

The Head
By
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)

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Compiled
by
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Engraved by C. Heath

Amalie de Boufflers

THE HEAD.

BY L. E. L.

THE Countess Amalie de Boufflers was one of the very prettiest specimens of a pretty woman that Paris and nature had ever constructed. She had bright golden hair, always exquisitely dressed, whether sprinkled with powder, lighted with diamonds, and waving with feathers, or suffered to hang in the studied negligence of a *crop à l'Anglaise*. She had a hand as white as a lily, and nearly as small; a foot and ankle as faultless as the satin slippers—which their artist said required the imagination of a poet to conceive, and the genius of a sculptor to execute; her walk was the most exquisite mixture of agility and helplessness that ever paid a cavalier the compliment of attracting his attention and requiring his aid; her dancing made the Prince de Ligne exclaim, “I understand the fables of mythology—Madame realizes the classic idea of the Graces.” Never did any body dress so exquisitely; Raphael himself never managed drapery to such a flow of elegance, Corregio never understood half so well the arrangement of colours, and in the management of fan, *façon*, scarf, handkerchief, and *bouquet* she was unrivalled—“the power of science could no further go.” Beautiful she was not, for the imagination and the heart must enter into the composition of beauty—that beauty which is both poetry and passion; but, after all, there is no word in French that translates our “beautiful,” and who in her own sphere could have desired her to be what their language did not even express? Numberless were the lovers whom she drove to despair—and many were those whom she did not! But all her *petites affaires de cœur* were arranged in the most perfect taste; no

scenes, no jealousies, no *brouilleries*; these are things which a *femme d'esprit* always avoids, and, as the Countess was wont to observe, "*Je suis femme d'esprit par la grace de Dieu—et je le sais.*"

It was amazing, in spite of all her avocations, how much she contrived to do for her husband: half at least of his pensions, places, and favours were owing to her solicitations; and this was very disinterested—for as they scarcely ever met, she had no motive for keeping him in good humour. Talk of the industry of the lower classes:—no woman with two cows, six children, to say nothing of pigs and poultry, and who takes in washing to boot, ever worked harder than the Countess de Boufflers; the poets whom she patronised; the plays which she protected, for a smile from the fair face bending anxiously from the box above, and meeting his gaze, quite by chance, disarmed many a stern young critic in the *parterre*;—then the fashions which she invented; the financiers' wives whom she put in the way of spending their husbands' money creditably, *i. e.* as quickly and as uselessly as possible; her assiduous attendance at court and at mass; her thousand and one balls; her myriad of letters and notes, and, above all, the inimitable suppers, of which she was the presiding deity; the piquant things which she said, the charming things which she looked, and the innumerable things which she did, proved, at least, that if idleness be the mother of mischief, she carefully avoided the parent, whatever she might do the child.

Time past on as lightly as he always steps over flowers, Brussels carpets, marble terraces, green turfs, or whatever simile may best express a path without an impediment. Every day added one to the crowd of her adorers—people feel so safe in an admiration which is general; to think with others is the best plan of never committing yourself—the unsupported opinion runs such risks. But Fate is justly personified as a female, in so many caprices does she indulge; and one malicious

fancy which she contrived was exceedingly displeasing to *la belle comtesse*. One night her husband entered her *boudoir*; a surprise disagreeable on many accounts, but most disagreeable in its consequences. With that perfect ease which constitutes perfect good breeding, he announced that an affair of honour forced him to leave the court for a while, and madame must be ready to accompany him to his chateau by daybreak. Amalie was horror-struck: she could have been so interestingly miserable about the count's misfortune—so useful in arranging matters: such an opportunity for general sympathy might never occur again; but though she had not had many experiences of the kind, yet one or two instances of a divided opinion convinced her, that when M. le Comte did make up his mind, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, it was not to be changed, and, it must be confessed, with no better reason. There is nothing in nature so impracticable as the obstinacy of your true husband; it is the insurmountable obstacle—the Alps no female vinegar can melt. Amalie knew her destiny, and submitted to it with as good a grace as she could. "Grace," as she afterwards observed, "is a duty which a woman owes to herself on all occasions." The count thanked her, kissed her hand, and bowed out of the room, leaving her to console herself as she could, and Amalie rarely wanted the means of consolation. We will only notice two principal sources; first, she had some rustic or rather romantic notions about innocent pleasures, interesting peasants, sheep, and roses growing in the open air; secondly, it was a great relief to think of the sensation her absence would produce; she had quite comforted herself while she reflected on *les misérables* whom she would leave behind; she also felt a little touch of curiosity when the count desired her company; she became almost interested about him while thinking what could be the cause. It was but a little mystery, scarcely worth penetrating, if she had known all. De Boufflers was himself in despair at leaving

Paris, and was only induced to take so rash a step from considering that his own chateau was preferable to the Bastile. In an agony of anticipated ennui he looked about for a resource; his wife's evil genius managed that her idea should occur to his mind. Every body said she was so charming, would not her company be better than none at all—or, worse than none at all—his own? The Comte de Boufflers was himself "the ocean to the river of his thoughts," and he decided that it was far better for half the *salons* in Paris to be *desolés* than to omit even so slight a precaution as his wife's company, when reduced to sixty miles from Paris, tapestried chambers, some fifty worm-eaten portraits, and an avenue with a rookery.

The next morning Amalie, who had made up her mind to enact *la femme comme il y en a peu*, was ready, and they drove off rapidly, after a conjugal dispute as to whether both her pet poodle and paroquet were to have a place in the carriage; but, as is usually the case in trifles, female supremacy carried the day. For many miles the countess was kept awake by hope and reflection; the hope, a sort of vague, romance-reading hope, that some adventure would fall out by the way, and the reflection on the despair which her sudden departure would occasion. At length her imagination and her temper were alike exhausted; she became sleepy and petulant, and, if such a term could be applied to any form of speech proceeding from a mouth whence spring had copied its roses (we merely translate into prose an expression in the last copy of verses addressed to the divine Amalie), she actually scolded, her poodle barked and snapped, her paroquet screamed and bit, and when they arrived at the end of their journey, the count was plunged in a profound meditation as to what other people could find so fascinating in his wife.

The chateau was, like the general run of chateaux left to a *concierge* and one or two old retainers, as dilapidated as their dwelling. A ghost had taken possession of one chamber

—smoke of a second—a murder, ages ago, had been in a third—and a fourth swarmed with rats. The count sought refuge in shooting partridges from morning till night, and the countess in despair and letter-writing. There is such a thing as friendship, for her epistles received answers full of condolences, regret, and, dearer still, news. One letter, however, from *l'amie intime*, Madame de Bethune, made her feel almost as desperate as people do when they tear their hair, drown themselves, pay their debts, or commit any very outrageous extravagancy. The precious yet cruel scroll gave a full and particular account of a late *fête* at Marli. Marie Antoinette had decided on a taste for rural and innocent pleasure, and the whole court had grown rural and innocent to a degree. Nothing was to be seen but crooks, garlands, straw hats, and "white frocks with broad sashes," quite English: then they had a real-earnest mill and a boat, and the gardens were filled with groups enacting rustic scenes. It was enough to provoke a saint—though Amalie made no pretensions to such a character, whatever she might to that of an angel—to have every body else playing at a country life, while she was acting in reality. But the worst was yet to come; the part selected by the queen herself for "*sa belle Amalie*" had of necessity been given to Madame de Mirvane, "who," pursued her informant, "looked pretty enough, but managed the dove, which she was to sit beneath a tree caressing, with no sort of grace. How differently would it have been perched on your *mignon* fingers! it was dreadful that such an interesting part, so simple and so tender, should have been so utterly wasted; but this will make her majesty still more in earnest about obtaining M. de Boufflers' return. What business has *notre bon homme* Louis with a gentleman's affair of honour?" The only consolation which the countess could devise was to try how the new and simple costume would suit her; she could at least have the satisfaction of her own approval.

The next day saw her seated beneath an old tree in the neglected garden, through whose boughs the sudden sunshine fell half green, half golden, as the light of the noon and the hue of the leaf mingled together. Her hair was carelessly combed back under a wide black chip hat, with just *un nœud du ruban*; she wore the simplest of white dresses; and, as no dove could be procured, her paroquet was fastened with a silken string, and placed in an attitude on the prettiest hand in the world. But, alas! projects fail, strings break, and birds fly away, even from such a jailer as *la belle Amalie*; suddenly the slender fastening gave way, the paroquet spread its wings, and was soon lost amid the branches. In such a case there is but one resource, and the countess executed a most musical shriek; this being of no avail, "tears were in the next degree;" but the countess had no idea of wasting such interesting things as tears on herself, so she was returning to the chateau for assistance to recover her fugitive, when a rustling amid the boughs overhead attracted her attention, and the next moment a singularly handsome young man sprang to the ground and presented her bird.

"*Ah, perfide!*" exclaimed Amalie, overwhelming her favourite with caresses—upon principle—for affection is the sign of a good heart, and simplicity was not only so engaging, but in such exact keeping with her costume! "But I am quite ungrateful with delight," turning to the young stranger, who was gazing upon her with evident admiration; and raising, but for a moment only, her eyes to his face, "I really know not how to thank you enough."

"Ah, madame," exclaimed the youth, "I am but too fortunate," and he stopped, embarrassed, but reluctant to depart:—the countess had no intention that he should.

"How could you," continued she, glancing, with a slight shudder, at the old chestnut tree, from which he had just descended, "trust your life amid these decaying branches?"

Ah, even my attachment to *ce pauvre cheri* is a selfish pleasure ;” and, lost in the terror her fancy had conjured up, and the philosophic reflexion it had inspired, Amalie seated herself on a projecting root, whose moss was beautiful enough to have been an artificial covering. The stranger stood at a little distance, and even Amalie felt something very like confusion at his earnest and prolonged gaze ; for *hommage* she was always prepared, but sincerity took her a little by surprise—however, the novelty made the affair more *piquante*.

“Monsieur does not belong to these parts?” Now there was insinuated flattery in this negative method of putting the question ; it was as much as to say, it was impossible they could have produced him.

“I am a native of the adjacent valley.”

“Strangers alike upon our native soil, I suppose?” said Amalie.

“I have passed the greater portion of my life here.”

“Indeed !” exclaimed she ; “but I can see that you have travelled.”

“I spent two years in England.”

“As every thing English is the rage just now, I dare say you recognize my dress.”

The young stranger was forced to confess that he did not, and he avowed that he had attended but little to the affairs of the toilette during his absence ; but his manner implied that he had now seen one that he should not readily forget. Well, to cut the conversation much shorter than the countess did, they parted, with a light hint just dropped by Amalie, that she now passed the greater portion of her time in solitude, and that the old chestnut was her favourite haunt. The next day she was there, and the young stranger passed quite accidentally ; however, she had to show him how much more securely the paroquet was fastened to-day ; one word led to another, and the conversation was long and interesting.

Amalie discovered that the youth's name was Julian ; and that he was *democrate et misanthrope*, but she undertook to convert him. Even with the very prettiest of preceptors conversion is not the work of a day ; so leaving it to its progress, we will take the opportunity of stating who Julian was—alas ! a *roturier*. His father had carried on an extensive trade in precious stones, had travelled much, and profited in more ways than one by his travels ; he early realised a competence, and, what is much rarer, early began to enjoy it. He married an English girl, and settling in the valley where he was born, led a life of seclusion, study, and domestic content—a state of existence so often a dream and so rarely a reality. Julian was brought up with every care ; his natural talents were cultivated as sedulously as books could cultivate them. But the knowledge of the library is not that of the world ; a youth of solitude is bad preparation for a manhood of action ; from the earliest age we need to mingle with our kind ; the child corrects and instructs the child more than their masters ; our equals are the tools wherewith experience works out its lessons ; and the play-ground, with its rival interests, its injustices, its necessity for the ready wit and the curbed temper is both miniature and prophesy of the world, which will but bring back the old struggles only with a sterner aspect, and the same successes, but with more than half their enjoyment departed.

The death of Julian's mother was soon followed by that of his father, and at nineteen the youth was left to a world from which he turned with all the desolation that attends on the first acquaintance with sorrow and death. The affection between himself and his parents had been so strong and undivided, that life seemed left without a charm when bereaved of their love. Youth suffers but for a season ; the bowed but unbroken spirit resumes its elasticity ; the future, unknown and beautiful, wins the present to itself, and the past

waits for that dark and overwhelming influence which sooner or later will darken our whole horizon.

Julian arrived in Paris—his heart full of passion, and his head full of poetry—the one to be deceived, and the other to be disappointed. His wealth, his prepossessing appearance, and some scientific introductions, for his father had been the correspondent of eminent men, opened to him several of the first houses in Paris ; but such society soon made him aware that he was only there on sufferance ; that “ thus far and no further,” was the motto of aristocratic courtesy ; he felt himself the equal—ay, the superior—of half the gracious coxcombs that surrounded him, and yet an accident of birth and fortune placed him at an immeasurable distance from those whose manner mocked him with the semblance of equality. It was one of the greatest vices of the old French regime, that there was no opening for the energy, the enthusiasm, or the genius, of the middle rank ; that rank which in England is constantly renovating the upper classes, and which may, at least, aspire to any distinction. But in France, “ the sword, gown, glory” did not “ offer in exchange” for industry and talent ; and a highly educated young man, of independent fortune, but of plebeian extraction, —from his wealth lacking the only pursuit allotted to his class—was like an animal in a menagerie, the most misplaced object in creation, debarred from all healthy and natural exercise, yet able to see the free boughs and far prospect while confined to a dreary perch and a narrow cage. But the tyranny of custom, like all other tyrannies, when grown quite unbearable—for it is wonderful what people will endure—had already sown the seeds of its own dissolution. Out of the hardship had grown the repining, and to repine at the exercise of an alleged right is soon to question its authority, and the first question asked shakes the whole ancient and time-honoured fabric of privilege. A fierce and restless spirit

of change was at work—and only that the future, despite of history, was never yet foretold from the past, a sudden and terrible re-action might have been foreseen. But we have nothing more to do with revolutionary principles than to mark their effect on the mind of Julian, which soon became imbued with the wildest of the doctrines then afloat; to the young it seems so easy to mend everything, simply because they have not tried. Perfect equality, and perfect despotism, are theories equally unreducible to practice; but there are many fine sentiments belonging to the first, and there is singular fascination in a fine sentiment—we pay ourselves a compliment by uttering it. Julian heard the errors of “the present state of things” so often dilated upon, that he doubted whether there was anything really right on the earth; however, he was fortunate in the belief (a common patriotic delusion, by-the-by,) that himself, together with a few chosen others, were destined to set everything as it ought to be, and the sooner that such a destiny was fulfilled the better. In the meantime an affront at a gaming-table from the Chevalier de l’Escars, for which satisfaction was afterwards refused on the plea he could not fight a *roturier*, drove Julian’s naturally violent temper almost to insanity. Degraded in his own eyes, he fancied every one must feel as he did, and abjured a world to which he imagined he was an object of scorn, while in truth he was only one of indifference. There is one conviction at which, though forced upon us by daily experience, we never arrive, namely, the conviction that Nobody in reality cares for Anybody; but this truth is so cold that we fence it out by all sorts of cloaks and coverings, delusions and devices. Well, Julian retired to his native valley, to brood over schemes of public benefit and private revenge; but at two-and-twenty it is as much *trop tot* for a man to be *philosophe* as it is for a woman to be *devote*. *Les beaux yeux* of Madame de Boufflers put to flight a

thousand schemes for the regeneration of mankind, and Julian forgot wrongs, projects, equality, unity, and the rights of the human race, at the feet of the pretty aristocrat.

PART II.

A low, chill wind moaned through the streets of Paris, and a dull, small rain scarcely penetrated the thick fog which hung on the oppressed atmosphere:—in a high wind and a brisk shower there is something that exhilarates the spirits; but this damp, dreary weather relaxes every nerve, unless indeed they be highly strung with some strong excitement, that defies every external influence—but, ah! of such life has but few instances. All great cities present strange contrasts; the infinite varieties of human existence gathered together mock each other with the wildest contrasts; and if this be true of all cities and all times, what must it have been in an hour like that of which we now write, and in a capital like Paris! The revolution was now raging in all its horrors; a terrible desire for blood had risen up in the minds of men, and cruelty had become as much a passion as love. In one street a band of ruffians insulted the quiet night with their frightful orgies; in the next a worn and devoted family clung to each other, and trembled lest the wind as it moaned past might bring the footsteps of the ministers of a nation's vengeance, or rather of a nation's madness. Here was a prison crowded with ghastly wretches sickening on hope deferred, till it grew into fear; there a palace where the purple availed no longer, while its wearied and wretched inmates sought courage from despair. Hate, terror, rage, revenge, all the most ghastly elements of human wretchedness and crime, were in commotion, and Paris was filled with riot and change. Yet into one luxurious haunt of rank, wealth, and grace it would seem as if no alteration had made its way. The blue satin draperies of the little boudoir, which was fitted up as a tent, were undis-

turbed, and the silver muslin curtains reflected back the soft light of the lamps ; while roses, on which months of care had been bestowed for an hour of lavish bloom, the red light from the cheerful hearth, the rich carpet, over which the step passed noiseless, the perfumes that exhaled their fragrant essence—all mocked the desolation without. Leaning upon a couch near the window was the Comtesse Amalie, pretty as ever, changed in nothing save costume, which was suited to the classical mania of the day ; her hair was gathered up in a Grecian knot, the little foot wore a sandal, and the white robe, *à l'antique*, was fastened by cameos. Suddenly a door opened—and the rain damp upon his cloak, and his hair glittering with its moisture, entered Julian ; he was changed, for he looked pale and exhausted, and lip and brow wore the fixed character and the deeper line which passion ever leaves behind. Amalie rose, and, with an expression of the tenderest welcome, took his cloak from him, and with her own *mignon* hands drew the *fauteuil* towards the fire, and then placing herself on a little stool at his feet, looked up in his face with an asking and anxious gaze, perhaps the most touching that a woman's features can assume to her lover. Amalie did not love Julian as he loved her—it was not in her nature—but her light and vain temper was subdued by his earnest and impetuous one ; she feared him too, and fear is the great strengthener of a woman's love. Besides there is something in intense passion that communicates itself, as the warmth of the sun colours the cloud, whose frail substance is yet incapable of retaining the light or heat. Amalie had no sympathy with the poetry of his character ; but it gave grace to his flattery and variety to himself, to say nothing of the advantage of contrast with all her other *adorateurs*. Moreover his influence with the Jacobin clubs had warded off dangers that had crushed other families noble as that of De Boufflers. Julian, like all of an imaginative turn, deceived

himself, and worshipped an idol which he had created rather than an object which existed: a pretty face blinds even a philosopher, and from habits of seclusion and naturally refined taste, he was peculiarly susceptible to the charm and ease of her manners. Perhaps—for the wheat and tares of human motives spring up inextricably blended—the young democrat was somewhat dazzled by the rank of the charming countess. I always suspect that the professed despisers of all worldly distinctions take refuge in disdain from desire. For some time Julian sat in moody silence, his gaze fixed on the wood embers, as if absorbed in contemplating their fantastic combinations. Amalie changed her attitude, rallied her lover on his abstraction, and asked him if it was fair to seek one lady's presence and then think of another.

"Think of another!" exclaimed he, springing from his seat: "Good God, Amalie! is there one moment, fevered and hurried as is my existence, in which you are forgotten? I love you terribly! ay, terribly! for it is terrible to have one's very soul so bound up in but one object. I would rather at this very moment see you dead at my feet than even dream of you as loving another."

The Countess turned pale; there was nothing in herself that responded to this burst of passion, and terror was her paramount sensation. "You are too violent," said she, in a faltering voice.

"Too sincere, you mean," replied he. "Amalie, our present life is intolerable;—I cannot endure longer these stolen and brief interviews. Why should we thus waste life's short season of existence? we shall not live long,—let us live together. Amalie, you must fly with me."

Madame de Boufflers looked—what she was—astounded at this proposition. "What nonsense you are talking to-night," answered she, forcing a laugh.

“You do not love me!” and his clear light eyes flashed upon her with a strange mixture of ferocity and tenderness.

She shrank before the glance, and whispered, “If I did not love you, why are you here? but think of the scandal of an elopement; *les convenances* of society must be respected.”

“Curse on these social laws! which are made for the convenience of the few and the degradation of the many. Amalie, I cannot, will not steal into the house of that insolent aristocrat, your husband, like a midnight thief. You must leave him, and let my home become yours. I will watch over you,—pass my life at your side,—anticipate your slightest wish,—but you must be mine own. The law for divorce will soon pass the Assembly, and then let me add what tie or form you will to the deep devotion of my heart, my own, my beloved Amalie, as my wife.”

“Your wife!” interrupted the countess, old prejudices springing up far stronger than present feelings. “How very absurd; think for a moment of the difference in our rank.”

A spasm of convulsive emotion passed over his face, the veins rose on the high forehead, the blood started from the bitten lip, but in an instant the expression was subdued into a stern coldness; and if Julian’s voice was somewhat hoarse the words were slow and distinct. “Amalie,” said he, taking her hands in his, “my whole destiny turns on the result of this interview. Have you no fear of my despair?”

Amalie could have answered that she felt very sufficiently afraid at that moment, but, for once in her life she was at a loss for a reply; she remained silent, almost embarrassed, certainly bored,—and Julian went on.

“I will not shock your gentle ear by words of hate against the class to which you belong; but a fearful reckoning is at

hand ; and I am among those who will exact it to the uttermost. I warn you fly from them—be mine, for your own sake.”

“ Really, Monsieur Julian,” said she, “ your conduct to-night is most unaccountable. Come, do pray be a little more amusing.”

“ Monsieur Julian !” repeated he, in a deep whisper ; “ is it come to this ? Amalie, do, I implore you, think how desperately I love you. You may believe that on your part has been the sacrifice ; but what has it been on mine ? For your sake I have trifled with rights I hold most sacred ; I have tampered with mine own integrity ; I have held back from the great task before me ; I have been a faint and slow follower of that glorious freedom which now calls aloud on all her worshippers for the most entire devotion ; and yet I have shrank back from the appointed duty. Amalie, come with me—be my inspiration ; feel as I feel, think as I think, cast aside the idle prejudices of a selfish and profligate court, and be repaid by passion as fervent, as fond, and as faithful as ever beat in man’s heart for the woman of his first and only love.”

“ This is really too much of a good thing,” thought the countess, whose mind wandered from the love before her to the scandal and ridicule likely to be caused by her flight. “ *Il faut respecter les convenances,*” was her chilling reply.

Julian dropped her hands, and approached the door ; he opened it, but he lingered on the threshold. “ Do you let me go, Amalie ?” whispered he, in a scarcely audible voice.

“ I am sure,” replied Madame de Boufflers, pettishly, “ you have not been so agreeable that I should wish to detain you.”

The door closed, and his rapid steps were heard descending the narrow staircase ; at length they died away.

“ I really must put an end to this affair, it is becoming

troublesome; my young republican is growing *pedante et despote*. He has none of the graces of my cousin Eugene." And Madame de Boufflers threw herself into the *fauteuil*, and indulged in a discontented reverie, in which Julian's faults and Eugene's merits occupied conspicuous places; together with the garniture of a new species of sandal which she meditated producing. In the meantime Julian pursued his way through the dark and dreary streets, suffering that agony of disappointed affection which the heart can know but once. Love is very blind indeed, but let the veil once be removed, though but for a moment, and it never can be replaced again. Then how quicksighted do we become to the errors of our past worship, and mortification adds bitterness to regret. "And is it for one," exclaimed he, "who holds the factitious advantage of a name, to be better worth than my deep love, that I have sacrificed the cause to which I was vowed, and have paused on the noblest path to which man ever devoted his energies? But the weakness is over; a terrible bond shall be made with Liberty—Liberty henceforth my only hope, my only mistress!"

The evil spirit of love left his soul for a moment, but returned, though with a strange and lurid aspect, bringing with him other and worse spirits than himself—hate, revenge, blood-thirstiness—all merged in and coloured by the excited and fanatic temper of the time. He stopped before a large hotel, from whose windows the red light glared, as if it mocked the darkness of night as much as the revel within did its silence. There was that mixture of luxury and disorder which at once so shocks and attracts the imagination. Its hangings were silk, the chairs and sofas satin, but they were torn and soiled; the servants were many, but ill-dressed and awkward; all the light elegance for which the hotel had been noted in its former proprietor's life (the Duc de N. had perished by the guillotine) had disappeared; the character

of its present master was impressed on all around him. A door opened into a vast chamber crowded with fierce and eager faces, every eye assuming the expression of murder as the ruthless Danton called down their vengeance on those whom he denominated their old and arrogant oppressors.

"Some there are," exclaimed he, as he caught sight of Julian's pale and expressive countenance, "who delude themselves with the belief that their own preferences are sufficient cause for exception—who merge the public cause in private interests. What are such but cowards and traitors? unworthy to bring one stone towards the great temple of liberty about to overshadow the world, but whose foundations must be laid in blood—ay, blood!"

A hoarse and sullen murmur rather than acclamation ran through the crowd, and a few minutes elapsed ere the business of the night proceeded. Then began those fearful denunciations, which seemed to loosen every tie of nature—the father witnessed against the son, and the son against the father; the young, the aged, the innocent, the beautiful, were alike marked as victims. Suddenly Julian arose: a close observer might have noted that his brow was knit, as it is in inward pain, that his lip was white, as if the life-current had been driven back upon the heart, prophetic of the future, which doomed it to freeze there for ever; but to the careless eye he seemed stern, calm, ferocious as the rest, while he denounced Amalie, Comtesse de Boufflers, as an aristocrat, and an enemy to the people. Danton looked at him for an instant, but cowered before the wild and fiery glance that met his own.

To denounce, to condemn, to execute, were, in those ruthless days, but the work of four-and-twenty hours. The next noon but one an almost insensible female form was carried or rather dragged to the scaffold. It was the Comtesse Amalie. Her long bright hair fell in disorder over her shoulders;

the executioner gathered it up in a rough knot,—he had been told not to sever it from the graceful head. At that moment the prisoner gave a bewildered stare around—a wild gleam of hope illumined her features—she stretched out her arms to some one passionately in the crowd. “Julian, save me!” The executioner forced her to her knee—the axe glittered in the sun, and the head fell into the appointed basket, while a convulsive motion shook the white garments around the quivering trunk.

PART III.

“I looked on the faces of his judges, and felt there was no hope,” said an old man as he led away the promised bride of his son, now a prisoner, doomed to death on the morrow.

“Yet the one they call Julian looks so young, so pale, and so sad, there is surely some touch of pity in him; at least, I will kneel at his feet, and implore him for mercy on Frederic.”

The old man shook his head, but accompanied her to Julian’s hotel, where the eloquence of some golden coins procured her admittance. She found her way to a large and gloomy chamber, where he sat surrounded with books, papers, and charts, mocking himself with a frenzied belief in the coming amelioration of the world, while his own home was a desert and his own heart a desolation. He did not perceive the fair and agitated creature that knelt at his feet, till her supplicating and broken voice roused his attention. He listened till her words died away into the short thick sobs of utter agony, unable to bear the picture it had conjured up of its coming wretchedness.

“Pity from me!” he exclaimed, with a quick fierce laugh; “Pity!—I do not know the meaning of the word. You might as well address your prayers to yonder bust of the stern old Roman, who sealed his country’s freedom with the life-blood of his child.”

The girl unconsciously looked towards the harsh features, made yet harsher by the black marble in which they were carved. And she started, for she felt that even that stern and sculptured countenance had more of human sympathy than the pale lip and cold eye of the living listener ; yet love is desperate in its hope ; she flung herself at his feet, she hid her face on the hand which she grasped, for she dared not look up and meet that fixed and passionless face ; but still she pleaded as those plead who pray for a life far dearer than their own.

“ He is so young—so good—there is so much happiness before us ; his poor old father will die—he has no other child—and I—he must not look to me to supply his place. God of heaven ! have you never loved—have you no recollections of affection that can move you to pity others !”

“ I have !” said Julian ; and rising from his seat, he took the arm of the agitated girl, and led her to a recess in the apartment, and drew back a curtain. Horror for a moment suspended every other feeling ; for, laid upon a cushion, the long fair hair streaming around, was a female head, preserved by some curious chemical process ; the eyes were closed, but as if in sleep ; colour had departed from lip and cheek, and something beyond even the rigidity of stone was in the face. The petitioner turned from the dead to the living, whose ashy colour, and wild fierce eye, struck more terror to her soul than the mournful mockery of the head, where life’s likeness was fearfully rendered. Julian gazed on the dread memorial which he had snatched from the scaffold, with that strange mixture of hate and love, the mind’s most terrible element, whereof comes despair and madness ; then turning slowly to the bewildered girl, said, in a low voice, but whose whisper was like thunder when the flash is commissioned to destroy,—

“ That head belonged to my mistress—she was an

aristocrat—and I denounced her——Judge if there exist one human being whom my pity is likely to spare.”

His wretched petitioner gazed upwards, but hopelessly, and staggered against the wall.

“I would be alone,” said Julian, and led her to the door.

She left him silently. She now knew prayers were vain. That night her lover perished beneath the guillotine;—the same blow struck to the heart of the fond and faithful girl—death was merciful, for both died at the same moment. By some inscrutable sympathy with the love which yet moved him not to spare, Julian had them buried in the same grave.
