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SEALED LIPS

A NOVEL
BY

Leon de Tinséau



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**SEALED LIPS.**

(Bouche Close.)

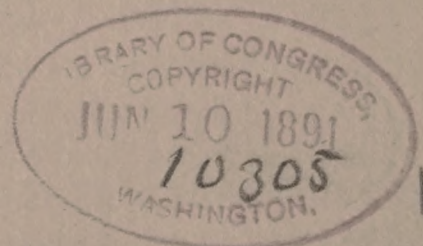
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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF  
✓  
LEON DE TINSEAU.

BY

**ANNA DYER PAGE.**

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# SEALED LIPS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### AN HONORED COMPOSER.

The applause was long and loud, the curtain was raised several times with that docile facility which distinguishes a theater's drop curtain, especially on evenings of a first representation. A new *chef d'œuvre*, "Constantin XII.," words by a manufacturer of librettos now in fashion, the music by Antoine Godefroid, had just been brought out, and scored a perfect success upon our greatest of lyric stages, The Opera.

In the house, in the lobbies, and on the staircase two thousand people were talking as they went out. The sparkling eyes of the women endeavored to read even then, in the countenances of others, the triumph of their beauty more than half veiled under lace or hidden in softly caressing furs. The men gave their hats little caressing blows, shook hands



and calmly smiled with that impertinent, morose, or *blase* coolness which is now the social custom of modern society. One could see that some of them did not find it dull, a much more infrequent result than we realize.

Various groups were formed in the vestibules making up parties. They talked of the new work very little, but arranged meetings for the next day. To meet together, no matter where, is for the Parisian of to-day a supreme pleasure, to go to their homes the greatest of misfortunes. Each one delayed as long as possible the time when monsieur and madam should find themselves alone in their coupe, on their way home. Nobody seemed in a hurry save the journalists, who hastened to their offices to finish the article which they had already commenced in the morning, with a smattering of knowledge and some politic remarks upon the fall of Byzance, the final episode in the new opera.

During this time, on the other side of the foot-lights, Antoine Godefroid was dividing his laurels with everybody. He was a composer who knew his trade, and had no illusions as to the modesty of the people connected with the theater. With a tired and melancholy smile, he had finished giving his praises. The principal actors had already gone to their dressing-rooms to remove their costumes. A suffocating crowd of people in dress suits, of all the artistic clans, remained, and it was from these that Godefroid tried to escape, repeating for the hun-



dredth time that nobody until now had directed an opera, looked after the scenery, led the chorus, beat time, painted and decorated a stage with such inimitable perfection. A small number, more polite than the others, had courteously replied that he had contributed something toward the success of the opera. A wise man has said, that politeness consists in doing more than one needs to do and saying more than one thinks.

Between times he shook hands with a crowd of strange men, one quarter of whom he knew by name and another quarter by sight. The physician in attendance, an old man with a gray beard, in his turn approached the musician.

“My dear friend,” said he, “you are in one of those two situations in life when you will receive the most hand shaking.”

“Why, to be sure; so I have noticed, doctor. When will the other be?”

“At your marriage, with a little difference, however.”

“What is it? Just now I am not equal to guessing conundrums.”

“Only this, on that day you will be congratulated at the end of the prologue.”

“A wise precaution,” replied Godefroid. “In that branch of art we see too many representations which never reach an end.”

At last he was alone, and for the first time in many weeks free to give his nerves a little rest.



When he had disappeared, a second tenor, who re-entered in his ordinary clothes, observed that Godefroid had left without asking them to supper.

The leader of the orchestra defended the composer:

“He looks as if he had had enough for one evening.”

One of the head employees whispered a little loudly in the tenor’s ear: “Probably he prefers to sup with the Princess Adossides.”

Twenty people heard this insinuation, and smiled in a knowing way. The princess in question was the principal female character in the new opera, being no other than the debutante of the evening, the beautiful, much admired, and much envied Jenny Sauval.

To tell the truth, the public gave the master credit for better luck than he had. With his overcoat turned up to his ears, both hands in his pockets, and a lighted cigar, he stepped out of the door on Boulevard Haussman, with no other intention than to go slowly home, alone and on foot, to cool his forehead and temples in the fresh air in the silence of the night. But he had not counted upon surprises. As he passed the gate of the enormous building now almost entirely dark, a man who had been hiding there for half an hour, threw himself on his neck, and nearly strangled him with his embrace.



“Dear old friend! Dear grand genius! How beautiful it was! How happy you must be!”

Having recovered from the embrace and the shock, Godefroid took the night wanderer under a neighboring gas light to stare at him.

“Patrice! You! Here in Paris, and I know nothing of it! And I have passed an evening like this without having the only friend that I can rely on here below, near me! Now, then, be off! You do not deserve that I should look at you any longer!”

“But what the devil! If I tell you that at six o’clock I was at the Lyons station trying to protect my poor traps against duties. I had only time to have my trunks and person taken to the first place.”

“Why not to my house?”

“The time would have been well chosen. I had only time to buy a ticket in the pit, at a ridiculous price, and to take my seat before the first measure. If you believe me, I have had no dinner.”

“No dinner?”

“No, but that is a discomfort to which I am accustomed, and according to all appearances I shall be frequently subjected to it. I shall not always be compensated by a *chef d’œuvre* substituting a roast.”

“Then your business——?”

“Oh, it is not brilliant, my friend. Never mind business. Talk of yourself. ‘Constantin’ is an admirable work, and its author a celebrity. Listen! To-morrow, when it is broad daylight, we will go to the boulevard together. You will give me your



arm; I shall have my share of the glory. The passers-by will bow to us without suspecting that they have under their very eyes the most fortunate and the most unfortunate man in all Paris—success and failure, victory and defeat, a pelisse for fifty louis and a coat for forty-nine francs just bought at the Belle Jardiniere. One person out of two satisfied. Fifty per cent. of happiness in our friendship. It is a good proportion, and I do not dream of complaining.”

“You would do very wrong to do so. You are young, gay, and lively. How I envy you!”

“*Blase!* He is already hardened. And you are going home on foot, like an author who has been hissed. I concealed myself here, expecting to see you pass in an elegant carriage, surrounded by an enthusiastic crowd. Oh! these favorites of fortune! I will wager that you are not hungry, not you!”

“My poor friend, I forgot. Come quickly to my house and I will keep you company. Joy at seeing you has given me an appetite.”

Toward two o'clock in the morning Antoine Godefroid and his friend, Patrice O'Farrell were smoking their cigars in the musician's warm and comfortable dining-room.

“I am drunk,” said Patrice, “completely fuddled. You saw, too, that I drank nothing but water, according to my usual custom. *Mon Dieu!* How my head aches! What a confusion of ideas of all sorts



and kinds! My straw hut in the Okma Island, your walls hung with Gobelin tapestry, my Chinese cook with braided hair, your valet's whiskers, the King of Siam's bayaderes, the ballet dancers a few hours ago, my fights with pirates, the massacre of the unfortunate Dracoses, the sea, the ships, the railroad, the opera, my elephants, the Parisians sparkling with diamonds. Ah! my friend, tell me that I am not crazy! You are not at the head of an institution for the insane, and just now when I wanted to leave they did not give me a cold water douche?"

"Do not be uneasy. My brain is in no better condition than yours. It now contains eighty men, all in black coats, playing on every sort of an instrument that was ever heard of. Not only do they play, but I know in advance just the note that they should sound. I see it, I wrote it, I wait for it, and I am always afraid that they will play the wrong one. One of the disadvantages of the school that I belong to is that they notice false notes. Well! We are both tired out. Let us go to bed."

"You speak of it coolly; to go to bed, for you, simply means to open a door, take off your clothes, and stretch yourself out upon a good bed. But for me, to leave this arm-chair, go into the street, I should say real life; turn to the east into a labyrinth of houses; read the numbers; get out of the way of carriages. If some one would only take me and put me out on the sidewalk! Once there, willing or not, I would make an effort, like a paralytic



placed on the track at the approach of a train."

"Come," said Antoine, smiling, "you will not find the ordeal so hard as you think." But he did not conduct his friend into the street. He raised a portiere, and they entered a room brightly lighted and heated by a fire.

"I have moved since your departure," said he. "But in this house, as well as the other, you have your room. Here, the same as there, you are at home. Sleep well, dear Patrice; thanks for the great happiness that you have given me this evening. Go to sleep quickly, for I warn you I shall not let you sleep long. As for me, I shall not shut my eyes."

O'Farrell, without listening to his host, looked about him with an air of suspicion.

"Go," sighed he, "my hallucination still continues. But do not imagine that I shall be caught. I know very well that this room is a cabin, that this bed that looks so large and sumptuous is only a berth where I shall soon hear my companion, the Liverpool merchant, snoring only ten inches above my head. Good-night, I shall go to sleep at once, for fear of waking up entirely."

A short time after the young man was asleep, for the first time in five years, upon a pillow and a good bed in dear France. And strangest of all, the only vision he had before him as he slept was the beautiful Adossides of whom he had not spoken a word to Godefroid.



## CHAPTER II.

## DESCRIPTIVE.

“Constantin XII.” marked Antoine Godefroid’s debut upon the lyric stage, but the composer, although more than forty years old, did not make his debut as far as celebrity and fortune were concerned. His only operetta, “Des Filets de Vulcain,” this masterpiece of a style now passed by, for fifteen years the California for musicians, had enriched him by covering the walls of all the principal cities of Europe with his name. As practical in business matters as ambitious in his profession, Godefroid, while putting aside his profits in a sure place, was soon tired of this title of “author of ‘Des Filets de Vulcain,’” which he saw himself threatened with for the rest of his life. He was too wise not to understand that in time the operetta would succumb to two fatal disorders—abuse and mediocrity. He felt that he was born for something better. He wrote “Constantin,” and without any trouble or waiting the doors of the Opera opened to receive his work. Then he felt that he had reached the height of his ambition.

To tell the truth, it was not everybody’s opinion. An old master, whose teaching he followed more



than his advice—for his independent will did not bend to others—made some predictions that he remembered on the day that our story commences.

“You are like,” said this sinister prophet, “those unlucky ones who build an inn on a mountain road the very day before a railroad is laid out which passes below it. You are a dreamer and a poet. Your talent consists of color, passion, tenderness, and enthusiasm. What the devil can one do with that in an opera? Are you blind? Do you not see that to-day the public discuss the beautiful as coldly as one discusses the thickness of a bridge’s iron beams? Art, like the Romish church of old, undergoes its reform. Two or three little Luthers led by one great one will undermine the edifice of our old musical creeds. I doubt if they have time to destroy the temple. Already these very serious and convincing men, much more learned than we, for they have not genius, have put their strong hands upon the grace notes. We now pass, thanks to them, for idolaters worthy of pity. To the stables with all statuary! to the fire with pictures! No more images in the sanctuary, only those cold gray pictures that the engineer’s compass traces, a hieroglyphic mixture of straight, crooked, and broken lines. Ah! To be sure! You choose a fortunate moment to offer your sparkling gold, your azure skies and voluptuous, satin flesh. Certainly, I am easy as to the future, as true as there has been a Mozart, melody will come again, but these illusions



must have their day. You, my dear fellow, have come too soon or too late."

The old professor did not convince Godefroid, for two other voices spoke louder still in the young master's ear than experience and wisdom. One of these voices was that of immortal art. I will tell you of the other later.

Until he was forty years old his profession had been his only faith, hope, and love. Even from his youth art, like a beneficent god, had taken him by the hand in the humble school-house of a village in Touraine, where his father gained a scanty subsistence as instructor.

One day the lady of the castle, Countess O'Farrell, mother of Patrice, was surprised to hear the little parish church organ depart from its vulgar flourishes and play a sweet touching melody. The organist was sent for to come to the castle—castles were of some use in those days—and was complimented and questioned. The little fellow, fourteen years old, told how, until then, nature had been his only teacher. The sacred spark had kindled in him, he said, the first time he heard the talented organist at the cathedral play, on a trip that he had taken to the city with his father when very young.

Still filled with ecstasy, he returned to his humble home, and passed the entire night in trying to find on a dilapidated old instrument the harmony that had transported him the night before into a new world. Thus, step by step, degree by degree, guided



by an infallible ear, the child had discovered the fundamental principles of the science. At fourteen he not only accompanied the sacred chants perfectly, but he improvised with much feeling and taste.

“What would you like to do?” asked the enthusiastic countess at the sight of this prodigy.

“To visit the cathedral organ and know the organist,” replied the young country lad. “More than once I have been to X— on foot, to attend worship on *fete* days, and have pushed open the little turret gate, and found myself on the narrow stairway that seemed to me to lead to Paradise, but the young lads who blew the organ stopped me. One day they promised to let me work for them. How happy I was then! It seemed that a part of me sung in every pipe. I had a genuine bath in harmony, and that night, in spite of the dozen leagues that I walked, I never closed my eyes.”

Madame O’Farrell had an artistic soul and a charitable heart, she felt that there was a future great artist in this child.

First it was necessary to conciliate Father Godefroid, an earnest instructor and a little defiant regarding the castle, as people of his class were then scarcely less than to-day. A pedagogue—this word seemed all in all to him—passed in his eyes as one of the most noble and sure professions in the world. A musician! That was something like a chorus singer minus the fees.



Finally his consent was given on condition that the countess assumed all the expense. A few days later young Antoine knew the cathedral organ in another way than blowing it.

He has often recounted since that the happiest day of his life—musical—was when he was seated upon the old oak bench for the first time to accompany a third-class burial mass. The dead, thank the Lord! did not seem to notice the substitution of pupil for master, and the living, if they noticed it, did not complain.

Three years after he left his home Antoine entered the Conservatory; he was invited frequently during the winter to his benefactress' house, and learned in the best society of Paris a knowledge of the world, that so many of our illustrious geniuses are ignorant of, on account of studying it too late in life.

L'Ecole de Rome received the young prize-taker, and when he returned to France almost immediately fortune favored him, and commenced to wreath about his head the golden crown of success, a thing more rare at his age than the Institute laurels.

From thence only two sentiments filled the heart of this happy mortal—love of his profession and gratitude toward the generous woman who had given him this profession. One of the first and greatest troubles of his life was the ruin of the O'Farrell family, a disaster followed in two years



by the death of the countess and her husband.

Their only child, young Patrice, was then only fifteen years old, and alone in the world. Antoine adopted him, and assumed most seriously the duties of a father; he renounced, in order to remove his ward from all unfavorable contact, the pleasures which his reputation as a renowned artist opened to him in more than one part of the globe. Until the last of the O'Farrells attained his majority his adopted father lead the life of a recluse. Sometimes this giving up of all pleasures seemed hard in his youth, but he was largely recompensed for it by the regularity and opportunities to work, with nothing to interrupt him. One thing remained to be seen—would not his heart and unknown senses, condemned to solitude, some day reclaim the arrears a hundred fold?

At all events when the young orphan was twenty-one years old he left his home to seek his fortune. Even after his departure Godefroid continued to work as seriously as ever. The most elevated branches of his largely developed nature seemed to have singularly weakened the frantic growth of his vigor. Thus by patient culture the ground refuses its strength to the brilliant but sterile flowers, keeping its richness for the branches of precious buds.

It was a strange thing! This great artist, applauded by everybody, remained good, timid, and artless, and was always ready to assist others. He passed for a misanthrope and a haughty, proud



person. He had very few friends, either among young composers or the older masters. The first for the most part considered that they were rivals, unjustly frustrated by fate. The others were not attracted toward a talent that rose so quickly. They accused him of being a miser, and, of all censure that they had given him, this above all caused them to withhold their sympathy.

In reality nobody could be less avaricious than he, but in his tranquil existence the gold that he earned deposited itself like clay upon a ground covered with stagnant water.

Perhaps with time these faults that were attributed to him would prove to be untrue, a circumstance of frequent occurrence. From continually hearing that he was a misanthrope he thought the world blind and unjust and disagreeable. It made him still more dignified when they reproached him for his pride, and if anything made money of value in his eyes it was to see to what a point those who did not have it made faces at those who did. He learned more and more to dispense with others' society, a quality that is nearly related to egotism. However, upon these moderate and easily explained transformations of character art and work continued to rule in a masterly manner. If he was not the happiest of men, he was surely one of the least to be pitied. The ideal steeped his soul in the purest delight; reality spared him sorrow for the present,



and, alone, in the world he was sheltered for the future from much vexation.

Often, after he first undertook his great work, "Constantin," the young man had been obliged to stop his tremendous task of putting each of the one hundred thousand notes which composed an act in the opera in their own place. He often felt that he had exhausted his strength, his inspiration, and his confidence in himself, but one thought always cheered him:

"I shall forget all this in one evening, providing that we come out conquerors in the struggle."

For it was not for himself alone that he trembled.

Two new comers were to make their first appearance the same evening on one of the greatest lyric stages of the world; Godefroid was aiming at the most noble success, and Jenny Sauvel, an unknown, was protected and launched by the young master; people even said imposed upon them by his will.

Both of them could now say that they had succeeded. One was applauded for her voice and talent as well as her grace and beauty. The other was applauded not by a few hundred friends, but by an audience perhaps not as fashionably attired as people usually are on nights of a first representation, but more intelligent and appreciative. Finally, to complete his happiness, the cordial and unexpected greeting of the man that he loved best in all the world crowned one of the ever to be remem-



bered hours of his life. And yet, when he entered his room, after having left Patrice, instead of the complete, profound, and secret joy that he expected to taste he felt in his heart a dim impression of uneasiness and vacancy.

“What is it that I lack?” he asked himself. “Is not art, glory, fortune, and friendship all there is in this world?”



## CHAPTER III.

## A FLORAL MEMENTO.

It was eight o'clock in the morning, and the lamp was still burning in Antoine Godefroid's room. The hero of the night before was reading the journals with calm attention, but a trifle uneasy, as a lawyer gives an abstract of a case.

Patrice, fresh and rested, enters his friend's room, and is surprised to find him with this preoccupied and sober face.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed he, "what a pile of journals! And to think that each one represents a political party! Happy France! Well, are you pleased? Does the incense burn upon all these blue, white, and red altars without exception? Ah! here is one where they compare you to Berlioz."

"You might say that the article was on Berlioz. He only speaks of me to deplore the unjust partiality of fate in respect to certain artists."

"He admits in the same breath the success of your work."

"He admits it, but in his heart he laments it. He is politely astonished. Do you see, my friend, on the whole—for I love you too well to let you read all these papers—the public is only a lofty critic which fights me with a vengeance."



“Would you like it better if the two thousand people had hissed you last night and the twelve bald-headed critics should praise you this morning?”

“Perhaps, for to-morrow these two thousand people will make their public apologies to these twelve gentlemen that you speak of, and excuse themselves for having applauded me too quickly.”

“That would be preposterous. But what have you not upset these last hundred years, you fellows of the revolution?”

“We thought to overturn all tyrannies, those of priests as well as kings. But another has sprung up—a band composed of critics and young fellows have put their feet upon the public, and have made them submit. ‘Obey,’ cries this Robespierre of music, literature, and the pencil. ‘Too long art has gloried in being your servant. Too long we have solicited your approbation. In your turn you must bow before us. What we like you must like. What we youngsters give you you will pretend to like and understand. What you think is of little importance to us. We advise you, above all things, not to sulk. We put away the scorned dish for pouting children until they are resigned to swallow it, free to make up faces. Thus we shall do with you, oh, Frenchmen! We will take away the old masters, servile flatterers of your pleasure. What matters it if half a century is necessary to make you forget your tastes, instincts, and national customs? We will be patient, first because we have



the future before us, and then because in spite of your bad humor you will bring us your money. Oh, public! the easiest to govern in the world, if one remains firm the first quarter of an hour of your resistance.' ”

“But among all these worthy people is there not one who takes your part and that of your school?”

“No, for the journals agree on every point, better than you would suppose. They separate on politics, but after the fashion of bees who swarm upon different bushes, understanding that if they were all to plunder the same plant they would die of hunger. But returning to their lives they all follow the same designs in their cells. Nevertheless for independents like me the journals always show a little spite. They love to revenge themselves in showing us as Bossuet said, that seated on a throne we are no less under their hands and supreme authority. *Et nunc reges intelligite.* Translated: Poor Godefroid will not see many such evenings like yesterday's.”

“The devil take me if I expected to hear at this time your funeral oration. Go, pessimist! What would you say if you were in my place?”

“My friend, pardon me, I am a miserable egotist. For twelve hours you have only heard me talk of what interests and pleases and disenchants me. It is, do you see, because I have not yet grasped the idea that my success is not yours, my gain your gain, that you work, succeed, and fail on your own



account. Your return has made me forget the past six years in our life, and, seeing you before me, I imagine that it is still the same as when my thoughts said 'we,' but my lips 'I.' "

"And I? Did it take me long to return to my old habits of eating your bread and sleeping under your roof? Even when I left to seek my fortune, it was with your money. Do not be uneasy, I bring it back, but just what you gave me, without the slightest addition."

"I did hope so much to see you rich some day."

"An O'Farrell rich! You are crazy! Money with us is like truth among rogues, an exception never lasting. Many a time since my ancestor followed James II. into beautiful France we have met with bad luck, and on my own part I can pride myself upon keeping up the reputation of the family. God be praised, I have a firm grip."

"Was your plantation a complete failure?"

"Yes and no. I obtained some superb crops. I had piles of coffee and mountains of sugar cane. As to tobacco I put it in ricks like hay. I can prove it, for there is not a leaf of it gone. It is all there."

"Well, what then?"

"Well, crops are good for nothing if you cannot sell them, and that is what I never could do. My products were as detestable as abundant. My coffee smelled of tobacco, my tobacco of nothing, and was obliged to bring it to Paris for my own personal



use. As to my sugar cane, it was as large as my arm, and gave out juice like a sponge, but the juice was not sweet, which was a great defect in that species. I might as well have distilled spinach. I still had my indigo remaining, which at first I had reason to be proud of. Ah, yes! You do not know about indigo! It is magnificent in its savage state. It is subject, if one cultivates it, to twenty-seven diseases, all deadly. I was a little vexed, as you may imagine, when I received a premium of encouragement from the colonial government, which paid back what I had spent. It is useless to say that I made only one bound for the treasurer's box and another to the steamer that brought me home."

"The colonial administration must have been a little angry at your way of employing its support."

On the contrary, my departure relieved everybody. I was the despair of a whole army of agents. They had me continually on their hands, roads to build, bridges to mend, pirates to hang. The administrator's office was no longer secure. They understood it, and encouraged me——"

"To leave?"

"It was deliverance for them. The colonist is their scourge. The native is always contented provided he is not protected too much."

"Very well. Why did you not write?"

"Because I had nothing good to tell you, and also so as not to disturb you in the midst of a musical



composition. I know you. When I came home from college once, with a heavy cold, you could not write a note for two days. If I had sent you by mail my complaints as to the sun, the floods, the cholera, the pirates, the native mandarins, the French agents, and other pernicious plagues, the Turks would still be under the Byzance walls, and there would be one *chef d'œuvre* the less. There was no way that you could help me."

"And now?"

"Now it is another thing, and I depend upon your assistance to find a situation for me. That ought not to be very difficult, for I defy you to name a position that I am not qualified to fill. Thanks to somebody that I know, I have a good education. I can write prose and poetry, and speak five languages. My last adventures have taught me navigation, commerce, agriculture, government, and even war, for I received and discharged more than one gun-shot in my island. I left a very good reputation there as a physician; I baptized children, and even what is still more difficult, I have assisted them into the world."

"Acknowledge it, you have not been six years among the pagans without trying to convert some of them."

"I will admit it, since you oblige me to, but you are too much of a pagan yourself for us to agree on this subject. One thing is sure, I shall go back



there if you do not interest yourself and get me a situation in three days' time."

"Do not fret yourself, I will do so. But at first you must help me to open fifty or sixty letters that have arrived; without you I should be lost. Oh, the correspondence——"

O'Farrell commenced the work with the enthusiasm that he showed in everything that he did. Without saying a word he watched his friend as he opened and glanced rapidly over the letters before him. He found Godefroid changed and older. What surprised him the most was to find this peevish temper, this disabused frame of mind, in a man for whom everything seemed to smile. His hands trembled slightly, and alternate waves of pallor and warm flushes mounted to his cheeks. Sometimes in order to decipher some handwriting, he used a magnifying glass.

"These last years have aged him terribly," thought Patrice; "he is no longer young. Poor friend!"

At this moment the door opened wide, and one could see a mass of green and flowers of every shade and description, which seemed to walk of themselves. It was Antoine's servant entering loaded with this fragrant burden. He had boxes of roses, baskets of lilies of the valley, whole branches of lilies, and wreaths of violets, with the name of Jenny Sauval traced in golden letters on the satin



ribbons. A large envelope accompanied the gift. It contained a photograph and a short note.

“Dear master, dear friend,” wrote the cantatrice, “here are a few of the flowers that I received. I keep more than my share, but I wish my parlor to be decorated when you come to tell me if you were pleased with me. You said so little last evening. What matters the praise of others if I have deceived the hope of the one to whom I owe all?”

The photograph represented the young artist in her adorable costume of princess, which heightened marvelously her refined and striking beauty. At the bottom of the lovely picture was written these words, taken from the role of Princess Adossides:

“He was the protector of my youth.

“He wiped away my first tears.

“Where should I be without him?”

“Well, now,” said Godefroid, whose face lighted up for an instant, “there are some hearts that appreciate!”

“Upon my word you invest your favors cleverly,” said the young man, as he gazed admiringly at the photograph. “The favor of the only Adossides would be worth more to me than that of all the Constantins or Mahomets that ever reigned over Byzance. What eyes! If I were a millionaire——”

“You would lose your time,” interrupted the composer, brusquely. “She is wisdom itself, you may be sure of it.”

“Alas! without calumniating your *protegee*, there



is something more positive even than her virtue; that is, that I am not a millionaire. Now, my fine gentleman, I suppose that you will perfume yourself, dress your hair, and put on your finest costume to go and give this innocent beauty the words of praise that she expects. If this troubles you I will go in your place."

"You will not go in my place, but we will go together."

"Oh! do you fear for your heart?"

"No, but I dread the jokes of fools."

"Thanks!"

"As to my heart, there is nothing to fear. At my age one does not love. I had a son whom I was obliged to look after carefully until he was eighteen. Now I am an old plucked bird, sitting on his perch and not knowing how to use his wings."

"Oh, well," said Patrice, laughing, "it is such old birds as these that are in danger of being gobbled up by young cats."

The young man joked only with his lips. At the bottom of his heart he felt sad, and thought that on his account Godefroid had an isolated old age without a wife's love or a child's smile.

"Patrice," said the composer, after a short silence, "I have done all that I could to bring you up well. Have you lost anything by passing your youth with a poor artist thrown upon the world entirely alone? Would your mother, your dear,



noble, good mother, have anything to reproach me with?"

O'Farrell glanced at the desk where for many years the portrait of a lady—always the same face—had occupied the same place, reserved for respectful gratitude. Then he said, taking Godefroid in his arms, as he had the night before:

"My mother blesses you, and her son will never leave you henceforth if you wish it. Rely upon me always."



## CHAPTER IV.

## HISTORICAL.

Jenny Sauval was at this time twenty-five years old, and justified in a most complete way the opinion that Antoine had of her virtue. She was not only wise, but she seemed very little disposed to commit the follies that the critics had spoken of the night before as they recalled her before the curtain many times.

“This little one will earn one hundred per cent. more when she loses something.”

To which, according to report, one of her greatest admirers, Prince Kenemeff, had replied:

“If she only could lose her mother!”

To be just to Madame Sauval, she resembled in no way the type usually described of an actress' mother. She felt with the best faith in the world that her daughter lowered herself in singing upon the stage, even upon the Opera's. She was very indifferent as to the question of first appearance, competition in roles, engagements and various other more intricate things, which usually occupy the minds of these ladies; she had only one aim—her daughter's marriage. She had done very little but drive away husbands all her life; first, of



course, on her own account, and in this interesting sport she had had less good luck than tact.

She was a Roumanian by birth, of a very poor but honorable family. She was considered at eighteen to be the village beauty, which was not saying a great deal for her companions. She really had beautiful eyes, those large eyes in which one could see wavering, according to the situation, curiosity, innocence, or vice. A trifle would give them effrontery or insolence. But save on rare occasions the one that was called the "pretty Martscha" knew how to avoid these trifles and keep her innocence, at least as far as looks were concerned. Her cheeks were too sunken, she was too tall and her bust too high to be graceful in the eyes of a connoisseur; but what completed her despair, for she knew as well as anybody the strength and the weakness of her moral and physical beauty, was her German mouth, a mouth which suppressed in this woman the greatest of all feminine charms—the smile. Instead of opening it, after the fashion of a flower, this mouth contracted, covering the teeth and gums, a venial fault in youth, but a mortal sin later.

Martscha never knew her father, who died when she was several months old. Her mother had a devoted heart but a weak mind, and succumbed to grief on discovering that her daughter was ignorant of all affection, justice, or morals when she wished to accomplish her end. These tendencies, essen-



tially practical, had shone forth at the time of her first marriage with a French diplomat, a good, worthy fellow who had honored her with his choice, without having studied her like a book or turning her like a glove. This honest young fellow, whose health was not strong and whose intelligence equaled his health, believed all that one could wish him to believe—that he was as strong as Hercules, as penetrating as a Metternich, and sure to attain some great embassy if only he had the chance to marry a woman cut out after the pattern of Marshal Guebriant's wife. He believed many other things which required less strong faith, and the marriage accomplished, his mother-in-law buried, he took his bride to Paris, upon which she had counted more than all the rest. Unfortunately he died almost immediately—that is, two or three years sooner than the Roumanian had fixed upon. She was left without a home, money, position, or any other aid to entering society; her only advantage was a very old name in the book of heraldry, but too new upon visting cards to be of advantage to her.

Nevertheless she was far from being frightened at the task, for she thought herself still in Roumania, where every one cited her as the most beautiful of women. In Paris she saw immediately that she must come down a peg. Her face created so slight a sensation in places where she showed herself that she was at first painfully surprised. To



crown her troubles she had no money. To be brief, she married without the least enthusiasm a field officer in the infantry named Sauval, younger, but more substantial and intelligent than the diplomat who was removed so soon from her tender caresses. If she had been less pinched in circumstances she might have chosen better, but certainly she could have done much worse; Sauval, according to what everybody says, was a superior officer. The young wife used every means to urge her husband's promotion, and God knows they were numerous. Several persons who knew him say that she used them well. One of them took Sauval with him as brigade major when they formed our brave and powerful army of the Louvre, after our irreparable Eastern disasters. But decidedly the Roumanian brought bad luck to both of her husbands.

It was learned one day that the major had lost his life at the battle of Orleans, under circumstances that were always mysterious, for no eye witness could give the slightest detail of his death, caused by a frightful wound in his head. When the war ended Sauval's patron left the army under pretense that a serious disease prevented him from continuing his career. This general was without near relations, and soon everybody had forgotten him. Martscha found herself for the second time in a bad situation, strangely complicated by this fact, she had a daughter nine years old, the future Adossides.



Although she did not sin by excess of grief the Roumanian seemed for some time crushed by her husband's death. She lived for several years in a very retired way in a little house that her husband owned in Bearn, seeing nobody and seeming to make it a point to be forgotten. Then suddenly she returned to Paris to educate her daughter, she said. In fact, the child had the very best masters, although her father died without leaving any fortune. But—details unknown—a large enough sum of money fell, if not from heaven, from the hands of some generous unknown, into Martscha's hands. The widow and the orphan lived comfortably upon it.

About this time Jenny became so beautiful that her mother realized that she had a future before her. Meanwhile Madame Sauval began to gain experience, having recognized by numerous mortifications that Paris was not Roumania, and that she had counted too much at the beginning of her career upon her own intelligence and the foolishness of others.

It was at this time that she met Godefroid, thanks to her lucky star, a star which always served her like a lantern. The composer was very lonely after Patrice's departure, not yet having become accustomed to missing one of his greatest interests in life. On her side Madame Sauval saw that she was farther away than ever from the worldly position that she had been seeking for the past twenty



years. Her revenues now consisted of vegetables, a few bags of corn, two acres of grapes that every third year gave atrocious wine. As for her capital, the notary had just given her the last cent of it.

Madame Sauval had heard it repeated a hundred times that Jenny's throat concealed a voice above the ordinary, and that even without hearing the young girl sing a man must indeed be hard to please who did not take pleasure in looking at her. When Godefroid first heard her sing he was so charmed that he thought that the Conservatory cage did not often hold such nightingales. Upon one word from him the Conservatory's doors were opened to the one in whom the composer saw in advance a future diva for himself and his operettas. But he did not count upon Madame Sauval.

“My daughter sing in comic opera! The Opera may be well enough, and yet——”

She nourished this thought, and while the others taught young Jenny vocalization, she taught Godefroid to be ambitious in his profession. He was much astonished at first, and also a little obstinate, but the young man was soon grateful to his friend, because she did not think the Opera stage too large for him—that is to say for the young girl—for she counted upon one to tow the other along. This strong-minded woman did so well that “Constantin” was written, received by the directors, and the parts distributed to the artists. It goes without saying that Jenny had a role, and that this part,



composed for her, was the most important one in the piece. This was the real but concealed motive for this "evolution of Godefroid toward high art," which created so much of a sensation and raised so many favorable and disagreeable predictions which the future would soon determine.



## CHAPTER V.

## PATRICE RECEIVES A SHOCK.

Jenny Sauval's parlor, or rather her mother's, for the Roumanian had kept the general management of their household, resembled less that of an artist's than a bourgeois of medium grandeur. When Patrice and his friend made their first entrance the flowers about the room, in their showy baskets, recalled the night before. The furniture was neither luxurious nor in the most perfect taste, but it gave the room a respectable, almost severe, appearance. The costumes of the two ladies were in direct contrast to each other, and would bewilder the most subtle eye. Mademoiselle Sauval wore one of those cloth dresses, closely fitted to the figure like a riding-habit, a fashion introduced among us by the English. Her shoes had thick soles, but in which her pretty feet lost none of their beauty, showing that she was going for a walk, doubtless to preserve health. Madame Sauval, on the contrary, had an exhausted look and languishing pose; she displayed loose draperies, carelessly attached, and wore Turkish slippers. One would never have imagined, to have seen them, that she was not the one who sang the night before five acts of an opera.



This indolent person arose and showed some interest at seeing Godefroid enter followed by a stranger. But as soon as he pronounced the name O'Farrell, her curiosity became suspicious. For several years it had been her object to fill the place of this absent one whose history she had not been long in learning. This sudden return did not please her.

While Godefroid talked with his *protegee* the mother took possession of the young man, so long and so well that, as he descended the stairs to go home, he could not have told you whether the Princess Adossides resembled her photograph or not. To make up for it Madame Sauval could have given his picture, both physical and moral, from his head to his heels. Ay, even his biography and that of his family, dating from the fall of the Stuarts. She decided that he had a warm, faithful, and sincere heart, that he was one of those poetical persons who seek all their lives to make the ideal rhyme with the reality, not without their smarting for it, of course. She decided at the same time that he was too good-looking, and had not money enough to be admitted there on an intimate footing, where there was a flower opening worthy of a prince with his millions. For the good lady did not intend that her daughter should sing until old, that she might earn money enough to buy her husband's cigars. Nevertheless she was convinced that Patrice was a man to be humored on account of the influence that



he had over Antoine. There is no good diplomacy without confederates.

When they reached the sidewalk of Rue de Vienna, where the singer lived, O'Farrell said to his friend, who was walking along, without speaking, wrapped up to his ears in his heavy coat:

"We have just acted the quartette from "Faust," the next time I hope that you will take care of Dame Martha, all the more as you seem to be a small-voiced tenor."

"The mother is a charming woman," replied Godefroid. "You talked as if you were old friends."

"We talked together like a thief and an examining magistrate. At least I suppose so, never having attended one of those *fetes*. I see now that I told all my history to this shrewd old woman and even some of yours. But so much the worse for you."

"I have no history," sighed Godefroid.

"If I was in your place, my friend, I have an idea that it would not be long before I had one. They say that these singers and dancers have bursts of gratitude that come quickly and go far."

"Again, once for all, leave these stories to those who do not know me."

"Where would be the harm? Have you turned abbe since my departure?"

"No, but I have become a composer of operas, which amounts to about the same thing. If I was fool enough to choose one of my singers I should be



lost. I should have against me, in one week, the manager, who would fear for his authority and his money, jealous comrades and patrons, who would be furious against this disloyal preference; in one word, all the world would be against me."

"Very well," said O'Farrell, giving his friend a side glance. "Then you leave the field open to me. I will profit by it. As for me, thank God, I do not compose operas."

Antoine shrugged his shoulders without replying, and the two friends separated, one to return to Godefroid's house, the other to leave tickets with some of the most celebrated critics and musicians. When he returned to his home the first thing that he saw was Patrice stretched out in an arm-chair, before a good fire, smoking.

"You can rest," growled he, as he renewed his overcoat. "You are lucky, I am obliged to work. I have letters to write that will take half the night."

"Master," said O'Farrell, standing up, "your slave awaits your orders. Will you take me as secretary?"

"With pleasure. Did you imagine that I should require urging? Seat yourself and reply to all this trash, to the people who complain because they did not have a seat at the first performance, and ask for one for to-night. I will take care of the others, the important ones, to which my autograph is indispensable. I must first write a half a dozen variations on this theme: 'Monsieur—or madame—"Con-



stantin" has succeeded, thanks to you; without your great talent it would have been a failure.' "

"Why have you not said this verbally to them?"

"I have said it and resaid it. But it is necessary that my effusions should be printed in to-morrow's papers. It is the custom. Now, then, let us go about our work."

Soon their pens were flying over the paper. When it was time to go into the dining-room they had finished the greater part of their task. Godefroid was taciturn during the meal, and did little honor to the dishes. When the fruit was served he left the table, feeling ill at ease and wishing to open a window. But he could not accomplish the short distance, his limbs failed him, and had not O'Farrell caught him he would have fallen. He was barely able to reach a chair, when he lost consciousness.

An hour later the Opera's medical attendant left his patient perfectly conscious, but visibly exhausted. Patrice accompanied him to the door, and, lowering his voice, questioned him. The doctor replied by this question:

"Are you a friend of Godefroid's?"

"His best friend. I only returned yesterday after a long absence."

"Monsieur O'Farrell, without doubt? The dear master has often spoken to me of you."

Patrice made a sign in the affirmative.

"Will you come to my house to-morrow morning



early?" asked the physician; "we will talk together. But our friend must not suspect that we do so."

The next morning the two met as agreed upon.

"Monsieur," said the doctor, "your presence takes away from me much anxiety. There is not in all Paris a man more isolated than Godefroid. It is his fault, but each one is privileged to arrange his life according to his own desires. Godefroid is seriously threatened, for this attack that you witnessed is not the first that he has had. He has worked too hard for twenty years, and now his heart works faster than his head; he will die of this trouble."

"What!" exclaimed Patrice, "is he doomed?"

"There are, thank God, intervals between the attacks, and that is why I wished to talk to you. He must be moderate in his work, avoid all shocks, all troubles, diverting his mind from any he may have—I suspect he has some; his friends may prolong his life. His love for you is very great and his confidence complete. I am ignorant of your plans, but if you could live within reach of him I should feel reassured, knowing your worth and who you are."

"Monsieur," said Patrice, bowing, "you do not exaggerate as far as my friendship is concerned for Godefroid. As to my projects, they are vague. But do you not think that a good wife is a better remedy than a good friend?"

"A good wife, most assuredly. But a druggist,



who has this rare article for sale, is yet to be found. If you know of one you are ahead of me. Godefroid marry! He is not ill enough yet to try this dangerous remedy. A commonplace wife would stifle him with her coarse vulgarity. A coquette would kill him by inches with jealousy. A cross and crabbed one would cause his aneurism to burst, in consequence of excitement. An avaricious one would end his days by obliging him to work incessantly. Good gracious! Monsieur, let me tell you, if I knew of a distinguished, virtuous, good-tempered, and disinterested woman, the first thing that I would do would be to take her myself. As I am afraid I shall remain an old bachelor, and, as you love Godefroid, I should advise you to depend upon yourself to cure him. He will live some months longer, and you will have fewer regrets. Above all things, no shocks."



## CHAPTER VI.

## CUPID'S ARROW ON ITS WAY.

When he returned to his friend, Patrice found him up as usual. He seemed nervous, preoccupied, and walked up and down his room with a vacillating step.

"Why did you rise so soon?" asked the young man. "There is nothing to prevent your resting now."

"I rest? And on the day of the second representation? I would like to see you do it. To-day the real battle takes place, and this evening the field is not clear. Yesterday each one could applaud according to his pleasure. But now the critic has done his work, he has put up his signboard, erected his barriers, marked in advance the part left free for approbation, which is, I wish you to believe, parsimoniously measured. The public will obey, for it is prepared. You will see knitted brows or pleased looks in the places designated automatically. What torture for an artist!"

"Artists are superior beings in appearance," said O'Farrell, "but in reality marvelously incomplete. They are baffled by the struggles and reactions of life. You ought to be at this moment the happiest of men, and I should not be surprised if you had thought of suicide."



“Have you never thought of it?” asked Godefroid, without replying to the question.

“Never. Suicide is vulgar, whatever you may think about it. Life is a struggle, and I like struggles. I have struggled with men, beasts, against the sun and against bad luck——”

“Have you never struggled against yourself?”

“No. Patrice and I agree on everything, like two fingers on a hand.”

“Then do not be in a hurry to say that you like struggles, for you do not know the worst of all.”

“Well,” said O’Farrell, who wished to change the conversation, “I see a pile of letters upon your table. I will continue my service. Let us work.”

They opened letters, but were frequently interrupted by callers; the doctor, a strange impressario, a journalist who came for an interview, an attache who came to solicit a box for the secretary to give a friend. In the midst of all these distractions the morning passed. As the two friends were seated at table a note was handed Godefroid; the sight of the writing even caused him to turn so pale that he looked as if he would faint again.

“Jenny Sauval!” exclaimed he, tearing open the envelope.

“Is that all?” observed Patrice; “why does it upset you so?”

“It is—because now I fear everything. If she should write that she was hoarse!”

The composer’s fears were groundless.



“They tell me that you are ill,” wrote this young woman. “Oh, that I might go and take care of you. I hope that your indisposition is not serious. Send me word quickly, for I am waiting at your door in my carriage.”

He jumped up with a bound.

“I will go myself,” said he.

But he stopped short, glancing at his morning costume.

“A trifle *negligee* to appear before the eyes of so beautiful a lady,” said Patrice, laughing. “Also, it is too cold for you to go out. I forbid it. I will go in your place; my duties as secretary include this office.”

Godefroid commenced to make some objections, but his friend was already half way down the stairs, bareheaded, like a pupil who is ordered to the office. Before the door was standing one of those coupes, with a plain exterior, and drawn by indefatigable horses, that certain livery stable keepers rent to people who wish to go fast and do not care to pay for silver-plated harnesses or top-boots for the coachman.

The window was lowered, and in its small frame an adorable picture was seen, sober, like the work of some great artist, but finished and strikingly like her. For the first time O’Farrell could examine close by and at leisure the singer’s beauty.

She had a small head, perfect ears, and a very low forehead, which may have been shortened a



little by the way she dressed her hair. Her hair was blonde, frizzled on her forehead in little curls which gave her face a rebellious look, soon corrected by the black eyes with their sad and rather indifferent look. These grand orators, usually silent, reserved their flashes of genius for causes worthy of their eloquence. When it pleased those eyes to speak a light transformed them, giving them that liquid brilliancy of a May sun, which penetrates and softens everything, even the thick bark of oaks.

Her nose was exquisitely modeled; it might possibly seem a trifle cold in its perfection; the purely chiseled nostrils rarely deigned to leave their marble-like immobility. This countenance showed the highest intelligence, added to an indomitable will; if she lacked anything it was animation. Her mouth alone gave life to the face; a mouth always on the alert, sometimes mischievous, sometimes disappointed, sometimes cruel, but more readily serious than coquettish. The slightest shadow of vexation or *ennui* lent to the whole face a disdainful look, assisted by the slightly hard lines of her eyebrows.

Nothing could be stranger than what her smile discreetly revealed. A curling of the lip to the right made a dimple in her round, rosy-tinted cheek, soft and savory as an infant's. One could generally say that one-half of her face only deigned to smile. Fortunate was the one who chanced to see this splendor of pearls, when a gleam of gayety



made her come out of her impassibility, in a complete expansion.

This pretty head, quietly covered by a black velvet bonnet, with one dainty pink rose stuck in carelessly, seemed even smaller this morning, coming out of a thick brown fur which covered her up completely.

When Patrice reached the coupe he was favored by the half smile at the service of simple mortals. It was all that he had a right to expect, and the half that she gave seemed so precious to him that he had no thought of regretting the other. He carried, on his own face, youth and good humor, and was very happy to tell her good news of his friend. He was also very agreeably surprised, to tell the truth, not to find Madame Sauval with her daughter. The young woman could not help giving him an entire smile when she saw his smiling face.

This was so perfectly dazzling that Patrice at once forgot everything; the cold wind kissing his bare head, the passers-by, who were slackening their steps to enjoy their share of the *fete*, even the sick man who sent him. He had only one thought—to drink, without losing any of this luminous face, this sunny smile, or the fragrance of this beautiful woman. He had one of those speaking faces that tell all, and that it is impossible not to believe. If Jenny Sauval had lived until now without realizing that she was beautiful, her ignorance would have all disappeared before this young man's



intensely admiring gaze, whose clear blue eyes shone with an ardent French fire. One could read in them a respect for woman, the universal queen; and Jenny received this homage without anger, but by a natural instinct she drew back into the coupe. As it was necessary to say something, she asked:

“Godefroid is better, is he not? You would not look so happy if you did not have good news.”

“He is better, much better. His morning costume prevented his coming to you himself. I came as his ambassador, to lay his thanks at the feet of the most beautiful of princesses.”

“Oh, no,” said the young woman, smiling for the second time, and the full smile, too. (Happy man this Patrice!) “I am the most devoted of friends in the morning; it is enough to wear the crown evenings.”

“The crown rests all of the time on your head,” said the young man, gazing ardently at Jenny.

“You will excuse me,” said the singer, after a short silence. “But the air is frosty and my poor throat does not belong to me. Say to your friend that I return home quite happy with the news that I carry away. I will do my best to cure the master this evening by a shower of bravos.”

A faint glimmer of pink lighting the interior of the coupe, a delicate hand closing the window, a pretty nod of the head, and the carriage drove away, leaving Patrice on the sidewalk with his head in a whirl. A passer-by, who gazed at him



with a mocking smile, awoke him from his reverie. He mounted the steps quickly, not realizing that he rubbed his eyes as if just awakening.

“Well?” asked the composer, as he appeared.

“She is delighted to know that your indisposition is not serious.”

“What did she say?”

“That she would sing like an angel this evening.”

“Was her mother with her?”

“No, thank the Lord!”

“Why, thank the Lord?”

“Because I cannot endure her.”

“What has she done?”

“That would be the finishing stroke if she had done anything. Have you never detested people who have never done anything?”

Godefroid shrugged his shoulders without replying, knowing that Patrice was subject to sudden likes and dislikes. Then he walked toward the dining-room, saying to himself, with a satisfied air:

“He did not stay long.”

He did not suspect, nobody suspected at that time, that Patrice had staid full long enough.



## CHAPTER VII.

## FLOATING RUMORS.

The second representation of "Constantin" was an undoubted success, with the shade of reserve predicted by Godefroid. The public had already entered into that path of abdication and renouncing of their tastes which our best critics make them walk in, taking great strides under the protecting and pedantic name of "Musical Education."

They still applauded, but kept their eyes upon their neighbors. The most advanced in their "education" tried to make an analysis. But enthusiasm and analysis do not pass through the same door, no more than love, which is enthusiasm for a beautiful woman. Nevertheless the women of to-day allow—what did I say, allow?—they wish to be analyzed. Let us hope that with this new system it does not happen to them as to operas by new composers, which rarely attain their hundredth representation.

"At last," said O'Farrell to his companion, when they started out for the theater, "I shall go behind the scenes."

"But," replied the composer, coldly, "you will be much better off in the audience, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned. I have procured a good seat for you."



The chair remained empty. Strong in his prerogative of intimate friend, the young man attached himself to Godefroid, and did not leave him until they were behind the scenes. There Patrice seated himself in a corner, and waited until Jenny should appear. All the rest had no interest for him.

He was much disconcerted at first to see only the singer's shoulders and to hear her voice so indistinctly, but he consoled himself in thinking that he should be able to speak to her after the end of the act. While waiting he reveled in her slightest movements. It seemed to him that he heard her voice for the first time, and the applause came to him like the noise of rubbish falling in the distance.

When the curtain was lowered the singer remained to exchange a few words with Godefroid. but while she was talking with him her eyes were seeking for another person. She soon saw Patrice lying in wait for her, as she must pass that way to go to her dressing-room. She asked him, as she gave him her hand:

“Are you enjoying your evening?”

He could see her then in all the glory of her beauty and superb costume, and he did not refrain from looking at her. It seemed to him that it was not Jenny Sauval, but a copy of her that he was looking at, not so young, and with harder features.

The paint gave her face a red look, like an angry woman's. Incapable of disguising his thoughts, O'Farrell replied to the young woman:



“If I did not enjoy the evening after the favor that you have shown me, I should indeed be hard to please. Nevertheless I would not change my morning for my evening.”

She looked at him, giving him that eternal enigma—her half smile.

“Well,” sighed she, “I see that the poor Adosides has not found grace in your eyes.”

“My eyes remember too well Jenny Sauval not to regret her, even when I admire the princess. I am a poor flatterer, am I not?”

“On the contrary,” said she, becoming very serious. “You could not give me sweeter flattery. For I prefer the poor Jenny myself.”

She left upon a sign from her mother, who was waiting for her with an opera cloak. Patrice watched her as she walked away, charmed with her exquisite grace. He wanted to go back to the house at once when she disappeared, for it seemed to him that the evening was ended, but he was very much mistaken, as we shall see.

He remained, wishing to feast his eyes once more on this regal beauty. He would see her again, but surrounded and besieged with admirers, without his being able to speak to her. The curtain was lowered for the second time. Suddenly a crowd of dancers filled the stage, for the ballet was in the next act. O’Farrell was a little embarrassed in the midst of this swarm of tarlatan skirts and pink limbs, when a hand was placed on his shoulder.



“Do not do anything to disgrace me,” said Godefroid, taking up his paternal role.

One of the young girls heard him. In less than five minutes the report spread about that this good-looking, tall young man was the composer's nephew. From thence it was to be seen with which he would be “foolish,” but he was not in the mood for it. Naturally they became excited; not modest enough to imagine that he could be inattentive to all their charms, these silly creatures declared that the newcomer was timid. Immediately sweet looks and jokes were showered upon him. What could he do but show that he was not a coward? To tell the truth, he managed it very well, until Jenny Sauval, coming upon the stage, saw this other Telamaque sporting with a band of nymphs. She stopped suddenly at the sight, when her mother asked:

“What is it, my dear?”

“Nothing; my train was caught.”

But Patrice, at the approach of his idol, forgot all the rest, and only had eyes for the radiant Adossides whose dress was not caught again. At the end of the act Godefroid motioned to him that he wished to speak to him:

“Will you do me the favor to go out and stroll around the lobbies and listen to what is said about the piece?”

Five minutes later O'Farrell was mixing with the crowd of dress-coats. During his six years' absence Patrice's long silky, blonde beard had had time to



grow upon his face, so that it was not easy for his best friends to recognize him. Noticing one of his old college friends, he offered his hand to him:

“You have forgotten me?”

“A little, I am afraid,” said the other. “But if you would only tell me your name——”

“Patrice O’Farrell.”

“What! looking like a globe trotter! Ah! it is true. You have returned from Australia, I believe?”

“No, but from Cambodia.”

“It is the same thing.”

“Oh, exactly, for a Parisian’s geography. And you, what are you doing?”

“Journalist, my dear friend.”

Patrice made a low bow.

“I could not have fallen into better hands then. What do they say of ‘Constantin?’ ”

“Ah! Yes. I know that you are interested in Godefroid. You were always yoked together.”

“Pretty expression. But tell me, what do they say in the lobbies?”

“There are differences of opinion. The old fellows are delighted, and declare that the good old days of ‘La Mulette’ have returned. The new school make some reservations. If you want my opinion, I should say that your friend had made a mistake in abandoning light opera. It is true that he has gained a pretty woman by the evolution.”

“What?”

“Yes, most certainly. Have you not heard the



story? How long ago since you returned to Paris?"

"Only day before yesterday, and I have seen nobody."

"Well, you have seen Sauval, I think? Why, my good fellow, for several years Godefroid has brought her up tenderly, not for her beautiful voice alone, you understand. But Sauval, who understands her business, wished to be heard. 'Give me an opportunity to be heard at the Opera, and we will see.' She never gave him more than the tip of her finger until the engagement was signed."

"And now?"

"Now everything is all love and sentiment. But this old fox of a Godefroid conceals his happiness. Has he said nothing even to you?"

"No," replied O'Farrell, with sorrowful amazement. "Perhaps it is only a story."

"It is the true story, my friend. Come, I will convince you."

The good creature called a brother journalist who was passing.

"Munier, one word. Who is Sauval's friend now?"

"Sauval's?" replied the reporter. "Her discoverer, of course. Everybody knows that. However, Prince Kemeneff was very devoted, and I believe the musician had to hurry and make a last desperate effort. That is the story this evening."

"Well," asked the journalist of Patrice, when they were alone, "do you believe me now? Do you



want other proofs? You must admit that your friend would have been very silly to have let such an opportunity pass to get back his outlay. For they say that he paid for her musical education."

"He would be very foolish. All the same, I should never have thought him so practical. Well, he must have developed since my absence."

O'Farrell was less calm than he affected to be, and did not push his investigations farther, but returned to the green room.

"Well, what do they say?" asked the composer.

"What do they say? Oh, there was only one opinion as to you. They congratulate——"

"I thought the audience was a little cold."

"Wait; you did not let me finish my sentence. They congratulate, they envy you for having one of the prettiest women in all Paris. Why in the devil did you make such a mystery with me? In the future do not take me as your chamberlain."

He walked off, leaving his friend heart-sick at these cruel words. Just then Jenny Sauval went on to the stage, but he had no wish to see or hear her. She made him shudder. All was repugnant to him in this great clique, where everything is paid for art, genius, talent, and beauty above all.

"Well," said he to himself, as he walked through the long, low corridor that led to the actors' exit, "amuse yourselves, fools."

In the little court a group of dancers were watching with an envious eye some of their friends, who



came with them but were now installed in satin, lined coupes, rolling back with all the airs of duchesses.

“Here is the little relative,” exclaimed one young girl, still unprovided with a carriage. “All alone and so late! Beware of the silly things.”

Then all of them burst into laughter.

“You saucy little baggages you!” returned Patrice, whose timidity had all disappeared. “Now, then, who comes to supper? Ah! you are the ones who are afraid now, are you?”

They ought to have been afraid, for the gentleman, in giving this unceremonious invitation, had his hands on his hips and a triumphant countenance that looked more like a musketeer’s than a timid young man’s. His eyes sparkled as Robinson Crusoe’s must have done upon leaving his island and first seeing a white face.

The dancers, like our fathers, the Franks, feared nothing; of the four who chanced to be there, four accepted the supper, leaving until later their explanations to those whom it concerned. Patrice was not unlucky. One of his guests was pretty, and two were bright and witty. He took the pretty one’s arm, and the rest followed together; it was only a short distance to the *Cafe de la Paix*.

Some moments later these girls commenced their supper, and ate as girls do who have only had a poor dinner. Patrice, on his part, was contented to drink, having something heavier in his stomach



than a dinner of three courses. He emptied several glasses before he could put out of his mind the besetting vision of two, dark, shining eyes, sweet and chaste under a cloud of blonde hair and the shadow of a velvet bonnet. It seemed to him that he could see those eyes become sad in proportion as he drank, but sweeter still. Ah, if he could hope that this clear purity did not lie! How he wished that he could leave the table and go into the night air and cool his throbbing brow.

What a stupid fool he was not to know that she belonged to Godefroid? He to come from Cambodia for this! He continued to empty his glass while joyous laughter surrounded him. Soon a mist floated between his eyes and hers. Then, like a last flash of a beacon light, the sweet and charming face disappeared. At last Jenny Sauval is forgotten.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## RECONCILIATION.

The next morning a pale, aged, weak, and bowed man was sitting in his arm-chair reading the journals, and dropping them one by one on the floor with a nervous and disdainful smile. Godefroid had not closed his eyes that night. Now he was waiting for the return of that prodigal child whose last words rang in his ears. He was astonished at the bitterness of certain moments in life; everything failed him, everything made him suffer. His ungrateful friend had turned against him, and, to speak in the language of the trade, the press was ill-natured.

He felt the first touch of old age, which is called doubt of one's self. He went over the course of his whole life, so smiling when one follows the course of the rising sun, so sad when darkness settles over the landscape.

"Where am I going?" thought he. "What fate awaits me? What is before me at the turn of the road? What remains for me to do in this life? Art has escaped me, and my last effort will be this 'Constantin' that is not appreciated. Friendship outrages and abandons me. Jenny Sauval! Alas! in



wishing to help her I have only compromised her. In wishing to make her my daughter I have made only trouble for her, and tortured my life."

The door opened, and O'Farrell appeared, calmed, refreshed, and purified by the long bath he had just taken. He seated himself before Godefroid, but did not offer his hand.

"Two words only," said he. "Last night I spoke to you like a boor. Your secrets are your own; nothing obliges you to tell them to me. I see in your eyes that I have wounded you deeper still than I thought. Forgive me, and let us part friends as before."

"Part!" groaned Godefroid.

"It is better. Do you think that I can consent to live at your expense? Even without my sudden burst of passion, which was more silly than culpable, I swear that to-morrow I should have ceased to be your guest. I shall always be your friend. I swear it by my mother's picture."

Godefroid raised his beautiful, artistic head, and looked O'Farrell in the eye:

"Then you believe in oaths?" asked he.

"Yes, because I believe in God and honor. But if there is ever an oath respected in this world, it will be the one that I have just taken. It is truly sacred between us two, my friend, for while we both live the memory of the saint who looks down upon us will admonish me whom she loved so much and bless you who have replaced her so well."



The composer arose, and taking off the velvet toque which covered the crown of his head, and pointing toward the picture, said:

“Listen to me now. I swear by your mother’s picture that Jenny Sauval has never received but one kiss from me, the one that I gave her before three hundred persons the evening she sang so beautifully in my poor ‘Constantin’——”

Godefroid stopped, strangely troubled. Patrice attributed it to the artist’s pride, equally proud of his pupil and his work. He, too, to tell the truth, was strangely agitated by what he had just heard.

“Do you believe me?” insisted the composer.

“Certainly,” sighed the young man; “what a pity you did not say this sooner.”

Godefroid looked at him surprised and a little suspiciously.

“*Mon Dieu!*” explained Patrice. “Do not imagine that Mademoiselle Sauval’s conduct interests me particularly. But I regret having outraged a woman whom you respect.”

He regretted, above all things, the supper, but he kept this secret to himself, a thing that never happened before; his adopted father did not know all that he was thinking of.

“What in the devil did she ever go on the stage for?” growled he.

“I am the one that caused her to do it,” said Godefroid, with a contrite look. “Ah, my friend, you cannot understand how I suffer, I who have de-



ceived this noble young girl as I deceived myself. Yes, I deceived her and her mother also."

"Oh, her mother!" said Patrice, shrugging his shoulders.

"I pointed out to this child art, success, and glory crowning her pure brow. I dreamed of seeing her famous now and memorable in the future, so high in everybody's esteem that not a suspicion could touch her. I have been unlucky in my dreams the last three days."

"So you allow yourself to be disconcerted by the talk of envious people and fools?"

"If you knew what precautions I have taken! I have not been to her home three times a year. When the mother came to see me she came alone."

"I wish you much pleasure; I know the charms of her conversation."

"And to think that this stupid public slanders us all three, mother, daughter, and myself! It is to be hoped that they will always be ignorant of this mud that is thrown upon them, and from which no arm can protect them without polluting them more."

He spoke with so much heat that O'Farrell was suspicious.

"Why do you not marry her?" asked he, point-blank. "That would be the best way to get even with these blockheads."

The composer dropped into his chair, as if suddenly frightened.



“Do you think that I look like a man who should marry?” said he, feigning to laugh; “I to marry a young girl with such beauty and such a future, and whose father I might be? You have never looked at her, then?”

“Then take a wife not as young and less beautiful. But marry. The more I observe you the more I see that you have lived alone too long. Solitude is a burden that crushes one soon; you are bending already.”

“Yes, my task is heavy, but a wife could aid me but little. What I need is a less cumbersome support, without nerves, migraine, or rustling petticoats, a sort of confidant; sharing my secrets which are not numerous, replying to my letters which are more so, recopying my semiquavers, above all to wind up the clock when it runs down. Say now, you who wish a situation, what do you say to this one?”

A deep flush extended over O'Farrell's face, growing deeper and deeper.

“You forgot to name the salary,” said he, with a forced laugh.

“I forgot that I was speaking to a descendant of the Stuarts, that is what I forgot. Truly we cannot open our mouths without hurting each other's feelings. Good gracious! what has happened between us since your return?”

There had come between them what separates the closest of friends—a woman



"This is what comes of drinking too much champagne!" said Patrice between his teeth, trying to excuse himself.

"No," insisted the other, "I am the one in the wrong. In my turn I say to you, forgive me and let us part. I prevent you from going your own way in the world. Go; leave me to work like a dog, stupid fool that I am. But at first we must have a settlement; I still owe a large sum of money to Countess O'Farrell's heir."

Godefroid stopped. He could say no more. His chest heaved. A coughing fit seized him. Drops of perspiration stood on his brow. He seemed as unhappy and discouraged as a man could be. Patrice was frightened, remembering what the physician had said to him the day before. He extended his hand in his frank way, and said:

"Give me your hand, and may the devil take me if I ever leave your house unless chased out by an officer. Let us forget this villainous morning. Come, old friend, what shall your secretary commence his work with?"

"This," replied Godefroid, opening his arms to O'Farrell.

When the hour arrived for the third representation of "Constantin" Patrice excused himself on the pretext that he was too lazy to change his clothes and spend four hours in a theater. He was afraid, by showing so little eagerness, to hurt his friend's vanity as composer, but it was not so.



“You are right; rest yourself,” said Antoine. “I will tell you all about it. I would like to be in your place and go to bed early.”

One person that evening looked in vain for Patrice O’Farrell. She looked in the green room, also into the vast audience filled with human faces almost to the roof. She looked for him among the crowd of ballet dancers, for Jenny’s mother had told her all about Patrice’s high doings, and this story caused the young woman much surprise mixed with a strange sorrow.

The Roumanian tried during the evening to excite Godefroid’s indignation against his friend. “A fine beginning on his arrival,” said she. “You who talked as if he were a little saint.”

“I did not call him a great saint,” responded the composer, laughing. “When one is only twenty-eight years old and has just returned from Cambodia——”

“And it is a crazy creature like this that you present to my daughter and to me! A beautiful acquaintance for two women in our position!”

“Good gracious, madam, I am not blaming you for being severe; but really, if you can only speak to angels furnished with wings—why, you must end your acquaintance with my future companion for life.”

“What!” exclaimed she, “are you going to live together?”

Godefroid, with that propensity for confidences



that all weak men have, had become accustomed to telling Madame Sauval all the little incidents connected with his life, so hastened to give her an account of his interview with Patrice—leaving out one part, and the agreement which had followed it.

The clever woman, after listening attentively to the story, took Godefroid's hands in her own, and giving him a knowingly tender look, she sighed:

“Ah! you have a great heart.”



## CHAPTER IX.

## A RE-INTRODUCTION INTO SOCIETY.

About this time Godefroid received a note from the Baroness de Pragneres. The three gifts that a woman desires the most in this world are wealth, beauty, and wit, and they were very unevenly distributed with this woman. She had wealth in profusion, wit in a certain degree, and was perfectly ugly. She was at heart an excellent woman, full of good intentions, which she loosened from time to time on people, after the fashion of the fable of the bears and the stones. Having plenty of leisure time, for she had no children, no lovers, and very little of a husband, she was the first to invent that idea of fashionable women which makes such ravages now. Sometimes she exhibited in the salon a terra-cotta bust of her chambermaid, then a portrait of her dog. She sometimes had a production of her own played at her house by actors from the Francais. Another day she would slip in between one of Saint-Saen's concertos and a romance of Gounod's, a serenade of her own. She wrote for the journals on society topics and for reviews on archæological questions. At last her first novel was announced for an early date.



“What a pity,” say the artists, “that she undertakes painting, music, and prose! She is a perfect lady to the tips of her fingers.”

“Poor baroness,” sigh the worldly ones, “her house is like a Montmartre beer saloon. But she has the right to be original; she is an artist. One sees such amusing people in her drawing-room.”

This is what she wrote to Godefroid:

“DEAR MASTER: You have always refused my invitations. Do not refuse this, for I have a surprise for my guests. Have no fear; you shall not be asked to play; you will not be asked to assist any unknown star. You can leave at midnight. I add, to make you decide the question, that you will not hear one word of my music. There will be but few guests. You will find me, Thursday evening, between two lamps in my morning gown. If you do not come, I shall believe that your success at the Opera has made you feel that we common mortals are beneath you.”

A postscript said:

“I anticipate also seeing the young gentleman” (here there was an erasure), “the celebrated traveler of whom everybody is talking, and who is with you like a shadow. Present this shadow to me; everybody says that he is very agreeable to see and hear.”

Patrice could not help laughing at the postscript.

“Poor woman! She has been unable to learn the name of this celebrated traveler of whom everybody is talking. Shall you go?”

“Would you like to?”



“Let us go; it will be my re-entrance into civilized society.”

On Thursday evening the two friends found the baroness in full dress at the entrance to a suite of brilliantly lighted parlors, filled with a compact crowd.

“Let us go away,” said the composer; “this is what she calls morning dress and two lamps. They will tell her——”

But a sentinel was lying in wait for Godefroid; for the lady of the house pounced upon him even in the antechamber; he was seized and handcuffed by an opulent arm, loaded with numberless bracelets, and made a sensational entrance followed by the faithful Patrice. In the back room, in the holy of holies reserved for persons of note, Jenny Sauval occupied the center of a group of men, who vied with each other for a glance from her eyes.

She was sitting upright in her chair, with the sad look of an unthroned queen; she talked very little and gave her perpetual unfinished smile; she was simply dressed in black satin and jet; nevertheless every eye in the room was turned upon her. All the other invited guests of the baroness were vanquished by her charms. They tired their eyes studying Jenny's hair and the way it was dressed, the harmonious line traced by the dark goods against the milky whiteness of her neck and arms, even the draping of her skirt. The dress was not new, and no famous hair-dresser had twisted her hair so care-



lessly on the top of her head. Madame Sauval was seated beside Jenny and enjoying her daughter's triumph, without envy, but not without regret.

"If I had had what she has, or she had had what I have," sighed she to herself. "This child will never profit by anything."

At the same time, she glanced through the rooms looking for the one that she wished above all to see.

All the baroness' guests, as well as that lady herself, would have been surprised to learn, who had, if not organized this soiree, inspired it, and more astonished yet to know that its sole object was to show Jenny Sauval, off the stage, to Prince Keme-neff. It little concerned Madame de Pragneres and her artistic pretensions. It concerned Godefroid and his operas, as well as all the operas in the world. It concerned Jenny's voice and musical reputation. What Martscha wished was to show that her daughter was of the material that princesses were made of, genuine ones of course. Nobody would have said to the contrary that evening.

Mademoiselle Sauval arose as the baroness approached towing along Godefroid. The meeting between the author of "Constantin" and the interpreter of his work did not lack picturesqueness.

An ovation broke out; it may have been spontaneous, or it may have been inspired by the lady of the house, who loved "effects."

As he raised his eyes to his pupil's, Godefroid saw that she was troubled and turned pale; she



looked ahead of her with a mixture of haughty surprise and pain. She was looking at somebody; her white bosom heaved with some powerful emotion. She was looking at Patrice, there could be no mistake about it.

The baroness had dropped the composer's arm to clap her hands with the rest. She kept it up to her heart's content, exclaiming in her shrill voice:

"Do you see, dear master! What do you think of my surprise?"

The "dear master" seemed more surprised than pleased; he looked lugubrious, but he replied, as he bowed before the cantatrice:

"Why should I not be pleased to see mademoiselle applauded and *feted* thus, when she merits it?"

"Look at her," said the baroness, accustomed to do the honors for herself and all who came to her house. "She is as excited as a child, and it becomes her. She could sing with her eyes if she should lose her voice."

The composer looked at Jenny's eyes; in reality they seemed to sing, but the poor man was obliged to smile although shivering as he thought of this phrase:

"Pardon, my comrade, this serenade is not for you."

Patrice, in his turn, bowed before Jenny, who barely returned his salutation. He had not, it must be admitted, a conscience so pure to-night that he



felt he had a right to blame her for her cold greeting.

“Probably,” thought he, “some charitable creature has told her some of the gossip on her account, and she has heard of the part that I so foolishly acted. But should I be obliged to lose my arm, I must obtain her pardon. I need her smile.”

First of all it was prudent to know the extent of the evil. There was an empty chair beside Jenny’s mother. Patrice seated himself in it, although her air was even less gracious than her daughter’s.

“We do not see you at the opera any more, monsieur,” said the lady.

The young man replied:

“I have just returned from a long voyage, which fatigued me very much, so I go to bed early.”

“Not every evening, at least, so I hear,” replied the Roumanian. “The proverb, birds of a feather flock together, is not always true. You are the companion of the steadiest man in the world, and while he prefers music, it is dancing that charms you.”

“Dancing!” exclaimed the astonished O’Farrell.

“Or at least dancers. At the Opera, the other evening, all the talk was of your generosity.”

This time Patrice understood. His crime then was not calumny, but a certain supper, the other night, in not the most edifying company. That, then, was what had clouded her charming face. At this thought he blushed less from confusion than



from joy. But without being offended on this occasion, with his habitual frankness, he replied:

“Alas! madam, there are a hundred reasons why I could not be generous, even to dancers. All that is pure invention. I could not tell you the names of three of these young women.”

“That is not what they say.”

“Ah! madam, I swear to you; but what will they not say in those frightful greenrooms? I have not the pretension to tell you, for since the first day I had the honor to meet you, I could not help pitying a woman with your tastes, education, and manners, condemned to frequent such a place.”

“It is my poor daughter that you must pity, monsieur. She is so little fitted for the stage. Others become teachers; she has become a singer, or rather—but it would be bad taste to blame our friend Godefroid, who urged her to this step. Naturally, he sees nothing but music. What a calamity it is to lose one’s fortune!”

“I know something about it,” said Patrice, laughing.

“You have met with great reverses, then?” questioned the good soul, captivated by all this wise diplomacy.

“They could not have been more complete. A man can get over such difficulties, but a woman——”

“And above all one that has been brought up like



my daughter. The daughter of a hero, who would have been to-day the pride of the army.

“Poor Jenny!” continued the widow, prompt to shun any talk about Sauval’s death. “So proud, so honest, and so fond of home life. She is made for the paint and tinsel of the stage as much as you are to say mass. And I, monsieur; at my age, with my past, to be obliged to pass long hours in the midst of what is repugnant to me, with mothers whose dresses I cannot even touch without a shudder, and gentlemen who hardly bow to me. I, who have had a salon, a chateau——”

Madame Sauval paused for breath, and Patrice profited by this pause to pour balm upon this wounded heart. He would have preferred to have talked with Jenny, rather than the mother, but he had no choice. The obstinacy with which the latter kept the back of her head toward him showed him that he was in full disgrace.

“I will conquer the mother first,” said he to himself. “Jenny is worth ten minutes of hypocrisy.”

“It will be prudent to get this fellow interested in my business,” thought the Roumanian. “He has influence with Godefroid, and he is necessary to us so long as there is no other.”

Meanwhile Prince Kemeneff was late in showing himself, a delay which made Madame Sauval nervous. It was getting late. Baroness de Pragneres with excuses, prayers, and numberless oratorical precautions, persuaded the young cantatrice to sing



for them something from "Constantin," accompanied by Godefroid. As she finished, in the midst of enthusiastic applause, more or less sincere, for neither the composer's work or the artist's voice gained anything by being transported into this crowd—grave news spread through the rooms.

A sudden coating of very slippery ice had covered the ground. It was impossible for carriages to move about; accidents were feared. They cited as among the victims Kemeneff, or rather one of his horses, that circumstances had obliged the prince to hold a consultation with his veterinary instead of basking in the smiles of Jenny or her mother.

The antechamber was already filled with footmen, who had come to tell their masters that their carriages had not been able to leave the stables. The vestibule was filled; each one thought to get home as soon as possible with no broken bones.

O'Farrell proved to be the most heroic of all the men, perhaps the cleverest. While Godefroid took charge of his pupil, he attached himself to his older companion with the care of a lover. They all started off on foot. On account of the serious danger it was necessary to walk very slowly in the midst of an icy mist. At about the end of five minutes, Godefroid, who was ahead with Jenny, stopped, discouraged.

"What can we do?" cried he. "It will be half an hour before we can reach Rue de Vienne. The least



that can happen to you, mademoiselle, is complete loss of voice for fifteen days."

"If mademoiselle will allow me to do so," said Patrice, "she shall be at home in ten minutes. I will undertake it."

"How can you do it?" asked all three, sick at heart.

"It is very simple. You will see."

The young man had already abandoned Madame Sauval to her fate, and being near a seat on the Boulevard Malesherbes, where the little band had rested for a moment, he sat down there for a few seconds, and then returned, walking with as sure a foot as if on a carpet.

"Come, mademoiselle," said he, taking Jenny's arm.

Nobody protested, as is the case when a man of will announces his purpose. The young people moved away rapidly; it seemed as if they had wings as they sped by the gas-lights, which reflected their figures like a mirror. After a few threatening slips of his companion, the young man, whose step was as firm as a rock, took a sudden resolution, and putting his arm about the young girl's waist, he almost carried her along with him.

"Monsieur," said she, more confused than angry, "you do not think what you are doing."

"No," replied he, slackening his pace, "I do not. I am only thinking of getting you out of this as quickly as possible. Have confidence in me."



She said no more, for it was not the time nor the place to discuss matters. Patrice, after what she had heard, was not precisely worthy of confidence. He, suspecting her hostile feeling, asked:

“Do you not feel perfectly safe with me?”

“That depends upon how you mean it,” said she. “I have confidence in your strength and dexterity——”

All at once she noticed that Patrice was going in his stocking feet.

“*Mou Dieu!*” exclaimed she. “You are playing with your life. Stop—I will not——”

He replied, resisting a strong desire to press her to his heart:

“You need not be uneasy as to my life. I would give it to you to spare you one hour’s suffering. Believe me, I am devoted to you as a brother, and devoted to you alone.”

“To me alone? to me alone?” said she, as she knit her beautiful eyebrows.

“I swear it to you,” protested he. “If any one has ever said to the contrary, it is an odious falsehood. You must have confidence in me. If you could know how much I—I would like your friendship.”

“You merit it this evening,” said she, sincerely moved. “But who knows? perhaps now you are thinking of your friend Godefroid. How awkward it would be for him if I could not sing to-morrow night.”



“Nobody could be quicker consoled than I, if you could never sing there again in your life. My whole being is irritated when I see you appear on the stage, and they offer you their admiration—what a sacrilege for them to deign to applaud you and judge you, as if they were worthy to raise their eyes to your beauty.”

“Then that is why?” said she, hesitatingly.

“Yes, mademoiselle, that is why I no longer go to the Opera. I shall go now less than ever. I wish I could forget the stones of that hateful edifice.”

“You are a strange man,” said she. “I never imagined you like this. You are the first one who has understood me. How does it happen? We have known each other such a short time.”

“It is not true, but it seems to me that I have always belonged to you. I slept a long time, believing that this sleep was life. One day, like a slave awakened by his mistress’ golden slipper, I came out of my dream. I trembled at your glance, and I find that I wear fetters that I have never known before. How is it? Why do I belong to you? I know nothing about it. All that I can say is, that you possess me, that you can use me according to your fancy—that is, even if I wished to fly away, the very next hour would find me at your feet with still heavier chains.”

“You speak like a man who had tried the experiment,” said she, thinking of the famous supper.

He was going to lie again. Let those throw the



stone who have not on their conscience any sin against the holy truth, that two beautiful black eyes have made them commit. They had reached Rue de Vienne, and Jenny, who was not a child, knew perhaps that people win sometimes by not letting certain cases come to trial.

“Now,” said she, “hurry, and God grant that you will not be ill. I cannot thank you for what you have just done. But we are even, for I forgive you all the foolish things that you have just said. I will attribute it to the cold. Only remember that slavery is abolished, above all in Rue de Vienne.”

She had rung the bell; the door opened. She entered, but before closing it, she said:

“But friendship still exists. We shall meet again.”

Only one little hand was visible of the person who spoke. Patrice carried it to his lips, and was deliciously surprised to find that it was ungloved, and the hand very far from being cold.

When Madame Sauval joined her daughter she was surprised to find her warm and comfortable in her dressing-gown, with rosy cheeks and shining eyes.

“Good gracious! here is a child in for a fever!” exclaimed this model of a mother. There are many kinds of fever; a certain English proverb says that fevers are like children, because they resemble each other at the time of their birth.



## CHAPTER X.

## A STARTLING ASSERTION.

The other did not get out of their difficulties so well that night.

Patrice reached home, he hardly knew how. As he sat dreaming he was aroused from his reverie by a noise at the door. He went into the ante-chamber to receive his friend. He hardly recognized Godefroid in the figure that stood motionless in the dim light without the strength to take off his coat. Its weight seemed too heavy for him. The perspiration stood on his forehead, and his teeth chattered with the cold. Patrice had only to glance at his friend to forget the ethereal world in which his thoughts were roaming a few moments before.

“Quick!” exclaimed he. “Come to bed! We must waken Baptiste, and have your bed warmed.”

Godefroid entered the room first, but did not seem to hear these words. With a wavering step he crossed the dimly lighted room, without noticing the grateful light in the fire-place, and leaned against the framework of the window, putting his forehead against the icy glass. He seemed like a man overwhelmed by the news of some irreparable disaster; O’Farrell had never seen him like this before.



“Come to bed,” repeated the young man, putting his hand on his shoulder. “Do not stay——”

Suddenly Godefroid turned around, and seizing Patrice by his wrists with unexpected strength, darting flashing glances from his haggard eyes, he screamed, almost making the room echo with his voice:

“You know!—that I love her—and I loved her before you ever saw her!”

Patrice closed his eyes to keep from recoiling, and to remain master of himself before this insane man. For a few seconds he asked himself what was going to happen. Was this furious creature who was crushing his wrists going to be the prey of an attack of acute delirium? Should he use force to control him or should he attempt to calm him?

Godefroid repeated, exasperated by his silence:

“Do you hear me? answer me. I tell you that I love her!”

There was such violent grief under this wild outburst and this reiterated exclamation that Patrice, moved with pity, responded:

“Poor friend! I can see that you do.”

These words, said in that quiet tone that strong beings have at command in these extreme cases, seemed to have an influence on Godefroid's nerves. His clutched fingers relaxed, he became as docile as a child, and allowed him to lead him toward the fire. There, without seeming to realize where he



was, he seated himself, and looked about him with a wandering stare.

Patrice understood that it was better to calm the mind before doing anything for the body, so asked, in a quiet tone:

“Why did you not tell me this before?”

At seeing the prodigious rapidity with which the reaction took place, a physician would have said that Antoine had been very ill.

“Because,” replied he, in a tone so low that one could hardly hear him, “because I did not wish to admit it to myself. It is a miserable, shameful, useless stupidity.”

Patrice interrupted him, to all appearances perfectly calm, but torn to the very heart by the thought of the future, which he could foresee:

“My friend, be more just to yourself. Any woman, no matter how beautiful, or what high position she may occupy, will be flattered to know that she has your love.”

“Ah! I merit it, the humiliation of being consoled by you! And how I love her! She does not love me, and never will. What can I do? What more can I give her? I have caused her name to be in everybody’s mouth; thanks to me, her beauty shines out like the sun above the multitude. How many years’ work, how much devotion, and trouble I have passed through to accomplish this! How many years of love! For a long time I have shivered and trembled an hour before I was to see her!



All this for nothing! She never has once suspected that she has stopped the blood in my veins when she even touched me with her dress. You have only to make your appearance, and she adores you!"

Patrice affected a burst of laughter, although he had no desire to do so.

"Upon my word," said he, "I never expected such a conclusion."

"She adores you," repeated Godefroid. "When you first spoke to her this accursed evening her looks told me so, better than her mouth could. Chance favors you; you will possess this woman. I realized it as you went away with her. You carried her in your arms almost. What did you say? What passed between you? I shall never know. Oh, what a torture!"

He arose, and became as agitated as at first.

"Now, then, you are dreaming," said O'Farrell. "Do you think it was the time for sentiment? Our only thought was to get home as quickly as possible, and I did not say twenty words."

"Twenty words! You do not know what I would give to be able to say three only to her. They weigh upon and choke me until it seems as if I should die."

"You will say them to her. You will make her love you; I premise it. As for that, you must live, and this will kill you if it continues."

"What matters it? It is too late now; she loves



you. And you, you belong to her body and soul."

"Listen!" commanded Patrice. "You are crazy, and I shall treat you as such. If you refuse to obey me and will not go to bed, I warn you, I shall take you by force."

Godefroid fell back in his chair. O'Farrell glanced at him and saw that it was not to disobey him. He had fainted.

At daybreak he was delirious, caused by a burning fever.

"Here he is for six weeks," said the doctor, "or perhaps for a much shorter time, for the poor fellow is very dangerously ill. Listen to him! Jenny Sauval! Always the same! If I did not know that my patient was not a sentimental man, I should say that he was in love with this woman."

"Yes," coldly replied Patrice, who doubted the discretion of these attending physicians at theaters; "one might be deceived, but it is of the singer that he thinks, not of the woman."

It was decided that Godefroid should have no other nurse than he, but another came that he was obliged to greet politely, willing or not; it was Madame Sauval. Fortunately she had other things to do than watch a sick man; she had her daughter. The visits that she made the composer were not very long. When he was in a condition to understand anything, one could see that the visitor's great desire was that her solicitude should not pass unnoticed.



She even proposed on a certain day to bring her daughter with her, but Jenny had hardly entered the room before his fever redoubled, although Patrice had avoided speaking or looking at the young girl.

“She came to see you!” murmured he, when his pupil had retired after a few moments’ visit.

O’Farrell was a little more nervous than a nurse should be, but he said, in a quick tone:

“Then she shall not come again, you may be sure of it.”

“I prefer that,” said the sick man.

He turned his face to the wall as if ashamed of this weakness; and Patrice, in his inexperience, destined to be of short duration, was astonished to see that at certain times love is not as strong as jealousy.

In Paris, when a fatal termination is feared, sick people pass through three distinct periods. At first they write about them, and the journals publish bulletins of their health; special reporters prepare the death notice, so as not to be obliged some fine night to lose a dinner when it should be needed. Then, as if by tacit consent, the patient’s name, which was displayed in all the windows the night before, is invisible and ignored as if he had died the year before. Finally three discreet lines appear announcing in an almost disappointed tone that the invalid is restored to health, and that his place is not to be taken.



For several weeks Godefroid had been in the second stage. Days would pass without a person stepping over the threshold to inquire how the invalid was. Patrice continued to watch over and care for him. Madame Sauval multiplied her visits. Often, to let the convalescent rest, they would go into the little parlor and talk.

“Madam,” said the young man one day, “are you not surprised or rather uneasy to see that ‘Constantin’ is no longer advertised? They have only given fifteen representations in all, if I am not mistaken.”

“It is true,” said the Roumanian, “that the success of the piece has stopped short. The author’s illness was unfortunate for him.”

“For him and for your daughter,” said Patrice, “for I have not heard that they have given her any other role.”

“Monsieur,” replied the lady, in a perfectly straightforward manner, “I do not deceive myself. The role of Adossides is the first that my daughter has ever sung; it will be the last. You understand very well that I do not speak with such frankness to our friend; he has his expectations; I respect them, but I have a quick ear, and I hear people talk who know about it. My daughter has talent, intelligence, and the advantages that it does not become me to boast of. She made a success, and at the first attempt had the public in her favor. Another would feel pleased, and would make her way.



Jenny is proud, she has instincts that the theater constantly wound; what is called the sacred fire is wanting. The sooner she leaves the stage the better. I wish she had never been obliged to enter the profession. But fate is mysterious."

The mysteries of fate seemed to be all that Madame Sauval could ask for in this world, and Patrice was surprised to hear her admit with such beautiful calmness that her daughter's musical career was gravely compromised. But a few days later she sang another song.

"Ah! monsieur, a mother in my position is to be pitied! What would happen to my daughter if I should be taken away? What has the future in store for her? I told you once that she became a singer instead of a teacher. Alas! it is much easier for a teacher than a singer to make a good marriage."

"As to that you surprise me," said the young man.

And he named over a few persons.

"One can see that you have not very thoroughly studied the question," replied the Roumanian.

She, on the contrary, seemed to know all about it. She recited over one by one names of persons, giving biographies of their husbands, since their marriage, embellishing it with details which if published would not be very edifying. One hears so many things in the greenroom!

"Do you think there is anything in this to en-



courage amateurs? One does not see a serious man, that is to say, one who has money and position, take a wife from off a theater's stage; I am convinced of it. Our friend meant it for the best in putting my daughter where she is. To be frank, they would both of them have done better to have remained as they were, one tranquil with me, the other on a less flattering field for his vanity perhaps, but more sure as to money."

Then the good creature commenced to talk of Godefroid, that is, to ask questions as to his affairs, as was her habitual custom about everybody. O'Farrell, without suspecting it, was lead to tell what he knew about his friend's money. When she asked him if according to his opinion the composer had long to live, he exclaimed:

"Long to live! I hope he will reach a good old age."

"I, too," said Madame Sauval, coldly, "but that is not the doctor's opinion."

It was time for her to return to her home; she folded up her work, and disappeared as silently as a cat.

"What is she concocting in her head?" said Patrice to himself. "She has looked at everything through rose-colored glasses for two days now. To-day she is as somber as a fog on the Thames. She chills me."

The young man could not have seen many fogs in Cambodia, or they must have been very rare.



Otherwise he would have seen that this one came from the Neva, not the Thames. The night before, Madame Sauval had seen Prince Kemeneff. The nobleman loved Jenny enough to marry her, but he loved his position as chamberlain too much to lose it by an adventurous marriage. Another person would have grieved at seeing her plans all destroyed, but Madame Sauval had seen, during her life, too many such catastrophes. She had already in her fertile mind erected other new combinations. To marry a prima-donna or the widow of a celebrated musician was an entirely different thing, even in the Czar's eyes. And that was why Martscha was so uneasy about the musician's chance of life, as well as the state of his financial affairs. She wanted Godefroid to live long enough to give his name to Jenny, but not long enough for Kemeneff to lose courage and transfer his affections somewhere else.

From this day Madame Sauval took care of Godefroid, or rather she watched him with a zeal and devotion enough to make one's hair stand on end. He improved slowly, but at last he recovered. He commenced to talk, and according to all appearances he entered into the views of his nurse, who wished to indulge in a private interview with him; suddenly she remarked one day that Patrice looked ill.

“Monsieur,” said she, “you do not walk enough.



At your age one needs plenty of fresh air, and you have been deprived of it for several weeks."

"That is true," said the patient, "it has been as much as a month since you have been out."

"How do you know?" said Patrice, laughing. "Could I not go out when you were asleep?"

Godefroid looked at the young man with a sudden, uneasy expression.

Then, after a moment's reflection, he said:

"No! Even in my sleep, which was always very light, I felt that you were near me."

"I never knew such devoted friendship," declared Madame Sauval.

"I would like to know," thought Patrice, "what reason she has for sounding my praises; in what way can it affect her plans that Godefroid cannot live long, and why does she wish to see him alone. Perhaps a will is to be made. Thank goodness, we have not come to that pass."

Willing or not he must go out to escape their united entreaties. As he appeared all equipped to brave the cold and to say "good-by" to the invalid, Godefroid asked with a singular interest:

"Where are you going?"

"I do not care where, so long as I can find the sun."

"If I were in your place," suggested the widow, "I should go to the Bois——"

"To skate?" interrupted the young man. "No! I dislike the cold too much."



“You need not skate. Somebody was telling us yesterday of the greenhouses at the Jardin d’Acclimation, that they were now one of Paris’ sights.”

“A good idea,” said Godefroid. “Go and visit the greenhouses—you will find some of your dear tropical plants there.”

“So be it,” said Partice, with a resigned air. “It will be a long walk.”

“Not too long for you,” insisted the sick man. “The air there will do you more good than the city air.”

“How afraid he is that I shall go to see Jenny!” thought the young man as he closed the door behind him. “What if I should go?”

But he reflected that if he should go, upon his return falsehood after falsehood would accumulate, and that sooner or later Godefroid would be informed of his deceit.

“Truly,” said he to himself, as he took the road to the Saint Lazare station, “liberty is only a name. I am twenty-eight years old, and supposed to enjoy all my rights, and here I am, forced to go to see a greenhouse instead of talking an hour with the only person whose conversation would do me good.”



## CHAPTER XI.

## A HAPPY MEETING.

A quarter of an hour later Patrice left the Porte-Maillet station, hurrying along the avenue, which was hardened by the cold, and cracked with every step that he took. He was almost entirely alone. At this early hour there were a few carriages filled with nurses and children to be seen. The place and the air that he came to seek were before him. He walked rapidly, turning occasionally toward a group of youngsters, spinning their tops while the coachman, superb in his furs, was chatting with a nurse shivering under her waterproof.

Astonished at first, then charmed by this solitude, O'Farrell commenced to reflect, and at once asked himself where and when he had been able to think the last time.

It was upon the bridge of a steamboat, some three months before, where he took his accustomed walk. How tranquil in his mind he was then! At Cambodia he pined for nothing. The thought of returning to France gave him quiet joy, rather than feverish expectancy. He left poor and returned poor, but not discouraged. With the exception of a friend for whom he had a more than ordinary affection, not one being in all Paris would notice his return.



“*Mon Dieu!*” sighed he, “am I never to have a happy hour again?”

What a troubled life he had had from the time he landed at Marseilles! First he bought a paper which announced the production of Godefroid’s opera the next day. Then what a mass of unexpected events. The hurried trip and the arrival; the pleasure of seeing his friend applauded; the emotion of the meeting and his surprise; the sorrow at discovering that his friend’s heart and spirits were in no better condition than his body; the disappointment of finding him almost aged when he had left him so young. And then—Jenny Sauval!

A strange vision full of a charm, the existence of which he had never suspected! This woman, he knew perfectly well, marked a new period in his life, the same as in history, a name suddenly famous, will mark an ineffaceable line between two epochs.

Jenny Sauval! This name seemed to close the past and open the future for him.

“The future!” sighed he, overcome by the melancholy reality.

Another loved this woman, and that other was his benefactor and friend, who was just returning from death’s door. Poor Godefroid! What torture he had endured, and how long he had concealed it! Health, success, and love were vanishing at the same time, under the troubles of this discouraged



wrestler. Friendship itself, which had held such a place in this life, consecrated to self-sacrifice, friendship violated, agitated, and threatened by this disastrous rivalry.

"It is always she, always the same thought!" groaned Patrice, as he continued his walk. "This woman is the torment, the obstacle, the sorrow—and also the heaven, a heaven only half seen and already more than half closed."

"Well, monsieur," said a voice—too well known—which came from a side-path. "What is the matter with you? What has anybody done to you? You look angry, and at the same time sad."

O'Farrell turned around without a start. The surprise was so great that it took away all power of reaction. He thought that he was dreaming, and nothing surprised him in a dream. He bowed to Jenny, and replied, without coming out of his stupor:

"Nothing has happened to me. I am out for a walk, that is all."

"You walk and repeat Hamlet's role. Am I destined by chance to give you the cue?"

And in a very sweet but joking tone she commenced to recite:

"Here he is! Am I the one that attracts you toward this place?"

But she stopped as she noticed Patrice's heart-broken looks.

"Well! you do not feel like joking. As for me,



this beautiful winter sun makes me gay. Seriously, how do you do? Not very well, I can see by your face. Certainly you must be tired at the very least. I know what a devoted friend you are, Monsieur O'Farrell, and I congratulate myself. You promised to be mine also."

By this time Patrice had gained possession of himself. He looked at Jenny, sparkling with freshness and beauty, and happily surprised at their meeting. Around them there was nothing but joy, life, and promise. The sun was shining with that brilliancy and cold glitter, like new gold, that the winter, hardly yet finished, had left for a few days yet. Some of the trees were already green like young fashionables in advance of the season. In the places protected from the north wind, the ground exhaled that subtle odor which is not a perfume, but an emanation of itself, exquisite and delicious, particularly to those young creatures bubbling over with life.

Any man, no matter how hardened, could not remain impassible before this reunion of all the principal attractions in life. As to the enthusiastic O'Farrell, who for the first time in weeks had left the dark room and morose society of an invalid, he felt as if under the influence of a pleasant intoxication, ready to forget all disagreeable things provided that one aided him a little.

In certain meetings, under the influence of certain emotions for a long time suppressed, it becomes



impossible to say a word to the one who has caused this trouble, otherwise than by the most passionate of vows or the silliest and most trivial of speeches. Between the children with their tops and the coachman fastened to his seat, watching his mistress from a distance, Patrice could not give himself the pleasure of opening his heart to her. He said for want of better:

“Then you are taking a walk, too?”

At this schoolboy's speech, this tragedy princess burst out into a laugh, showing those pretty white teeth which she was not accustomed to expose so generously.

“It would be useless in me to deny it,” replied she, “even if I would. My mother having informed me that we should not go out together to-day, as she should be absent the greater part of the afternoon, and the carriage not having been countermanded, appearing at the usual hour before my door, I could not resist this beautiful day, and I came here hoping not to meet any one —”

“Oh, you have met nobody,” interrupted Patrice. “I am of no account. What is funnier yet is that I came to this place by Madame Sauval's advice.”

“What story is this you are telling?”

“I assure you that your mother insisted that I should pay the greenhouses a visit.”

“It is not so extraordinary as you think. Yesterday Prince Kemeneff spoke so enthusiastically of this winter-garden that I came to visit it on his



recommendation. The prince said that one would not meet a living soul here."

O'Farrell looked a little uneasy.

"Perhaps he will be here, who knows?"

Jenny stopped suddenly, understanding his insinuation; she scowled and looked about for her carriage. Suddenly changing her mind:

"Monsieur!" said she, with an entirely different air. "Come back with me. It shall be your punishment for the words just spoken. Learn, once for all, that I do not take such jokes in good part."

"Mademoiselle," said Patrice, "I accept the punishment. I sinned only from carelessness. I did not know what I said. I did not expect to meet you. My joy is so great and—I am so unused to good luck, I spoke without reflection. I assure you that by living near a man whose brain is affected by suffering, one almost catches the disease."

"Meanwhile, he is better, is he not?" said she, appeased.

"Certainly, much better. It is necessary to use every precaution——"

He sighed as he thought that she was the first of all these precautions. If Godefroid could see them passing through the garden gate together what a bitter surprise it would be, perhaps a terrible relapse.

"What a beautiful day it is!" exclaimed the young lady. "What a lucky thought we both had.



How still, and what a delicious warmth there is in this miniature forest."

It was beautiful in reality, but of a fictitious nature and singularly enervating. There was nothing natural or familiar to the Parisians; either the wall concealed under the crawling verdure of the lycopodium, or the light through the glass roof, or the trees with such excessively large trunks, compared to their height, that they looked like large hogsheads from which grew slender branches of light foliage. Patrice recognized the scenes that he had looked at every morning for so long a time, only on a grander scale. He saw once more the gigantic tropical ferns, the clusters of bamboo with their long yellow sticks crowned by a long slender foliage, like ostrich feathers, the entangled network of tropical creepers, orchids with long drooping foliage at once charming and hideous, looking like large insects sleeping under their folded wings. Above all, he recognized those intoxicating emanations to which he was so accustomed and which he could endure without suffering.

"Yes, it is beautiful," said he, seating himself a few steps from his companion. "It is as beautiful as that which is not real can be. An adorable falsehood, limited to a duration of some moments and a space of a few feet. We are benumbed now by these beautiful illusions. Soon we shall pass out of this door and find the cold reality again, the frosty air, the bare ground, leafless trees. The truth will



reappear once more to us, or rather to one of us, for the other is a creature so divinely gifted that she seems elevated above reality itself."

Jenny listened with lowered eyes, as if her ears were still more charmed than her eyes. When he had finished speaking she said, in her deep, musical voice:

"It is strange that you should speak of dreams and illusions. You have just come from a country where the reality of these things surrounding us exists."

"It is true," said he, half closing his eyes to see again the far off scenes. "I have traveled days and nights in forests of which this glass cage is only an ingenious miniature. I have experienced as great emotions as nature is able to excite in any human being. It was sublime. It was immense, but for all that—empty. In the midst of this fervent working of material, in this teeming life which flies and leaps about me in its own way, I was chilled by an overwhelming solitude. How many days of my life would I not have given then to see spring up at my side the one supreme miracle without which all else is simply a frame waiting for a picture! Ah! how I called you then, so often, without knowing you. Perhaps I shall die under excess of enthusiasm at meeting in this paradise the Eve of my heart, if she would only permit me the joy of touching her hand with my lips."

Patrice forgot for a moment that another man



had put his foot into his Eden. He forgot the sick man who was watching with a sad and anxious look the hands on the enameled clock that moved so slowly. He took Jenny's gloved hand, and kissed it softly, nor did she try to defend herself.

She gazed steadily before her at her feet, and her pearly nostrils and rosy lips showed by their slight tremor that she had felt the kiss. Nobody came to trouble them, no human sound reached them. The exotic birds, screaming in their neighboring cages, added to the illusion of an unknown fairy country to which some spirit had suddenly transported them.

Patrice, vanquished by this increasing rapture, forgot everything, all save respect, and dropped on his knees with clasped hands and moist eyes, in which adoration was shining. At this moment Jenny came to herself, and drawing her cloak over her shoulders, she quietly arose and said, in a weak voice, but so soft and caressing that a stranger ignorant of our language would have said it to have an entirely opposite meaning:

“We must go now, it is late.”

“Alas!” groaned O'Farrell, sighing as if he had awakened from a delicious dream.

He still remained on his knee, following her with his eyes as she walked away, seeming to glide over the ground like a floating vision. When she reached the threshold of the greenhouse she turned about and said, with a brusque effort:



“Come! let us go.”

He rejoined her, and offered his arm.

“Thanks,” said she. “My hands are cold; I will keep them in my muff.”

At that moment a wedding-party passed them. The red-faced and slightly gray-haired husband was gazing with his big round eyes at his bride, who was dressed in bridal costume, and carried orange blossoms, disdaining to appear modest, and joking and laughing like a crazy creature. Patrice and his companion turned their heads and walked away without speaking, secretly indignant against this vulgar tenderness which disturbed their poetic dreams and was also called love, miserable profanation! In a few seconds they reached Jenny's carriage.

“Rue de Vienne,” said she to the coachman, while O'Farrell stood hat in hand before the opened door.

The sweet smile of a happy woman was the only “good-by” that she vouchsafed him.



## CHAPTER XII.

## STARTLING APPRAISEMENTS.

O'Farrell left the woods, as he had entered them an hour before, on foot. In passing the station he was so absorbed in thought that he forgot to enter to take the train, so that his legs took him to Godefroid's the same as a well-trained horse takes a sleeping coachman home safely.

He paid so little attention to his walk and the incidents on the way that when he opened the invalid's door it seemed to him that he had but just closed the greenhouse gate. The contrast was great. He left verdure, flowers, light and moist air rendered healthy by the exhalations of the plants. He found himself suddenly in the close atmosphere of heavy draperies, in the dim light of lowered curtains, and the nauseating odors of medicine. Above all, he had left Jenny for Godefroid, pleasure for duty, the fantastic for the real.

"What!" exclaimed Madame Sauval. "Home already?"

"Hum!" thought the young man; "it seems that I have not given you time to say your beads. How do you feel?" added he, aloud, as he took his friend's hand.



“Very well,” replied Godefroid, with a cross look. Then designating the widow by a glance as she was putting some wood on the fire:

“I am very bad,” corrected he, in a low tone. “She has killed me.”

When the two friends were alone Patrice asked: “What did she say to you?”

Godefroid had not taken his eyes from him since he entered. Without replying to the question that was asked him he inquired:

“Did you go to the Bois? You have not had time, it seems to me.”

“But I did, my friend,” said Patrice, nervously. “Would you like to see my ticket?”

He took the little piece of pasteboard from his pocket, taking care not to take out the one that he had taken for Jenny. After this proof Godefroid seemed calmer. He closed his eyes, and only for the slight tremor of the eyelids one would have said that he was sleeping.

“Poor friend!” thought Patrice, moved with deep pity. “How I have deceived him, but I was obliged to do it! If he knew that he himself was the cause of our meeting! If he knew——”

“Patrice!” exclaimed the invalid, bounding up in bed, “my days are ended!”

“You are nearly well,” said the other, soothingly, “but you have kept your bed too long, and that, with the low diet, has filled your head with dark thoughts. Eat, drink, and commence to live again



as a person should who has everything in life to live for."

"Why did you deceive me?" continued the invalid. "Why did you tell me that "Constantin" was still on the boards when it was not so? For three weeks my name has not been advertised."

"It will not appear for some time to come if you allow it to disturb you like this."

"Why did you not tell me that Mademoiselle Sauval was not singing her role of Adossides, and that she had been offered no part in the new opera now running or in the ones in preparation?"

"The devil!" exclaimed the young man, beside himself with rage. "That is what that satanic Cassandra was so anxious that I should take the air for. She lost no time while she had you alone. I find you in a fine state, physically and morally."

As is usual in such cases, the exasperation of one calmed the other.

"Now, then," said Godefroid, "you did not expect to conceal it from me the rest of my days, that my opera has been a half failure. You might have done so without much trouble perhaps, as my days are nearly ended, and God knows I have no wish to complain."

"Yes," growled Patrice, "you are dying, you are dead, you are buried. That is understood. She told you that at the same time with the rest, I suppose? I hope that she also spoke of your will?"

"Oh! my friend, how you wrong her. She is the



most disinterested of women. But let us drop that. I shall get well since you decide it so. When I am able to be about I shall try to get a position as organist, and I will compose masses."

"Very well," said O'Farrell, fixing his clear eyes on his friend, for a suspicion darted through his mind. "What will Mademoiselle Sauval do?"

A slight flush mounted into the invalid's cheeks, and for a moment he was silent, and seemed embarrassed. Suddenly he burst out into a forced laugh, and replied, in a pleasant tone:

"She will do as a great many singers do. Sing in concerts and at soirees, where the people cannot afford to pay for stars."

After this forced sally the conversation ended abruptly, and from that time until evening he hardly spoke. The next day the doctor said to Patrice, after his visit to the sick man:

"I do not know what to make of his case. When I have relieved his lungs then the heart is wrong, when these two are fairly well, I think perhaps the brain is affected. In spite of all this he is better, and what is necessary now is that he should go South. You who are always near him maneuver accordingly."

At the first overture Godefroid had a sort of spasm of fright, and fairly shrieked. Madame Sauval was admitted to the consultation, and said that the doctors were all the same, and soon tired



of their patients, thinking only of getting them off from their hands by sending them away.

“As for myself,” concluded she, “if I were in our dear convalescent’s place, I should defy the whole faculty of France to make me even cross the Seine.”

There was no longer any talk of leaving, and from day to day the Roumanian assumed a most manifest empire over Godefroid. They had secret talks, from which it was not necessary to send Patrice away by a subterfuge, for he saw plainly that he was not wanted, and would take of his own free will his hat, and leave the field clear for them.

One symptom struck him. Cassandra and her doleful manifestations had disappeared, and made place for a sweet, consoling friend, with a fund of good humor, always ready to look on the bright side of life. Added to that she was more devoted to Godefroid than ever. One would have thought her a sister of Saint Vincent de Paul without her cap, and humming, “We have only one life to live,” from one end of the day to another. What completed Godefroid’s subjugation was that, thanks to his nurse, he was making great progress toward health.

“He is better,” declared the doctor, “and better than all I think his disease is really better. The pulse is agitated, but then he has a pulse. This man hangs to life. As for us, nothing is more difficult than to keep a man from dying who laughs at a cemetery as he would a pill.”



At first Patrice felt somewhat bitter to think that he was not the first in his friend's confidence. Nevertheless he was delighted at the salutary change, and even on his own account, for his existence was less laborious. His thankless task of consoler, according to all appearances, was ended. There was no necessity of talking for hours to Godefroid to convince him that his illness was only a temporary fatigue and that he would live to be a hundred years old, that the public were only awaiting his re-establishment to health to vehemently demand the reproduction of "Constantin."

The important question between these two men at this time was the future, a peaceable life in the country perhaps, then there were appraisements to be made, columns to add up, and investments to be looked after. Anybody, to hear them talk, would think he was in a merchant's office, computing his profits and trying to find out if the time had come to sell his stock and live on his income.

It was not an easy work, for the composer had never had a stock broker or a regular notary. The disorder common to all artists was to be found in him, but not of the ordinary kind, for Godefroid placed his capital, and then lost sight of it, even neglecting to collect his dividends.

In the end, after looking over memoranda, examining certificates of deposit in twenty different banks and adding the balance to his credit, Patrice ended by obtaining a sum which astonished him.



“Five hundred thousand francs!” exclaimed he, laying his pencil on the table. “Is it possible that you have earned five hundred thousand francs by writing quavers!”

“Why!” replied Godefroid, modestly, “my one operetta was played three hundred times in Paris. Add to this the performances in the country and abroad. Then remember that I have no house, horses, wife, or children. I had one child, but for five years he has not cost me much. Certainly five hundred thousand francs is a good sum, even for a man who is accused of hoarding up his money. I should have thought——”

“Good!” said Patrice, “now you are going to complain. What do you lack? Would you be any happier if you had a million?”

Godefroid did not reply, but lost in thought, shook his head softly, as if to say:

“I do not think one million would be too much for what I have in mind.”

Madame Sauval’s visits were just as regular, confidential, and long as ever. If she happened to meet Patrice she would give him a few gracious words, a smile, and a shake of the hand. O’Farrell felt a great antipathy for this woman, not doubting but that on her side she detested him, too, but he treated her with ceremonious politeness. He felt that grave events were going to happen in which his role, to all appearances, was likely to be a thankless one. A thousand daily occurrences con-



vinced him that he was far from being a necessary person to Godefroid, and sometimes it seemed to him that his presence troubled him. Unfortunately for the peace of his future life, the day was near when they would need him too much.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## GODEFROID'S STERN RESOLVE.

One evening, after dinner, Godefroid was seated in his chair before his desk. Usually at this hour he would be stretched out before the fire on a sofa. He was agitated, and his hands trembled; he had hardly eaten anything. Patrice feared that he had a fever, and asked him:

“Do you not feel well this evening?”

“Do I look like an invalid, then?” said he, with a disappointed air.

He arose and approached the mirror, looking at himself as anxiously as a coquette does at her first wrinkle, then he returned to his seat.

“No,” said he. “I feel very well. Only I am pre-occupied. My dear Patrice,” said he suddenly, “I have something important to tell you.”

“Something pleasant, I hope,” added Patrice, to encourage his friend, who seemed moved at the communication he was about to make.

“If you remember, you advised me once to get married,” said Godefroid. “Perhaps you remember also who it was that you advised me to marry?”

“I have not forgotten, it was Mademoiselle Sauval,” replied Patrice, as he arose and lowered the lamp shade to keep the light from his eyes.



“You also remember my objections. I said that a composer is foolish to marry an artist who sings his roles.”

“I conclude that you have changed your opinion.”

“It is not my opinion that has changed, but circumstances are not the same. The musician Godefroid is dead and buried.”

“Good!” said the young man, with forced gayety, “this is a burial notice which very much resembles a marriage invitation. As to the marriage, I am with you. But as to the burial, I take exceptions.”

“No, my dear friend, make no exceptions. ‘Constantin’ will be my last work, not so much because it is not appreciated as for a more peremptory reason; I have not strength necessary for it. Even if I had my confidence would fail me.”

“My dear Godefroid, I do not merit this half frankness. You are forty-five years old. A few days ago we added up your fortune. Your first great work succeeded, certainly financially. Some say that you have deceived yourself. Nobody has pretended that you are not a great artist. And now, at this very moment, you pose as a vanquished man, forced from the battle-field. Now then! Why not open your heart to me? Why not tell me, ‘I love Jenny Sauval more than music. I prefer rather than the glory of writing *chef d’œuvres* the joy of making the one who holds my happiness in her hands my wife.’ Do you not suppose that I would do as much if in your place?”



Godefroid did not take his eyes off from his friend's face while he was speaking with so much enthusiasm that one would say that he was pleading his own cause. Noticing suddenly his defiant look the young man said for diversion:

"You look depressed. Hold up your head. One would think to look at you that you had committed a crime."

"A crime? No," replied Godefroid, slowly. "A foolishness probably; a bad action perhaps."

O'Farrell said nothing, for this time, in spite of his desire to soothe the patient's mind, as he had his body, he could think of no reply. For some moments nothing could be heard but the crackling of the burning wood.

"Ah! your silence is eloquent!" exclaimed Godefroid. "Everything looks gloomy before me, all, even our friendship. Whatever happens we shall never be the same to each other that we have been. My God! why did you leave me? How happy, calm, and sweet our life was! You filled the place of all, and when I saw this boy by my side that I was so proud of, there was no other place in my heart for other love. But you went away. In the empty space left by you another image has taken root, the seed being sown by chance. Then little by little the plant grew, and now——"

He stopped with such a heart-broken gesture that O'Farrell, moved by his suffering, tried to encourage him in his illusion.



“You can see how it is if you have a young father. Sooner or later one may depend upon having a step-mother. If you think that our friendship will suffer from it——”

“Our friendship!” said Godefroid, returning to his one fear that never left him night or day. “Perhaps you hate me at this moment. Why should you not hate me if you love her?”

“By Jove! must I repeat it?” commenced Patrice.

Godefroid had arisen, and was walking up and down the room as he used to do before his illness. Without giving his companion time to reply he continued:

“You have only loved her a few weeks. I have loved her for four years, ever since a certain evening, when a stranger that I hardly knew, invited me to her house without warning me of her object. All of a sudden I saw a young girl approach the piano. She sang passably well, I think; I hardly listened. When she had finished, and they told her that she had sung before the composer, Godefroid, this charming creature before whom I have so often trembled became white as a sheet, and trembled all over. I was obliged—oh! the irony of fate!—to talk to her, and reassure her, to encourage her by telling her that I had taken great pleasure in hearing her. I was the one who stammered, who could think of no words, and was more embarrassed than when as a child they took me to your mother, I, the little country lad, who had never



spoken to any but the village people before. When I left the parlor I had promised all sorts of things, so it seemed to me. Be that as it may, I have kept all of my promises. I devoted myself to Jenny as I devoted myself to you."

"Yes," said O'Farrell, "but this time your devotion will be recompensed."

"Alas! In order to do that she must love me! Love me!" repeated he as he stopped before the glass. "How can I be foolish enough to have such an idea, I, whose days are numbered? Say what you will with your gestures, my poor friend. I feel within myself an invisible wound from which drops slowly away that unknown thing called life. A wise man would say good-by to the world, the future, and renounce everything. I do not want to die like this. I have tasted more or less of some of the joys of this life here below—work, the joy of being useful to others, the glory of fame. But I seem to forget it all, and if my hour should come now I should feel as if I had not lived."

He was so animated as he talked, his features so rejuvenated, that he was truly beautiful in his enthusiasm, mixed with the energy of somber despair. O'Farrell could not help from exclaiming:

"Ah! if she could see you like this! she could not help being touched."

"Touched!" repeated Godefroid, with an ironical laugh. "Well, no matter. If I could only kneel at her feet and tell her how I adore her, let my heart



gush out, that is bursting within me with this accumulation of passionate love. Ah!" said he, putting his hands over his excited face, "for this happiness only, for one year of this intoxication it seems to me that I would gladly give my share of heaven, if there is one. At least I would give all that I possess; my music, which has been my only god, what little glory surrounds my name, I would give you, Patrice. If at this time I love another more than I do you, do not be jealous. Your portion will have been the larger. I consecrated fifteen years of my life to you. In fifteen years from now nobody but yourself perhaps will remember that I ever existed."

Godefroid stopped for breath, so tired by his excitement that his friend tried to calm him as one calms a child by talking of a desired plaything."

"You left off," said he, "at the most interesting part. Have you offered yourself?"

The composer glanced at the clock, and replied:

"By this time she must know all; her mother was to speak to her for me; she is an excellent friend. Provided that she acts adroitly, and has well prepared her daughter——"

"Oh! your future mother-in-law is not wanting in adroitness," interrupted O'Farrell. "If she accepts you as her son-in-law it is because she has discovered that it is for her interest to do so. If Madame Sauval is interested in anything—— Good heavens! if I was sure that she wished me to be



hung before your marriage I should almost think that I felt the rope about my neck."

Godefroid made no reply to this speech. It was easy to see that it was not to his taste, but he seemed to have lost the power of contradiction.

"Will it be settled soon?" asked Patrice, to make conversation with his friend.

"Yes, at two o'clock to-morrow I shall know the reply."

He closed his eyes for a moment, shivering nervously, and then arose from his seat to go to his chamber. As he said good-night to the young man he held his hand for a moment, saying, in a trembling voice:

"Since you believe in God pray that she may not say no. I shall kill myself if she does."

"Rest easy; you will not need to kill yourself," replied Patrice, as he returned his grasp.

This confidence in her reply one must see was not the most sincere, for the next day Patrice maneuvered in every way to meet Jenny's mother on the stairs as she came up. The look of rage and resentment that she darted upon him was enough for him to know that she had failed in her diplomacy.

"Is 'no' the response that you carry him?" asked he, without losing time for any forms of politeness.

"You rejoice too soon," taunted the Roumanian. "Your friend shall know all. We will see what he thinks of the edifying role that you have played with my daughter."



“Madam,” said O’Farrell, “I swear that you shall not enter Godefroid’s room without having made me a promise first. You must tell him that she accepts.”

She opened her eyes wide, and stood motionless with surprise. She was too cunning in the art of deceiving others not to read the truth that was written in his face.

“But then,” stammered she, “I do not understand——”

“I really think that a woman like you would be troubled to understand a man like myself. But I cannot explain here. Go, madam, time presses; reassure Godefroid, who is dying of uneasiness. Give him to understand that he will marry your daughter, for he will marry her, I swear it, upon upon my honor as an O’Farrell!”

“But Jenny refuses—and I imagine you know why.”

Patrice made a gesture of impatience, as if he was a thousand miles from knowing why. He insisted more feverishly yet:

“I beg of you, madam, do as I ask you. Gain time. Invent some excuse; your daughter was taken by surprise; she was not expecting such a thing! She asks for twenty-four hours. Imagine something yourself. But do not leave Godefroid with any fear in his mind, I beg of you. Madam, go quickly. Every moment that passes is danger to him.”

Without giving Madame Sauval time to reply he



walked rapidly away, his heart full of joy, and at the same time with the bitterest agony. She had said "no."

"My God!" thought he, "how we are going to suffer! But I should have suffered more had she said 'yes.' "

He walked fast, that he might forget his troubles, and have time to think of what he was about to do. Never a lover flew with greater haste to his mistress' feet. In a few moments he reached Rue de Vienne, and without paying any attention to the servant, who refused him admittance, he walked into the parlor. Jenny was sitting in an arm-chair with depressed and fatigued looks, gazing with her burning eyes at the flame that was dancing on the hearth.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## A NOBLE SACRIFICE.

Always accustomed to submit to her mother's iron will, Jenny had early assumed the habit of resignation, recompensing herself in her secret soul by an invisible but proud revolt against persons and events. This melancholy which her countenance so often expressed, and which was mistaken by people for proud disdain, came from this cause, as well as her half smile, which seemed but an attempt. How could she smile? Her youth had given her none of those joys that she had hoped for as due in her life. In her artistic career, embraced from necessity, not taste, Mademoiselle Sauval had found numberless trials to her delicate nature. All the attractive side of theater life that she had heard so much about were without savor for her, the same as an imprisoned bird, to whom the choicest grain cannot replace the fresh, free air.

To really understand the state of her mind, one single word suffices—she waited. For the young, still ignorant of the long trials of life, resignation is only a kind of waiting. But from the date that Patrice O'Farrell first appeared before her eyes, waiting took a form, a name, and very soon a voice for her. At last those words that she had dreamed



of hearing addressed to her, not under a stifling mask at the theater, but by a man, had been said. This profound tenderness, this charming respect, like a song breathed at the foot of a balcony, this murmured admiration so little like the greenroom madrigals, all seemed to Jenny like the delicious preface to a book that she hoped to read soon, but with what deep emotion!

The offer that her mother had transmitted on Godefroid's part had glided over her heart like a question in a strange language which had struck her ear without appealing to her understanding. Madame Sauval was not one of those who was easily beaten. She would insist and question, and when she wished to know a thing the best kept secrets would not hold out before her curiosity. She soon learned two things—one, that nobody ever thought of concealing from her that her daughter's heart was captured, the other she suspected also very quickly, that Jenny loved O'Farrell.

She knew her daughter too well to overwhelm her with vain or even formidable reproaches, she had no hesitation as to the step to be taken, and when Patrice stopped her on the stairs she had gone to Godefroid's with the determination to say to him, without any circumlocution:

“Your friend is your rival. Send him away!”

Jenny was hardly surprised to see Patrice, although a visit from this young man, without being announced, was enough to have surprised her. For



some time she had been left to herself by reason of her forced idleness, and she often thought of this new-comer in her life, who had, one might say, entered into its innermost recesses. Thought, as well as exchange of words, can render us familiar with a person. With that faculty of forgetting everything else, given by nature to a woman who loves, she had almost forgotten the message that her mother had given her, as well as the scene that had followed it. All that had happened between her visit and the present hour was only a chain of accessory details. She did not ask herself when she saw Patrice:

“What has he come to say to me?”

She only thought:

“How happy I am!”

O'Farrell saluted the young lady without looking at her, for fear that he might forget his role. He took a chair a short distance from her, and said, in a hurried manner:

“Mademoiselle, you hold in your hands not only the happiness of Godefroid, our benefactor and our friend, but his life.”

“His life!” she repeated, with an effort to follow him in this unexpected direction.

Patrice gave a sigh which showed that he could hardly continue.

“Yes,” continued he, “his life. For if you refuse him he will kill himself.”

If there existed in this world a cruel, heartless



woman it certainly was not Jenny, and yet she replied, in an almost indifferent tone of voice:

“Men very rarely kill themselves for that; above all at his age.”

“On the contrary, it is at his age that they do it, when age has not closed their hearts. Godefroid is exactly the one to do it. Without God, without family or consolation, disappointed in the dearest hope of his life, never having undergone certain struggles, he is lost if you repulse him, he is dead; it is infallible, it is true.”

“*Mon Dieu!*” said she, tremblingly, “my mother has gone——”

“Your mother has gone to give him hope. I met her on the way, and as it was a question that concerned the life of my friend I took it upon myself to change the message which she confided to me.”

“You did that!” exclaimed Jenny, in a broken tone; “you have done that! Oh, unfortunate!”

Patrice gathered up these words one by one as so many vows of love. He engraved them in his memory to be his supreme consolation in some distant place where he should go to end his days. As he kept silent she said:

“I understand; you wanted to calm him, to prepare him, and gain time. You did just right. Poor man! Ah! *Dieu!* I should never console myself. if—— Who ever would have suspected such a thing of him.



“You will talk with him and make him understand that it is impossible?”

“Why impossible?” said O’Farrell, slowly. “You do not like the stage. He will free you from it. He will give you an honored name, a comfortable fortune, a stainless past, and devotion without bounds.”

“What I hear is so strange,” interrupted Mademoiselle Sauval, “that I think my reason is giving way. I do not know what to say, or rather I cannot say what I would. I do not believe that there is another man living that would do as you are doing.”

“I am only doing what a devoted friend should do in my place. I plead Godefroid’s cause so that he may live and be happy.”

“Do you remember,” said she, lowering her eyes, “that evening on the ice? Do you remember what you said? I will be a devoted brother to you, devoted to you alone! Why is it that between these two attachments it is the other that has the preference? Why do you sacrifice your sister to your friend?”

“Because that friend has sacrificed himself for me for fifteen years. Because I owe everything to him; the bread that nourished me; the clothes that I wore, and more yet—the examples of courage and honor which he has shown me, and which have made a man of me. At this hour he is the weaker one. If you knew how he suffered, how unhappy and lonely he is!”



“Have you not returned to him?”

“Oh!” said Patrice, shaking his head, “that is not the same thing. When I go Godefroid only loses a friend; without me he hardly suffers. Without you he will die. He must not die.”

Jenny arose full of passionate indignation, and going to the mantel commenced moving in a nervous way the articles upon it.

“And I,” said she, suddenly, “am I the only person that it does not concern? Can I not love also? Have I passed the age when the heart has a right to speak? Am I one of those creatures consecrated to self-denial, marked from birth to be sacrificed? My mother tortured me for hours this morning, and when I thought that I had recovered from that combat, behold you return to the charge, and tell me to marry Godefroid, whom I do not love.”

“If you knew how good he is! How he adores you; what a grateful slave you would find in him!”

“I believe it,” replied she. “If he had spoken six months sooner I might perhaps have placed my hand in his with happiness. I must tell you that what you said to me only a minute ago is to-day another thing.”

“Why?” asked he, in a trembling tone.

“Do you wish to know why? Be satisfied then, and if you are astonished at my frankness thank yourself for it. In fact, I struggle to defend my happiness, but I struggle alone. Nevertheless, they shall not find in me a timid, frightened girl.



Now, then, enough of this subterfuge between us. Yes, something has changed my life; I, too, have known another sentiment besides friendship. I love—try to find out who; I am loved—try to discover the man.”

O’Farrell felt that the decisive moment had arrived. One tender glance from her eyes, and although he had come to sacrifice himself he would leave with his friend’s death-warrant in his hands.

“I think,” said he, stammering, “that many men have and will love you. But of all these, one ought to come first in your eyes. One more word—has Godefroid done nothing for you?”

Jenny Sauval looked at the young man, whose eyes were sparkling with enthusiasm. Those who reproached her as being ignorant of passion in her roles would hardly have recognized her now. In a vibrating voice she replied:

“He has made me experience the most supreme joy of my life.”

Patrice was at his wits’ ends, and kept silent.

She continued:

“I owe it to him, having met the one that I love, that I shall always love, that I admire even now in my astonishment that a human being can carry his nobleness to such a height. Go, I should give you my heart after what I have just seen if you did not have it already. Keep me yours and God help us to save poor Godefroid.”

At each of these words Patrice trembled as if he



had been pricked by a sword. Her happiness and her endurance surpassed anything that he had ever imagined. He had come there to get himself out of the way, and behold! she gave herself to him.

Concealing as well as he could the horrible agony that seized him, he stammered:

“But you are mistaken. I have never told you that I love you.”

She bounded out of her seat at these words, then an expression of terror passed over her countenance. But soon she regained her confidence.

“Have pity!” said she, “do not continue. What will become of me if I am mistaken! Think how I have seen you on your knees. Ah, do not prolong this unhappy untruth. Who will profit by it?”

“Mademoiselle,” replied Patrice, “when they announce to you to-morrow that I have gone to the ends of the earth, you will not think then that it is an untruth.”

“My Heaven!” exclaimed she, wringing her hands. “What have I done to merit such torture? What secret are you concealing in your soul? Do you think me unworthy of you? No, certainly not, since you find me worthy of this friend who is of more account to you than all the world. Perhaps you efface yourself in your devotion for me so that I may marry a rich man! Were you thinking of that? If I sought a fortune do you think that Godefroid’s would suffice me?”

“No,” said O’Farrell, “I do not think of money.



If I thought of that I should be obliged to tell you that I am poor, that work is my only portion. I am strong, and I am young—too young sometimes. I can struggle against life. Godefroid without you is lost; with him you can be happy. You know now the truth.”

“Alas!” exclaimed Jenny, “the truth only is that I am lost, too. You have left me nothing here,” and she struck her breast. “You have killed all in me; the love that I had hoped for, the promised friendship, pride, all hope in life. With the man that I love I could be a saint. With hate, despair, eternal spite, who knows what kind of a woman I may become?”

“Well,” said the young man, with a bitter smile, “at all events, I see that it is better that I should go. As well for the joys that I have found in Paris as those which await me, I like the desert and solitude much better.”

Jenny was suddenly stricken with stupor. Her face fell, showing a sort of heart-broken terror that would have moved with compassion a stranger’s heart.

“Ah! I am lost! You are all against me!” groaned she. “Nevertheless you promised me your friendship. It is the only thing left for me in this world.”

“If you save Godefroid, until my dying day, I will be your friend. I will love you like a sister, a sister who would have me save a life.”



"Yes," said she, shaking her head sadly, "until the day when another more happy——"

Patrice interrupted her, and extended his hand toward her with a look that he sometimes had and which it was impossible not to believe. In a sweet, soft voice like a last adieu, he said:

"Rest tranquilly. That day will never come. I shall live and die alone. The hours that have just passed mark too much in my life for me to be able to forget the hard lesson. Curses on love, the ruin and evil that it causes!"

She fell into a chair, and buried her face in her hands. By the movements that she made Patrice saw that she was sobbing, and with a suppressed exclamation he darted forward; but a last glimmer of reason restrained him. Half crazy he reached the door. Jenny, terrified at the sound of his retreating footsteps, cried out:

"Patrice!"

He turned around, showing an agitated countenance.

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed she, in the midst of her tears, "I am nothing to you then, nothing, not even the dog that one caresses for the last time before giving him to another. You leave without saying one kind word to me, without thinking that there are women who kill themselves. Are you going? Shall I never see you again?"

"Upon my honor, you shall see me to-morrow," said Patrice.



He crossed the threshold, and carried away with him that cry of joy, weak, but at the same time harrowing, that he had just heard.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### OUTBURST OF SARCASM.

At last it was ended.

Often Patrice would go over in his mind the tortures of that long half hour and think how if he had known of them in advance he could never have braved them. He would have disappeared without saying a word, and let events take care of themselves, removing by his departure all obstacles that Godefroid could consider him responsible for. But to see what he had just seen, to complete the work that would make his heart bleed to the end of his life, to lie with such cruelty, to sacrifice with such merciless barbarity! No, never, had he foreseen it, would he ever have undertaken such a task.

While Jenny cried bitterly, over her heart but just awakened, now dead, her executioner, who was twice as much to be pitied, because he killed at the same blow two victims, was walking away quickly from the house, like a person whose instinct guides rather than the will. He walked for a long time, crossed squares, followed avenues,



passed bridges, carriages grazed him, men with heavy bundles let fly imprecations at this fanatic who jostled against them. Pretty women, walking out wrapped up in their furs, sought in vain for a look from this young man with such a strange expression. But he seemed unable to see and hear anything. The sole being who could arouse him from his sorrowful thoughts was a poor lost dog, who was dying of hunger, cold, and fatigue. In the angle of a wall, where the cold wind blew clouds of dust, the little creature was shivering curled up in a heap, upon some pieces of paper tossed there by the wind, the only bed that he could find as he wandered in his agony, not having strength to search for his master, unconscious even of the passers by, he laid there waiting his last gasp. Patrice was affected by this extreme suffering. He stooped down and took the dog up, intending to carry him away with him to make a companion of him, and one from which no love or duty could separate him. But he was too late. A grateful look from two kind, faithful eyes, an attempt at a caress from the already paralyzed little tongue, and that was all. One being less to suffer here below.

Then the one who suffered yet walked away, thinking of the words that he had heard a weeping woman say:

“I am nothing to you, not as much as a dog that one caresses before giving away.”



Soon after he entered Godefroid's library and found him radiant with smiles, and looking ten years younger.

"Guess the reply!" exclaimed the musician, joyfully.

"I know it," said Patrice, falling into a seat.

"How do you know it?"

"I should say that I suspect it in seeing you so happy."

"For the time being," said Godefroid, speaking with singular volubility, "she leaves the final answer for a week. But her mother—that woman is goodness personified—has taken care to remove all uneasiness from my mind. This delay of eight days is merely for propriety's sake."

"I suppose," said Patrice, "that in cases like this a young lady ought not to seem to decide too quickly."

He spoke with an involuntary touch of sarcasm. But Godefroid had become very philosophical now that philosophy was not needed, and shrugged his shoulders with an indulgent smile.

"Ah! You make me angry without intending it," said he. "In reality if any one rejoices at my happiness it is you, I am sure of that. But you can admit it to an old friend. Mademoiselle Sauval seemed to—to honor you more than others. And in such cases the least conceited of us do not enjoy seeing that they were mistaken."



“Do you still return to that?” interrupted Patrice, wearily.

“Truly, I am wrong to do so. If there was ever any need of it the mother’s confidences about her daughter would take away the least shadow of doubt.”

“Then you are happy—perfectly happy?”

“My happiness is so great that I dare not fathom it for fear that I shall be engulfed in it. If I appear partially calm to-day it is because I am somewhat stupefied. I cannot yet fully realize it. But you can understand how I feel when you think of what I said to you yesterday. I repeat it again—herself or that.”

He pointed with his trembling hand to a revolver hanging upon the wall. Patrice’s only reply was a deep sigh.

“Now,” continued Godefroid, “would you like to know my plans?”

The young man could not resist this insinuation, “Madame Sauval’s plans, for your mother-in-law knows them better than you do, I presume.”

“You will judge her less severely when you know her better,” prophesied Godefroid, to whom everything looked rose colored at this moment.

Then he told of the arrangements already made for the future. His first care would be to cancel the singer’s engagement. As for himself, for a year or so he should rest, following his own inclinations and the state of his health as to when he



should write again. This period of rest would be passed at some distance from Paris on an estate that Madame Sauval and her daughter owned in Bearn.

“An estate!” interrupted O’Farrell. “I supposed that they had no fortune.”

“Oh! as to that I imagine that this estate costs more than it brings, and that it has fewer crops than mortgages. But we will attend to that. We will live there like happy country people, looking after our fields and vines, contented with our own society. It seems, however, that it is a very pleasant neighborhood.”

“Then it is *finita la musica*?”

“Music!” interrupted Godefroid, with the look of passionate inspiration that he formerly had, but with a more terrestrial light now. “Music! Now I shall begin to write the true and only music of my life. Would you like to know what I think? I wish I had your belief that I could thank God for the happiness that has come to me. I feel overwhelmed with gratitude and without knowing who to thank for it. How good God is, if He exists!”

When O’Farrell returned to his room, and thought over his own affairs, he felt gratified that fatigue of body and mind was benumbing him. This double and distinct exhaustion gave him the impression that he was two distinct beings. One, Godefroid’s and Jenny Sauval’s Patrice, was doomed to sacrifices and great unhappiness and



superhuman undertakings. The other was commonplace Patrice condemned by force of circumstances to occupy himself unceasingly with the vulgar but imperious necessities of this life.

This Patrice of inferior position, to speak frankly, was not the one whose affairs were in the worst condition just now. However, if Godefroid was making plans it was time that his companion—for a short time only—should begin to make his.

“What a pity that I sold my island,” thought he, “and above all that it is four thousand miles away! I would have slept there to-night. Still I should have no right to do so, as I promised her that I would see her to-morrow.”

The next day Madame Sauval had no suspicions of O’Farrell, for she could see by her daughter’s low spirits that the new ally had acted in earnest. Probably he had reasons of his own for desiring this marriage to take place. The best thing for her to do was to allow him to continue his work, since her homilies produced so little effect. The young girl was alone when O’Farrell presented himself, shivering at the thought of what he had endured at his preceding visit. But at the first glance he saw that the same thing would not happen this time.

Jenny was very calm, but evidently much exhausted with fatigue; she offered her hand without glancing at him, and invited him to seat himself before her. In twenty-four hours her expression—always more serious and grave than comported with



her age—had assumed that oppressed immobility that a secret and hopeless trouble gives one. Patrice seeing that she wished to speak first, remained silent. After a moment's silence she commenced:

“You surprised me so much yesterday that I lost all control of myself. I said certain things that I regret and that you must forget. Or rather—what is the use in not being frank?—I wish that it was possible for you to remember all your life what you know now, but to forget what you learned from my lips. This being granted, let us, as my mother would say, talk practically. Your constancy as regards myself has produced a result which surpasses, I am sure, anything that you could have expected. The shock has transformed me; I have reflected during the night; cunning motherly arguments have done the rest this morning. Truly, you might as well not have troubled yourself.”

There was so much bitterness shown in this ironical speech that Patrice O'Farrell clenched his fists and uttered a low imprecation.

With a covert glance Jenny watched him, for she had an end in view; she wished to clear up a remaining doubt in her mind. Since the night before she had thought:

“He pretends to have had only a moment of enthusiasm. I cannot believe it, he must be lying. But if he loves me he will betray himself.”

Seeing that the sphinx kept silent she continued:

“Three ways are open before me—to follow my



profession, marry your friend, or let Prince Kemeneff carry me away with him; he offered to do so some time ago. You probably will judge me harshly, but of these three ways the first is the one that pleases me the least.”

“Great Heaven! is it you who are talking in this way?” groaned Patrice.

“At the very thought of putting on a costume, paint, and powder, and going before a crowd of people, to go over again for money the scenes that I have played *au naturel* with you alone to save my life, and with no warning— Ah, no, never! Never again will they see Jenny Sauval pray and struggle, strike her breast and wring her hands for the amusement of others. I never had any liking for the stage; to-day I detest it. There remains Godefroid or Kemeneff. More than one in my place would not hesitate.”

“Stop,” exclaimed the exasperated young man; “now you are playing a miserable comedy!”

“In another way. Repulsed in sentiment, I take refuge in reality. Kemeneff or Godefroid—I repeat it, there is no medium, for I am too religious to kill myself and unfortunately not enough so to become a nun. You, it is understood, of course, are for Godefroid. But do you not believe that the prince loves me, too?”

“Not enough to marry you.”

“Not enough to have trouble with the Czar by marrying me. But if Godefroid was obliged to lose



his place at the Court of Russia by marrying a singer we would see. However that may be, I ask myself what will be your reply if I say to you, One man only can save me from the prince, and that is not Godefroid!"

"I should reply that you told an untruth. I know you. I know, I feel that you are incapable of such infamy!"

Their eyes met. It needed all her will power to keep from throwing herself at his feet and thanking him for the words that he had just spoken. But she knew that she could never obtain any admission from him only by surprise. She continued, keeping her mask of irony:

"Thanks for your good opinion. Between us you speak of it entirely at your ease, for putting aside the millions, the prince—after one other man—is the one who is nearest to having my heart. But if you should be deceived on my account? If you should hear this morning that Kemeneff was the one preferred, now, then, would it not cause you to beat your breast?"

Patrice had his hand on that place, but it was not to perform the act of contrition.

"I do not recognize you," said he.

"Nor I myself any longer. But I shall know myself still less when I am Madame Godefroid. All the same, I think I shall take that name. What would you have me do? What can I do against three persons? Nevertheless, my mother assures



me as you do, that I shall be very happy, and make your friend very happy. That will be a pleasure for you, will it not, to contemplate our happiness? For, you know, it will be your work."

"Yes, but I shall not see it. You know very well that I am going away."

"Oh, not before our marriage," said she, imperiously. "If you leave it will not take place. It is a condition *sine qua non*. You will be your friend's witness."

"It is impossible," stammered Patrice. "I must—I cannot——"

Jenny's eyes sparkled, her face was animated with a supreme hope. She seemed to wait for one word, one gesture from this man that she loved. Seeing that he would say nothing, she continued:

"Then we are of one opinion. All is ended, and well ended. Now listen to what I am going to tell you, take good notice; you know that I do not love Godefroid; I shall tell him so, rest assured; you know that I love another man. Very well, at the very last minute, no matter what time or place, even if in the mayor's office, you have only to do like this" (she moved her finger in the air) "and I shall remain Jenny Sauval."

"Ah! poor Godefroid!" exclaimed the young man, putting his hands before his eyes.

"Have no fears about him. I will oblige you to admit that I am good for something. You will be obliged to esteem me. More yet—when you hear



your friend say that I am good and faithful you will think: She would have done like this if she had been at the end of the world—to obey me. And if he writes you some day, Jenny is dead, you will think——”

“For the love of Heaven,” interrupted Patrice, “have pity upon me.”

“You are right. I was really becoming sentimental. Let us drop the subject. For the last time Jenny Sauval has told the secret of her heart, betrayed, but all in vain. Adieu!”

When the young man had disappeared she bowed her head, and thought over all that had passed during the last hour:

“I have extorted nothing from him but a little compassion,” thought she. “But I shall always suspect; I——”



## CHAPTER XVI.

## SEPARATION.

When Patrice left Jenny he was careful not to repeat his exhausting walk of the night before. He did not wish to expose himself to the ordeal of another hour like that, and then, too, it was necessary to busy himself about his future, for he was resolved to leave Paris the day of Godefroid's marriage.

For the hero of a classical romance situated as he was, to leave Paris meant to go home, give his valet orders, be driven to the station, dine in the refreshment-room, if the appetite had not been destroyed with hope, and at last to establish himself in a sleeping compartment engaged in advance, looking at the porter with an envious eye, thinking that he was destined to grow old without any of these troubles.

But this kind of a comfortable, elegant suicide is not within reach of us all. For more than one reason Patrice could not think of affording this. He was somewhat like those desperate creatures very anxious to pay for the rope that is to hang them. The first thing was to find the rope, that is to say some business that would enable him to live elsewhere, and which would pay in advance the ex-



pense of the journey, for now from a feeling easily understood, the young man would not accept aid from his friend's purse.

He did not have to search long; thanks to the friends that he had made among people in colonial enterprises, he found a situation that under less dramatic circumstances he would have disdained. It concerned the direction of a forest in Algeria, granted to a society whose administrators were more or less millionaires and consequently amateurs in quiet life, in no haste to leave the boulevard or the opera for the mountains.

Three days after his last visit to Rue de Vienne, Patrice was in the heat of business transactions, and saw Godefroid only at diner; then the conversation between the two friends was of such a wearisome character that neither felt the slightest desire to prolong it longer than necessary. The composer was secretly annoyed at his companion's obstinacy in not speaking to him of his approaching marriage, and in this affected silence he thought he saw anger or disapprobation. He, to retaliate, avoided questioning the man as to his own plans; Patrice, although he had other griefs more bitter, was deeply hurt at his want of interest.

Finally the day arrived that Mademoiselle Sauval was to give her definite response.

"Has she replied yet?" O'Farrell would ask himself as he went from office to bank. "Has the final answer been spoken? Will some supreme revolt



make her hesitate? It seems to me I must have taken away the slightest hope from her. Oh, my stars! Let us hope that I shall not be forced again to stamp this love under my feet. I could not do it. There are resolutions that one cannot keep but once."

When he returned at night there was no need to ask if Mademoiselle Sauval had given her reply, Godefroid was so disturbed in looks and appearance. He thought at first by his friend's tragic air that the response had been in the negative. He hesitated to ask a question, knowing the storm to which he would expose himself, but Godefroid without offering him his hand as usual thundered out upon him with angry looks:

"How you must have laughed at me the other night!"

Greatly discouraged to think that he had suffered so much for nothing, O'Farrell asked:

"Then she has refused you?"

"Oh, no! Rest easy in your mind. All goes as you wish. This afternoon in the presence of her mother she gave me her consent."

"Well, what then?"

"She gave me her hand with the polite regret that she could not give me more. "My heart is not free," she said, after the most approved and consecrated style. And I, ridiculous fool that I was, I consoled you for her having forgotten you so soon.



You could not but laugh, or rather you ought to have laughed at my simplicity."

"Did she tell you that she loved me?"

"Not so foolish! She gave no name. You have nothing to reproach her with. She was discretion itself."

"Do you know that I have seen her twice?"

"And that to obey you she marries me. Yes, I know it. Probably you thought that I should be affected, and admire your self-denial. You are mistaken; I see clearly now; I understand everything. Ah, you are cunning creatures! Others would have made a fool of the husband vulgarly speaking. You two people, honest after a fashion, you wait; the future is before you. What could you do now for Jenny Sauval? You have nothing but a stainless name, which would lose its immaculateness if the Countess O'Farrell should continue on the stage, a necessary sacrifice, if she should marry you. I arrange all. I take your beloved from the theater, I give her my name and money, at least you expect it. Certainly the widow of Godefroid, the composer, is not a brilliant match for a gentleman of as good blood as you are, but honor is safe, and I do not look like a man who would make you wait very long."

"Admit now that you are not the one who has imagined all this," said Patrice, with a flash of anger from his eyes. "I should think that I heard Madame Sauval speaking. Admit that she was the



one that suggested this ignoble suspicion. It would be less hard to bear."

Godefroid turned away his eyes, ashamed of himself, but muttering between his teeth with an angry look. The young man drew near him, and placing his hand upon his shoulder, he sighed:

"Oh, my friend! how unhappy we are. Our friendship, our esteem, our confidence, which is almost as old as we are, totters and almost threatens to crumble away. Why? because a woman has glanced at us and the folds of her dress have rustled between us. This woman is the most noble and loyal of creatures. I love her more than anything else in this world. But I never have thought of disputing for her with you. How would it be if I were your rival? Listen! the future is greater than we. But before we penetrate into the unknown by two entirely different routes, we must take care to leave behind us no doubt as to the great affection that has existed between us for so long a time. We are going to part, to meet again, I hope, but if it should be otherwise, if one of us should die suddenly, we must not add to the sorrow at the loss of a friend, you, remorse, for having misjudged me, and I, grief, at having submitted to such injustice. Listen—if you die before I do your wife shall never become mine. Receive my solemn oath, and may it take away all suffering from you. Now, you will believe, will you not, that I am not speculating upon your death or fortune?"



“You will never know,” replied Godefroid, without raising his head, “how small I feel before you. There is only one thing greater in my life, that is love. It is that that I drink, breathe, and eat; it replaces sleep, for I have not slept for a long time; it replaces music, which was my God, but it also replaces, one might say, my reason and conscience. Now then, it is fortunate that I am not separated from Jenny by a crime.”

“Nothing can separate you,” said O’Farrell, uneasy at this over excitement. “She will be yours. Be happy, but above all be calm. To make her love you, to give her the happiness that she merits, you must be very kind and sensible, too. A little while ago you were not so——”

“How could I know that it was not you that she meant? Oh, that name—— Why did she not speak it? Perhaps it is yours?”

“Other men have approached her much more likely to please than I.”

“It is Prince Kemeneff, doubtless?”

“Now, then! Calm yourself. Respect the young girl’s secrets. All have them. Do not punish us, her for being frank, and me for having struggled and conquered her scruples. Oh, my friend, do not forget that I am your surety for the happiness that you must give her. And now enough of agitation. We have work before us. You to prepare for your marriage and I for my journey, and yet” (he tried



to laugh) "you have Madame Sauval to assist you, and I have nobody."

"When do you leave, and where are you going?" asked Godefroid, as if this idea was entirely unexpected to him.

"I am going to Algeria to cut wood, but I do not run any risk of losing money. My head and my arms are all that I put in this business. This time I shall succeed."

"Ah!" groaned Godefroid, as he passed his hand over his forehead, "I am the one that obliges you to leave. To have this woman I sacrifice my only friend. What name do you give to what I am doing?"

"Love," said O'Farrell, slowly.

"And you, would you sacrifice me to gratify your love?"

"No, with the help of God," replied the young man.

These words, said in a low tone, framed the only reproach that Antoine Godefroid ever heard from his friend's mouth. Only death, which is more powerful than love even, could break this friendship. This short response penetrated to the very heart of the one who heard it. He arose and started to walk away, but he tottered, for he was far from having regained his health. As he leaned on the table for support his eyes met the smiling face of Patrice's mother in its golden frame. He looked at it for some time without speaking. It was the picture of



his benefactress. Taking it from its case he placed his lips upon its tarnished exterior for the last time. Then bending toward Patrice with an humble, almost abashed attitude, he presented him with this precious relic of a never-to-be-forgotten time, but ended now forever."

"Take it with you," said he. "I have no longer a right to keep it. Now leave me, I wish to be alone."

Thus their separation was consummated, waiting for the final parting.

Three weeks passed before the marriage-day arrived; they were long ones for all. Fortunately, the various steps to be taken and plans to be arranged kept them apart during the day, and Godefroid passed the greater part of his evenings with Jenny. Every time he went there he found her more beautiful, and felt that he was to be pitied; as time went on, this unfortunate Pygmalion thought he could see his marble idol harden.

The journals announced the marriage, and it made quite a stir, although the composer was in a fair way to be forgotten, and his intended had never been completely "the fashion." The public, or at least that part of it who pretended to be interested in music, were not deceived as to Godefroid's future. Everybody considered that he had written his last note, and to be just many people deplored "this premature eclipse of undoubted talent," to speak after the manner of critics.

Others affirmed that he was "drained" when



“Constantin” was written, and that he made the great mistake of his life the day he left off writing operettas, to which he owed his success, and took up grand opera.

The envious trampled on their enemy’s body, peddling the blackest of lies. According to the imagination of these story-tellers he was first a child found in a farmer’s cabin, then the cleverly disguised proof of some great lady’s weakness. As to the music of “Constantin,” he did not write it, but a comrade who died in his arms when at the college in Rome, and from whom he had stolen it, without the slightest scruples.

Among his devoted partisans, for he was not without them, the greater part, his physician in particular, thought his future more gravely affected physically than morally, and spoke of this idea of marriage, shaking his head and shrugging his shoulders.

Thank Heaven, Godefroid heard only a small part of these unpleasant rumors, but he partly suspected the rest, and the joy mixed with agony that he found in his new happiness was seasoned with innumerable mortifications. The saying, “That the hours that precede an unexpected happiness are more delicious than the happiness itself,” was not true in his case. On the morning of the first of May the three persons most concerned in our story were not sleeping. The only one who was completely and peaceably happy was Madame Sauval.



Everything had come out as she had patiently and cunningly prepared for it. Her daughter was not a princess, not yet, but she was to marry a rich man, who would leave her his money without doubt, and of whom the physician had said the night before to this model of mothers-in-law:

“We have prolonged his life as one draws out a metal wire in thinning it. Beware of sudden shocks. Luckily, if he does leave a young and beautiful widow for you to look after, you will not have the trouble of caring for his orphans.”

But Madame Sauval's gratification did not end there. In one of his confidential moments Godefroid, who was desirous of taking away all suspicion of his friend's disinterestedness, told her of a certain stormy interview followed by a solemn vow, and the Roumanian was immediately reassured. When the hour came Kemeneff would have no competitor.

Everything was working for the best. Pomeyras would receive the newly married couple the next day. After a few days she would rejoin them to pass the summer there. She could already see herself lady of the house, a role that she had played so little, that if not perfectly satisfactory, would at least freshen her ambition while waiting for better. This “better” was just now in Russia, trying to console himself without succeeding very well, and hearing as little as possible about the marriage. This justice is due Kemeneff.



As he entered the mayor's office Godefroid walked as if in an unknown and supernatural world. He asked himself how this person who sat reading papers behind a desk and looked like all other people, could accomplish an act worthy of God, and throw by one word this woman that he had adored for years into his arms. He pronounced with impatient avidity the word that was to bind him forever to the idol of his heart and eyes. It was Jenny's turn to reply to the important question. But before giving up her liberty, while they questioned her as to the spelling of her name, she bent her charming head slightly forward, and sought Patrice's face, who stood a few paces from her. It seemed as if the victim while already at the altar, turned to make a last appeal for her liberty. For a second the energy of this appeal was heart-breaking to the young man. He understood that his beloved wished him to save her. He remembered the words that she had spoken one day:

“Whatever the hour may be it will be sufficient if you move one finger!”

Then he saw for the last time what might have been his future. A rapid glance showed him long years of happiness by the side of this woman, who implored him by a look, who was ready to follow him to the ends of the earth. Then another vision rose up before him, Godefroid dying of despair, and cursing him with his last breath, his heart full of rage against this——



Patrice turned his eyes away, and all was ended. The "yes" was spoken, and then a formula, cold as a sentence was read, which sealed the fate of three people. The sigh that escaped O'Farrell's lips was almost one of relief.

They went at once to the church, where he felt less unhappy, as is usually the case with a religious person. At first he gave himself up to the powerful impression of calmness that seemed to come from the vaulted room with its soft light through its stained glass windows, and burying his face in his hands he tried to pray. This desire was the only thing of which his troubled heart was capable of. Then with that desire that is in all of us to flee from suffering he tried to forget the place where he was, and to think of his home in Africa, toward which that night's train would carry him.

Suddenly the organ pealed forth—a delicate homage rendered the composer—one of the sweetest love melodies in "Constantin." Patrice was unable to struggle against his thoughts any longer. He gave it up, and drank the poison of the tender harmony, remembering the first evening when he listened to this woman who had captured his heart and soul forever.

At last the ceremony was ended, and as he touched Jenny's hand, her cheeks became redder and redder, until they looked as if she had a fever.

Without replying to the laborious congratulations expressed by Patrice, she asked:



“When do you leave?”

“This evening, by the Marseilles express.

“And we by the Bordeaux express,” said she, in a low tone that he only could hear.

“I wish you a happy voyage,” said Patrice.

That evening, leaning on the window of the car which was flying over the plains of Villeneuve Saint Georges, the new colonist to Algeria watched the last rays of daylight fading away and a ribbon of white smoke curling among the tops of the green poplars on the other side of the Seine.

“Perhaps that train is the one that carries her away,” thought Patrice.

Soon the trains moved away from each other just as the lives of these two beings were separated. Night enveloped the earth, and in the traveler’s heart the darkest of shadows seemed to obscure all hope.



## CHAPTER XVII.

"AT LAST."

The Chateau de Pomeyras is neither for sale nor to let, otherwise it would be recommended as a residence after one's own heart for lovers or a person in ill-health. At the north a gently sloping stretch of meadow land, flanked by well trained vines protected the house from the not frequent but treacherous winds from the mashers. On the other side the view extended over a space, broken up by successive views, like the shifting scenes on a stage, with the Pyrenees for a curtain in the background. First came the garden, which was so small that Madame Sauval did not dare to call it a park, but she called the little cottage a "chateau." There grew and turned green on good terms with each other plants from all latitudes—the magnolia, with its foliage of hard leaves; the araucaria, in tiers like the shelves of a sideboard; the oleander, with its melancholy beauty; the larch, elegant in her delicate suppleness, and the pine, this mountaineer that is always wild even when it leaves its solitary heights for civilized gardens.

During the winter the slightest rays of the sun would heat like a hot-house the narrow gravel walk which was in front of the house. In warm summer



days this place became uninhabitable. But the oak path at the end of the garden, with its healthy freshness, was reserved for promenades. Twisted and knotty, but of medium height in spite of their centuries, these trees were as different from the giants of Fontainebleau as the thickset Bearnais to the erect and lofty Comtois. Full of sap, and very vigorous, they formed, with their verdure which was opened to the sun, a cloister one hundred feet long. It was an exquisite, silent retreat, only disturbed by the noise of the black woodpeckers, who attack with their bills the cancerous, rough bark of the trees, which swarms with insects.

There, even in the heavy, lukewarm days of July, the breeze never went to sleep. Sometimes it came heavily charged with the resinous odor of pines brought with heavy rumblings on certain days from Cape Brittany. Then it came again charged with the faint odor of hay which the pretty Basquaise, in her bare feet, spread on the other side of the stream. The place was not crossed by any road. One must understand it to be able to go there and follow the gray, clayey road which deadened the sound of every footstep. Carriages themselves rolled over the ground without awaking the tranquil echo.

Nevertheless, it is not a desert. Every hour a thick white smoke is seen over the tops of the willows and poplars growing along the banks of the stream for at least half a league. This is the smoke



from cars which are hurrying along toward Bayonne or Pau, which are equally distant, and will deposit the traveler at the foot of the Chateau Henry IV., or upon the wharf of the Adour, dotted with vessels. To reach Paris, one must admit, is a long journey, but the new-comers to Pomeyras do not intend to take this trip often enough to tire themselves.

The day that Godefroid left for this oasis of simplicity and peace, was, doubtless, the happiest he would ever know in this life. For the first time he saw a genuine smile on Jenny's face, when she stepped to the ground on this lovely May evening, before the door of the little house where she was born. Upon the steps the servants awaited their mistress, who had been absent so long. There were only two of them—Marcelline, dressed in a dark woolen gown, and her head covered with a handkerchief, and Pierre, her father's old servant, in his Sunday clothes, and cleanly shaven, was twirling in his hands his blue woolen cap. Marcelline clasped her hands and pressed them against her lips, not daring to take a step toward this beautiful woman, so elegantly clothed, and so grand, that she hardly recognized her. Nevertheless, she had nursed her when she was first born with a love that her own children might well be jealous of. Jenny, the great singer, applauded, crowned, and *feted* by dukes and princes, gave one bound, and threw herself upon her nurse's neck. Then she embraced



Pierre, who awaited his turn as a perfectly natural thing. What embarrassed this good man was to have forgotten French that he had formerly learned in more than twenty different garrisons. The greetings ended, before she entered the house she took her husband's arm, he, too, being moved at the sight of such joy.

"Come and see," said she, "what I love the best at Pomeyras, next to these good people, of course."

Almost running—everything reminded her so much of her youth—she led him to her dear oak wall under which the shades were gathering already, although the tardy buds had not yet opened.

"Oh, my beloved old trees!" said she, sending them kisses with her hand, "there you are. I have found you again. Did you expect me? How happy I am to see you once more!"

"And I," said Godefroid, very low, "how happy I am to see you happy."

"Oh, yes, very happy," said she. "Why do certain places seem made for happiness, as a church for prayer? Here I always seem to be protected against sorrow. When, as a child, I was punished for some naughty action I always came here to tell my troubles to these trees and to complain of too great severity. I know them all, not by name, but by their looks. There are some of them so placidly good-natured, always disposed to give me advice. Others deformed in their obesity, stunted, and disfigured by knots, seemed always ready to laugh



with me, a malicious laugh, but so good. The others, so straight and delicate, shining in their bark-like, well-brushed coats, inspired me with less confidence than the others. I never stopped near them to read or to play; I was always alone, for my mother was constantly seated at her table, busy with her letters or accounts. As to my father, I remember him as being good, but quiet, and always sad. Oh, how I have missed him all my life!"

Godefroid drank down eagerly these words, although they were not what a husband burning with love and on his wedding-day might prefer to hear. But what happiness it was to be alone with this woman, now his own, to have her on his arm, to hear her voice, to witness her happiness, and to say to her, "I am the one who has given this all to you." He dared not speak. What he wished to say, what he felt, resembled so little this pure dream of tender youth, which unbosomed itself in his presence, as if he was only one more tree, added to those of whom his wife was speaking. Ever since they had left Paris, ever since the silence of the country had surrounded them, he had felt his love grow more timid and younger. If he had loved when he was twenty years old, it would have been like this moment when the slightest rustle of her dress moved him like an exquisite melody.

When they reached the last arch of the trees it was nearly sunset, and the daylight was fading away. A silvery vapor spread over the haziness of



the horizon, leveling the inequalities, and seeming to drown all noise. Upon the pale green sky was displayed the boldest of rosy sunsets. Both of them stopped, overwhelmed with this all powerful peace, which their tired hearts needed so much. But this salutary weakness was soon interrupted. Jenny was leaning on Godefroid's arm in a more abandoned way, and he felt coursing through his veins the long suppressed ardor. Incapable of containing himself any longer, impatient for a first caress, which until now he had never been able to ask for, he fell on his knees, and imprinted a burning kiss upon his wife's hand.

“Oh, my beloved!” sighed he. “At last!”

At these words Jenny awoke from her dream, she remembered. Her childhood was far away. Many years and many changes had taken place in her life since these old oaks saw her wandering under their shade for the last time. Then she was alone; her short dress did not sweep the dust from the walk. And now a man was on his knees kissing her hand; this man was her husband, her master, and during this time the man that she loved, who would not take her—why?—was on the ocean, saying adieu to the shores of France. She commenced to cry so silently that Godefroid, kneeling before her, did not see her tears. This thought filled her soul with bitterness:

“They are all against me, all. But he is the one I



have obeyed. Oh, Heaven! shall I have strength to endure this life?"

Suddenly the bell on the top of the house rang out in clear, joyous tones, giving her hope.

"Come," said she to herself, "your home awaits you; the lighted hearth calls you. Thus, like a long exiled queen, you return to the places that are so dear to you. Here you will live in peace, free from all odious contact, surrounded by happiness and liberty. Come, and do not be ungrateful to the one who loves you and has given you all these joys, whom your kindness will make live, your hardness kill."

Then, subdued by the all-powerful sentiment of justice in her, Madame Godefroid leaned her face toward her husband and said, in a sweet voice:

"To you, my dear, I owe the supreme happiness of my return to this house; without you it would no longer be mine; I shall never forget it, and if God hears my prayers I will be a good, devoted, and faithful wife, one worthy of you."

He pressed her to his heart with such an impulse of tenderness that it made her shiver. An innocent falsehood came to her aid, and freed her.

"Come to dinner," said she. "I am hungry."

They retraced their steps rapidly; Godefroid feeling his wife shiver was uneasy on account of the heavy dew.

"Really," said she, "it is quite damp."

It was not the dampness that made her shiver;



she thought that the time would come when she could not lie.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### AMONG THE ARABS.

A rider, clothed in light colored flannel, with fawn-colored leather boots and an Indian helmet, was climbing the slight slope which incloses the southern part of the chalky plains of Bel-Abbes. The majestic Arab, who served as guide, was astonished to see a Frenchman capable of going for hours without speaking a word; but as they traveled Mohammed felt great admiration for the vigorous energy and equestrian skill of his companion. Disdaining the hot, burning road, they spurred their horses straight on before them, as if in an open desert, through the labyrinth of entangled bushes.

Patrice O'Farrell will be no more tired when he reaches the station, fifteen leagues distant (they have already traveled half the distance) than he was after his stormy sea-voyage. A trip like this was mere play for this man, who has been tossed about on the Indian Ocean for weeks at a time, who had gone hundreds of miles by means of the most atrocious of transports, an elephant's back. Nevertheless, in comparison with the frightful overwhelming lassitude that oppressed his heart,



the complete annihilation of his body seemed to him a happy and salutary diversion. The blinding dust, the scorching sun, his choking thirst are to him like caresses when he thinks of the hours that he passed not long since, in his comfortable chamber in Paris, lulled by the pleasures of luxurious hospitality and his soul torn by a hopeless agony. Oh! if only this torture would calm down! If only a sympathetic voice would promise him that he should forget at the last turn of the road, with what joy he would ride for days, entire weeks even without complaint. To only forget! Each bounding step cried out a name, a crowd of inexorable remembrances, invisible but tenacious, and never changing, haunted him. When Mohammed turned in his red leather saddle to see if all was well, his great dark eyes made the young man tremble as he thought of that other look, which asked him with such silent despair the tender question, to which he had replied by a falsehood. It was so as not to tell the truth, for now, above all times, he must keep silent; it was to lie more surely, that he had gone far from her to this great wall of mountains, at the foot of which he could confide his secret to the rocks and trees, the sole confidants of his trouble.

They were nearing their destination; already the hillocks began to appear, clusters of pine trees were to be seen. Before undertaking the steep ascent the guide, by a motion of his hand, advised a short halt, for he made it a point of honor, and felt that



an Arab lowered himself by talking when a European obstinately kept silence. The riders left their saddles near a spring that was partially dried up, and while the horses greedily devoured their bag of barley Patrice nibbled at, without knowing what he ate, a bit of hard bread and some cold meat which Mohammed took out of the holster.

Not far from them an Arab was turning with his wooden plowshare the straight piece of ground which had been already despoiled of its first harvest. Bending over the handle of his rustic implement the Mussulman walked in the furrows, threatening, each in turn, with his guttural cries, the two creatures that composed his yoke; on the left a thin, hairless donkey; on the right, going abreast with her companion in yoke, was a creature so black, so dilapidated and deformed, and so old, that Patrice had to look a second time to recognize that it was a woman. This unfortunate creature, nearly cut in two by the hair rope with which she was harnessed, was a woman, perspiring and puffing beside this other beast of burden, not much less resigned but less unconscious of its misery, but doubtless not more precious to her master.

Who would believe it? The sight of this lamentable specimen of African civilization, the sight of this poor monster worthy of pity, made O'Farrell's thoughts turn with more sadness yet toward the woman, who in his eyes was the personification of charm, grace, and poetry.



“Perhaps,” thought he, “the yoke with which she is burdened because I willed it so is none the less hard for her delicate shoulders to bear than the cords that cut into this poor creature’s flesh. Perhaps she sighs more ardently for liberty than this miserable slave!”

Each time that the African reached the end of a furrow and repassed before him, throwing a sorrowful, half-famished glance at the bread, the young emigrant turned away his eyes, heart-sick with discouragement. As to the guide, one could easily see that in his eyes it was the most natural thing in the world.

As soon as the horses had taken breath, finished their rations, and nearly emptied the shallow spring, Mohammed received orders to prepare for his departure. Soon the riders were in their saddles, and when Patrice, after a short ride, was in the depths of the forest his thoughts became a little less bitter.

He felt that he was nearing that great consoler that he had come so far to seek—work.

He was at first deceived by the appearance of these trees, stunted, twisted, and knotty, scattered about like disordered troops and crowned with scanty dark foliage. What a difference from European trees and more yet with those giants on the borders of the Mi-Kong, under whose branches our cathedrals could hide their apses. In the midst of these Algerian thickets there was no freshness, no



mystery, no singing of birds, not one of those prolonged, dreamy echoes whose wail resounds under the humid vaults of our woods.

For two hours Patrice continued on his way, interrupted only by meeting a few Arabs hunting hares, partridges, or grouse, or by the passing of a line of camels with their grimacing, unhappy faces, going toward the sea laden with produce from the interior. Already the approach of regular cultivation could be seen. Roads were marked out. This unfinished way was used as a footpath; the footpaths became hollowed out ruts. They met carts loaded with wood symmetrically arranged going to Bel-Abbes. Tents of camel's hair striped with bands of black and red were to be seen here and there. Chickens were pecking at the dusty ground, where naked children were rolling about under the care of dogs, who barked at the approach of the riders. At last, in a completely cleared space a *bordj* appeared. It was Telagh.

Patrice restrained the stallion from Tiaret, who was anxious to reach the stables, and gazed at his future residence. Before him was an oblong square of yellow walls pierced by loop-holes confining in its inclosure the buildings of the old Algerian troops, granted by government to be used as the center for forest improvements.

Soon satisfied with his examination, he passed through the large door, painted green, which stood wide open. The interior court was one hundred



feet by fifty, well built, and resembling cavalry quarters.

“Monsieur O’Farrell?” asked a French soldier, in his concise tones, advancing before him, having put on for the occasion, over his best vest, his Italian medal and his cross.

“Yes,” replied the young man, as he jumped to the ground. “And you, doubtless, are the overseer, Lafon?”

“Formerly sub-officer of the Algerian troops, yes, monsieur,” responded this person as he made the regular salute. “Here is my wife, who comes to pay her respects.”

The couple were not at all alike. The husband, before whom Patrice, in spite of his tall stature, seemed of ordinary height, was thin, bony, and singularly agile, notwithstanding his fifty years; his face was furrowed and scarred, making one think of Don Quixote. Madame Lafon was small and round as a ball, with a plump, red face that shone like a tomato, she could pass for a Sancho Panza in petticoats. She made her courtesy to the traveler at the same time tugging away at the narrow sleeves of her dress to pull them down over her large arms. Then turning toward a little servant-girl, who looked like a wild gazelle, and had timidly ventured to take a peep at the new-comer:

“Djemoul! I see you!” exclaimed she, in a voice that made the child flee, and an imperceptible



shiver run over the long body of the officer himself.

Then, smoothing down her voice and her face, she invited Patrice to take possession of his rooms. They were in a separate building in the rear of the court upon which were these words, "Officers' Pavilion." The new-comer forthwith selected the best room on the first floor, but empty as a convent parlor, and scrupulously clean. The windows looked out over the walls upon the woods. Patrice's baggage, which had arrived the night before, was soon placed temporarily in his room. But he was a true horseman, and only took time to remove his boots and refresh himself with a cold water bath before he went to the stables to look after the valiant beast who had carried him almost fifteen leagues without stopping.

He dined alone, as often would happen to him in the future. Djemoul waited upon the table under the direction of Madame Lafon, who, between each dish, made her appearance to inquire as to the success of the cooking. At dessert she did not leave again, seeing by Patrice's smile that her ado amused him. At this moment the poor fellow would have given a great deal to be left to himself. Happy to have such a listener, the good woman gave him a sketch of her life. She told him of her youthful days in Marseilles, where she remembered with pride that she had been one of the best dress-makers and not one of the least courted. Perhaps,



she admitted, she had been a little giddy, but she added, with a glance from her black eyes:

“Nevertheless, the only man who could ever reproach me was the one who never complained. Do you understand? I had the good luck to find a good man. The soldier returned to me after seven years, the only one who had changed, for he had a saber wound, and I was just the same as when he had left me, as sure as my name is Coralie. After we were married I came to Africa with him, where he had a desire to establish himself. If anybody had told me, when I was trying dresses on beautiful women, that I should end my days in the midst of people who wore none—— Ah, love, monsieur, you have no idea what it does to one! Is there any news from Marseilles?”

During all this time one could hear Lafon swearing in the open court, which was full of teams that were returning. Soon all was silent, the carts were drawn up in lines under the sheds like artillery wagons in the field; it was fast growing dark, and Patrice went to his chamber, and leaning out of the open window he smiled with melancholy disdain at the thought of this large matron and her words:

“You have no idea what love does!”

He wanted to call her back to say:

“Poor, ignorant creature, what was your love beside mine?”

But this woman had a right to speak of love, she who had waited for her lover so many years, who



had sacrificed so much to follow him into a desert which to all appearances would be their tomb. Patrice could not help smiling at the thought that a human creature beside himself could pretend to know what love and suffering were. For with the same false balance we weigh sorrow or iniquity according as it concerns others or ourselves. The mote in a prevaricating neighbor's eyes becomes the crushing beam. When it concerns pain it is the thorn that we have hardly drawn blood with, which assumes the proportions of a double-edged sword.

Patrice did not smile for long, a thought passed through his mind that was, at this time, more over-excited than calm, owing to the fatigue of his journey.

"Who can say," thought he, "whether I am a hero or a monster, large-hearted or a fool? Who is right, I or Coralie's husband? He took his wife away without any scruples. A woman gave him her love, he took it, without any uneasiness as to the sacrifice he exacted, sure of paying her. They are happy. Not once has she reproached him for having taken her away from her friends and her fashions. They are happy! What matters the rest of the world to them? If Jenny could see them at this moment would she not envy them? Alas! perhaps she would say that I should have done better to have brought her here as this soldier did Coralie."

The quiet which surrounded him brought about



an overpowering reaction, the fatal hour reserved for the complete immolation of himself. It was night. Darkness covered everything. In the little opening of the *bordj* the pale evening tints were rapidly darkening, and by a frequent optical illusion the trees and masses of foliage seemed to draw near, like Shakespeare's walking forest.

No dark or threatening mystery was concealed behind this somber curtain. There came, from the depths of the woods, children's cries and women singing accompanied by the rustic *guzla*; as it reached Patrice's ears he thought that the sole creature in this desert who knew complete solitude, desertion, and overwhelming sadness was himself. His courage forsook him.



## CHAPTER XIX.

“ARE YOU HAPPIER?”

Suddenly a strong hand knocked at his door, and Coralie called from outside:

“Monsieur, Pere Chrysostome is here.”

“Who is Pere Chrysostome?” asked the young man, appearing on the threshold.

The good woman felt embarrassed, as simple people do when asked a question which is difficult for them to answer.

“Why,” stammered she, “it is Pere Chrysostome, the priest, as they call him to us poor devils.”

“A missionary, then?” said Patrice.

“A missionary!” protested the horrified Coralie. “Do you take us for savages, monsieur? At any rate, missionary or not, he is here. We see him once a month. He has rooms at Telagh, and appears any fine day, when we least expect him, leaving when he has visited the wood-cutters to go to some still more distant place. He never loiters anywhere.”

“Well, then,” said O’Farrell, “receive him as usual, there need be no change.”

“He asked to see you, monsieur. He knows that you have arrived, and as you are master now, he wishes to greet you, for he is a man as finely edu-



cated as a prince. One can see at a glance that he is a gentleman, they say that before he became a monk he held a position in society."

"Indeed!" replied Patrice. "In that case I will go to him. I shall not be sorry to talk an hour before going to bed."

"When monsieur wishes to talk," said Coralie, a trifle wounded, "I am always at his service."

O'Farrell found the monk in the court, standing beside his horse, from which he had just dismounted, talking familiarly in Arab with a number of workmen and servants who had passed the night in the inclosure.

He was a tall, athletic old man, whose attitude and slightest movements confirmed at first sight Coralie's suppositions. His superb head and distinguished features, his energetic and easy speech denoted a superior man. A red ribbon, faded by the sun and rain, was concealed in the button-hole of his black robe behind the copper crucifix which hung on his neck.

Patrice was instantly struck by the piercing and also gentle look that darted from his singularly beautiful eyes. He could not keep from looking at him, and asked himself at once:

"Where have I seen those eyes?"

Many times, for several years after, did he ask himself that same question, only then he could say that he had found out whose resembled them.

"Reverend Father," said the young man, "you



are welcome to this house, which is not much more mine than yours."

"And you, monsieur," responded the priest, "are welcome to this French soil, where Frenchmen like you rarely come. You will find that one can live happily here."

By this single sentence, which he would not have uttered had he known Patrice's history, and his soft voice, Pere Chrysostome made a new friend. After having partaken of a short repast the young man conducted him to his room, feeling that a beneficial intimacy would soon be established between them.

After they had exchanged a few sentences, the man expressed his surprise at hearing that the young man intended to establish his residence at Telagh, and not follow the example of his predecessors by making short appearances there occasionally.

"You will end like the others," said he, smiling. "In two months, when you have the company's affairs in good condition and your zeal for hunting and traveling is calmed, you will be seized with a desire to see France, your family and your friends. You will leave here."

"I shall remain here, *mon pere*. I alone compose my family. As to friends, I only had one, and his house is closed to me forever."

The missionary seemed agitated, and deep lines appeared on his forehead.



“I think that I understand you,” sighed he. “I have been in Algeria for twelve years, and I have learned that a young man of your age and station does not come here unless he has a fault to expiate or a love to fight against. I can read in your eyes that it is no shortcoming that brings you here. Thank God for it, and may He soon grant you forgetfulness.”

Patrice suspected at once that Pere Chrysostome had a secret in his life. He felt still more attracted toward him. The priest, who consoles, encourages, and absolves mankind, knows how to find the quickest way to the heart when he understands the weakness of men.

“One can see,” said the young colonist, “that this dress has not always been yours.”

“I have lived in the world and fled from it.”

“Like myself,” said O’Farrell, smiling.

“Would to God that I had fled from it when as young as you!” responded the monk, with touching humility.

Patrice made no reply. For the time being he seemed absorbed in himself. The priest was accustomed to long silences, and seemed also to be lost in thought. Suddenly the young man seemed to have reached a decision. He asked:

“Father, will you enlighten me? Forgive me if I open my heart to you so quickly, but when you came I was suffering the martyrdom of doubt. Perhaps you know what that is?”



“Unfortunately for me it is not the one that I know the best. However, when you have told me your trouble I will try to find in my compassion and faith the words that will give you comfort and peace.”

“I am at peace now, almost happy compared with what I was an hour ago. Listen to me then. Perhaps you may have heard of a celebrated person——”

“What matters the name? I have sworn to forget others’ names as well as my own. Tell me your story, and give no names.”

“The one of whom I speak has filled a father’s place to me. He brought me up like his own son, better than he would a son, for he left me free in my faith and the beliefs of my childhood, which were not his. I owe everything to him. For many years I ate his bread, and slept under his roof. We were very happy together. But a woman came between us. He is married.”

“And you were afraid of acting basely toward your friend. Many stories commence like yours; I have known of those that ended in blood. My son, remain in Algeria.”

“Certainly, I shall stay here, but you do not know all. You do not know that this woman and I loved each other, that we do so now. Alas! it seems to me that we always shall love each other. To give her to my friend, to force her into his arms, I lied, I feigned indifference, I saw her crying at my feet,



and made not the slightest gesture. I can yet feel the look that she gave me eight days ago from under her bridal veil before linking her life to another's. And now I ask myself, 'Have I done rightly?' "

"Why did you make this sacrifice? Did your friend exact it?"

"If he had not married this woman he would have killed himself, and cursed me. *Mon pere*, there is a word often used that is not understood; it is 'passion.' Well, for the first time in my life I understand it, in seeing everything crumble under the feet of this almost gray-haired man, health, love of his profession, ambition, and even friendship. Ah! what jealousy! What a base opinion of me! What sudden indifference as to my future! What undisguised joy at my departure! If you had seen him, broken down, ill, with only one thought in his mind. If you had heard him say, he, for whom nothing remained on this earth, 'I will kill myself!' you would have been afraid as I was. It is a great stain upon one's life to have a friend's blood or even his broken heart to think of."

Pere Chrysostome left his seat and stood by the open window.

"I impose upon you," said Patrice, "but I have ended. This is what I have done. My friend is rich, I have nothing; that was also another motive for giving the woman that I love to him. Now that it is all over, cruel regrets haunt me; a fright-



ful uncertainty tortures me. Will my friend be happy? With one single blow have I ruined three lives?"

"Who can tell?" said the priest, turning from the window where he had been leaning with his face buried in his hands. "You are not culpable to have devoted yourself for another. Perhaps you have prevented a great crime. What sacrifice is too great to save a friend's life? Ah! my child, if you had seen what I have, your uncertainty would cease very soon. Can the words of an old priest and sinner take it away from you forever. Believe me; be calm, and courageous, and grateful for the rare strength which has been given you. What you did was well done."

They parted at these words, as it was getting very late. Upon the narrow mattress of his soldier's bed the youngest of these two friends slept as he had not done for months before. The other prayed for a long time, sighing deeply as he knelt on the thick boards.

"My God!" groaned he, "I was commencing to forget! You have punished me for it, for it is your will that I should remember it always. Now when to do your service I come here I shall find my living punishment. This young man had so much strength, and I showed so much weakness!"

From that day the inhabitants of Telagh noticed that the priest's visits were more frequent. Many times during the years that followed Patrice and



his friend talked as they did the first evening with an increasing intimacy. Meanwhile they kept their secrets. The young man piously concealed the name of the one he loved in his heart. The priest never let him suspect what grief or fault had caused him to withdraw from the world.

Every time he appeared with his good, pure, saintly face he would say to Patrice:

“Are you happier?”

And always to the old man's interrogation Patrice was obliged to answer “No,” looking in those eyes that had haunted him ever since the first night that he saw them.



## CHAPTER XX.

“SHALL I MAKE HER HATE ME?”

The third day after his arrival at Pomeyras Godefroid went out from the house alone, about nine o'clock in the morning, leaving his wife still sleeping. During the two preceding days he had followed this marvelous creature, step by step, like a dog. He could not take his eyes from her, and was astonished to know that a human being could feel such happiness as he felt. Every moment brought him new delights. When she spoke the sound of her voice threw him into ecstasy. When she was silent he looked at her trembling with mute adoration, watching the opportunity to anticipate his idol's slightest desire, and to spare her the slightest movement.

At the table he would forget to eat.

Sometimes, when they were alone, he would jump up to wait upon her, kneeling at her feet like a slave, ready to cry with joy when she thanked him with her constrained smile.

All that poets have written of lovers, jealous of the air that their mistresses breathe, of the clothes that touch them, or the insect that flies near their cheek, all these ingenious and charming imaginations were realities to him. For two days he had



not written a line, touched a box, or taken one step without his wife either in the house or in the garden. To live like this for years! His imagination refused to conceive a more delicious fate, and in his proud joy of this first love of his life, this man, who was forty-five years old, was surprised to read so often this blasphemy of morose philosophers:

“Complete happiness is never found here below.”

“It does exist, I have found it. I have it,” thought he. “I am happy!”

And he added, confident in these first hours of happiness:

“We are happy!”

But the second evening, at sunset, as he was walking with Jenny in the garden, he left her for a moment to gather some roses that seemed to please her. When he rejoined her she was standing with her arms at her side looking very tired, and gazing at the distant mountains. He stopped to admire her in this pose, for he admired her in any way. Alas! a deep sigh came from the young woman, and without realizing it she let fall from her lips this heart-broken cry:

“Oh! my God!”

Then Godefroid realized that she at least was not happy. He looked sadly at the roses that he carried, regretting that he could not put them back on the bushes, for he understood that all the flowers, all the caresses, and all the treasures in the world, offered by him, would be powerless to satisfy this



heart, that was already sighing with weariness. His was pierced by the cold pang of despair. Never, he saw clearly, could he obtain anything but a resigned tenderness from this one for whom his entire being was overflowing with love. What use to admit his error? What good to avow that he had committed one of those crimes of which one dies, and which is the death of others? The freshly cut roses that he held in his hand could not return to the bush that gave them birth. Jenny Sauval, this other flower ruthlessly plucked, could never become the happy child that she was when running through these same walks which stifled her to-day like a prison cell.

During the long hours of a sleepless night Godefroid had time to reflect on the present, and to foresee the future, to turn over in his mind all the ways of gaining her heart, which he seized like an unscrupulous malefactor.

“I must,” thought he, “have the courage to leave her sometimes. When she sees me then she will greet me better, perhaps.”

This morning, then, he went out early and alone to carry out his programme, but governments and husbands are to be pitied who believe that a programme is necessary.

In spite of his prudent resolutions Godefroid did not have courage to lose sight of the roof under which the idol of his life would soon open her charming eyes to the light. He wandered about,



near the house, hiding under the trees, and behind clumps of bushes, like a lover obliged to use mysterious caution. He spent three hours hoping to see her appear and to catch a look that would permit him to believe that she was looking for him. But Jenny did not appear.

The breakfast hour was drawing near. He lost patience, and entered the house, thinking that doubtless she was tiring her beautiful hands with the various arrangements of a long neglected house. But one glance showed him that he was mistaken. Jenny was seated in the little parlor reading over a long letter that she had just written. She arose when she saw him, and came toward him with shining eyes and animated countenance, holding in her hands the freshly written pages.

“Now, then,” said she, “I have done my best to replace you. Read my letter, and add a few lines at the bottom of the sheet. When does the mail leave? It would be too bad if this friend, who is so far away, should go more than a week without news from us. He would think that we had forgotten him.”

Then Godefroid remembered that the night before, in some way, the conversation had turned upon Patrice.

“About this time he must have reached his forests,” the young woman had said. “You ought to write to him.”

He had promised to do so, confessing at the same



time his horror for all letter writing, so much so, that Jenny offered to take his place.

After breakfast was over Godefroid eagerly read the lines she had confided to him. The most jealous being could not have found the least complaint with this familiar chit-chat that had no hidden meanings. The young woman told of their arrival, avoiding all that could approach unpleasant details. She spoke of the emotions that she experienced at seeing her birth-place and the gratitude that she should always have toward the man who had given her that pleasure. She added at the close:

“He will be recompensed for it, for the air that we breathe here is the best in France. He will soon entirely regain his health, for he rests. You see that I serve as secretary. Write us without delay, tell us of your journey and the new country.”

These lines convinced Godefroid that there had never been any love passages between his wife and Patrice. Still there was something about this friendship that made him cruelly jealous. If he had dared he would not have sent the letter. But what right had he to retain it, when it had been agreed upon that she should write it? What right to deprive this young woman buried in a desert, after having known a most exciting life, of a pleasure which she had set her heart on?

“She already feels lonely,” thought Godefroid. “Shall I make her hate me? Alas! since my love



weighs upon her, she shall have at least my esteem and confidence."

The poor husband, struggling so soon with his misery, got out of it in the ordinary way.

"This letter must go, decidedly," thought he. "As for the others, we will see. Perhaps this zeal for writing will pass away."

At the bottom of the last page he added a few lines, as affectionate as he could, but which betrayed the constraint which conjugal life had put between the two friends. While he was writing he could hear his wife coming and going in the next room, giving orders sometimes in French and sometimes in the Bearn *patois*, according as she addressed her old servants or the new ones she had brought with her from Paris.

"She did not open a box or drive a nail until she wrote him."

That was the thought that troubled Godefroid as he directed the letter to O'Farrell.

"Oh! how I would like to change places with him!" sighed he.

Not once during the days which followed did the young woman speak of Patrice or of the letter that she had written and the expected response. However, when this reply reached Godefroid it goes without saying that Jenny spied it among the mail, although she had never seen Patrice's handwriting. Her husband read the letter first, then passed it to her without saying a word. It was a sort of a jour-



nal written with no enthusiasm nor complaints. One could have printed it in any paper without changing a word, there was nothing intimate or sentimental in the whole letter.

Fifteen days after Madame Godefroid replied to the hermit's letter—as she jokingly called him. She was very careful never to allude to him in a sympathetic way. He replied with the same delay, after this the correspondence was tacitly arranged on this footing, but as long as it lasted not one line was written that did not pass under Godefroid's eyes.



## CHAPTER XXI.

“YOU WILL NEVER RETURN TO FRANCE.”

In consequence of Madame Sauval's arrival, which was about the first of May, Godefroid's installation in Bearn took a definite form. He had tried, before he left Paris, to procure a month's conjugal *tete-a-tete*, and regretfully contented himself with the two weeks that he obtained with difficulty from his mother-in-law, who said she could not live two days, without her daughter. It was, nevertheless, with a feeling of relief that he saw Jenny's mother arrive. Not once had he seen any appearance of rebellion or complaint on the young woman's part, but at rare intervals he would hear that weary sigh that threw him into despair. The presence of a third party in their solitude might produce a useful diversion.

Madame Sauval's return into her own domain had something of the melancholy pomp that formerly signalized the return of refugees into their own countries and to their own estates.

If the notary of the place had not been discreet he would have told that by virtue of certain deeds, followed by a change of stocks, that Pomeyras had become Godefroid's. For the present poor Sauval's widow took care that these little details should not



be known to her neighbors, and forgot them as quickly as possible herself. As to the future, she knew that one could do many things with God's help and a good will.

Madame Sauval took the reins of power into her own hands, and nobody disputed her, Godefroid less than anybody else, and in this Bearnais Eden there was one person to be seen whose plans and desires seemed to be fulfilled. Madame Sauval had no intention of spending her days in this kingdom, composed of a lawn, vegetable garden, a poultry yard, and a stable. But the truly ambitious can content themselves for a time in the pleasure of watching events that are working in a quiet way to establish, in the end, their fortunes. Like the illustrious, vanquished one, who stood on his rock at Elba and watched at his feet the Inconstant, with its sails slowly filling under a favorable breeze, Martscha, in her pleasant exile at Pomeyras, kept her eyes fixed on the mysterious shore that she only had in view.

She had hardly arrived before she had made her son-in-law sign a deed of purchase of a small farm which joined their estate, and from that time she had an outlet for the spirit of commanding that was in her. Even the oxen yoked to the heavy carts hurried their heavy steps when at a turn in the road they saw this terrible mistress watching them at work. The continual struggle against draughts, rain, storms, idleness, or the tricks of the small farmers enamored her, and soon she had



to contend against an enemy more worthy of her, that was malice and jealousy.

While Jenny, who cared less for seeing the sunrise and going about the place in sabots, arranged the house and picked her flowers, a league was organized against them by the neighbors about Pomeyras.

To these very ignorant and virtuous country people, destined to live and die without having gone beyond Bordeaux, there was very little difference between an opera singer and the lowest of concert singers. Both sang on the stage. Meanwhile it was reported that some one had read in a Paris journal that "La Sauval" had buried herself in the country because she had lost her voice. The better disposed were ready to believe that there had been a civil marriage, while others said that the couple had brought to this virtuous soil the fatal example of free marriages so common in the theatrical world of Paris.

Very soon, thanks to Madame Sauval, the cure of the place soon formed the habit of dining once a week at the chateau. This was considered a proof that the household was according to the rules of the church. From thence Godefroid could have had his house full, but he was intractable on that point, and his doors were closed upon all those idiots who had insulted his wife.

It was opened one day to receive a deputation that came from Biarritz. These ambassadors pre-



sented themselves with many apologies for having come unannounced. Perhaps their visit was not a surprise to all, for Madame Sauval had not put her foot outside the house that day, and her daughter, who knew her well, expected something was going to happen when she saw her mother's toilet. Godefroid came into the room, and received the men in a sulky manner, while they saluted him with low bows and called him "dear master."

"We are organizing," said they, "a concert for the benefit of our poor people. If we could only announce on our programme the grand aria for Adossides by Madame Godefroid, people would come from Madrid, and the receipts would be immense."

Godefroid thought it over, weighing the pros and cons as to his decision.

"You have not read the Paris journals then, gentlemen?" said the queen mother, with majestic irony. "They say that my daughter has lost her voice, and that is why she married."

At these cunningly calculated words Godefroid seemed to emerge from his indecision. Jenny came in just then, and they almost prostrated themselves before her. When she knew of their request she looked at her husband with the look of one who only wishes to be persuaded. This opportunity to amuse herself tempted her, and more yet, the idea of singing for the poor as a great lady, after having sung for the rich for money, pleased her. The day was



appointed forthwith, and all the details arranged. The ambassadors departed overwhelmed with joy, and during the days which followed at Pcmeyras everybody was busy. Godefroid resumed his music, and made his wife practice. Her voice was never in better condition. Madame Sauval wrote several letters, which she took great care to post herself.

The concert took place on the appointed day. Upon the list of patrons were to be seen the names of a dozen aristocratic Europeans. One of the last on the list was that of Prince Kemeneff, chamberlain to the Czar.

Madame Godefroid had as dazzling a triumph as a woman could ever dream of. Her voice, talent, beauty, refinement, toilet, and wit were lauded to the skies, and to be just, she merited this ovation. She became at once the favorite of a galaxy of ladies, mostly Russians, who had applauded her at the opera, but now treated her like one of them. Kemeneff was irreproachable in his reserve, and gave an example of his respect by introducing her to his friends. He had owned for several years one of the most elegant villas in Biarritz.

Although the young woman was too sensible to have her head turned by this success, she could not be insensible of it. But most of all she felt pleased at being received as one of them by women in the very best society of Europe. Invitations were showered upon her so fast that she was unable to accept all. Instead of passing two days at Biarritz,



as she had intended, she remained there over a week. She left overwhelmed with caresses, promising, as one promises many things in society, to visit St. Petersburg the next year.

“When the emperor sees you and the empress hears you,” they said to her, “you will never return to France.”

She was too clear sighted not to see that she owed this enthusiasm—at least a great part of it—to Prince Kemeneff; when she saw him so assiduous at first, she had a defiant feeling, fearing that some day he would demand recompense for services rendered. But Serge Kemeneff was a gentleman in deeds as well as thoughts, slighting women only when they delighted to be scorned. In early life the prince had been fortunate enough to meet a very beautiful, worthy woman, who would not listen to him. This was a very useful lesson, and obliged him to believe in the virtue of women or at least in the possibility of it, which is a great deal. Since that time the recklessness of his age and race, his trips from one end of Europe to the other, the different people he had met, the examples before his eyes, all these had given him this mixture of frivolity and philosophy, passionate ardor, and easy resignation which distinguishes certain men. Kemeneff loved Jenny more sincerely than he had ever loved before, and if it would not have seriously compromised his interests, he would have married her if possible. It is difficult for men like us, who



are unaccustomed to traditions of obedience and ideas of respect, to realize how heavily the approbation or blame of the Czar weighed upon these Russian gentlemen.

Kemeneff was in great despair when he learned that Jenny was married, but he loyally resigned himself to see another obtain what he had never asked for. After serving a month at the palace, followed by a month of pleasure in Paris, he established himself for the summer at his villa in Biarritz, and when he learned by a letter from Madame Sauval that his old love was living so near him, his first movement was to overcome all remembrances of his love for her. But when he saw Jenny more beautiful and attractive than ever, his old passion for her returned with one more incentive, for he found an exquisite, elegant society woman distinguished above all others. He had so much chivalrous respect for her, so much reserved admiration, his devotion took such a delicate adoration, that Godefroid, in spite of himself, conceived more esteem than jealousy for him. When he left Biarritz he exacted a promise from the prince to visit Pomeyras, a politeness, to tell the truth, almost forced upon him, for it was to the prince that Jenny owed the greater part of her pleasures as well as her success during their short sojourn.

Sometimes a fear that he kept to himself haunted Godefroid.

“I am lost,” thought he, “if this applause makes



my wife regret her past, and if she returns home with a taste for this society which she has just entered. That is the way that I should surely lose her."

He was soon reassured, for Jenny left Biarritz without any regrets; she even refused her husband's offer to remain a few days longer.

"If you wish to make me very happy," said she—it was the first request that she had ever made—"let us take a roundabout way home. I would like to see my dear mountains again."

The next day Madame Sauval went home alone, and the couple plunged into the depths of the Pyrenees, choosing for their stopping places the villages ignored by the crowd. Jenny took great pleasure in doing the honors of the grand sights to her husband, enjoying them herself with artistic enthusiasm. Godefroid noticed that even in the midst of the sublime horrors of Maladetta and the whirl of *fetes* at Biarritz that she did not forget O'Farrell. She watched for the arrival of the African mail with the same interest, and in order to reply the usual day she sat up two hours in spite of her fatigue from a tiresome excursion, when Godefroid urged her to go to bed, saying that for once Patrice could miss a letter.

"Oh, no," replied the young wife. "He must never think, even for twenty-four hours, that you have forgotten him."

Toward the end of September the two tourists



were obliged to leave the mountains on account of the cold. Jenny was painfully surprised to see how much her husband suffered from it, for she had thought that his health was more permanently re-established. He seemed profoundly discouraged by this relapse, although it was not serious apparently.

He wished to stop in Pau for a day. There, for the first time since their marriage, he left Jenny alone the entire morning. On the return of the guilty one she complained in an affectionate way.

“Why did you not employ the time to write to Algeria?” said he.

She did not reply, judging from his air that he was in one of his sober moods. She did not dare ask him where he had been, and by this reserve she saved him the trouble of lying. He had promised himself that nobody should know how or where he passed his morning, for he had been with his lawyer, and had made his will.



## CHAPTER XXII.

“OH! HOW I ENVY HIM!”

At Pomeyras Godefroid found warmer weather, for summer lasts longer on the plains. But he did not recover his evenness of temper at the suspense that he endured, as his health began to fail again. Madame Sauval discerned with her infallible eye that he had begun to decline in health, and her ordinary care for her daughter's husband became a solicitude that few sons-in-law ever experience.

At heart what she experienced was poignant emotion such as a chess player feels who has made a move based upon a false one of his adversary's. Was this artless player going to make the very move that she anticipated—that of dying?

At all events, it was time now to advance her knight upon the scene. Without losing a day, as if an angel from Heaven had apprised him of their return, Kemeneff wrote to announce himself, as he had promised.

“The devil take him!” said Godefroid, who was growing more and more morose. “I have not invited one of my friends from Paris to come to see me, and I am obliged to give hospitality to this Moscovite.”

“A dinner, a simple dinner,” corrected Madame



Sauval. "At Biarritz he offered you much more than that."

"According to that there are twenty-five people that I ought to invite to dine with us. If I commence with one——"

All discussion was displeasing to Jenny, whatever its causes, so she made a pretext to leave, preferring not to be consulted.

"Now, then, what notion have you taken into your head?" asked his mother-in-law when they were alone. "Are you jealous? Has my daughter given you any reason to be so? If you are is it prudent for you to show it? In your position a man cannot shut the door in the face of a man of position like the Czar's chamberlain. It is not your intention, I fancy, to drop your profession now, at least your ambition is not limited to having your music applauded in the casino? At St. Petersburg the prince might be of great service to you. Then, to tell the truth, he amuses Jenny, who, between you and me, sighs a little for olden times. To leave the theater was all very well, she wished to do so, and I am rejoiced that she was able to do it. From there to a convent is quite a step; I fear you are tempted sometimes to forget it."

Madame Sauval did not always succeed in convincing her adversaries when she reasoned with them, but she got them in such a state of lassitude that they were compelled to submit. Godefroid yielded, thinking that peace to an honest man was



well worth a dinner even if given to an ardent prince.

“We shall expect you day after to-morrow,” wrote he forthwith to Kemeneff. “I fear that the little cottage where we live”—this was a revenge on his mother-in-law—“will seem a trifle small beside your villa. But you will receive the very best that we can offer. A carriage will meet you at the station.”

The next day but one the carriage returned empty from the station, but almost immediately a phaeton drawn by two trotters dashed up the oak drive.

“What!” exclaimed Godefroid, “did you drive all this distance?”

“Oh!” said Kemeneff, with a slightly affected indifference, “ten leagues is nothing for us.”

Almost immediately two men appeared, and led the horses away to the yard between the house and stable.

“Three hours’ work!” said one of them to his companion.

“Yes,” said the other, looking at the horses covered with foam with a discouraged air. “Since the day these horses were put in our stables it is the first time that he has not been afraid that they would moisten their skin. It must be that this little lady has caught him fast.”

Upon reaching this conclusion they commenced grooming the horses, while old Pierre, with his hands in his vest pockets and cap over his eyes, watched



the operation with the same frightened look that he would have followed the audacious feats of a tamer, in a cage of wild beasts. They had not finished their task before Godefroid and his party had left the table and gone into the garden. Kemeneff would not have exerted himself more if he had been promenading in the gardens of Tsarskoe-Selo in company with an archduchess instead of in Pomeyras' narrow walks with Madame Godefroid.

The master of the house watched his wife, not with jealous suspicion, he had not yet reached that degree of misery, but because he was incapable, when she was near, of turning his eyes in any other direction. He was delightfully surprised to see her as simple and unembarrassed as if she had been accustomed from her infancy to do nothing but receive the Czar's chamberlains. She was uneasy and almost impatient, turning her head toward the oak walk with as much anxiety as a scholar watches a clock when waiting for recess. Suddenly the postman's blue blouse and leather cap appeared. Adieu to the prince and his charming conversation. His beautiful companion flew away like a bird, and returned to her husband carrying a letter post-marked Algeria. It was the day for the foreign mail.

"If your excellency will permit us?" said she, smiling. "It is a letter from one of our friends, who lives alone across the sea. You know Patrice O'Farrell, I think?"



“I would like to be in his place this moment,” said the prince, with a courtly salute, “since you think of him.”

He very politely engaged Madame Sauval in conversation, who blushed with rage as Jenny, leaning on her husband’s arm, listened to the exile’s letter.

When the last line was finished she returned to the prince, and devoted herself to him with her perfect grace until the equipage, more dazzling than ever, drove up to the steps with its porch covered with clematis.

Meanwhile autumn was drawing to a close. In a climate less mild they would have already felt the approach of winter. Many times the prince’s trotters went over the road that they knew every turn of so well now. Kemeneff, unless he had been very conceited, and that was not one of his faults, could not flatter himself that Jenny ever showed the slightest agitation in his presence, but she made no attempt to conceal her friendship for him.

As to Godefroid, in spite of the urgent request of Jenny and her mother—his gloomy spirits made them uneasy—he applied himself constantly to work. Every day his health showed more and more unfavorable symptoms, but he seemed to disregard them. They sent several times for one of the best physicians in Pau to come to see him. He pretended to say before Godefroid that they were unnecessarily alarmed, but in his private confer-



ences with Madame Sauval he expressed himself differently, and did not hesitate to say that his heart trouble had made great progress. At this time the invalid was very loath to leave his room or the reclining chair in Jenny's little parlor. His temper was more aggravated and his jealousy became of a violence all the more fatal as he concealed it most carefully.

Without letting it be seen, each visit that Keme-neff paid them caused him extreme suffering. The prince was treated so familiarly in the house that he never thought of paying any more regard to the frequency of his visits than if he had lived in a neighboring hamlet. The sick man exhausted himself, unknown to all, in watching every word and gesture of his guest. More than once, when Serge was talking with his wife, seated upon one of the rustic seats before the house, Godefroid would conceal himself behind a curtain, and while they believed him to be quietly reading he was restlessly watching them.

The letters that Jenny received from Algeria and those that she continued to write in her husband's name were to the very last simply harmless manifestations. The unhappy man would shut himself up in his room to read and re-read them and scrutinize every line, trying to discover some hidden meaning. He even studied it with a magnifying glass to see if there was not some cabalistic sign, and finding none he was still more unhappy yet.



“Who knows,” thought he, “if there have not been other letters exchanged between them?”

But he got nothing for his miserable suspicion. If Jenny had been a prisoner she would have had about as much of an opportunity for clandestine correspondence as now. She not only never left Pomeyras, but one could have counted the moments that she was out of her husband's sight. Meanwhile her intimacy with Serge Kemeneff seemed to visibly increase. The prince seemed to have forgotten love for friendship there was such a unique charm in the innocent smile of this fascinating creature, simple and faithful in her loyalty; she neither sought nor avoided opportunities for a *tete-a-tete*, one could see that his visits, her only distraction, were anticipated by her with much pleasure. Standing upon the steps, she would watch him drive away, and never failed to say, with a gracious movement of the head:

“I hope we shall see you again very soon.”

During all this time Godefroid was dying of love and jealousy. He had moments of enthusiasm and despair, supplicating adoration and hate. Sometimes he would take his wife in his arms with savage ardor, saying, in a suppressed voice:

“You are mine! Your beauty belongs to me! I possess those eyes that I gazed at from a distance for so many years like inaccessible stars. How can they say that I do not believe in Heaven? You are my heaven, your beauty and the intoxication that



it gives me, the proud thought that no other being like you lives upon this earth, and that this treasure is mine. Yes, I believe in eternity. Eternity is one minute of my life when I feel your heart against mine, and I bury my lips in your hair. Ah! you have given me a hundred very happy centuries!"

Then seeing her immovable and speechless, as if frightened by these wild transports:

"You do not love me!" he would exclaim. "I know it! I am not your lover; I am your master! Now, then, superb slave, I steal these kisses as I stole you. What does it matter? it is one more luxury. What supreme delight it would be to die now if you would die with me."

Soon he would pay for these disordered outbreaks by overwhelming returns of distressing grief.

"Alas! What am I to you?" he would sigh. "What could you find in me worthy of your sovereign beauty? Even what I once had I have no longer. Youth, art, enthusiasm, all is merged in my love! If you wished it the world would be at your feet as I am. Every man that you look at loses his reason. Kemeneff stammers like a school-boy when you glance at him. And that other; the one whose name you have never told me, that you love yet, I presume—where is he? Perhaps he still lives separated from you? Dead or living, oh, how I envy him!"

One day, after looking at her for a long time with



the frightful stare of one whose mind wanders, he said, slowly, as he clenched his hands, "How I envy those kings in the east; the same funeral pile consumes them and the wives that they have loved."

A short time after the physician came from Pau to see him. As he was going to his carriage escorted by the mother-in-law:

"Madam," said he, in a very low tone, "your son-in-law adores his wife. It is easy to see and to understand it, but he loves her too much. He must be calmer. Try to arrange it; you understand me, do you not?"

"Very well, doctor, I will do the best that I can."

But she forgot this time to follow out the doctor's prescription. With her cold, tranquil, penetrating eye, she watched the progress of this crisis as she watched her oxen as they paced the furrows in her meadow. Sometimes a heavy fear oppressed her. Godefroid, from day to day, showed more confidence in his "guardian angel," as he called her. The angelic widow would have given the best feather out of her wings for an answer to the question that she dared not ask, for the sick man felt that she was on the point of asking it, and eluded it with an eagerness that augured badly. This reply was in a notary's safe at Pau, from whence it would emerge in good time, but Martscha was ignorant of this fact.

"At any rate," said she to console herself, "Kem-



eneff is rich. What matters it who my son-in-law leaves his money to?"

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

"GIVE ME THAT LETTER."

Jealous as he was, Godefroid felt the deepest respect for his wife, and scorned himself for having stooped so low as to watch her. He tried to calm his scruples in this manner:

"I submit her to an unworthy proof, but in doing so," thought he, "I force myself to recognize her loyalty, which is without reproach."

One day his heart was torn by such a terrible discovery that he asked himself if he was going to fall dead to the floor before making a sound.

Kemeneff was preparing to return to his villa; before mounting to the seat he took leave of Jenny, while her mother was petting the thin and tired horses, exhausted by the long trips that they had been making for weeks. Suddenly, after gazing around her, Jenny took a letter from her pocket and slipped it into the prince's hands, he hid it as quickly as if this maneuver was a familiar one to them. Before the husband, who was secreted on the upper floor, could recover from his surprise, the



horses and their master had disappeared down the road.

If Godefroid had had the strength he would have bounded upon his perfidious wife, and when the crime had been admitted would have avenged himself God only knows by what violence. But a faint turn nailed him to the spot at first. When he was able to reflect he comprehended that it was necessary to dissimulate in order to surprise two guilty ones instead of one.

For a week this single idea, this one desire, gave him such incredible energy that at this time his health seemed to improve. His strength returned, although he took very little nourishment, and sleep was a thing unknown.

He even had the will power to address his wife with an apparent deceitful calm, but the very sight of this adorable creature made him suffer a thousand deaths. For one whole week he watched her actions night and day as one watches the movements of a criminal condemned to death. But he saw nothing suspicious. He was beginning to fear that he should be unable to conduct to the end his work of revenge when one day a note was received announcing a visit from the prince the next day.

At the usual hour for Kemeneff's appearance Jenny seemed nervous, and taking her book went into the garden. She soon feigned to be deeply interested in her reading, and directed her steps toward the oak walk now despoiled of its leaves.



Godefroid, sniffing the air as a wild beast scents its prey, glided behind a laurel hedge whose green foliage made an impenetrable screen. As he glided from bush to bush he could see his wife's elegant, supple figure walking slowly with her hands crossed over the book, which was now closed, her head bent, with all the signs of bitter distress. He thought of the promenade that they had taken together in this same place the evening of their arrival at Pomeyras.

"What are these old trees that she loves so much going to see?" thought he, shivering in spite of himself, as he thought of the drama so near.

A rumbling of wheels was heard in the distance. Jenny turned her head to assure herself that she was alone. Upon a sign from her hand the horses covered with foam stopped. The prince threw the reins to the servant, and descended from the carriage.

"To the stables, and unharness them!" ordered he.

Then, as the carriage disappeared, Kemeneff bowed respectfully before the young woman.

"Here is the reply to your letter," said he, handing her a letter that she at once put in her pocket.

"I can hardly wait to read it, but I dare not. I always fear that he may appear. He watches me constantly, and this suspicion is atrocious."

She carried her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I pity you with all my heart," said the prince.



At the least familiar gesture this man would have been dead, for five steps from him Godefroid was caressing the trigger of his revolver, but Kemeneff and Jenny took the road to the house without even having touched hands.

On the way the prince met Madame Sauval, and seemed to allow himself to be taken possession of by her, while Jenny disappeared down a narrow walk protected from sight by a wall of cypress. As she drew the letter from her pocket a man rose up before her, so changed that she gave a cry, believing that she was to be attacked by a criminal.

“Give me that letter,” commanded her husband in a suppressed tone.

She trembled and drew back, holding the envelope behind her out of his reach. Godefroid suspected that she would take to flight if he took one step more, and he felt unequal to it. What pursuit were his limbs capable of?

To frighten Jenny, only to frighten her, for he pitied her when he saw the look of mortal agony on that dear face, Godefroid showed her the pistol that he held.

“Do not undertake to run away,” said he. “You see that I am determined to have that letter.”

“What I see is this,” replied the young woman—“that I pass in your eyes for the vilest of women. That is what I get for doing as I did. My God! how unhappy I am!”

She commenced to cry, but Godefroid took no



notice of her tears. He continued in the same harsh, inflexible voice:

“I am unhappier than you are, and I do not merit it. Give me that letter.”

“Antoine,” said she, placing her hand on her husband’s arm, “I beg of you do not get excited. Poor friend, dear in spite of all. Is it possible that you no longer esteem the wife that you loved?”

“All women are deceitful; all men betray them. Life is one long falsehood. My experience is like others’; but I wish to know my disgrace, to relish it, to learn just how far it goes, to know how long I have wallowed in it. If this proof that I have should escape me do you think that that miserable fop of a Kemeneff would be spared? Ah! Ah! I have the man that you love now, do you see! Yes, I will kill him! Do you hear?”

“Yes, alas! yes, I hear you,” groaned she. “My God! What shall I do? You have confidence in my mother. Go to her. Before you she shall open and read the contents of this letter. If she swears to you that these lines are only a response written by the most loyal of hands in answer to a most honest demand——”

“I have no confidence in anybody,” interrupted Godefroid. “The letter!”

“Well, here it is,” said his wife. “I have done the best in my power; God is my witness.”

At first as he glanced at the address Godefroid



was stupefied to see a name that he little expected to find there. It was addressed like this:

TO PRINCE KEMENEFF,  
At his villa,  
Biarritz.

(To be handed to Madame Godefroid.)

Suddenly, recognizing the handwriting, the irritated husband gave a cry of horror.

“O’Farrell!” cried he. “It is he! It is he who is making a fool of me! I understand! The prince is only a go between. But Patrice! Patrice! Oh! this will be the greatest grief in my life!”

Jenny became very pale, her features changed their expression. With a flash of indignation and superb assurance she said to Godefroid.

“Yes, it is Patrice. But before insulting anybody further, read what he has written.”

“I am overcome with grief,” read Godefroid, aloud. “Is it possible? Is this doctor not mistaken? So much progress in eight months by this terrible disease! Has he not been happy? They said that happiness would make him live. Thank you for letting me know; I will start at once. Oh, that I never had left him! this friend that I have loved so tenderly, more than he ever knew, for I would have given my life for him! I gave him all that I could! And you, too, have generously paid your debt. God will reward you for it! I shall start on my journey, and must hasten to prepare for my absence. I must also find some pretext for



my arrival, for he must not have any suspicion. I wish him to keep up the illusion to the end. Watch on your part, and let us do our duty until the last hour. I shall see you soon. My heart is overflowing with sorrow that no human being can comprehend.

“PATRICE.”

Godefroid folded up the letter without saying anything, and put it in its envelope with the same precaution that he would have replaced a poisoned dirk in its sheath. His hands did not tremble. His face, calmed by that solemn voice which called him from the tomb, had already a tranquil but majestic solemnity imprinted upon it. A landscape scorched by a burning sun changes its aspect in a second like this, when a cloud gathers in the heavens, announcing a storm.

“Ah! It is then the end!” said he, without looking at Jenny. “I knew very well that it would be short, but I thought that perhaps it would be a little longer. Poor Patrice! he never suspected when he wrote these lines that he was warning.”

“God is my witness,” sobbed the young woman, “that it is not my fault that you read them.”

He took her in his arms, and pressed her to his heart.

“Forgive me; can you forgive me?” he asked. “Forgive me all. I have loved you too much, and it is that which is killing me. Ah! this love, if only you do not regret it more than I! A little



patience. It was better that I should be warned. Henceforth I shall not be suspicious or unjust. Now, I believe that there are faithful friends and generous hearts, and it is so good to believe it! Now, my dear Patrice, you will not have to seek a pretext for coming to Pomeyras!"

Just then a bell announced dinner. Jenny had her head on her husband's shoulder, trying to conceal her tears. He kissed her forehead, saying:

"How grateful I am to you for pardoning me! The bell has called us; we must not forget that we have a guest to-day. Ah! that bell! It seems as if I heard it for the first time only yesterday in the oak walk. Do you remember? It rang for me then, the happiest hour of my life. Now it is a farewell that it rings. Between these two tinklings the happiest hours of my life have passed. Let us go! no more weakness! Give me your arm, my child, and we will appear like two people who have been reconciled after a scene. Be tranquil; I shall do nothing more hereafter."

She walked softly, guided like a blind person by her husband, for she kept her hands over her eyes to prevent the tears from gushing forth.

"Walk a little faster," said he, softly. "The dinner must not get cold. Kemeneff must be hungry."

He pretended to speak in an elated tone, but as they approached the house, he asked:

"Promise me one thing, the same as if you were promising a—some one who was very near his end.



Never repeat to a soul, never! the miserable folly that you saw me commit a short time ago."

"Ah!" responded she, "do you believe that it is necessary for me to make such a promise?"

They entered the parlor where the prince was counting the moments, for he had reason to be uneasy at this long absence. But when he saw Godefroid's smiling face and eyes overflowing with tenderness for his wife, he forgot all his fears. That day he left more convinced than ever as to his host's blindness as to the number of days he had to live.

When the phaeton had disappeared Godefroid asked Jenny for her arm, and together they made a tour of the garden under the warm rays of a winter sun. At first they walked in silence. The young wife would have liked to have said something, but she felt that he was making a farewell visit, and all ordinary subjects of conversation would seem in his eyes cruel, out of place, or ridiculous. Godefroid was the one who talked, but one would have said that he was talking to himself rather than to his companion. He seemed to wish to live over his past life by recalling remembrances of it. Jenny, for the first time, knew this man's history, ordinarily he talked so little.

She could see the poor schoolmaster's child seated at the organ in the little village church, then the young student, studying music with passionate fervor, gaining his first success, winning his first



applause. Then the young master artlessly proud to hear when he passed a crowd:

“That is Godefroid!” and soon, to his complete surprise, he was no longer poor. Then, after that he met Jenny Sauval, and it was nothing but her.

“Until then my life was only a tiresome journey,” said he. “After that it became a temple, where I found the divinity dreamed of, and which I never left.”

They reached the gate leading to Madame Sauval’s small farm, and which marked the limit of the inclosure. Godefroid stopped and gazed at the Pyrenees, whose white tops obstructed the horizon.

“How beautiful they are,” sighed he, as he looked at them. “How many years will you be there, you indestructible giants! How many insects like me will you see swarm in this place and then disappear? I do not envy you your eternal duration. One of those thrills that I feel when your hand touches mine, my dear, consoles me for not living always. How beautiful you are! How I have loved you! How I love you now! Do you hear me, you mountains? I love her, and I am happy!”

He fell into silence for a moment, and then kissing his wife’s hand, he said:

“Yes, I am happy. And if our friend should arrive later than he expects, of all my words that is what you must tell him. Now let us return. I have just time to write a letter that must go out to-night.”



He went up to his room, and could only write a few lines in such an altered handwriting that these lines would tell the story that he must die.

“Poor friend, you can come without seeking any pretext. Come quickly, I beg of you. I wish to talk with you before. GODEFROID.”

Then he fell back in his chair unconscious.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

“HAS HE ARRIVED?”

The shock is severe for the strongest of men, if he learns suddenly that he must die, and Godefroid had no idea that he was so near his end. In spite of his rare courage the shock prostrated him.

They were able to revive him, and when the physician visited him in the evening he requested to be left with him alone.

“How many days yet? Several?” asked he.

“Do not be alarmed,” replied the physician. “It was a simple faint.”

“I am not alarmed, but I wish to know. Do not treat me like a child. Will it be fifteen days?”

The doctor seemed to have suddenly become deaf.

“Eight, then?”

“Something like that.”

“Shall I suffer much?”

“I can assure you, no. As little as possible. For an instant probably.”

“Ah! so much the better! That is too much, for our loved ones to have to pass long hours about the repulsive disfigured object that death makes of us. Doctor, will you do me a great and a last service? Will you make my wife believe that her presence causes me dangerous emotion. That she must come



only when I send for her. Poor little one! She must not see all the villainous things that precede the most villainous of all."

"It shall be as you wish," said the doctor, as he withdrew.

From thence it was established as a measure of prudence that Jenny should go into the sick room at certain hours only, and that she should not stay there over a certain time. Godefroid spent one hour preparing for the first visit, with all the coquetry of a lover. Before the young woman's appearance everything pertaining to medicines were put out of sight, the vials and glasses were carried into an adjoining room, and the room carefully ventilated. Then he was shaved by his valet, perfumed, brushed, and clothed in spotless linen. Then Godefroid would say:

"Ask madam if she will be so good as to come to see me."

Sometimes when she was there he would feel the approach of one of his terrible attacks which occurred more frequently now. Forcing himself to smile he would quietly beg her to retire, pretending that he wished to sleep, and the poor woman would obey, feigning belief in what he said, for she knew from the doctor that the slightest contradiction would render the crisis fatal. The moments that Godefroid passed, holding Jenny's little hand pressed in his own, were moments of supreme happiness to him, although he never said the word love.



He seemed to go over his past life, returning to the time when his love for her was concealed in himself like a rash hope. And a thing no less strange! he renewed his passion for music, and spoke of his works, of great masters, of the opera, the successes and failures that were produced there. One day he even wished to hear the grand aria from Adossides which had been their common triumph. She was obliged to accompany herself, and in the midst of the piece she burst into tears, from that time Godefroid never mentioned music.

During this time the invalid was greatly pleased by a call from Kemeneff, for his conscience reproached him for not having appreciated the loyalty of this friend who had always been a warm admirer of his works. This time, like a well-bred gentleman, he did not unharness his horses, but inquired at the door for the invalid. But Madame Sauval would not listen to that, and forced him to seat himself in the little parlor, and then there was a conversation, such as Moliere delighted in, between them.

“Poor man!” said Kemeneff, in a low voice. “Do you think that his disease is progressing rapidly?”

“My poor daughter!” groaned the mother-in-law. “A widow before the end of the first year of her marriage!”

“Do they think the end is near?”

“It is a matter of days only. The unhappy child may be a widow to-morrow.”



“It is a singular destiny for this talented man. At one time I believed that he had a great future before him.”

“Alone in the world, and so young! As for myself, it does not matter. I am old and shall die one of these days. I have suffered so much!”

“He had a good heart. He adored his wife.”

“Ah! yes, doubtless he adored her. But these artists look so little on the practical side of life! And my daughter is so disinterested almost—imprudently so. God knows if he will leave her anything but a stainless name.”

Kemeneff understood by this that the affair of the will was not going to please her. Supposing that Madame Sauval would not commit the “imprudence” of disturbing her daughter at the invalid’s bed-side on a subject as serious as that, he arose and took his leave.

“I beg of you,” said he, “give my most sincere sympathy to your son-in-law. As to Madame Godefroid, please present my best respects. I never cease to think of her.”

“My daughter has always considered you her best friend.”

“After Patrice O’Farrell,” thought the prince.

He kept to himself the secret of the correspondence of which he had been cognizant. He departed after ten minutes’ audience, and refreshed himself and his horses at a neighboring inn.

Six days had passed since Godefroid wrote



Patrice. He counted the hours, haunted with a fear that never left him, but which he mentioned to nobody:

“If he should get here too late!”

Jenny had never mentioned it, but she had confided to the telegraph the lines written by her husband, for she, too, feared that the post was too slow. With electricity one gained four days.

One evening toward the end of January he heard the noise of wheels before the house. Godefroid by earnest entreaties had persuaded his wife to go out to drive for an hour to take the air. His ears recognized the rumbling of a carriage that was to be let at the station in desperate cases. He sat up in his chair with animated face and eyes sparkling with joy.

“It is O’Farrell!” said he to Madame Sauval, who was sitting by him. “I know that it is he. How quickly he came! You must leave us alone.”

Almost immediately the young man entered.

“Do not embrace me too hard,” said the invalid. “You will crush me. Sit down there; give me your hand, and let me keep it. Ah! the good, brave hand! Do you know that I would like to hold it like this when the moment comes for me to take the great leap into the unknown. What happiness to see you! But how did you get here so soon?”

“I received your dispatch.”

“My dispatch? Ah! yes, I understand. She has thought of everything. Well, here you are; I can



now talk seriously with some one. You can imagine how hard it is to talk of the rain and the beautiful weather when one is as I am. But I must spare the nerves of these two poor women for whom I am preparing an entertainment, as you know. I take care of them the best I can. Jenny is out driving. Did you not meet her?

“Talk of yourself. How do you feel? I did not expect to find you looking so well.”

“I should advise you not to rely upon that too much. My body is always pretty well, but it does not cure my heart; it simply incloses it. I recall to myself those fairy dancers who stand before the trap-door, their costumes held only by the wires that they pull to shift the scene. Only this time costume and the person will go into the trap at once.”

“There is one thing that will not go into the trap, my friend; that is your soul. But perhaps you may be cured yet. Sometimes with your disease people live to a good old age.”

“That remains to be seen. While waiting let us improve every hour and minute, for between us old age is not what I fear the most. Do you remember? I asked for a year, one year only! It lacks three months of that time. Still if it only lacked that!”

“Have you not been happy?”

“I have been on the point of being so once or twice. But this happiness has cost others too dearly, you first, and then her. Oh, Patrice! how



I would like to know! How much easier I should die if I could have two questions answered. Do you love her? Are you the one that she loves?"

"Always the same ideas!" sighed the young man as he arose, incapable of hearing more.

"They are not the same ideas. I see myself clearly now, and I assure you that it does not make me proud of myself. Ah! if you only would tell me all! What do you fear? There, where I am going there are no reproaches or quarrels. Come! sit down beside me again. Let me take your hand, this hand that I have seen when so small and weak. How strong it is now. How regularly, how calmly, and how strong your pulse beats! What a difference to my poor used up machine!"

Godfroid was silent, holding in his own his friend's robust, healthy hand. He thought with the instinctive envy of a dying man that these bounding arteries that he felt would beat many millions of times after his should have stopped forever.

Suddenly it seemed as if a storm was raging under his fingers. The pulse became quickly agitated. Almost at the same moment a carriage that Patrice had heard first stopped before the door; it brought back Jenny. Quick steps could be heard coming up the stairs; the tempest redoubled. Outside the door a voice asked, with a new vibration in it:

"Has he arrived?"

The door turned softly on its hinges. The one



who opened it remembered that she was entering her husband's chamber, and that he was condemned to die soon. As soon as she entered the sick man could not feel Patrice's pulse at all. The young man's blood stopped in his veins; his secret was not his own.

“Good-day, Patrice!”

“Good-day, madam”

That was all. Their eyes met without the slightest agitation under Godefroid's look. Their hands were stretched out without hesitation toward each other. Two friends whose heads had been whitened by age would not have been more calm at meeting after a short separation. There was not a tremor of Patrice's features or voice, for he had come fortified against all emotions of life or death, prepared for all surprises.

But he had, without knowing it, betrayed his secret. Godefroid had no more questions to ask. The sacrifice that he had accepted without seeing it, when passion blinded him—he understood now all those generous falsehoods, for the clearness of sight that precedes eternal night had been given him. He was no longer egotistical, suspicious, or jealous. He was simply a man full of generous instincts, who had become penitent and good as he approached his last moment. Once more before he left this world, he wished to give himself the pleasure of making others happy. But at first he must reflect.



After asking the traveler a few questions as to his journey, and of his life and work in Algeria, Godefroid said he was tired, and wished to be left alone.

“Go and look at our garden,” said he to Patrice. “Do the honors, my dear, and above all show him our Pyrenees. Can one see them plainly to-day?”

O’Farrell listened to these words with such evident stupefaction that the sick man smiled. For the first time since his arrival at Pomeyras he realized how far death had advanced in its work. Godefroid freed from that jealousy, that was once stronger than friendship or confidence! Godefroid arranging a *tete-a-tete* between him and Jenny!

“Alas!” thought he. “What more certain sign that death was near!”

One could tell by seeing these two promenade in the garden with lowered heads and hardly speaking, that they had little heart for the walk. After a long silence the young woman spoke, and her words showed what filled her thoughts:

“If you could know how I have watched over him and cared for him, how good and devoted I have tried to be, from the first day, even the first minute! Why were you not here? You would have seen that I did my very best to keep my promise to you. And after all that to be where we are now so soon.”

Patrice trembled, thinking that the torture of “being here” would have been more than he could have endured. Sooner, a thousand times sooner his



solitary exile in Algeria. He was moved by the tears that he saw in her eyes, and replied:

“Be at peace. I know that no other hand but yours could have prolonged his life so long.”

“Alas” said she, sighing, “would to God that I could exchange places with him; I would willingly do so.”

The young man walked with bowed head, he could think of nothing to say. What could he reply that would not be an outrage to this dying friend or an irony toward the one whom he had condemned to live without happiness? They continued their sad promenade, lost in thought, or rather dominated over by the thought of that dark hour, that go where they would was not far distant from them. They felt that everything had gone against them, that all their sacrifices had been in vain for themselves as well as Godefroid. But the future was still more desolate for Patrice, a vow that he had not forgotten prevented him even from the sacrilegious hope that the most noble hearts are haunted with sometimes at the sight of an open grave. So as not to succumb under the weight of his hopeless grief, he repeated to himself Pere Chrysostome’s words which had given him so much comfort that first night at Telagh:

“What you did was well done.”

But these words that he breathed to himself were only a revolting, ironical echo. The emptiness of



his disappointed life seemed every moment more discouraging and hopeless.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### “MY POOR PATRICE!”

The next day, in the morning, before the hour when he usually sent for Jenny, Godefroid managed it so as to see Patrice alone.

“I feel a little better this morning; I slept some,” said he. “You gave me a good remedy, joy at seeing you again. When I think that but for this visit I should—— But thank Heaven! I shall not leave this world with the indelible trace of most frightful egotism on me. Is it possible that I have permitted, wished, and done all of these cruel acts! Ah! my friend! What is there more formidable in this life than love? It not only leads us to commit crimes, but it makes us consider these crimes as the most natural thing in this world, as a superior right.”

“Why do you talk of crime?” said O’Farrell. “What man can flatter himself that he is just if it is not you, my brother and my friend.”

“Your friend! Do you think that I have acted toward you like a friend? You are not exacting.



But patience! Do not judge me hastily before the hour shall come which judges all the other hours of my life."

"Be calm, you are talking too much."

"So be it; I will be quiet, but listen to me, and do as I say. Order the carriage, and take the train for Pau; you will be there in less than two hours. Here is the name of a notary that you will go to see; he has my will. Bring him here without losing a moment; tell him to bring the document."

"But," observed Patrice, "you disturb this man uselessly. A few lines in your own handwriting is worth all the notaries and stamped paper in the world."

"No, no! I have a countryman's ideas. I believe in a notary and official paper. Go, my old friend; no lawsuits after I am gone. You will be here in five hours. Bring back Maubourguet dead or alive. I shall be on live coals until I have everything in order."

"Be quiet, and I will go this very moment. You will not? My God! it is not the journey to Pau that I care for, it is the thought of leaving you for half a day. Why can I not simply send a telegram?"

"No. If the telegram should be lost on the way! If the notary should not be at home! You would find him; you would bring him, willing or not. When I have seen him, when I have done what I wish to do, a great load will be lifted from my heart. It is a misfortune for a man to love too pas-



sionately and too late. Remember these words some day—She will pardon me. Now kiss me and go.”

The two friends embraced, and later it was a great consolation to one of them to remember this caress which revived the best days of their love.

Patrice did not take a carriage, he was a good walker, and the station was near. He started off at a rapid pace, never suspecting that he left Madame Sauval half wild with uneasiness and curiosity. The good lady was to all appearances devoted to her duties as nurse, but she kept an attentive eye on this field of battle, this Waterloo which was to decide her daughter's future and her own. But this time Grouchy came too soon. Why was not Algeria farther away. Why did this detestable O'Farrell come to thwart Kemeneff's affairs?

This private interview between the two friends followed by Patrice's hurried departure toward the station meant nothing good. Where was this young man going? To seek a doctor? There was no necessity of so much mystery for that, a servant would do the errand just as well. Then, too, Godefroid felt better if one was to believe him.

“How tiresome this struggle for life is!” thought Martscha, thinking only of herself, forgetting this struggle against death going on before her very eyes.

Meanwhile Godefroid had, as usual, given himself up to his valet's care, but just as they were about



to call his wife he had an attack of suffocation. The servant was accustomed to these attacks, and went for the mother, as he knew his master's wishes.

"Ah! this time it is the end!" groaned the invalid, gasping for breath. "Say nothing to my wife. I do not wish that she should see my suffering. Let me try. I have a few moments yet. I must write."

In truth it was the end. When the attack was eased the last threads were broken. But, like a bird whose cage door is left open, and who hesitates, surprised before trying his wings, so this soul delayed its departure. Godefroid himself thought that a respite had been accorded him. But he saw he was near the dark journey. Twelve o'clock sounded. Five hours yet before Patrice could return.

He reflected a few moments, and then motioned his mother-in-law to approach:

"Tell them to leave us alone," said he; "I wish to say a few things that nobody must hear. Bring me a pen and paper."

The conversation was not long. At the end of about ten minutes Jenny was sent for to come to the room. If it was Godefroid's great desire to deceive his wife as to his condition, she, on her part, took every care to make him believe that she was deceived. Although she always knew the slightest details as regarded his illness she always avoided



any allusion to it, speaking to her husband, always in a light tone and with a smile on her lips.

“I am not pleased with you this morning,” said she, “for you have stolen more than a hour away from me. I excuse you, however, since you gave it to your friend.”

“To our friend,” corrected Godefroid. “Do not be jealous of it; you will have me to yourself for several hours. He has gone to Pau.”

“Then what made you so late? It was your fastidiousness, I am sure of it. Do you think, my dear Antoine, that I am not able to give you credit until you are cured, for a few strokes of the brush to your hair and the trimming of your beard?”

“One must not give credit to bad debtors,” said the dying man, softly, as he kissed his wife’s hand with a strange timidity, as if some troublesome third party had ordered this reserve.

This tiresome third person was there, a witness to the amorous caresses of this husband. He was standing there between the two. The dying man saw this invisible messenger lying in wait in the darkness, mute and livid, waiting for the hour to strike.

“What a pretty rose you have in your bodice!” said Godefroid, while his eyes looked higher than the flower, to the face that he loved best in all the world.

She gave him the rose, and he pressed it to his lips; as he made the movement to do so she saw



that one of his fingers had a spot of ink on it, still moist.

“What!” exclaimed she, taking the soiled finger softly in her hand, “is this the way they perform your toilet! It was hardly worth while to be so long. You look like a neglected schoolboy. Give me a brush and some soap! This time your wife will be of some use!”

She started to go into the dressing-room, but he held her with what remaining force he had.

“My wife, my beloved wife!” sighed he, giving Jenny a look that had as much love in it as human eyes could contain.

When he had gazed at her for several moments he said, in a singularly sweet and quiet voice, these words which the young wife would remember in days to come:

“Dearest treasure of my life, leave this stain as it is. I made it by giving those I love the last proof of my affection, that they may be happy when I am no more. Do you hear me, Jenny? let this stain remain on my finger. It will be the last seal of my passport, if what you have said so often, that the step that I am going to take is only a voyage toward another life. I would like to go with this mark upon me.”

A cruel agony, like the grasp of an enemy's hand, obliged him to stop. His features changed so quickly that the young wife nearly fainted, for it seemed to her that the Godefroid that she had al-



ways known had departed, leaving in his place a twin brother, but aged, despoiled, and devastated, still imposing with his air of heroic grandeur.

He could only say these words which were his farewell ones to those here below:

“My poor Patrice! How I wished to wait for him!”

Then, after a short silence, a name passed his lips, a name that he had scarcely pronounced since his childhood:

“God!”

At the expected hour Patrice and his companion reached the station, and were very much surprised to find no carriage waiting for them. But as the weather was beautiful, and it was hardly dark, they walked the distance very quickly. When they reached the house, nobody was in the antechamber to receive them.

“Monsieur,” said Patrice to the notary, “will you take a seat in the parlor. I will go and see what is the matter up-stairs.”

Godefroid lay upon his large bed all dressed and seemingly asleep. His face was calm; all appearance of suffering had disappeared, and he seemed to have grown younger. What showed Patrice the kind of sleep in which he lay was to see that his hands held with the awkwardness of death a crucifix and a rose, Jenny’s rose.

Without looking to see if others were there, he



fell prostrate with his head upon the winding sheet and great sobs burst from him.

Suppressed moans replied to his from the other side of the bed. Separated by the dead as they were by the living, O'Farrell and Jenny wept.

During this time Madame Sauval was running from garret to cellar, giving orders, and making preparations, for death is a guest that does not pass over a threshold without causing more trouble and fatigue than a prince's visit. When the Roumanian entered the parlor with a lamp in her hand she was very much surprised to find a stranger seated in an arm-chair, hands in his pockets and coat buttoned up to his chin, for the night was becoming cool, and nobody had taken care to light a fire on the hearth.

The unknown arose thinking that she had come to conduct him to his client's room.

"Were you waiting for somebody, monsieur?" asked Madame Sauval, in an imperious tone.

"I am the notary," said this person, bowing. "Monsieur Antoine Godefroid sent for me."

"Monsieur Godefroid is dead!" said Martscha, darting a terrible glance at the man of law.

"But it is not my fault," stammered Maubourguet, for these hard, accusing eyes seemed to trouble him in spite of himself. "I came without losing a moment as soon as he sent for me."

"Did my son-in-law send for you?"



“Yes, madam. One of his friends came to find me at Pau. I have brought the will.”

“Was there a will?” said Madame Sauval. “Pardon, monsieur, but at such a moment. And you are the one who has received my son-in-law’s last wishes?”

“I am the one,” said the notary, with a bow. “Did you not know it?”

“No, nor my daughter either. Can one? Do the duties of your office forbid——”

“On the contrary, madam. The will contains certain directions concerning his funeral. He wishes to be buried at Pomeyras without any display or any invitations outside the family.”

“Poor man! so modest! so opposed to show! I recognize him in this. And his other desires?”

“All left to his wife,” said the notary, opening his bag.

“He had such a good heart!” sighed the mother-in-law.

This sigh, to tell the truth, resembled a sigh of relief.

“Then my poor daughter is the only heir to her husband’s fortune?”

“Yes, madam. Only——”

The Roumanian trembled; there was an “only!” Her heart commenced to beat as it had beaten only under two or three grave circumstances in her life. The man of law continued after having put on his



glasses, and found upon the paper the passage referred to:

“Only in case of a second marriage the wife will lose all rights to the estate, which will be divided in equal parts between two of the relatives of the deceased.”

The notary had had experience in such cases as this, so took off his glasses and took his hat perfectly indifferent as to braving the storm. But he did not know Martscha. She had had time to reflect. She said to herself that Kemeneff would be reduced some hundred thousand francs. She quietly replaced the handkerchief, parsimoniously wet with tears, in her pocket, from which she had taken it a little too soon. As she did so her hand touched the envelope that she had forgotten and of whose contents she was ignorant, for it was not addressed to her.

Her first impulse was to tell Maubourguet by whose hand and under what circumstances she had received the mysterious paper. Her usual prudence stopped this impulse.

“Eh! eh!” thought she. “That is a thing to be seen. We will not be in a hurry.”

She took her lamp and stepped aside to let the notary pass before her:

“Pardon me, monsieur, if I do not detain you longer. But just now there are so many thousand little details——”

Without troubling herself as to what this man



would do at six o'clock at night in the open country and unknown roads, she conducted him to the door a little quicker than etiquette demanded. He was furious, but before going out he had time to discharge this Parthian arrow cunningly chosen from his pettifogger's quiver:

"Good-night! Do not forget that the testator's will obliges you to seal everything up for the inventory, the——"

Madame Sauval interrupted this prophet of evil by closing the door in his face. Then she went up to her room, and carefully shut herself up there, coming out at the end of a quarter of an hour more tranquil in appearance.

"Whatever happens we will let it rest now," said she to herself. "I have nothing to do for three hundred days. Many things may happen in ten months!"



## CHAPTER XXVI.

“HE HAS NEVER LOVED ME!”

Ten months later, that is at the end of the autumn, the apartment in Rue de Vienne had resumed its ordinary aspect, with the exception that the piano was always closed and the widow in deep mourning never sang now.

Paris hardly remembers the name of the composer Godefroid or of a singer named Jenny Sauval, and God knows that Martscha is not desirous of recalling these two souvenirs.

Patrice left the cemetery after the sexton had finished filling his friend's grave, and went to the depot after a simple shaking of hands with the widow. He never saw her a moment without witnesses outside of the death chamber. It was a strange thing, but in spite of the Roumanian's strong nerves she was remarked during the ceremony by her extreme grief. One would have said that she was afraid to approach the coffin, as if from its icy depths a terrible voice might question her.

She wished to leave Pomeyras as soon as the legal formalities were over with; this was only an affair of a day; and if the maledictions of the living could trouble the repose of the dead, Godefroid would



have spent a very bad night in his tomb. Jenny seemed to have lost all will and all interest in life whatsoever, and allowed herself to be taken to Paris without the slightest resistance.

Once installed in her apartments, separated by two hundred leagues from her son-in-law's remains, the Roumanian recovered her superb calmness, and seemed relieved of some nightmare. She was not wanting in amusements. She had taken in hand the administration of her daughter's fortune. It was a medley, composed of documents printed in all colors and written in every tongue. Martscha was only to be seen before the bank windows and other large companies, for she acted as collecting clerk herself, and she said that nobody should stick a nose in Jenny's business.

There was no music, according to her ideas, to compare with the clink of the gold upon the marble of the cashier's desk. The silky rustle of the bank-notes counted one by one by the clerks magnetized her, and no voluptuous love tremor had ever been to her like this delicious thrill that she experienced as she held her hand tightly grasped around her pockets to defend herself against pickpockets.

Sometimes, it is true, the thought of the "relatives" poisoned her enjoyment. The detestable creatures! One day their avaricious hands would detach these coupons and handle these dividends. But then Jenny would be a princess.

"Princess!" repeated Martscha, closing her eyes.



“Unless—truly it is a good thing to have two strings to one’s bow.”

Meanwhile Kemeneff, in spite of several attempts, had not been received by the young woman, but his name in default of his person had often reached Jenny’s ears. Madame Sauval met him two or three times every week, and as her widowhood had become an old story to her, there was nothing to prevent her holding a conversation with his excellency. On her return she would acquaint her daughter with the fortunate accidental meetings.

“Poor man!” said she, “I cannot get it out of my head that he lies in wait expressly to meet me. He asks me a hundred questions about you, and is dying to see you. But he respects your desire for solitude. I asked him when he was going to install himself at Biarritz. Would you like to know what he said?”

“It is useless. I will not hear or see anybody,” said the young widow, softly shaking her head. “Why will they not permit me to wear my mourning in peace?”

If she had let anybody know her real thoughts she would have said that she wore mourning for two persons—one who was lying in the cemetery at Pomeyras, the other buried and giving no signs of life in his forest at Telagh. She would have said that she had a sincere attachment for each of them, different in their nature, but mixed with an unavowed bitterness almost equal. Godefroid she felt



angry at, for his last provision, not for the material results to her detriment, but for this jealousy that seemed to impose fidelity to the dead, at the risk of forfeit. The other irritated her by his indifference which was confirmed more and more as the weeks rolled by.

In order to hear from Patrice, Jenny was obliged to write the first letter. Since then the young man's letters had grown further and further apart. One would almost suppose that he wished to let the correspondence drop entirely. When he spoke of Godefroid it was with a constraint easily seen between the lines. One day, struck by this coldness, she asked herself:

“Can it be possible that he was not satisfied with the souvenirs of little value left him by his friend? Is he visiting his disappointment upon me?” This supposition seemed to her like an injury, and she refused to believe it. At least one thing was evident.

“He has never loved me!” sighed she. “And I have obstinately believed in this idea of a generous falsehood. What is there to prevent his speaking now?”

She suffered the double humiliation of a love that it was impossible to stifle, ridiculous after having been almost guilty, and the consciousness of her great error.

The twelfth month of her widowhood was passing away. Jenny felt that it was time to make an



effort to shake off her painful languor and look the future in the face, as a prisoner released from confinement asks himself what route his limbs, tired from so long a rest, should take.

She was nearly twenty-seven years old, and certainly there were very few women who were gifted to such a degree. But of what use were all these graces? What use was her youthful sacrifice, her unrequited heart, her music disdained like a jewel that is out of fashion, and so far as her beauty was concerned, she never thought of it now. It had been so long since she had seen anybody to tell her that she was beautiful! Her fortune was distasteful to her, as money earned too quickly, and that she must return some day should her heart venture to speak. She did not love her mother now, for sometimes the Roumanian had not succeeded in deceiving her, she who secretly flattered herself that she deceived all the world.

This model of mothers-in-law remarked to her daughter that they must not fail to be at Pomeyras on the anniversary of Godefroid's death.

"Assuredly," said the young widow, astonished at this pious respect for the dead. "It is our duty to assist at the service."

They left the next day, and Jenny found herself once more in the house where she was born; this time she had no feeling of joy. The memories that she tried to throw off took the place of those that had filled her heart from childhood.



“Alas!” thought she, “is there a place in the world that will not recall remembrances that are mixed with sorrow?”

The villagers thronged at the religious ceremony, although the greater part of them had never seen three times the one who had been for so short a time, “the master of Pomeyras.” As they left the church Kemeneff waited for the young woman to pay his respects and touch the tips of her fingers. After this ceremonious formality, all the parish gathered to see him mount the seat of his phaeton, and start off on a trot for Biarritz, to the great disappointment of certain prophets.

This proceeding of the prince sincerely touched the heart of Godefroid’s widow. She had considered him for a long time as a true friend, and he was the one in whom she had confided when she wished to recall Patrice to the dying bed.

The next day, when he made a visit to Pomeyras, this loyal gentleman laid his heart and his fortune at the young woman’s feet; she seemed to feel only a slight surprise at this, and said, without accepting or refusing him, that she was very much touched at his offer. Then she reflected a moment, leaning her head on her beautiful hand as she often did now since her widowhood.

“My dear prince,” said she at last, “I esteem you too much not to open my heart to you. It does not depend upon me to make you ‘the happiest of men,’ to speak in your own language. I swear to



you that I loyally did all in my power to give my husband happiness, otherwise it would be a trouble to me the rest of my life to think that he died from sorrow. Not a shadow of a guilty thought has made me blush before him. A souvenir only, the shadow of a regret that haunted my heart, separated us. That seems a little thing, does it not? Well, then, sooner than to impose upon another, it may be to myself also another year of torture, I will pass the rest of my life watching flocks on the poorest farm in this village."

Kemeneff approached the young woman, and kneeling before her said, as he kissed her hand:

"You are the woman that I thought you were, and now more than ever I love you. Speak to me without disguise, for a long time I have known your secret. Do you think still that Patrice O'Farrell thinks of you?"

"What does it matter, since I think of him? What will you do to take away this thought? Ah! if you only could!"

"What I will do is this," said Kemeneff, beaming with hope. "I will give you all that Godefroid could not give you. Love we will not talk of, for I know that he loved you passionately, unwisely perhaps. But you shall have what a woman of your age, beauty, and mind should have—recreation and society. At Biarritz the people had only to see you to be at your feet. You will see how at the court of my own country a Frenchwoman of your accom-



plishments will be received. You will see how a woman like you——”

“A woman like me would be unhappy on a throne,” interrupted she, “unless with time she can overcome disastrous illusions. Prince, here is my response—will you wait one year?”

“And in a year you will give yourself to me if you are assured that the absent one does not love you?” said he, with a smile and a trace of bitterness.

“Yes,” said she, gravely, “if I am certain that you still love me. One word more—you know what provisions have been made on my account? I come to you with empty hands.”

“Good!” said Kemeneff, shrugging his shoulders. “Do you class me with those heroes of romance who think that they give a supreme proof of their love in dividing their fortunes with a poor wife? Empty or loaded with treasures, your hands are to me the most beautiful in the world. My only merit will be to wait one year. But I shall wait. Will you allow me to see you sometimes?”

“Sometimes,” emphasized she; “that is to say very little. If you wish to please me you will pass the greater part of the time in Russia. My confidences must have made you see that with me you will not gain anything by being near, neither lose anything by being away.”

That same evening Jenny sent off a long letter to O’Farrell, which ended with these words:



“This is what Prince Kemeneff has said to me, without omitting one phrase. As to my reply, it is sufficient to know that I have taken one year to reflect in, and also—I do not conceal it from you that he has suspected—to have your advice. I do not know how to do without it in this case, in spite of the slight interest that you have shown as to my future; I remember the very active part that you once took in my decision in a case of the same kind.

“What shall I say? You can judge with perfect competence. You know the prince; you know me also. I have not changed in any way; I am exactly the same. All that I once said to you I say now, although I admit it the great hope of my heart is far from being justified by the pretension of disinterestedness that you have shown me.

“Now then, if you tell me to marry Kemeneff I will follow your counsel, for it will be given without restraint this time. I do not suppose that the prince has any all-powerful rights over your friendship. You owe him nothing that I know, and I can guarantee that he will not kill himself if I refuse to marry him. Thus you have no reason to sacrifice me over again unless the role of preparing sacrifices is particularly to your taste.

“Answer me when you have maturely reflected; we have time. You hold in your hands for the second time a poor woman’s happiness and her future. It is a very little thing, but little as it may be, in whatever mold your heart may have been cast, this



woman should be the first, unless the Algerian air has killed all remembrances in you.”

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

“WHAT SHOULD HE RESPOND?”

Telagh has changed very much since the young manager for the Societe de Forests has taken possession of his post. It is not that the place has become less solitary or wild, nor that one is less deprived of the comforts of civilized life. Patrice had not the ideas of our great colonizers of to-day.

“In matters of civilization,” said he, when he talked with a person capable of understanding him, “the welfare of the conqueror plays a less efficient role than the comfort of the conquered population.”

All the furniture that he had in his room yet was a deal table and two arm-chairs covered with sack-ing made by the carpenter belonging to the military detachment that occupied the *bordj* in the beginning. His narrow bed had not been enriched by a mattress, and the varied menus of Madame Lafon continued to make all the change at his table. One single cipher had increased into the billions the Telagh undertaking. The business was known in Paris as a choice investment. The shares



were constantly rising; Patrice did more for the others than he did for himself. In a few months the *bordj* had a school for the children, a chapel officiated in every week by a priest, and often visited by Pere Chrysostome, an embryo hospital and an apothecary. Roads were laid out through the woods, villages of wood-cutters were organized, and a saw-mill had just been completed. "M'siou Patriz," as the Arabs called him, was by turns engineer, doctor, general nurse, and primary inspector. He passed his days on horseback, and his nights, often very short, were very wakeful. Hopeless and nameless love always held the same place in his heart, but it was not the chief wheel in the mechanism of his life. He never ceased for one second to love, but he could, thanks to work, pass entire hours without suffering.

Work is the great liberator of the human soul conquered by sorrow. It not only opens the prison doors—often voluntary—which the remembrance of an unhappy moment has kept closed, but often with its rude hand it pushes us over the gloomy threshold. In spite of us at first we drag our heavy, weary steps, without ceasing to be reminded of the fatal souvenir by the bruising of the chains and the sight of the afflicted in distress which seems to fasten to us. But soon, like captives recompensed for their courageous efforts, we feel the iron weight diminish, and we assume the agile vigor of a free man; we become wrestlers after



having been conquered. Grief remains riveted to our heart forever, but in place of languishing, we proudly carry the dear and noble burden concealed from all.

Sometimes fate, that cruel master, opens by a trick our half-closed wounds. It was thus with Patrice, in two minutes Jenny's letter made him retrograde in his cure two years. All the madness of love, all his regrets for the past, took possession of his heart, and at the same time a dear voice breathed in his ear once more a cry of unrequited love. What should he respond?"

During the whole night he felt that his love was renewed with a new force. He was waiting for daylight to write these lines which would finish all this struggle between two bruised hearts:

"The one whom you should marry is not Kemeneff, it is I, I, whom you love and who have loved you since the first moment that I saw you."

Who could prevent him? One single obstacle existed at this hour between him and the widow Godefroid—the religion of a vow. But death had given liberty to the husband; had it not, at the same blow, released the friend from his crazy promise? Could the being lying in his tomb own anything, could he yet watch over his rights as to the wishes of the living? Is it anything but a thought, a name vibrating in a cold echo? What do human actions signify to one who has nothing to gain, lose, or suffer?



In the midst of feverish slumber Patrice invoked his friend's spirit.

"Do you hear me?" said he, "you who have cost me so dear. Are you there? If your soul is happy in its new home and knows nothing of events here below, what matters it to you if she wears a new nuptial ring? What matters a few words of love or caresses to you? If you see us, show by some sign that your spirit is near us. Perform one of those miracles so many tell of. Godefroid, I am calling you! I suffer. We both suffer, and you loved us both so much! Godefroid, have pity upon us!"

In the darkness of the night the young man listened, bathed in perspiration, lying in wait for the slightest sound—the cracking of furniture, a blow upon the wall, or a sigh like the rustling of a bird's wing. But in vain his nerves strained to the highest pitch. The night never was so still, outside as well as within. The forest even, so rarely quiet, did not make a moan. Life and death seemed to be in league to refuse the sign. A little before daylight, vanquished by fatigue, he closed his eyes not to open them until the sun was shining in full splendor. Suddenly the chapel bell rang in a certain way that he well understood.

"Pere Chrysostome has arrived!" exclaimed he, hastening to dress himself.

The indefatigable missionary had just entered Telagh, having traveled all night to reach there at his usual hour. When Patrice joined him mass



was over, and they turned their steps toward the school.

“Come,” said the young man, hurrying along the astonished priest. “To-day you have something else more difficult to do than to teach the catechism to children. You must decide the repose of the living and the dead, too, perhaps.”

When they were seated alone in the modest little parlor Patrice said:

“You know the only secret of my life. The first time we met here my lips, in spite of myself, told you. I was alone then in one of those frightful depressions when one would open his heart to a tree.”

“Do you regret these confidences?” asked the priest, in a brave and soothing voice.

“No, certainly not. If I have not spoken of it in our conversations it was because at any price I wished to forget, and I believe that forgetfulness is bought by silence.”

“The best remedies do not always cure. As to me, I never see you without thinking of your trouble, and often when far from you, I have prayed that it might become less heavy.”

“Prayers, like remedies, are sometimes useless.”

“Never !” exclaimed Pere Chrysostome, raising his beautiful face shining with faith. “But let us see—what has happened? I find you in low spirits. Now, then! What is it?”

“Her husband is dead.”

“Ah!” said the priest, “he is dead! Since when?”



“More than a year. It was to close his eyes that I made that trip to France. Poor friend! I was not able to conceal my secret to the end. As he was about to die he discovered it.”

The missionary sighed, and his face took on a sad expression. He said, with lowered eyes:

“That must have been good, to die discovering the sublime generosity of a friend! Well, my child, has the hour for earthly recompense come for you?”

“Yes,” said Patrice, rising. “The one that I love is free. A prince worth his millions has asked her hand in marriage. He is not the one she wants, I am the one. She has written and called me. To be mine she will become poor, but what matters that to her? She also knows how to love?”

“Well?” asked the priest, with a questioning look.

“Well, *mon pere*, in a fatal hour, pushed to extremities by the atrocious words of the unfortunate man who is no more, I took an oath; I swore that this woman should never be mine, even if by her husband’s death she became free.”

“Ah, poor children! How I pity you from my very soul!”

“Then,” asked the young man, in a gasping tone, falling into a seat, “you think that honor binds me even in death?”

“Honor, yes, the sacred religion of an oath. Listen to me. If you had sworn to bury your friend in this desert where we are, would you not have



braved all obstacles to bring his body here? Still what matters it where our bodies rest?"

"It is not only a body that it is a question of burying. It is a heart, and the heart of one other. Can you tell me that you would do that—you? Had I a right to make such a vow?"

"No, for God commands us not to make vows only to himself alone. If you had consulted me when there was time I should have said, 'Swear not!' But to-day the deed is done. The sacred promise weighs upon you forever. And now I am going to answer the question that you asked me—Should I have done that? I have done something more than that, for a living ear has heard your vow, while I have sworn to a dead friend at my feet. It was on my account, because of my treason, that he died in calling me accursed. Then pity, remorse, and terror filled my soul. Like you, I took an oath, and if I am before you now in my priest's robe in my beggar's poverty, far from all that I have loved, it is because I have kept my vow made to the dead. I, too, am dead; my name is forgotten by all. To certain voices that call me I am deaf. When soon, under some mountain rock, my tomb is dug out, those who will place me there, you perhaps, will not be able to put anything but a simple cross there. Do you still doubt, my son?"

Instead of replying Patrice drew near Pere Chrysostome, and seized his hands, crying in bitter despair:



“But you do not know that this unhappy man, one hour before his death, seemed to repent of all that he had done. I am as sure as I am that I see you, that he wished to change his last will and free me from my promise; I read it in his eyes, and suspected it from what he said. Alas! time failed him, death came too soon. Who knows what supreme, unspeakable regrets he took away with him?”

“Who knows what was the last thought of his dying will? Keep your oath, my son. You will be astonished when your hair is as white as mine to have suffered so much for so slight a thing as a woman’s beauty. What is a woman compared to peace all your life! What! you sacrificed your love when you were free to gratify it because you did not wish to see the despair of the living, and you would inflict upon the soul a death of torture beside which the most frightful suffering here is only play.”

“You will not hear the imprecations of your friend, it is true, nor his reproaches. But his unquiet soul, unhappy because of you, will be always present watching both of you, your slightest acts, hearing each of your words, assisting at all of your pleasures, and calling upon you and your companion the punishment of perjurers. Ah! it is horrible!”

“What!” said O’Farrell, “is that what is called repose in the other life?”



“This repose exists only for souls sufficiently purified. Which of us can tell when eternal happiness commences for us, that nothing troubles, neither cries, nor tears, nor resentments? When will this time, without a to-morrow, come with its indestructible peace? At the end of a year or at the end of a century?”

The priest arose, as if incapable of saying more. A few moments after, although he had promised to remain until the next day, he passed out of the inclosure, and started off toward the mountains.

Patrice wrote Jenny that same day.

“You have asked my opinion. I advise you to accept Kemeneff. How can you hesitate at the future that is before you? What being in this world could offer you more than the prince? With him you cannot fail to be happy. He loves you devotedly; you have proved it. I have the deepest esteem for him. Can the prayers of a faithful friend add any to your happiness?”

This was all. Twenty lines followed, speaking of Patrice's health, the work at Telagh, and the appearance of Pere Chrysostome.

The young woman read her sentence, and crushed the paper in her hand with a gesture of rage.

“The ungrateful, deluded man!” exclaimed she. “Not one word to show that he understands me! He shall be satisfied. I will marry the prince, but what good to make him wait one year? If he will



take me from a cruel memory, the sooner the better.”

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE DEAD HAS SPOKEN TO ME.

In spite of his promise not to come to Pomeyras only “sometimes,” Kemeneff hardly let a week pass without coming there. When Jenny reproached him for not keeping his promise:

“But,” said he, “ ‘sometimes,’ for those who love, means, ‘Not every day!’ ”

It was another thing when she recalled to his mind that he had promised to go to Russia.

“Do you know the best way to make me go immediately?” asked the prince, his eyes sparkling like a spoiled child’s. “It is to go there with me. You have imposed upon me one year of waiting, but it seems to me a century. What do you gain by making me unhappy until next winter? What more will you know than you do to-day?”

This response, said in loud and clear tones, was what the young woman had repeated to herself ever since she read Patrice’s last letter. What good was it to wait? There was no doubt in her mind to be dispelled. Hope was dead in her heart. A foolish fancy for two years had made her life wretched;



she had not had the courage to forget the dream for the reality, nor the glory of sacrificing her future for the dream. Was it not time to be cured, and what remedy could save her better than the life of luxury and excitement that was offered her?

At last two things determined her resolution—the fear of being ridiculous in Patrice's eyes and the ardent desire of freeing herself of this fortune of which every farthing was a souvenir of the past.

During the first spring days that followed Godefroid's death, Serge learned from his *fiancee* that his happiness should not longer be delayed. They wished to keep it a secret as much as possible, to celebrate the ceremony at Pomeyras, and leave immediately for St. Petersburg, where great festivities would greet the new princess. A reporter, very well informed—doubtless, by Madame Sauval—baffled this desire for silence in a sensational article which awoke the echoes of the press. Soon this news, that they wished to conceal, became the sensation of the day. One evening at the opera, in the directors' box, some one seriously advised the reproduction of "Constantin," on the score of general curiosity.

"I would like nothing better," replied the manager, who well knew his Paris, "if the princess would assume her role. We should make money."

As to the "Filets de Vulcain," it had never completely disappeared from the stage, but it now attracted crowds.



Naturally they did not forget the happy *fiancee*, Kemeheff. The journals doubled his millions. They made him a Russian nobleman, and according to the story, one who was fickle with women, a tippler of champagne, a great bear hunter—a strongly exaggerated portrait, at least as far as the bears were concerned. But they would have made him shoot lions on the plains of Siberia if it had been the fashion.

Everything was turned to his credit, even the story of the will. Jenny was not the one who was disinherited. It was the prince who had voluntarily refused to touch one penny of his predecessor's fortune, an example of disinterestedness that gave rise to piquant comparisons.

As to the ones who were to receive their relative's fortune, I doubt if they would have exchanged places with the prince.

One was a farmer in Tourraine, the other a city clerk in Bordeaux. In fact, a person might write one of those "studies," so much the fashion to-day, in depicting the joys, fears, hopes, and projects for the future that these good people and their families lay awake to talk about many nights. But our story does not concern them.

The only one whom nobody talked about was Patrice O'Farrell. Like everybody else, he had read the great news in the papers, and one can readily imagine that Jenny's haste to obey him did not give him unalloyed satisfaction. Seeing that



she did not communicate her resolution to him directly, he smiled sadly, and thought:

“She is doing her very best to hate me. I ought to wish that she may succeed.”

But he wished nothing of the kind. On the contrary, he asked himself what would happen if he should leave Algeria and go and say to the future princess:

“Here I am! Leave Kemeneff and his millions, and come with me into my desert.”

Two years before he would have been unable to have prevented himself from doing thus, but long months passed in solitude and work at the foot of the Atlas mountains calms the spirit and senses of a man. He still loved, and was only too sure that he should do so all his life, only he was used to his trouble, he was like those cripples who have made up their minds to be lame, and go through the world with one leg shorter than the other rather than spend their money on a doctor.

When Kemeneff's love allowed him to think, he thought that his titles, his millions, and even himself, were received in a very cool manner. But Madame Sauval became his confident, and had a word of consolation for him.

“What do you complain of?” said she. “Instead of waiting a year you are let off with three months. If there is any feeling of indifference I must admit that I know nothing about it. My daughter is not of the age to jump with joy like a schoolgirl on the



eve of her vacation. Believe me; do not fret yourself, and sleep soundly."

She, too, if she had told the truth, would have admitted that she slept badly, above all since they had left Paris for Pomeyras. Every night she saw Godefroid upon his death-bed, with clasped hands and the ink stain upon his finger. For reasons of her own this vision caused her disagreeable shivers. The worst was that she was obliged to pass through that room ten times a day, and it recalled ugly souvenirs, for she was obliged to arrange everything for their approaching departure from Pomeyras for the heirs. It was agreed upon that the evening of the marriage they should leave it.

The village notary drew up the contract under Madame Sauval's dictation. Kemeneff declared that he would sign with closed eyes. He only exacted two things—a magnificent settlement upon his wife and an income for his mother-in-law.

"I take your daughter from you," said he, "and you will see her probably only at rare intervals. We wish to feel that you are free from all material cares."

Eight days before the marriage the future husband and wife, their witnesses, the mother of the future princess, and the notary from Pomeyras were seated around a table in the parlor to listen to the reading and to sign the documents. A beautiful April sun lighted the scene.

Jenny was very agitated and pale, moving rest-



lessly in her chair, with her eyes vaguely fixed upon the table covered with its leaves of paper.

She had taken a promenade in the oak walk that morning which had recalled many remembrances. All the time, during her solitary walk, she felt as if two specters were walking beside her, the living and the dead. Without being able to explain why, it was the dead that she thought of. She seemed to hear him speak in the tender fatherly tone that he had used during his last hours. This voice was so sweet and kind that Jenny's heart, which had been hardened for some time by bitter thoughts, was suddenly softened.

Poor Godefroid! How unhappy, distracted, and crazy with love and jealousy he was when he came out of those bushes armed like a thief to intercept the letter that told him of his fate.

And he, the cruel, insensible Patrice, loved through all, even at this moment! Only once during their short meeting had they walked side by side in this garden. But then a sad vision came between them and froze their lips, and their melancholy promenade had no sweet thought attached to this spot that she would soon leave forever. To abandon Pomeyras would once have given her great sorrow, but now it was almost a relief.

She was to write this name Godefroid once more, that she was to change for a strange name. She looked sorrowfully at the horizon and the mountains with their white tops,



“Adieu to the dead! Adieu to the living!” said she to herself, not listening to the reading. “Adieu to all that I know, all that I love! The unknown calls me. God have pity on me!”

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“Have the parties any observations to make?” asked the notary as he read the last line in the contract.

He wiped his forehead, affected by the words that he had just written for the first time in his life, and, doubtless, for the last—“majesty,” “palace,” “hundred thousand roubles.”

Kemeneff bowed with an easy air, as if to say that all seemed right for him. He was the one to give; all the others received.

The notary thought that he had done a good day’s work. He said, bowing to Jenny:

“If madam will put her signature here?”

The prince gallantly arose, not wishing any other should have the honor of offering his *fiancee* the pen. But there are politenesses that cost one dearly.

In dipping the pen into the ink-bottle, which was too full, Kemeneff made a stain on his finger. The young woman advanced to sign, as soon as she saw the hand and the stain she gave a stifled cry, and fell back in a chair ready to faint. It was a strange thing, but Martscha, who was not impressionable, seemed to be overcome with terror. The prince was astonished that such a slight accident could have



such a terrible effect, and did his best to efface the stain.

Meanwhile Jenny arose, and reached the door with a tottering step.

“Mother,” said she, “I beg of you come with me.”

The Roumanian had already recovered her self-possession. She hurried to her daughter’s side, and gave her arm, making a sign to the other to have a little patience.

When the two women reached the landing on the next floor, instead of going to her own room, Jenny turned the handle of the door to the room that was not opened often, since Godefroid’s coffin had left it. She entered with an impassible, cold face. This time she led her mother.

“Do you remember his death?” asked she, as she closed the door. “He had a stain of ink upon his finger, like the one I have just seen. Had he been writing?”

“Without doubt,” said Martscha, with trembling lips. “Why is it not possible?”

“I wish to know what he wrote?”

The Roumanian replied in a perfectly natural tone:

“I know nothing about it, but one can easily imagine.”

“Imagine! You were near him when he wrote his last lines. You ought to know all about it.”

This was the time for Madame Sauval to make an important decision. She did not hesitate, but turn-



ing her large eyes where truth seemed to brim over like those of a child's, she said:

“This is what passed: One hour before his death, your husband wished to see a notary in Pau, and sent Patrice with a letter. He probably repented of his rigorous will, and wished to change it. Unfortunately he was dead almost immediately after, you remember. But there is every evidence that he stained his finger in writing that letter.”

Jenny thought, leaning her head on her hands. She could see her husband panting for breath on the pillows. She could hear these words, “I made this stain in giving my last pledge of affection to those that I love.” Certainly her mother's explanation was plausible, but she was still overwhelmed with grief. Without partaking in her mother's oriental superstitions, she was not entirely free from them.

“Do you understand now?” asked Madame Sauval.

Jenny raised her head and slowly said, with her eyes fixed upon the bed, with as much emotion as if the body still lay there:

“Yes, I understand one thing that is that the dead has just spoken to me. I must not sign.”

“What!” cried her mother, bounding from her seat, “you will not sign?”

“Not to-day, not so soon, not in this house. Perhaps we are committing a sacrilege, something very wrong. Think of it! he died there! At this moment I am greatly troubled; I wish to leave; I



am afraid; all the money in the world would not hire me to sleep here to-night. I beg of you go and send these men away, I will not see them again, go quickly."

"But the prince?"

"Tell him that I wish to speak to him, but not in this room."

A quarter of a hour after, Kemeneff left his *fiancee*, and took the road to Biarritz in a state of mind and an attitude that recalled to mind Hippolyte making his last trip over the road to Mycenae. Fortunately his horses were exhausted—he was only waiting until after the marriage to sell them—and they knew every little pile of stones on the way. No sea monster jumped out from a ditch to cause an upset, and they reached the villa without any accident.

"May the devil take me if I can understand what has happened!" growled the prince when alone in his smoking room. "Three months' delay! Will this new delay that she tremblingly asked for, looking prettier than ever, be the last? I am a fine fellow; I think Russians are capricious!"

A letter from Madame Sauval, dated the night before, was received the next day, but gave him but slight relief.

"We leave in an hour for Paris," wrote Martscha. "If my daughter should remain in Pomeyras she would certainly become crazy. Positively she has hallucinations; I believe that she has seen Gode-



froid's ghost. Such things do happen. But in eight days he will not appear again, and then she will sign. We shall see you soon, prince, shall we not? I trust you will have no feeling of anger. When the supernatural interferes one is not master of himself."

"All this is very fine!" thought Kemeneff. "But the ghost was not on the programme. To defend one's self against the living is enough of a task for a husband with a young and pretty wife. If I have to pick a quarrel with the dead into the bargain my task will not be a light one."



## CHAPTER XXIX.

“PITY ME, SINCE YOU PITY PATRICE.”

The Sabbath after the two women returned to Paris, the curate who was to preach gave up his place in the Saint Augustine pulpit to a priest who preached there for the first time. He was a tall man, with a long white beard. He wore a dark robe, crossed by a purple ribbon, from which was suspended a gold cross.

A sympathetic curiosity was aroused among the faithful ones at the sight of this old preacher with this superb head that might have served a painter as a model. When the old man commenced to speak and announced the subject of his short discourse, a young woman who was plunged in deep reverie, gave a sudden start, and raised her eyes toward him. She was so overcome with emotion that she forgot where she was, the crowd that surrounded her, her own existence even, all to follow this priest across the seas to this distant region that he described with such simple and picturesque eloquence.

The missions in Algeria! These words spoken during the discourse struck Jenny to the very heart. She eagerly devoured the evangelist's words, as with indefatigable zeal he solicited aid from the



faithful ones in France for those whom he called "his poor children." She listened to the simple recital of the wandering trips that he made through plains swept by simoons and through forests hardly accessible at the foot of the Atlas.

When he descended from the pulpit the man of God humbly extended his hand among the crowd for assistance, the young woman took off her gold bracelet, and threw it into the plate, tying her card to it.

"Will you please bring this jewel to my house," said she, in a low voice; "I will buy it of your poor people for much more than it cost."

She could not get the thought of Patrice O'Farrell out of her head the rest of the day. He had often spoken in his letters of a saintly missionary, his only friend there, and often his guest.

"If it should be the same!" thought the widow.

It was he! The next day a visitor was announced at the little apartment in Rue de Vienne. He gave the name of Pere Chrysostome.

Jenny awaited him, fortunately her mother was not present to disturb the conversation. Her emotion was so great that she would have given some hint to the good man if he had not been intent upon hunting for the bracelet in the depths of his large pocket, where it was carefully wrapped up in a piece of newspaper.

Wishing to have time to collect herself, she went



to the secretary to get some money. When she returned Pere Chrysostome was standing.

"Thanks, madam," said he, reaching out his hand. "God will repay you for what you have done for his poor creatures."

He seemed in a hurry to depart, by discretion probably, as he did not appear in the least embarrassed. On the contrary, there was something about him that showed that he had more than once in his life walked over carpets in elegant houses.

But this haste was not to Jenny's mind. She took a chair, and played with the gold pieces in her hands. The venerable mendicant was obliged to seat himself also. Now she must broach the subject. She could not say to the old man:

"For two years my heart has belonged to a man that you often see. I wish to know why he does not wish to love me."

Fortunately the priest came to her aid by entering into conversation with that ease which is the way of the world.

"Madam," said he, "I will tell the story of your bracelet to my poor children in Algeria. You would hardly believe how these generous acts touch them and prepare them to love France. They have so many less edifying *éxamples* under their eyes to inspire them with the reverse sentiments!"

"Yes," replied the young woman. "They say that the missionaries can not always rely upon the moral support of our colonists in Algeria."



Madame Sauval would have been proud of her daughter if she could have seen with what cunning Pere Chrysostome was lead to speak of the French colonists. The more severe his interlocutor was the more this apostle of charity defended them. It was fortunate that something told Jenny to accuse them.

“The Parisians,” said the priest, “have a bad habit. They form their opinions on all subjects from one piece. That there may be among our emigrants suspicious characters would not be surprising. But we have some before whom I bow with respect, whom I am honored to have for friends. I know one story in particular that I am sure would make you shed tears.”

“Oh! *mon pere*,” said the young woman, trembling with emotion, “make me cry, I beg of you. I promise you that I will pay a good price to your poor people for every tear I shed.”

At this romantic appeal the missionary softly smiled.

“*Mon Dieu!* I have said too much, I am afraid. But the prize tempts me. My friend—you will allow me to conceal his name—is a young hermit who lives in the depths of the forests.”

“To repent of his sins?”

“No, simply to cut wood. Up to this time your eyes have no desire to weep. But if I should tell you his story, and show you how unhappy he is, unhappy and without remedy!”



“An unrequited love, perhaps?” asked the young woman as she turned the gold pieces one by one, as if to assure herself that none were counterfeit.

“Unrequited because he willed it so. He sacrificed love to friendship, then his heart bled almost its last drop. To avoid all deception he left; to forget he worked.”

“Did he forget?” asked Jenny, in a changed voice.

“He has not forgotten. Already you are affected, and the story has scarcely commenced. Listen to the rest. After being married some months the friend on account of many griefs fell ill, and died. You think, do you not, that these two people, who loved each other so much, are at last united?”

“Why not?” asked Godefroid’s widow, breathlessly.

“Here the drama commences, one can hardly believe who has not known the tempest of passion, trouble, and egotism. Like those misers who wish their treasures buried with them, this unhappy man, who is no more, torn by atrocious suspicions and jealousy, wished that his friend, who is in Algeria, should sacrifice himself forever by making a vow. This young man swore, not foreseeing that he would so soon pay for his generosity by bitter tears. He swore that his friend’s wife, the apple of discord between them, should always be a stranger to him, even if death made her free.”

Jenny arose from her chair, pale with anger.



She had no wish to cry; flashes, not tears, came from her eyes.

“A vow!” exclaimed she. “What right had Patrice to swear? What right——”

“*Grand Dieu!*” said Pere Chrysostome, joining his hands. “Do you know him? You know his name? You——”

“Alas!” said she, dropping into a seat entirely overcome. “For two years the thought of him has filled my heart. For two years I have struggled with this mystery, that I understand at last. How I have suffered! How I have struggled! Forgive me the subterfuge that I have used to find out what I have just heard. Pity me, since you pity Patrice O’Farrell. Poor, poor friend! What has he done!”

They both of them were silent for several minutes. Jenny was the first to speak.

“Do you think that he ought to be bound by this vow?” said she.

“I think so,” said the priest, “and I probably am the one who prevented his breaking it.”

Then she could not retain her spiteful feeling against the dead.

“Oh, Godefroid! How could you be so cruel, wicked, and heartless!” cried she “To have invented this! To have buried me alive, I, who devoted myself to you like a slave, and tried to make you happy! You will tell me, I suppose, like other priests, that I ought to pardon him?”



Surprised at receiving no response, she turned toward the old man, her eyes shining with a melancholy light. His eyes were fastened upon a portrait that he had just observed, and he seemed not to hear her.

“It is my mother,” said she, forgetting for the moment her sorrow. Pere Chrysostome’s confused expression struck her so forcibly.

He trembled, and his long beard shook as if agitated by a breeze. With effort, he turned his eyes away from the canvas which represented Martscha in all the flush of her young beauty.

“My daughter!” he took breath after this word, “pardon the dead, that they may pardon us. But will they? How shall we know?”

He arose, pale and exhausted, trying in vain to stand erect. He seemed broken and aged several years in these few moments. He had no other thought than to get out of this house as soon as possible. He was going, leaving in the young woman’s hands the rich offering that he had come to seek.

“Ah! Do you forsake me?” exclaimed she, as she saw him about to disappear. “Have I said one word that your ears ought not to have heard? God sees my heart, as he knows my life, I have no act to blush over. Why will you not listen to my troubles?”

“Alas!” said the holy man, turning toward her, “God only can heal your wounds. As for me, I



have said adieu to the world and all its troubles. You have made me break my promise by a subterfuge that I excuse. Ah! I am cruelly punished for leaving my desert home! Why did those whose orders I must obey send me here."

Jenny listened, but she did not understand the old man's trouble, for he seemed elevated by age and austerity above the things of this world. Once more he looked at the young woman with eyes moistened by emotion, then by a brusque movement he placed his hand on her head, and said, softly:

"God bless you, my child! May we each of us have peace soon, with pardon for all our faults."

Without another word he disappeared.

Madame Sauval entered almost immediately after, and found her daughter in a collapsed state, lost in reflections that completely absorbed her.

"I just met in the vestibule an old priest, who had a very beautiful beard," said the Roumanian. "Did he come out of here?"

"Yes, mother; he is a monk who is soliciting alms for a good work."

"He is very timid for his age, he drew himself up against the wall, as if he was afraid that my skirts would touch him, and I never even saw the color of his eyes."

Madame Sauval had very little love for priests, no matter who they were, but she especially detested those who solicited alms.



## CHAPTER XXX.

## I WILL LISTEN TO YOU.

Jenny spent the rest of the day shut up in her room, trying to join together the details that she had learned from the priest and those that she had known for a long time. All Patrice O'Farrell's mysterious actions were explained. She suspected now the role that he had assumed in the beginning, and as he was resolved to keep his word, he shrank from any explanation as a useless cruelty. Upon himself alone the heavy secret must weigh. She at least, should be happy."

"And this man will never belong to me!" thought she, with a defiant smile at the impossibility.

Having but one aim in life, she put aside for the moment her love, enthusiasm, and gratitude, all that could obscure her judgment. She went over again, in her mind, Godefroid's last moments. The more she reflected, the more certain she was that the dying man wished to withdraw before his death the barrier that he had erected between his wife and friend. She could hear the words that he said when she wished to remove the ink-stain from his finger:

"I made that in giving those that I love a last



proof of my affection, that they may be happy after I am gone."

Where was this proof? In the letter written to the notary, asking him to come quickly? This was Madame Sauval's explanation.

Jenny had had, for some time, other sentiments than that of blind confidence in her mother. She knew the greediness of her ambition, the unscrupulous ease that she showed in her choice of arguments. What if this mother, eager for grandeur and riches for herself and daughter, had lied! If those last lines written by Godefroid were something besides a letter to his notary—a useless letter, since Patrice had gone to Pau in person! If, on the contrary, the dying man had written them after his friend's departure, when he felt that his moments were numbered! If they had been confided to the one who assisted his trembling hand! The unhappy man had so much confidence in Madame Sauval.

"Would my mother dare?"

The young woman's only response to this question was to close her eyes and sigh. This paper, supposing that it existed, would render Kemeneff's chances very doubtful. Madame Sauval was not ignorant of this fact, as she knew her daughter's heart. Meanwhile Jenny remembered the frightened expression on her mother's face at Pomeyras, at the time when the signature was about to be placed to the marriage document, and was suddenly deferred.



She arose to go and find her mother, and entreat her out of respect for the dead to tell her the truth. A wise thought prevented her from doing so. Would she give way after having gone so far? And this paper, if it still existed, might she not destroy it as a dangerous piece of testimony?

Jenny shivered as she thought that a candle's flame could in two seconds destroy her last hope. Then all would be lost, unless the dead man could come out of his grave and speak.

Suddenly she struck her forehead; a thought had just come to her. She seated herself at the table, and wrote a letter; then hastily putting on her things, she took it to the post herself. Then she returned in a more tranquil frame of mind, and forced herself to restrain her impatience until the next day.

"Now, then!" thought her mother, overjoyed at her uneasiness, which did not escape her eye. "She is reflecting, and very soon she will recall Kemeneff."

The next afternoon a telegram arrived from Pau addressed to Madame Godefroid. The notary sent the following response:

"Your husband never wrote me any letter. His friend was charged with a verbal message. My recollections are perfectly distinct. My documents do not contain any letter, and I always save every one of my clients' notes."

Jenny was much affected as she read this dis-



patch. Now there was no more doubt; her mother had lied. Godefroid, before he died, had written to release Patrice from his promise. What could he have written if not that "to assure the happiness of those that he loved?"

Jenny, trembling with hope, did not hesitate any longer.

"Pere Chrysostome alone can advise me."

It took her the whole morning to find the priest. After going from convent to church, Madame Godefroid found him at last, prostrate before the altar of a poor little church in the suburbs. He recognized her immediately, and once more his face became as confused as if at the approach of some terrible temptation.

"You!" stammered he, as he arose. "*Mon Dieu!* What is the matter?"

"I beg of you to come to my aid, I need your advice, *mon pere.*"

As he heard this word that had been often given him since he said adieu to the world, the missionary closed his eyes, and seemed strangely affected.

"Come," said he, sighing deeply.

He bowed reverently before the altar, so low that his forehead nearly touched the floor, then preceded the young woman into the small parlor with its glass door, through which one could see its smallest recesses. He seated himself there leaning upon the pine table and covering his face with the large flowing sleeves of his robe.



"I will listen to you," said he.

Then Jenny told him the story of the ink-stain, of her husband's last words and the thoughts which had troubled her for three days. Pere Chrysostome did not make the slightest movement. The exclamations that escaped his lips resembled groans, and showed that he did not lose one word of the story. When the young woman ceased speaking, he said to himself:

"Her mother has given her her unconquerable will, but she has given her only that. Oh, my God! I see it, and thank you for it. What a heart! What fidelity! What nobleness of character!"

Jenny asked him, impatiently:

"And now what would you advise me to do?"

"Do nothing," said the priest, rising, for just then a clock struck in the hall. "I am the one to act. I will see your mother to-morrow; I must see her alone. I have some things to say to her that nobody must hear. Adieu, madam; the poor missionary blesses you."

"We shall meet again," said Jenny, bowing.

"Adieu," said the old man.

The closing door separated them. The priest listened with glistening eye and quickened breath to her light steps as they died away on the flagging. Before going to the refectory he entered the chapel again.

"My God!" prayed he, "I did not do this on purpose. I did not seek this happiness born of my



crime. Do not let her cross my path again, that my expiation may be as complete as possible. But, oh, holy Father, may she be happy in this world, this poor child, who has not sinned!"

The next day Madame Sauval was just finishing her toilet when a servant announced that a priest wished to speak with her.

"What does he want?" asked the Roumanian. "Did he give his name? Is he in this parish?"

"No, madam," replied the domestic. "He is a missionary with a long beard."

"The same one my daughter saw on Monday?"

"Yes, madam, the same."

"These begging priests are a nuisance. Send him away."

"But, madam, he is in the parlor."

"Why did you let him in?"

"Upon my honor, madam, he walked in of himself, saying that he wished to see Madame Sauval."

Exasperated at his audacity, she joined her caller with a frowning countenance, and showing that she had no intention of seating herself:

"My daughter has given you something already. Why do you come again, Monsieur l'Abbe?"

A commanding glance that was not new to her, prevented her from continuing her role of offended queen any longer. At this time she had no wish to mock at this shy priest, nor to complain that she had not seen the color of his eyes. Once she had been fascinated by these dark eyes that were now



flashing with rage. Still she doubted, it was so long ago.

“I did not come to ask you for money,” said the priest, slowly.

Madame Sauval fell back in her chair at the sound of this voice. She felt her limbs bending under her. There could be no further doubt. A distant period in her life which she felt was buried in the tomb had risen up before her. She stammered:

“What do you want?”

“What I wish,” said Pere Chrysostome, “is the paper that you received from Godefroid upon his death bed.”

The Roumanian raised her head at these words. She had lied, deceived, and betrayed all her life, but she possessed an unexpected mixture of inconsistent faults that made her a dangerous woman to struggle with. This imposter was also very courageous. If one disputed her prey with her, this fox became a lion. She straightened herself up with a furious look, and the parting of the lips which had formerly been a voluptuous attraction when it disclosed her white teeth now gave simply a malicious expression to her threatening face. The weaknesses, falsehoods, and perfidies of other days were forgotten at the thought of one thing—if she hesitated Kemeneff would be lost to them. Her voice renewed its youth, and the exotic and sonorous



quality of her native country which she had left thirty years before.

“What paper? What are you saying? Who gives you the right to speak to me in such an arrogant tone? What would your superiors say if they knew where you were at this moment?”

“Would to Heaven that I had no rights!” responded the priest, “but this is a matter which concerns me and my conscience. As to you, if my presence annoys you it is easy to free yourself from it. Obey me, and I will go.”

“Who sent you?”

“I come on the part of the dead, of your daughter’s husband.”

“Did you know my son-in-law?”

“What does it matter? In his name I claim the trust that he left with you, the last lines he wrote. It is his voice that speaks to you, his hand which threatens you. Take care!”

Martscha trembled from head to foot, for she had had superstitious fears of the dead from her cradle. Still she thought that to be the mother of a princess a few sleepless nights was not too high a price.

“You are deceived,” said she. “I never have received any trust. Who has made you believe that I would betray the confidence——”

“Woman,” said the priest, “do not continue these pretenses. I know you. If it was not blasphemy I should say that I admire you. You have more courage than I have. I have not slept for twenty



years, because I have before my eyes continually the bloody, disfigured face of a man, who was nearer to you than Godefroid. What have you done to prevent his haunting you night and day, not to see him cursing us both with his dying breath?"

"He died a soldier's death," stammered the widow.

"I will tell you how he died since you feign a convenient ignorance. In the future you will not be able to pretend that you do not know."

Pere Chrysostome arose, and approached the chair where Sauval's widow, was sitting.

"One evening," recited he, in a trembling voice, "your husband entered my room. We were near the enemy. We were preparing for battle next day. 'General,' said he, 'one of my comrades thought he would make me smile by telling me a bivouac story—he was ignorant of the glorious role that I played in it—and told me that you were a coward, a liar, and a false friend. I know now that the favor that you did me in according me a post near you was the price of infamy. I know that my wife is a miserable, ambitious woman, that my daughter is a stranger who will live under a usurped name. In ten minutes my whole life has been ruined, past and future. What matters all the events in the world to me now, victories or defeats? I have only one thing remaining—my honor as a soldier. That is why I do not kill you. At this time



it would not be a legitimate vengeance; it would be a crime against my country. I wish to die a death worthy of my French uniform. That my blood may be on your head I kill myself, and it is your hand that gets ahead of the enemy's bullets. You have killed Major Sauval.' I thought that he was crazy, although his words were only too clear to me. I looked at him petrified with shame and surprise, not knowing what to say. He threw a letter upon the table, accompanied with a laugh, that I can hear now, saying, 'To whom better than to you could I confide the care of this letter to be sent to her address? But have no illusions, general. You are no more fortunate than I; she deceives you, too.' One second after he fell at my feet, with a shattered skull. As I am sure that God exists I am sure that he was crazy. He never in his right mind would have killed himself on the eve of a battle."

The priest had spoken very rapidly, and stopped to take breath as he wiped his forehead. He continued immediately before the Roumanian had time to interrupt him:

"At least, I have saved his reputation; alone, save for an officer who aided me in my fraud, and who knew that Sauval had not been killed in fighting near me. But I am the only one that knows it now. The next day, before noon, the other witnesses no longer existed. When the war was ended, for I was spared in spite of myself, I disappeared in



my turn, after having sent the terrible letter to you. If I reappear before you for an hour believe that it is only because I am determined to succeed in what I have undertaken. This dead man has been troubled and agitated in his grave long enough."

Madame Sauval sat perfectly motionless. Was it by the unexpected violence of the attack or by a supreme effort of desperate resistance? The priest's voice became threatening as he said once more:

"I swear to you that Prince Kemeneff and Patrice O'Farrell shall know of the impious audacity with which you have suppressed Godefroid's last words. You do not fear the dead any more, but take care of the living."

Martscha understood that she was vanquished without hope of revenge. Rage, more than shame, covered her face when she arose to go into an adjoining room. Quick to profit by all advantages, she said, in a harsh voice:

"Do not forget that the secret of a confession has closed your mouth."

"You are joking, I think," responded the priest. "Have no fears. In telling the truth I should cover with shame and blood those that I love and have united. Hurry and obey me. Every minute that I pass in this house is a torture to me. Here, my priest's robe burns my shoulders."

With the impatience of a lover who wishes to know his fate, this priest, bent with age, could



hardly wait to read the note that Martscha slipped into his hand, trembling with rage.

He sighed, and an expression of joy passed over his face as he read the lines that had been so laboriously penned.

He placed the paper in his pocket which contained this last will:

“I revoke, in case that my beloved wife should contract a second marriage with Patrice O’Farrell, the clause of disinheritance contained in my will. I wish to show by that that I wish and advise this union which will make, I have every reason to believe, the two people that I love best in this world happy. May they pardon and remember me.”

This codicil, dated and signed, was an authentic act, and left Godefroid’s widow mistress of her fortune, if she married Patrice, but not if she married any other—Kemeneff, for example. Like a prudent woman, Martscha had taken care not to destroy the paper. One never can tell who may live nor who may die. In default of the prince, O’Farrell would be a suitable husband for Madame Godefroid. Poor himself, he would bring riches with him. If they were obliged to renounce the prince, Jenny would regain Pomeyras—happiness into the bargain. Such were Madame Sauval’s reflections the very evening of Godefroid’s death.

Pere Chrysostome saw it all at a glance and his heart was filled with bitter disgust when he thought of the past.



“*Mon Dieu!*” prayed he, “you have not wished to leave anything that would punish me, even the shame of seeing to what a point I was the dupe of this unworthy creature. Give me once more the peace of my solitary expiation, and this time may I have finished with the world!”

When Jenny saw her mother there was no need of any question to know that the priest had been there. Madame Sauval seemed to have suddenly lost all energy and interest in life. Jenny did nothing to know the result of that interview, as much as she wished to know her fate, but she was incapable of resting five minutes in the same place. As she saw the condition of the vanquished one, she felt great hope renewed in her.

Toward the middle of the afternoon she received a strange missive—a page from a torn breviary, upon which she read the psalm, “*Nunc dimittis.*” At the bottom of the page was written, “*Hallelujah! hallelujah! Wait!*”

It was thus that this faithful heart knew her happiness was near. Tears rolled down her cheeks, but at first her gratitude turned toward this priest whose voice and slightest gestures made mysterious chords vibrate in her heart. A mystery that would never be cleared in this world. She waited as he had said, but one may believe that the days were long for her; she lived, dreamed, and went to sleep with this thought.



“He loves me; I was not mistaken! I shall be his!”

At the same time she knew by certain indications that Martscha was making preparations to leave France, and it troubled her not to be able to say to this misguided woman:

“You will stay with us.”

But certain generous deeds are but acts of folly. At least she would try to be good to her mother during this short and last period of their common existence.

One evening as they were taking leave of one another, Jenny waited, as usual, for the customary kiss, but was surprised to be clasped in the arm of a weeping woman:

“God preserve you,” sobbed Martscha, “from ever being pitied by your daughter.”

This was the only sign of remorse or sorrow that she ever showed until the moment of her departure. She immediately regained possession of herself:

“How little you resemble me and how much you resemble him!” said she, looking at her daughter with a kind of humble admiration.

Before Jenny could reply Madame Sauval had disappeared.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

“I HAVE SOUGHT FOR IT SO LONG.”

At the end of fifteen days, in spite of her hope in the future and her blind hope in Pere Chrysostome, whom she considered almost superhuman, Jenny was about at the end of her patience. Dark thoughts and fears of disasters troubled her mind. Had the priest fallen ill on the road? she knew that he had left. Was he dead? Was there some other obstacle that deterred Patrice? Why did he not write?

One morning she had about made up her mind to write herself when the postman brought her one single line that she received before she was up:

“To-day, at two o’clock, in the greenhouse.”

“At last!” sighed she.

Her head fell back on the pillows; her eyes closed that she might better see a loved face, her hands sought among the cool lace the place where her heart was beating, and to press against it the message so long watched for. Two tears trickled down her soft, rosy cheeks, divinely tinted with the light of happiness.

She spent the moments of waiting as if in a dream. She felt a delicious languor, and believed that she was calmer than ever in her life before;



but she was so feverishly excited that her mother suspected at once that she had heard from Patrice.

At last the hand marked the hour, and the one who had so faithfully loved started out for her first rendezvous with her lover.

Fortune favored them. The rain kept all Paris in doors. The greenhouse, with its cool foliage, belonged to them. As she stepped inside she saw Patrice waiting for her; she was seized with a sudden fear. Was he going to play once more the role of indifference that he had so cruelly sustained for two years? Was Pere Chrysostome deceived in what he had told her? She did not fear very long. Patrice came to meet her, and folded her in his arms, gazing at her with eyes full of love. He did not speak for several seconds, but looked at her with his heart overflowing with joy, for he felt at this moment that this charming creature who was to belong to him had never attained such perfection of beauty as now. Patrice knelt before her, and in a voice of suppressed emotion said:

“Oh, my beloved! how much I love you!”

She leaned her head on her *fiance's* shoulder, scarcely surprised at this tender familiarity, mixed with such respectful adoration. Their love was a thing so old that she could not be offended. She replied, very low:

“Repeat it once more. I have sought for it so long!”

“What I would like to do would be to open my



heart, and show you these words which have bled in me for three years like wounds. Ah! if you could know how I love you, how I have suffered, how I have struggled.”

“And I, too!”

She accompanied these two words with a light pressure of her hand upon the young man's shoulder, who was still kneeling.

“I was a hundred times the unhappier,” said O'Farrell.

“No, for you knew that I loved you.”

He arose. For a moment the thought of the past made an unhappy expression pass over his face.

“You were not like what I was, lost in solitude, overcome with discouragement. You did not hear in the night voices that turned your devotion into derision, as well as the fidelity of a vow, or all that was good or true in a man's heart. You did not curse, as I have more than once, others and yourself, for the troublesome severity of certain scruples or the egotism of certain lovers!”

She placed her hands over his mouth.

“Curse nobody. I admire you, I love you, and I approve of you; is that not enough? Oh! Patrice, you might have had me sooner, but would you have had me so surely? I swear to you, no! If I could show you all that you have gained by this long waiting, you would bless instead of cursing it. With the same love, my heart brings you all that it contains of esteem, confidence, and respect. Take



me to the ends of the earth, order me to draw a cart like that poor woman you wrote me about in Algeria, order me to die—you would see!”

“Ah!” said he, “this is what I order; I have been dying for so many years to do so!”

His lips sought hers, and she obeyed.

“I beg of you,” said she, releasing herself, “do not forget that I am your *fiancee*.”

They seated themselves hand in hand upon the green bench where they had once sat before.

“Now,” said she, turning her large eyes on him, “tell me about Pere Chrysostome.”

“He reached the forest five days ago, thin, old, and changed. I hardly recognized him. At first I thought he must bring me news of some disaster. He soon reassured me, however. ‘Go quickly; she is waiting for you; she is yours; these lines give her to you,’ and he placed this paper in my hand.”

Jenny’s beautiful face became sad as she glanced at the handwriting.

“Poor Godefroid!” sighed she. “It was writing this that stained his finger.”

“Yes,” said Patrice, “and only for this stain, an avaricious, intriguing woman——”

Again the little hand was placed over the mouth of this son-in-law in a fair way to commence where sons-in-law generally end.

“I am her daughter,” said Jenny, slowly.

Then, to turn his thoughts from this painful topic, she kissed the paper, and handed it to



Patrice, bending her head and humbly addressed these words to the one who was no more.

“Pardon, poor Godefroid!”

“Yes, pardon!” repeated Patrice, like an echo. “Oh! that he may pardon us, poor friend! For some time I have judged him harshly in my heart. You, too, I suspect. But he has painted himself in the last words that he said to me, ‘It is a great misfortune to love too passionately and too late.’ My dear, there are many ways of loving.”

Jenny looked at Patrice no longer. She seemed to be seeking in the foliage a floating form, and said, in a loud voice, as if to be heard by this invisible witness:

“No, there is only one way to love, and that was his, it shall be ours—to love until death.”

She arose to leave, and her companion did not try to prolong the *tete-a-tete*. They had called up Godefroid, and dared not speak of love in his presence, for they yet feared, in spite of all, his jealousy.

When the young woman was seated in her carriage she said, smilingly:

“I imagine that you will not oblige me to go so far to join you, as if you wished to hide me from everybody.”

Patrice was pleased at the thought that they would not have to hide from anybody. He replied:

“I wished to see you under these palm trees that recalled such souvenirs. And then I admit it—the



presence of a certain person. I was afraid of not having control over myself."

"Poor mother! I doubt if she will remain long in France. How you look at me! Tell me your thoughts."

"I was thinking that once before I saw you in a carriage as I see you now. Do you remember? It was before a certain door, you came to inquire for an invalid. Your eyes, as they met mine entered my heart, and took possession there forever. You smile. In your turn tell me what thought pleases you."

"I think that we were then like two combatants who pierce each other with their swords at the same blow."

Without speaking but by a movement of the lips they sent each other a kiss, and the carriage started off.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

“DEAD!”

O'Farrell never saw Madame Sauval again. She went quietly to Roumania soon after his return. This departure cast a shadow over the future countess' joy, but it was indispensable in the interests of all and the few who knew Jenny's past. What would they have said had they known the whole history?

The lovers had one other regret. They wished that Pere Chrysostome should bless their union. Before fixing the date of the ceremony Patrice wrote him and asked him to make the voyage, and sent him the means to do so. But the good man replied by a formal refusal of this request, and what was most astonishing the letter was addressed to Jenny:

“What you ask of me would be too great a pleasure for an old man who must expiate his sins. Three years of penance would not pay for the sacrifice that I impose upon myself in not coming to you upon that day. You will never know how much pleasure I renounce. Your happiness, if my prayers are heard, will continue to increase. Be happy. And you, my daughter”—these words were hardly legible, the priest's hand trembled so—“do not for-



get that you should pray every day for two people that are dead, and soon for three."

A short time after their marriage the new couple, installed at Pomeyras, received their mail. The Countess O'Farrell commenced to read a letter post-marked Roumania, it was a very short acknowledgment of the first payment of a life income freely given her in the marriage contract.

She was interrupted by an exclamation from Patrice, who handed her a letter still sealed, addressed in the young man's handwriting to Pere Chrysostome at Telagh, on which was written, "Returned, uncalled for." The holy man had ended his peregrinations. Under the missionary's name was written, in a strange hand, one single word:

"Dead!"

[THE END.]



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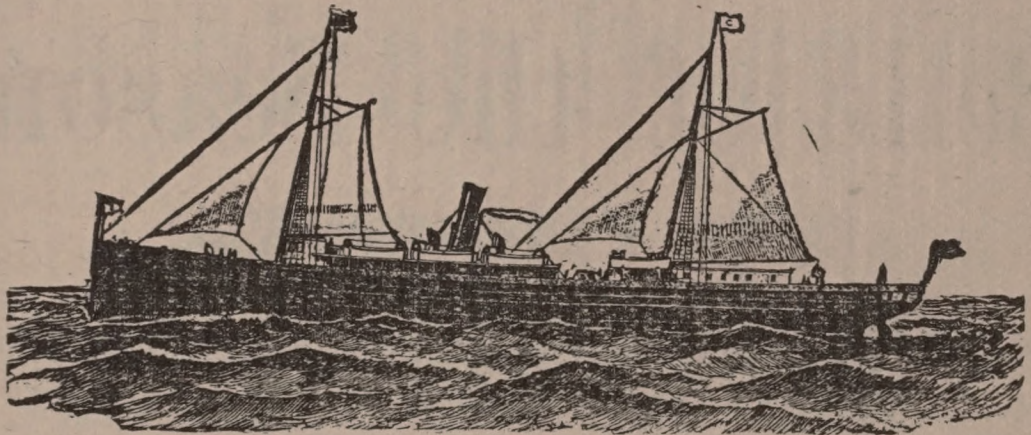
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