow yourself the bad taste of calumniating a rival."

Without another word the discomfited druggist retired, pale with anger and jealousy, meditating some vengeance against Jeannette or against Mon-

sieur Jean, or even against both; for no one is more bitter in resentment than an offended druggist.

We left Rosette fainting on learning the deplorable news that M. le Vicomte de Candale was amusing himself with a grisette; when she had recovered from this swoon, she became possessed with the idea of seeing this Jeannette, who was beautiful enough to cut the roses from under the feet of a goddess of the Opéra, and entice into sentimentalism a young man who till now had been satisfied with pleasure. She comprehended, with that feminine instinct that never deceives, that the lace-maker must be a rare morsel to so deeply interest M. de Candale, who knew the ways of society, and was a thorough man of the world. What alarmed her most was that Mlle. Jeannette, although courted by the vicomte, remained in her little chamber, instead of being transplanted to some little mansion furnished in ruinous luxury, as is customary when a gentleman distinguishes with such attention a girl of low estate. It must be that Jeannette was a paragon of virtue, or that M. de Candale held her in great respect, to have

his conduct towards her so different from what it would have been to others.

She thought to herself that the vicomte must have disguised himself at first, so as not to frighten the maid, and the better to gain access to her abode; but she was surprised that he had kept up this travesty, and to clear away her doubts, she ordered a chair, and enveloping herself in a sombre-coloured therèse, ordered the porters to carry her to Rue de ——.

Jeannette, who believed herself unknown to the world, and lost as a bird in the depths of the woods in this nest of love, felt greatly surprised when she saw a beautiful, well-dressed woman enter, who said to her with a rather disdainful air, "Mlle. Jeannette?"

"It is I, madame."

"Do you make lace?"

"Yes, madame."

"Can you make me three ells of a pattern similar to this?"

"That will be long and difficult, but it can be done in time," said Madame de Champrosé, keeping up at all hazards her character as a workwoman before this unknown, of whose intentions she was ignorant.

"And will it be expensive?"

"Three louis, madame."

"Here they are in advance," said Rosette, who wanted a little time to examine her rival, and who could not, with all the desire in the world, find her hideous, nor prevent herself from admitting, as Jeannette stood opposite her, that she was charming. She admired, while she was enraged at, the beautiful blue eyes, so proud and tender, the rosy mouth, the delicate complexion, the pure features, the beautiful throat, so finely turned. All these modest charms were set off by a fresh and simple gown, and this contemplation drew a sigh from Rosette.

Certainly her beauty was as great as Jeannette's, and yet the lace-maker had an indefinable charm, a natural nobility, a certain aristocratic air, if such a term could be applied to a simple grisette.

"What is the reason she is more beautiful than I?" said the danseuse to herself, as she stood facing the working-girl. "My eyes are as beautiful as hers, my complexion as brilliant, and my figure is better. Can it be, as the philosopher and imitator of Rousseau, to whom I give dinner in the kitchen, said, that, in her, physical beauty is joined

with moral beauty? I came to give her a scolding, and here I am almost embarrassed before her."

These reflections, passing rapidly through Rosette's mind, caused a silence of some seconds, which became awkward. The danseuse broke it:

"My dear little one," said she, in as affectionate a tone as she could command, "this lace was only a pretext. I wished to see you and speak with you in regard to important matters concerning you and me; for although I have never before seen you, everything that concerns you touches me deeply."

"What you say, madame, is an enigma which I cannot understand. What can two people have in common who have never met, and who will probably never meet again?"

"Mlle. Jeannette, you have a lover."

At this brusque exclamation the noble blood of her ancestors mounted into Madame de Champrosé's cheeks; but recalling that she was Jeannette, she preserved a haughty silence.

"A lover, — that is perhaps saying too much; a flame, as he would be called in your class."

"Whether I have a lover or not, what matters it to you? Leave me, madame. Whatever is the object of your conversation, I do not understand it."

"But it is of great importance to me! I love the Vicomte de Candale."

"And I, Monsieur Jean; it is indifferent to me."

"Not so indifferent as you think!"

"And why?"

"M. le Vicomte de Candale and Monsieur Jean are the same person."

"I do not believe a word that you say. You wish to torment me. In any case, I am not jealous. You are not loved; else you would not have come to seek the Vicomte de Candale at the home of Mlle. Jeannette."

"Alas! you are right, Mlle. Jeannette, — he does not love me, and now I know the reason; for you are beautiful, very beautiful, — yes, more beautiful than I am; but the love which you accept from Monsieur Jean, could you accept it from the Vicomte de Candale, a young nobleman of an illustrious house, well placed at court, who has taken this disguise to seduce you, like Jupiter when he trans-

formed himself when he wished to amuse himself with common mortals? He has no other idea than to deceive you and abuse your innocence. Nothing serious can exist between you. You were born in too different spheres for your lives not to separate of themselves. What could you be in his life? An hour of pleasure. Soon he will return to the world, where he was created to shine, and you will remain in your chamber, weeping over your credulity. Assuredly, he will give you as much gold as you wish, he will allow you a large income; but that is not what you wish of him, since you are modest and aim only at true affection. Perhaps, dear little one, you had hopes that Monsieur Jean would marry you? That is only a chimera with a man like M. de Candale, who will be a duke and a first-class grandee of Spain after the death of his uncle."

"Who knows?" said Jeannette, smiling quite tranquilly; "we will talk of that again when you come for your lace."

"But she will do as she says," thought Rosette, greatly cast down, as she returned to her chair. "These grisettes, with their pretences of disinterestedness and virtue, are a thousand times more

cunning than opera singers, and that is not saying little. Ah, my poor, brave girl! on what a career you have entered in loving Candale!"

This strange revelation, so curiously made, did it cause pain or pleasure to her who received it? If Jeannette lost by it, Mme. de Champrosé gained. She felt well satisfied with the perspicacity of her choice; she rejoiced that her noble blood had not been deceived, and paid the compliment to her heart, of not aiding in this plebeian caprice, born of the suggestions of ennui and the intrigues of a waiting-maid. She felt the joy of the ermine in knowing its white fur free from stain. At heart, although very much in love with Jean, she thought his name vulgar, and was happy to see it lengthen itself into the Vicomte de Candale; and so all those elegancies, all the distinctions and refinements, which seemed so astonishing in a salt-excise clerk, explained themselves naturally.

She gave herself up to her love with complete security, never dreading the consequences, since she could make an eternal union of what might have been but a passing fancy.

So Rosette, instead of breaking up Candale's love affair, helped it; but she did not know that

Jeannette was the Marquise de Champrosé; she had not asked that of the detectives, who, being discreet men, had left her ignorant of this detail, on the suggestion of M. de Sartines, who was always prudent, mysterious, and wise.

When Monsieur Jean came to pay his accustomed visit to Jeannette, she received him most ceremoniously, and with all the marks of profound respect.

"What fine courtesies you make me this morning, Mlle. Jeannette; you have accustomed me to more friendly and familiar greetings: a kiss would please me more than thirty courtesies."

"Ah! that was because I did not know I was receiving in my humble room such a grand and powerful personage."

"What personage? What are you saying? What do all these affectations mean?" said Candale, much disquieted at the turn the conversation was taking.

"It is truly too great an honour for poor Jeannette."

"*Pardieu!* a truce to all this joking! Jean and Jeannette can please, but not honour, one another, — their titles are of equal value."

"No; Mlle. Jeannette cannot be the equal of the Vicomte de Candale. Your genealogy, Monsieur Jean, — permit me to call you once more by the name under which I have loved you so well, — goes back much farther than mine."

This sudden blow staggered Candale a little, but he soon recovered his self-possession, and with an air of extreme nobility said:

"In whatever manner you have learned my name, I do not deny it. Yes; I am the Vicomte de Candale. I owe it to my ancestors to acknowledge it when one asks it of me."

"Ah! M. de Candale, how you have abused the simplicity of a young girl! how you have deceived me!"

"Deceived you! in what way? Have I lied? Look! are not my eyes full of the flames of love? What Monsieur Jean said, Candale repeats."

"But can Mlle. Jeannette listen to it?"

"Disdainful one! she listened readily enough to Monsieur Jean. Are you going to be proud because I am only a vicomte? Everybody cannot be a plebeian. I have not had the good luck to be born as a simple individual, without title. You should forgive me."

"How did it happen that the Vicomte de Candale was at the wedding at the Moulin-Rouge?"

"*Mon Dieu!* through pure caprice, idleness, disgust with fashionable pleasures, love of adventure, the vague hope of a heart seeking for its ideal, and which I have found, thanks to my disguise. You welcomed the salt-clerk: you would have repelled the vicomte. Listen, Jeannette," he continued, in a more serious tone. "I love you as I have never loved any one else. Believe me. Far from concealing my passion, I wish to glory in it; I wish to put you in your place; I wish to frame your beauty in gold,—to give you a life of enchantment, of fêtes; to make you rich, sparkling, happy enough to cause the envy of duchesses; to hand to you on silver platters the keys of all my châteaux. The mistress of the king, who is almost queen of France, will grow pale with jealousy in seeing you pass, for she will feel that she has fallen from the throne of beauty, which she only occupies because you choose to remain in the shade. My life, my blood, my gold,—all are yours. I give you everything."

"Yes; everything except that ring which Monsieur Jean would have put on Jeannette's finger,

and which alone would permit me to accept the treasures of M. de Candale. Adieu, vicomte; we must not see each other again. Kiss my hand for the last time. Ah! Monsieur Jean, why did you come to dance at the Moulin-Rouge?"

CHAPTER XI.

IT would require an abler brush than ours to paint truly the vivid look of disappointment on the abbé's countenance when he presented himself at the Hôtel de Champrosé at his usual hours, and was told by the lackey that the marquise had gone to pass six weeks in the country with her aunt, the old Baronne de Kerkaradec, in Brittany. The abbé

was rejoicing in the idea of seeing Madame de Champrosé, whose society he dearly loved, and he arrived at her door with a furtive and happy air, springing on the tips of his gold-buckled shoes, his short cloak gallantly flung over his arm, and his legs encased in the finest black silk stockings, *in fiocchi*,[1] as they called it. He was rosier and more expansive than usual; his smile, caused by his inward content, showed the thirty-two sparkling pearls of his mouth. He had prepared two or three almost new jokes, and as many madrigals, hardly ever heard before, and he counted much on the effect of these. Never had he felt in such perfect spirits, and in order to get there sooner he had made his servant say his breviary for him.

Poor abbé! no disagreeable presentiment had given him warning of what was to happen.

He flattered himself that by his grace and amiability he would this day supplant his pupil, the monkey, who was his rival in the heart of Madame de Champrosé, and now to learn that she had gone off to a wilderness, more unapproachable and frightful than the Tauric Chersonese, and peopled by Topinambous, Algonquins, and Hurons! What a blow to his hopes!

[1] In great style.

His smile, which he never entirely lost, contracted itself about half, which was for him the supreme expression of sadness, and he withdrew with slow steps and a disturbed air, letting the silk of his mantle fall into desperate wrinkles, while he mechanically repeated to himself: "What intolerable barbarity, — what shocking irregularity, — to go away like this without any warning, to visit an everlasting old aunt, and to leave us here, — her friends, her guests, her admirers, and the pet animals of her household! What shall I do now with the little verses I prepared so laboriously for her this morning? They will grow rancid waiting for her return! Ah, what a cruel, impious destiny! What has a poor abbé of the court done to you to persecute him in such a fashion?"

After the abbé came the financier Bafogne, in a carriage covered with gilding and showy armorial bearings (for he had but recently purchased a patent of nobility), encumbered behind by a crowd of footmen, and loaded in front with a great, corpulent coachman. The financier descended slowly from this sumptuous vehicle, for he was dressed with unusual splendour; his coat, vest, and breeches were of gold brocade, lined with silver brocade,

and fastened with diamond buttons as large as snuff-boxes. He looked as gorgeous as a peacock with his tail spread, for having long before determined on making a formal declaration to the Marquise de Champrosé, he had chosen precisely this day for the great act which had cost him so much; for Madame de Champrosé had deeply impressed him, and he had donned his arms, and made himself look as handsome as possible, — which was in reality very ugly; for the graces are not to be bought from a gentleman's furnisher.

When he heard of this inconceivable journey, which spoiled all his plans, he flew into a violent rage; from crimson he became purple; he swore, stormed, beat the ground with his gold-headed cane — chased by Roettiers, engraver to the king — with such force as to break it, although the cane was of inestimable value, and made to the lackey this magnificent offer, which expressed vividly his belief in the power of gold: "Rascal, tell me that your mistress has not gone away, and I will give you a hundred pistoles!"

The conscientious lackey, who asked for nothing better than to gain this sum, was obliged to reply to Bafogne that his mistress had really set out the

evening before, for the château of her aunt, the Baronne de Kerkaradec, near Pen-Mark, on the Bay of Audierne, — details which he felt obliged to add, in thanks for the richness of the banker's offer; and he was rewarded for it by a handful of silver crowns.

To the banker succeeded the Commander de Livry, and the chevalier, in a phaeton drawn by great English horses, an imported fashion due to M. de Lauraguais, on his return from London, where he had gone to learn to think.

The commander was quite overcome at the absence of Madame de Champrosé, whose cook had a style that agreed admirably with his opinions on the science of eating. No one could suit the commander's taste better in bisque soup, or in forcemeat balls, and he was simply incomparable in his woodcock salmis. So the commander always attended the marquise's suppers with most exemplary faithfulness. It was difficult to make him eat anywhere else, and after his own wines, which he guarded with the most minute care, he would not admit that any other's but the marquise's were fit to be drunk by an intelligent throat; and he showed such great knowledge in this direction that

he gained the deepest veneration of her butler.

The chevalier had been deceived by the glowing pictures which Justine had given him as to his progress in her mistress's heart, and thought that his time had now come; so he saw with extreme dismay his hopes thus retarded indefinitely. He imagined that with the aid of his cheap wit [1] and his legs, which were finely formed, and of which he was quite vain, he had made some impression on the marquise; but now what a quantity of *bons mots* and dandified airs would be necessary to make up for this lost time, thought he half furiously; but that did not help matters.

So the four *habitués* of the Hôtel de Champrosé departed, seeking to pass the evening as agreeably as possible. The abbé went to call upon the Présidente de T——; but he found her pug-dog so badly trained, and her monkey so ill-tempered, that he amused himself only moderately; besides, the Présidente was terribly disfigured by pimples, and to crown all, her colour was wretchedly distributed: the roses, having abandoned her cheeks,

[1] *Esprit de ruelles:* wit suited for the meetings at ladies' houses (*ruelles*).

had now taken refuge in her nose, where, in spite of the free use of chicory-water and cucumber-juice, they were of a lively poppy-red. The abbé, in comparing this fiery, ungovernable nose with the pretty white and delicately cut one of the marquise, felt all the more bitterly the extent of his misfortune. He essayed in vain to introduce the compliments and verses he had composed for the marquise, but circumstances were unfavourable, so that instead of compliments they would have appeared like gross insults to the disfigured Présidente. Overwhelmed by so many mishaps, he grew dull, and the Présidente remarked to the Baronne de B——, "Decidedly, the dear abbé is deteriorating." If the supper had only been good: but the wines were adulterated, and the butler was surly about refilling the glasses; the plates were whisked off the table, if one turned away an instant, for the servants were impatient to get to bed, and hurried the dessert out of the way. Notwithstanding the richness of the silver, the brilliancy of the cut glass and the candles, it was the dinner of an ordinary café, as is apt to be the case in houses where avarice is mixed with ostentation. The unhappy abbé took his leave, suffering at the

same time from indigestion and from hunger, and thought seriously of ending his days in a monastery.

Bafogne was not much more successful. Not knowing what to do with his time, he visited Mlle. Desobry, who aided him in being patient under the austerities of the great ladies; but as the *demi-mondaine* had counted upon her Mondor's[1] passing his evening elsewhere, she had taken measures to lighten the solitude to which he had condemned her. The financier, who entered unexpectedly, with an air of ownership, saw a little table delicately set for two persons, and he caught a glimpse of a vanishing sword and uniform through a closing door. In vain Mlle. Desobry sought to explain to him that nothing was more natural than to have the table laid for two, when one expected to be alone. The financier would not swallow this plausible excuse, for he had seen with his own eyes a bit of uniform disappearing into the closet, and he determined at all hazards to force it open. He succeeded in dragging out a musketeer most beautifully got up, who seemed to experience no embarrassment whatever, explaining that he was a cousin of Mlle. Desobry, and a respectable person,

[1] A millionaire, man made of money.

and he would see that she was treated with proper regard, and swore he would cut off the ears of any rascal who lacked respect for her.

The financier, who was not overburdened with courage, and wished to preserve his ears, although they were too long, cast a sheepish look at Desobry, and, without speaking a word, withdrew, slamming the door behind him, leaving the field free to the musketeer and his lady-love, who burst into peals of impertinent laughter. Such was the evening of Bafogne, the rich financier.

The Commander de Livry, to console himself, devoured almost an entire boar's head, stuffed with pistachio nuts, which almost stifled him, although he watered it with numerous bumpers of red wine, and possessed the digestion of an ostrich. That night he had a frightful nightmare. The decapitated wild boar, whose head he had eaten, seemed to be stamping on his chest and trying to crush him by rolling over him. This dream greatly alarmed the commander, who consulted Tronchin. That celebrated physician replied, with a smile:

"This dream signifies that wild boar is heavy, and you will have indigestion if you eat it again."

As to the chevalier, he was in such a bad humour

that he quarrelled with Versac that night in the greenroom of the Opéra, and the chevalier received a gash on his cheek that almost blinded him, and he was obliged to cover it for several days with a great patch of English court-plaster. This disfigured him so comically that he almost had another duel.

These were the unfortunate extremities to which Madame de Champrosé drove her four habitual visitors, by feigning a visit of six weeks to her aunt, the Baronne de Kerkaradec, while she was weaving her romance with Monsieur Jean in the little lace-maker's chamber.

But what Madame de Champrosé had not foreseen was the supreme resolution taken by these idlers driven to bay. At the end of some days' fruitless efforts to house themselves as agreeably elsewhere, the abbé, the financier, the chevalier, and the commander individually conceived a scheme which each thought belonged to him alone, and which was at once put into execution with the greatest possible secrecy. This scheme brought about the complication we shall relate.

The manor of Kerkaradec, a ruin which has come down from barbaric times, is a Gothic for-

tress with walls fifteen feet in thickness, in which the windows form deep recesses; with battlements, spy-holes,[1] projecting galleries, and loopholes; with drawbridge and portcullis, and all such feudal apparatus. Four turrets with roofs like pepper-boxes flank the angles and are surmounted by swallow-tail weathercocks, tarnished by the wind from the sea, which breaks on the rocks at the foot of the castle walls, and whose tiresome and monotonous moan may be heard night and day. Clouds of noisy martins circle about this ancient remnant of gentility, striving to impart a touch of life to its walls, blackened by centuries. Nothing could be more gloomy than this manor of Kerkaradec, built before the Mansards, the Gabriels, the Ledoux, and the Servandonis gave us a taste for regular beauty and a true style of architecture.

It is astonishing that any one can live so far from the atmosphere of courts, from the sun of Versailles, the only one that really shines, among a peasantry not less savage than animals, and gentry as uncouth as their Celtic ancestors of ferocious memory. Nevertheless, the dowager of

[1] *Moucharabys:* balconies with parapets, whence projectiles could be launched.

Kerkaradec, although highly born, had solved this problem, since she was eighty years old. It is true that she had had time to forget Paris, where she had been educated, in her solitary life on the beach of the Bay of Audierne. Certainly, one could not imagine a châtelaine more perfectly in keeping with this old château: the figure suited the frame exactly. The dowager of Kerkaradec, with her cap with immense lappets, after the fashion in vogue during the youth of Louis the Fourteenth; her gown of some stiff stuff — brocatelle or figured silk — which looked as if it had been cut out of an old curtain; her great owl-like eyes, with their bistre-coloured lids, and separated by a thin nose shining like a bird's beak; her mouth retreating from the loss of her teeth, — had the aspect of a spirit of the past, returned to haunt this edifice of a bygone age.

Notwithstanding her witch-like appearance, which was increased by the solitude and wildness of the place, Madame de Kerkaradec had a certain grand and haughty air that bespoke the noble blood flowing in her veins, under the parchment-like skin of her hands, which resembled the withered claws of a mummy; and one could understand that

that blood was pure, and derived from a noble source.

The dearest dream of this good soul was to have a partner to play cards with her. All her old gentlemen friends had died long ago. She had only distant relatives, or who did not live in Brittany, and the curé could not come often, — the parsonage was a long distance from the castle, and the roads leading to it were detestable. The poor dowager, seated near the window in a great tapestried armchair, was occupied seriously in playing a game by herself, her right hand representing herself, and her left, her imaginary adversary, when an old servant entered the chamber in affright, and said to her mistress:

"Madame! madame! some one has rung the drawbridge bell!"

"Go along, foolish woman! Your ears are ringing. Who do you suppose would ring at our poor abandoned dovecote?"

"My ears are not ringing! Yvon has gone to open the gate."

"What are you talking about? No one ever enters that way. M. le Curé passes through the gap in the park, and enters at the postern gate."

"Madame, some one has rung, — has rung three times!"

"All fancy! The last person who passed the drawbridge was M. de Penhoël, because he came on horseback; and it was — let me see — fifteen years ago he died," said the good lady, counting on her thin and yellow fingers.

Old Bertha had not been deceived, however, for in a few minutes an odd-looking creature, half lackey, half farm-servant, came to say that a gentleman whose carriage had broken down a short distance from the castle had come to crave hospitality.

"The guest whom God sends us is always welcome," said the old lady, who had old-time traditions. "Ask him to come in."

The lackey went out, and Madame de Kerkaradec could not refrain from saying, "This blessed guest who has fallen from heaven will take a hand with me."

A person of our acquaintance, who was no other than the chevalier, recognisable by the red line which Versac's sword had left upon his cheek, approached the armchair of the dowager, who had risen slightly, and saluted her profoundly.

"Madame, I am the Chevalier de Saint Hubert."

"And I, the Baronne de Kerkaradec."

"An awkward lout of a postilion has overturned my carriage and broken one of the wheels in a rut, and I see no possibility of continuing my journey before the carriage can be mended."

"This castle is at your service, monsieur; but were you not wounded or bruised by your fall?"

"No, madame; my fall was a most fortunate one. I slid on to a soft mound overgrown with moss and shrubs."

"Ah, so much the better. Perhaps, while waiting for dinner, you will play a game of piquet with me?"

"Very willingly," replied the chevalier, who readily seized any pretext to remain in the house.

And he took up the cards, which he shuffled and cut with an ease that delighted the dowager.

"What devilish idea," said he to himself, "made Madame de Champrosé come and bury herself in this nest of owls and rats, with this old mummy? Women are really mad. Where can she be? Without doubt, in her room reading or sleeping. She must come to dinner, and then I shall see

her, and my passion in following her will have its influence and advance my affair."

The chevalier and the dowager had scarcely played two games when Bertha, more frightened than the first time, came in, saying:

"Madame, there is another ring!"

"Well, let them open the door."

In a few minutes the lackey introduced a charming court abbé, very natty in appearance, extremely well dressed, who seemed much annoyed and much surprised at finding the chevalier already installed in the place. The abbé you recognise at once. Two days of Madame la Présidente was all he could stand, and he had then started in pursuit of Madame de Champrosé. Swallowing his disgust, he gave his name and related his experience, which was exactly similar to that of the chevalier.

Madame de Kerkaradec explained this double accident by the frightful state of the roads, when beasts, carriages, and people were lost; then she invited the abbé to take a seat at the green table.

About a half-hour later, the bell rang the third time, and Bafogne made his appearance. He was covered with mud, for being heavy and fat, he had not managed his accident with the adroitness of

the chevalier and the abbé. He was welcomed like the others, and the dowager, raising to heaven her transparently thin hands, said, with an accent of profound jubilation:

"Heaven did not wish that I should die without enjoying one more game of whist. Here are four of us, — just the number needed! Providence is good!"

The commander, also somewhat untidy, was not much later in appearing, and also had the same pretext.

"Sit down, monsieur, and when one of these gentlemen is tired, you can take his place in the game," said the old lady, in a transport of joy at such an unusual company.

These gallants of Madame de Champrosé had all four of them conceived the idea of going to look for her in the Château Kerkaradec, and their sterile imaginations had furnished them all with this extremely commonplace exploit. Each had hoped to be the sole inventor of this triumphal combination, and it was with the most comical rage that they found themselves all united in the house of the old Breton lady. They all played with the worst possible grace, watching each other slyly,

like those Japanese monsters studded with warts, with which people decorate their chimney-pieces and what-nots.

But that was nothing in comparison with what awaited them.

When dinner was announced, and they passed into the dining-room, Madame de Kerkaradec gave her hand to the chevalier.

Oh, surprise! oh, rage! oh, despair! Madame de Champrosé did not appear, — she was not at the château!

Where could she be? Without doubt, away with some gallant.

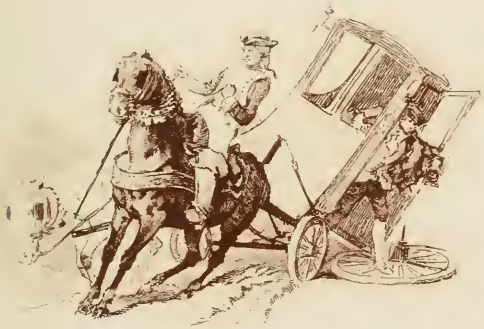
The chevalier cautiously turned the conversation on Madame de Champrosé, whom he said he had frequently heard mention Madame de Kerkaradec with veneration and love.

"Oh!" said the old lady, "my wrinkles, without doubt, frighten her. It is six years since I have seen her, and over two years since she has written to me."

"We are duped!" exclaimed the chevalier, the abbé, the financier, and the commander, but with closed mouths. After resting a day or two, as good breeding demanded, for Madame de Kerkara-

dec's game of whist, they departed together for Paris, bruised and furious. You may well suppose that they told this story to whoever would listen to it, in the city or at the court, in the circles and in the foyers of the Opéra or the Comédie, and soon nothing was talked about but the disappearance of Madame de Champrosé, in flight with some unknown gallant; for in this ingenious and positive eighteenth century, no one for an instant imagined that she could have gone alone.

Candale himself heard of it, and was immensely astonished; but he was a thousand leagues from thinking that he alone could have told the whereabouts of the beautiful fugitive.



CHAPTER XII.

THE situation was becoming complicated. Madame de Champrosé had heard through Justine, who had kept informed of what went on at the hôtel, and had been told of the expedition of the four intimates to Kerkaradec, and the gossip which had been the result. That which would have been a serious matter with Monsieur

Jean, could be much more easily arranged with the Vicomte de Candale; but the marquise, before throwing off forever the pretty mask of Jeannette, under which she had been disguised for some days, wished to push her impersonation as far as possible. She had determined that, having commenced this intrigue, she would get out of it all that it contained. She had the ambition, as she was romantically inclined, of being loved for herself alone, and of owing only to her natural charms a triumph which she could easily obtain with her title, her riches, and her high position.

On the other hand, the Vicomte de Candale, returning to his hôtel, where he threw aside the modest garments of Monsieur Jean, henceforth useless, felt that he was hopelessly in love with Jeannette, and that it would be impossible for him to live without her.

He therefore went again to see her, clothed this time, as became his rank, in a magnificent and fashionable costume, which brought out wonderfully his personal advantages. He had given his orders as if for a visit of ceremony.

When he entered the chamber, all radiant and superb, Jeannette felt a thrill of pleasure, and

thought the vicomte much handsomer than the salt-excise clerk had been.

"Ah, Monsieur Jean!" cried she, playing to perfection surprise and grief. "Monsieur de Candale, I should say; it is not generous of you to pursue a young girl whose life you have disturbed, and who only asks to forget you, if she is able, in the obscurity where you found her."

"Jeannette, I beg you to continue to Candale the friendship, the love, which you seemed to have for Monsieur Jean."

"Do not recall to me that name, under which you surprised a heart which believed it had a right to give itself to you."

"Ah, well, so be it. We will speak no more of Jean. We will talk of Candale," said the vicomte, throwing himself at Jeannette's feet. "What do you wish, naughty girl, cold and virtuous creature, thus to play with my sufferings? You refuse to receive me because I am a vicomte. Your plebeian blood is then prouder than my nobility? Were you a princess, were you descended from Charlemagne in direct line, if your escutcheon were equal to mine, which Saint Louis enriched with a new quartering at the Crusades, — should I love you less on

that account, and ought you to impute to me as a fault an advantage I did not seek? Yes, Jeannette, I feel it. My life is henceforth bound up in yours, and cannot be separated from it. It is necessary that you should love me, vicomte though I am. I see your reply hovering on your lovely lips, but you cannot say it, for this kiss will stop its passage. You belong to me by every tie of nature, by the sacred right of love, by your heart which trembles, and by mine which is leaping; duchesse or grisette, prince or peasant, what matters it? It is only Cupid and Psyche here who recognise and embrace each other."

"Candale, leave me," sighed Jeannette, endeavouring to release herself from the arms of the vicomte; "do not abuse my love for you."

"Fear nothing, dear angel; rest on my heart,—it is your place. What can the Vicomtesse de Candale have to dread from her husband?"

"Oh, heavens! what are you saying?"

"I say that I shall marry you, since there is only one woman in the world for me, and that is you."

"Oh, unhoped-for happiness!" said Jeannette, pale and red by turns; "but I ought not to accept.

Just think of it, what an ill-assorted match! one of the grandest names of France uniting itself to a poor lace-maker, who has nothing but her virtue."

"You are a queen by your virtue. And besides, from the manner and morals of the day, no one can be sure of the blood in his veins. Who knows but that you are as nobly born as I? Our princes are gallant enough to be able to call themselves literally fathers of the people."

"Oh! for pity, Candale, do not calumniate my mother," said Madame de Champrosé, who could not refrain from inwardly smiling at the supposition of Candale, — a supposition so much better founded than he imagined, — "and do not persist in this demand, which would cause the unhappiness of your life."

"Not at all; I predict that we will be so happy as to make everybody envious."

"What, I, a poor ignoramus who knows nothing of life or of the world, — how could I conduct myself properly in your brilliant sphere, among all those high personages, those haughty women, who will look down on me from the height of their pride, and make me feel my humble origin by contemptuous looks and disdainful laughter?"

"Everybody will respect the wife presented by my hand."

"Do you not fear the jeers of the city and the court?"

"First of all, I fear no one: I am young, free, rich; and if some old lordling given over to antiquated prejudices blames me for the most sensible action of my life, I shall have on my side Voltaire, Diderot, and all the learned clique, who will make a devil of a noise celebrating my act as worthy of one of the seven sages of Greece. I shall become very popular by it. You see, then, Jeannette, that all your reasoning is of no value, and that you will soon be the most sought-after woman in all Paris. Will you give me, yes or no, the tips of that pretty hand, white and delicate as a marquise's, that I may place on it Monsieur Jean's ring?"

Jeannette comprehended that further resistance would only irritate and rebuff the vicomte, so with lowered eyelids, and cheeks blushing with modesty, she held out her finger for the engagement ring that Candale offered her; the ring accepted, she flung herself on the neck of her future husband with an effusion of adorable tenderness.

The day for the celebration of the marriage was

decided upon, and the impatient Candale wished it to be as early as possible. He then withdrew, his heart full of joy and dreams of happiness, but not without first having stolen as a lover many kisses belonging by right to the treasury of the husband.

After receiving the ring, Madame de Champrosé had for a moment the idea of telling her true name to Candale; but she wished to keep this surprise for the signing of the contract. What ineffable happiness flooded her soul when she acquired the certainty of being loved for herself, with no thought of ambition or vanity or self-interest, by a man, noble, rich, and illustrious, who believed her to be obscure and poor, a simple daughter of the people, gaining her bread by lace-making, whom he would associate with him in his rank and his fortune. This love crowned her with a more brilliant coronet than that of a marquise.

The rôle of Jeannette was about finished, and Madame de Champrosé, accompanied by Justine, returned in a post-chaise to her hôtel, with a great flourish of trumpets, so that her return should be observed. The abbé, the financier, the commander, and the chevalier rushed to present themselves;

and the marquise explained to them that on her way to Kerkaradec she had been taken so seriously ill as to be confined to her bed for some days at an inn, and that she had returned to Paris, instead of continuing her journey, so that in case of a relapse she might be within reach of the care of Doctor Bordeu, in whom she had implicit confidence.

This history of her illness did not at all agree with the appearance of the marquise, who had never looked more radiantly fresh and blooming; but as it was quite plausible, they had to accept it, for no one had the right to think it a poor excuse.

The following days, Madame de Champrosé took care to be seen in all directions, in order to make known the fact that she was in Paris. She appeared in her box at the Opéra, and at Versailles, where, on the grand staircase of the Orangery, she had a rencontre that nearly disconcerted her. As she was descending the staircase, Candale was going up. On seeing the approach of this woman with her sweeping train, her feathers and diamonds, and all her paraphernalia of a grand court toilet, powdered and painted like a princess, and sur-

rounded by a group of devoted cavaliers, Candale was strangely troubled. He had discovered in the features of the marquise a most marked resemblance to Jeannette. Notwithstanding the difference in manner and costume, the similarity was so great that he could not restrain himself from stopping on the step where he found himself, and looking fixedly at Madame de Champrosé, exclaiming, "Great God! Jeannette —" The marquise, who continued to descend, glanced towards him with a naïve and astonished air, as of one surprised at an action she did not comprehend; and seeing Candale immovable, his feet rooted to the marble by stupor, she lightly continued her way, followed by the Commander de Livry and Bafogne, whom she delighted to make walk very fast, because he was fat and heavy, — a bit of mischief she enjoyed greatly.

"How strange Nature is in her freaks!" thought Candale, continuing his ascent when this vision had vanished. "She amuses herself by casting two faces in the same mould, and making a double of a marquise and a grisette! How much they resemble each other! But how much prettier Jeannette is!"

No, dear vicomte, Jeannette is not prettier, and you will soon be convinced of it; you only do your duty as a lover in thinking your mistress the most beautiful creature in the world, — more beautiful than herself. It is only faith that saves; and the faith of the lover is as good as the faith of the coal-dealer; that is the beauty of it.

It will not be forgotten that the druggist left Jeannette profoundly hurt at finding his illustrious alliance disdained by a little creature, very attractive, it is true, but without a penny to her name. He sought to revenge himself for this disdain, and as he knew Justine's lover, the shop-walker, — to whom she had had the weakness to tell the facts regarding Jeannette, — while pretending to give some facts regarding the little lace-maker who interested him, he adroitly drew from him the information that she was no other than the Marquise de Champrosé, — a discovery of which he promised himself to take good advantage. In short, he bruited it abroad that the marquise, in imitation of many women of exalted rank, tired of the voluptuousness of the court and the gallantries of worn-out courtiers, was attracted by the young men of the people into little towers of Nesle,

where she assumed different characters, so as to enjoy the pleasure of their society without assuming any responsibility. His spite did not limit itself to that, as we shall see; but the star which presided over the destinies of Jean and Jeannette, if we may be permitted once more to use these names, was so decidedly lucky, that everything planned to injure them turned out to their advantage. The day that Candale went to Jeannette to sign the contract, a messenger opened the door and threw a letter on the table. The letter was addressed to Monsieur Jean, and contained these words:

"Monsieur Jean:

"Look out for yourself! You have fallen into a snare; you, no doubt, have heard stories of young men beloved of great ladies, who disguised themselves in order to see if the pleasures of the people were as good as those of the court, and if the drunkenness of the cabarets was more diverting than that of their little suppers; you may have heard of handsome youths who have disappeared, perhaps in the dungeons of a Bastille, perhaps in the hold of a ship starting for distant isles. Tremble! The lace-maker is a marquise, — Jeannette is Madame de Champrosé. It is enough to warn you of the fate that awaits you when the whim of this second Madame d'Egmont shall have passed

away. If you have courage, revenge yourself for having been played with in this fashion, and leave her as she deserves; if you have not heart enough for that, and if you have nibbled at her bait, you have only yourself to blame for what may happen to you. You are warned!"

The Vicomte de Candale, thinking only of his happiness, opened mechanically this letter, which was written on wrapping-paper, but felt not a little surprised when he read its contents.

"What is the meaning of this extraordinary story?" asked he, in a startled voice.

"Ah! I see what it is," said Jeannette, glancing over the epistle in the most tranquil manner possible; "my waiting-maid must have been gossiping."

"Your waiting-maid! What, great gods! is it true? Clear up this mystery, or I shall die!"

"Jeannette has finished her rôle."

"Then it was one?"

"Monsieur Jean, it ill becomes you to scold Jeannette."

"That letter, then, tells the truth?"

"It is true."

"Madame la Marquise de Champrosé!"

"Monsieur le Vicomte de Candale!"

"Perfidious woman!"

"Deceiver!"

"Ah! how you have tricked me!"

"And you, but for Rosette, would still be Monsieur Jean."

"If that letter had not discovered all, would you still have kept silence?"

"My signature at the bottom of the contract would in a few moments have revealed my secret. But come, my dear Candale, do not be grieved. I am only a marquise, to be sure; but all women cannot have the good fortune to be born grisettes. Have I really become ugly since I ceased to be Jeannette?"

"No!" said the vicomte, kissing her hand with ardour.

"And if you should meet me on the stairs at Versailles, you would recognise and salute me?"

"It was you, then?"

"Assuredly."

"In truth, there could not be two Jeannettes in the world!"

"Flatterer!"

"What a singular chain of circumstances!"

"It is a secret sympathy which has guided us both; but do not think that I am in the habit of making such escapades. Anyway, you will soon see that I am not," said Madame de Champrosé, laughing.

"My story is the same as yours: the notion seized me one tiresome evening to assume this disguise of Jeannette, under which I have had the happiness to become loved by you. In society, dominated by fashion and frivolity, in the constant whirl of pleasures, we should never have been able to discover our true characters. We should have passed and repassed without understanding one another. This mask has enabled us to act sincerely. I, who have the reputation of being a fashionable woman, affected and gay, am really simple and true; nature alone touches me. And you, notwithstanding your reputation as a fop and lady-killer, are affectionate and sincere. Let us tell this to no one, but always be to one another Jean and Jeannette."

The marriage took place in the chapel of the Hôtel de Champrosé, and in the evening, when the abbé came to pay his respects to the marquise, he

was astonished at seeing a new face in the room, from which he augured no good for the future of his flame, for the unknown was young, handsome, and magnificently dressed.

To counterbalance the effect of the new-comer, the abbé recited to the marquise some verses on which he had counted much, and which commenced in this manner:

"Thinking to hover o'er a rose,
A butterfly in sportive play
Lit trembling on the half-closed lips
Of Madame Champrosé."

"Hold on there, my dear poet!" said the marquise, laughing. "I am extremely sorry to destroy the symmetry of your verse, but I am no longer Madame de Champrosé. I am now called the Vicomtesse de Candale, which does not rhyme so well; and here is my husband, whom I wish to present to you."

The commander, the financier, and the chevalier soon learned the news, and accepted it with resignation. The abbé alone, who could not arrange his couplet to rhyme with Candale, remained inconsolable.

Some time after this Rosette received a great box full of Malines lace, and a bracelet of large diamonds of the first water. A little note accompanied these two gifts. It contained these words: "From Jean and Jeannette."