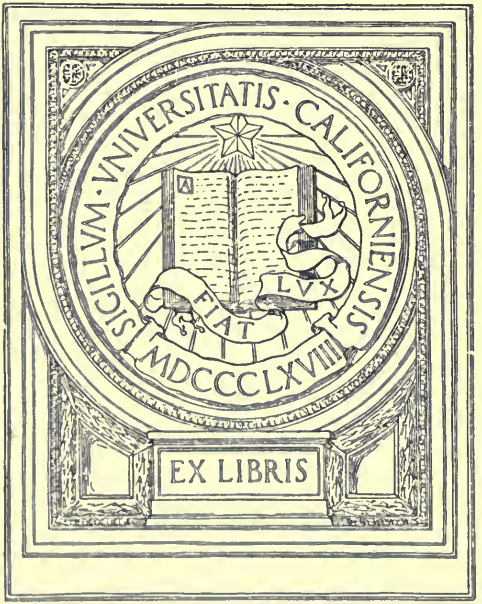

To

I respect the Priest,

I love the Philosopher.

I adore the Soldier

I pray for the Friend

Lt. F. Paul Perigaud

from A. H. Farrington

Durham, Illinois

Jany 1, 1918

1898


E. BOYD SMITH

THE CRIME OF SYLVESTRE BONNARD . . .

BY
ANATOLE FRANCE

NEW YORK AND BOSTON
THOMAS Y. CROWELL AND
COMPANY . . . . .

THE CRIME

OF

SYLVESTRE BONNARD

(Member of the Institute)

BY

ANATOLE FRANCE

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY

ARABELLA WARD

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Part I.

THE LOG.

THE CRIME OF SYLVESTRE BONNARD.

THE LOG.

December 24, 1849.

I PUT on my slippers and my dressing-gown, and brushed away a tear which the north wind, blowing across the quay, had brought into my eyes. A bright fire was burning on the hearth in my study. Ice-crystals, in the form of fern-leaves, frosted the window-panes, hiding from me the Seine, its bridges, and the Louvre des Valois.

Drawing my arm-chair and writing-table before the fire, I took the place that Hamilcar deigned to leave me. Hamilcar, his nose between his paws, lay curled up on a feather cushion in front of the andirons. His thick, soft fur rose and fell with his regular breathing. As I approached, he gently opened his dark eyes from between their half-closed lids, but almost instantly shut them again, as if saying to himself, "It is nothing; only my friend."

"Hamilcar!" I exclaimed, as I stretched out my legs, "Hamilcar, somnolent Prince, mighty Guardian of the City of Books! Like the Divine Cat that fought against the ungodly in Heliopolis during the night of the great combat, thou dost pre-

serve from vile gnawing the books which this old student has purchased at the cost of his scant savings and untiring patience! In this library, protected by thy military genius, sleep, O Hamilcar, as softly as a sultana. For in thy person are united the formidable aspect of a Tartar warrior and the sensuous grace of a woman of the Orient. Sleep, thou brave and voluptuous Hamilcar, until the hour draws nigh when the mice begin their dance in the light of the moon, before the *Acta Sanctorum* of the learned Bollandists!"

The beginning of this apostrophe must have pleased Hamilcar, for he accompanied it with a gurgle in his throat like the sound of a boiling kettle. But as my voice became louder, Hamilcar's ears began to droop, the striped skin of his forehead grew puckered, and this warned me that it was unbecoming in me thus to harangue.

"This old bookworm," Hamilcar evidently mused, "makes idle speeches, whereas our housekeeper never utters a word that is not full of good sense and meaning, containing either the announcement of a meal or the promise of a whipping. Any one can understand what she says. But this old man strings together sounds that signify nothing."

Thus mused Hamilcar. Leaving him to his reflections, I opened a book in which I became deeply interested. It was a catalogue of manuscripts. I know of no easier, more pleasing, or more fascinating reading than that of a catalogue. The one that I was reading, published in 1824, by Mr. Thompson, librarian to Sir Thomas Raleigh, errs, it is true, by

an excess of brevity, and fails to show that accuracy which the archæologists of my generation were the first to introduce into works of diplomatics and paleography. It leaves much to be desired and conjectured. This is perhaps why, in reading it, I feel a sensation which in a more imaginative nature than mine might be called revery.

I had given myself up to the gentle train of my thoughts, when my housekeeper, in a sullen tone, announced that Monsieur Coccoz wished to speak with me.

In fact, some one had already slipped behind her into the library. It was a poor, puny, insignificant little fellow in a thin jacket. He approached me with a series of little bows and smiles. But he was very pale, and although still young and active, he seemed ill. As I looked at him, I thought of a wounded squirrel. Under his arm he carried a green case, which he placed on a chair. Then, untying the four corners, he uncovered a pile of small yellow books.

"Monsieur," said he, "I have not the honor of being known to you. I am a book-agent, monsieur. I represent the leading houses of the capital, and in the hope that you will be good enough to honor me with your patronage, I take the liberty of offering you a few novelties."

Ye kind and just gods! Such novelties as the little Coccoz fellow showed me! The first volume he handed me was *l'Histoire de la Tour de Nesle*, with the love affairs of Marguérite of Bourgogne and Captain Buridan.

"This," said he, smiling, "is a book that deals with true history."

"In that case," I replied, "it must be very tiresome, for a history which keeps strictly to the truth is extremely dull. I have written some such myself; and if ever you should be unfortunate enough to offer one of them from door to door, you would run the risk of keeping it all your life in your green case, without ever finding a maid-servant sufficiently ill-advised to buy it of you."

"Certainly, monsieur," replied the little fellow out of pure good nature. And, still smiling, he showed me the *Amours d'Héloïse et d'Abeilard;* but I made him understand that, at my age, I had no use for a love-story. Still smiling, he suggested the *Règle des jeux de société:* piquet, bésique, écarté, whist, dice, checkers, chess.

"Alas!" said I, "if you would have me remember the rules of bésique, give me back my old friend Bignan, with whom I used to play cards every evening until the five Academies bore him solemnly to his grave; or bring down to the frivolous level of human amusements the grave intelligence of Hamilcar, whom you see sleeping on that cushion, and who at the present time is the sole companion of my evenings."

The little fellow's smile became vague and frightened.

"This," said he, "is a new collection of society diversions, jokes and puns, with directions for changing a red rose to a white."

I told him that for a long time I had been put

out with white roses, and that as to the jokes, I was satisfied with those which I unconsciously allowed myself to make in the course of my scientific work.

The little fellow offered me his last book with his last smile, saying, —

"Here is the *Clef des Songes*, with explanations of every possible dream, — the dream of gold, the dream of robbers, the dream of death, the dream of one's falling from the top of a tower, — the list is complete!"

I had seized the tongs, and brandishing them in the air, I replied to my commercial visitor, —

"Yes, my friend; but these dreams, as well as a thousand others, both joyous and tragic, are summed up in a single one, — the Dream of Life. Does your little yellow book give me the key to this?"

"Yes, monsieur," replied the little man; "the book is complete; and it is not dear, only one franc, twenty-five centimes, monsieur."

I called my housekeeper, for my lodgings are without a bell.

"Thérèse," said I, "Monsieur Coccoz, whom I beg you to escort to the door, has a book which may be of interest to you. It is the 'Key to Dreams.' I shall be glad to buy it for you."

My housekeeper replied, —

"Monsieur, if one has not the time to dream when awake, one has not the time to dream when asleep. Thank God! the days are enough for my work, and my work for the days; and I can say every evening, 'O Lord, bless the rest I am about to have!' I dream neither awake nor asleep; and I do not mis-

take my eider-down coverlet for a ghost either, as my cousin did. Moreover, if I may be allowed to give my opinion, we already have books enough here. Monsieur has thousands and thousands of them, which turn his head; and I have two, which are all I need, — my Catholic Prayer-book and my *Cuisinière Bourgeoise*."

With these words, my housekeeper helped the little man to put his goods back again into his green case.

Coccoz no longer smiled. His relaxed features wore such an expression of suffering that I was filled with remorse at having poked fun at so unhappy a creature. I called him back, and told him that I had caught a glimpse of a copy of *l'Histoire d'Estelle et de Némorin*, which he had; that I was very fond of shepherds and shepherdesses, and that for a reasonable sum I should be glad to buy the story of these two perfect lovers.

"I will let you have this book for one franc, twenty-five centimes, monsieur," answered Coccoz, whose face now beamed with delight. "It is historical, and I am sure you will be pleased with it. I see now what you want. You are a *connaisseur*. To-morrow I will bring you the *Crimes des Papes*. It is a good book. I will bring you the *édition-de-luxe* with the colored plates."

I begged him to do nothing of the sort, and sent him away happy. When the peddler and his green case had vanished in the shadow of the hall, I asked my housekeeper from where the little man had dropped in upon us.

"Dropped is the very word," said she. "He dropped from the roof, monsieur, where he lives with his wife."

"He has a wife you say, Thérèse? That is marvellous! Women certainly are strange creatures. This one must be a very unfortunate little woman."

"I really do not know what she is," replied Thérèse; "but every morning I see her trailing down the stairs in a silk gown that is covered with grease-spots. She makes eyes at people too. Now, how in all justice can such eyes and such dresses belong to a woman who is received out of charity? For, in consideration of the fact that the man is ill and the wife in a delicate condition, they have been allowed to occupy the attic while the roof is undergoing repairs. The janitress said that the woman's confinement began this very morning. They must have had great need of a child!"

"Thérèse," I replied, "they certainly had no need of one. But Nature willed that they should have one, and they fell into her trap. Unusual precaution is necessary in order to foil the tricks of Nature. Let us pity rather than blame them! As to the silk dresses, there is not a young woman in the whole world who does not love them. The daughters of Eve adore finery. You yourself, Thérèse, who are serious and sensible, how you do scold if you have no white apron in which to wait at table! But tell me, have they all that they need in their attic?"

"How could that be possible, monsieur?" answered the housekeeper. "The husband, whom you

have just seen, used to peddle jewels, so the janitress tells me, and no one knows why he gave up selling watches. You see he peddles almanacs now. This, in my opinion, is not an honest profession; and I can never believe that God will bless any one who follows it. The woman, between you and me, seems unfitted for anything, a lazy good-for-nothing. I consider her as capable of bringing up a child as I should be of playing the guitar. No one knows from where they come, but I feel sure that they must have come by the coach of Poverty from the Land of Don't-Care."

"Wherever they have come from, Thérèse, they are wretched, and their attic is cold."

"Mercy! I should think it was! The roof has cracks in several places, and the rain pours in by the gutterful. They have neither furniture nor clothing. Cabinet-makers and weavers seldom work, I think, for Christians of such a brotherhood."

"It is very sad, Thérèse, that a Christian woman should be less well cared for than this pagan of an Hamilcar. What does the woman herself say?"

"Monsieur, I never speak to people of that class. I have no idea what she says or what she sings. But she sings the whole day long. I hear her from the stairs whenever I go in and out."

"Well! the heir of this Coccoz family can say, like the egg in the village riddle, 'My mother brought me into the world while singing.' A similar thing happened in the case of Henry IV. When Jeanne d'Albret was about to be confined, she began to sing an old Béarnaise canticle: —

'Our Lady from the end of the bridge,
May this hour bring me joy!
Raise now thy prayer,
That God may hear,
And send to me a boy!'[1]

It is unreasonable, on the face of it, to bring poor little wretches into the world. But it happens every day, my poor Thérèse, and all the philosophers in the world cannot reform the foolish custom. Madame Coccoz has followed it, and sings. That is good, at least! But tell me, Thérèse, have you not set the pot to boil to-day?"

"Yes, monsieur, and it is about time for me to go and skim it."

"Very good! but do not fail, Thérèse, to carry a good bowl of soup to Madame Coccoz, our neighbor up-stairs."

My housekeeper was about to leave the room, when I added, —

"Thérèse, first of all, be good enough to call your friend the porter, and tell him to look about our woodhouse for an armful of wood for this Coccoz family. Above all, see that he does not fail to put in the pile a big log, a regular yule log. As to the little man, I beg you, in case he returns, to show him politely to the door, him and all his yellow books."

Having taken these measures, with the selfishness

[1] *Notre-Dame du bout du pont,*
Venez à mon aide en cette heure!
Priez le Dieu du ciel,
Qu'il me délivre vite,
Qu'il me donne un garçon!

of a confirmed bachelor, I turned again to my catalogue.

With what surprise, pleasure, and pain, I came upon the following words, which even now I cannot copy with a firm hand: —

"THE GOLDEN LEGEND" BY JACQUES DE GÊNES (JACQUES DE VORAGINE).

Translated into French. Small quarto.

This manuscript of the fourteenth century contains, besides the more or less complete translation of the celebrated works of Jacques de Voragine, 1. The Legends of Saints Ferréol, Ferrution, Germain, Vincent, and Droctoveus; 2. A poem on "The Miraculous Burial of Monsieur Saint-Germain of Auxerre." The translation, the legends and the poem, are due to the clerk Alexander. The manuscript is on vellum. It contains a large number of illuminated initials, and two beautifully painted miniatures in a poor state of preservation. One represents the Purification of the Virgin, the other the Crowning of Proserpine.

What a discovery! The perspiration came out on my forehead, a mist swam before my eyes. I trembled, I flushed, feeling that I must shout, yet unable to utter a word.

What a treasure! For forty years I had been studying the history of Christian Gaul, especially the wonderful Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, whence came the king-monks who founded our national dynasty. But in spite of the culpable insufficiency of the description, it was evident to me

that the manuscript of the clerk Alexander must have come from the great abbey. Everything proved it. All the legends added by the translator related to the pious founding of the abbey by King Childebert. The legend of Saint Droctoveus was especially significant, for it was that of the first abbot of my dear abbey. The poem in French verse on the burial of Saint-Germain took me into the very nave of the venerable basilica, which was the centre of Christian Gaul.

"The Golden Legend" is in itself a vast and graceful work. Jacques de Voragine, Assistant of the Order of Saint Dominic and Archbishop of Genoa, collected in the thirteenth century all the legends of Catholic saints, and made a volume of such richness, that from the monasteries and châteaux there came the cry, "It is the Golden Legend!" "The Golden Legend" was particularly rich in Roman hagiography. Edited by an Italian monk, it was especially good in its treatment of the earthly domains of Saint Peter. Voragine sees the greatest saints of the Occident only through a cold mist. Therefore the Aquitanian and Saxon translators of this good legendary were careful to add to his account the lives of their own national saints.

I have read and collated many manuscripts of "The Golden Legend." I know those described by my learned colleague, Monsieur Paulin Paris, in his beautiful catalogue of the manuscripts of the Royal Library. Of these, two in particular held my attention. One is of the fourteenth century, and contains a translation of Jean Belet; the

other, younger by a century, includes the version of Jacques Vignay. Both came from the Colbert collection, and were placed on the shelves of that glorious Colbertine library through the energy of the librarian Baluze, whose name I never utter without baring my head; for even in the century of the giants of learning, Baluze astonishes every one by his greatness. I know a very curious codex of the Bigot collection. I know seventy-four printed editions, beginning with the venerable ancestor of all, the Gothic of Strasbourg, commenced in 1471, and finished in 1475.

But not one of these manuscripts, not one of these editions, contains the legends of Saints Ferréol, Ferrution, Germain, Vincent, and Droctoveus, not one bears the name of the clerk Alexander, not one, in short, comes from the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Compared with the manuscript described by Mr. Thompson, they are as straw to gold. I have seen with my own eyes, I have touched with my own fingers, an indisputable proof of the existence of this document. But the document itself? What has become of it? Sir Thomas Raleigh spent his last days on the shores of Lake Como, whither he carried a part of his vast treasures. What became of them, then, after the death of that elegant collector of curios? Where could the manuscripts of the clerk Alexander have gone?

"And why," I ask myself, "why have I learned of the existence of this precious volume, if I am never to possess it, never even to see it? If I knew that it were there, I would seek it in the burning

heart of Africa or among the ice regions of the Pole. But I do not know where it is. I know not if it is guarded by some jealous bibliomaniac in an iron safe, beneath a triple lock, or if it lies mouldering in the garret of some ignorant person. I shudder when I think that perhaps its pages have been torn out to cover the gherkin-jars of some housekeeper."

August 30, 1850.

The heat was so oppressive that I was obliged to walk slowly. I strolled along, close to the walls of the northern quay; and in the sultry twilight the shops of dealers in old books, prints, and antique furniture attracted my eyes and my fancy. Rummaging among them as I idled along, I enjoyed a finely turned verse by a poet of the Pleiad, I looked through an elegant "Masquerade" by Watteau, I weighed with my eye a two-handled sword, a steel gorget, a marion. What a thick helmet! What a heavy breastplate, Lord! The covering of a giant? No; the carapace of an insect. The men of those days were armed like beetles, their weakness was within. Now, on the contrary, our strength is within. Our armed souls dwell in weak bodies.

Here is a pastel of a lady of the olden time. The face, faint as a shadow, is smiling. One hand, covered with an open-worked mitt, holds upon her satin gown a lap-dog with a ribbon about his neck. The picture fills me with a sweet melancholy. Let those who have in their hearts no half-obliterated pastel make fun of me!

Like the horse that scents the stable, I hasten my steps as I near my lodgings. Here it is, the human hive where I have my cell, in which I distil the somewhat bitter honey of learning. With a heavy step I mount the stairs. A few feet more and I shall be at my door. But I imagine rather than see a gown descending, with the sound of rustling silk. I pause, and draw back against the railing. The woman who passes is bareheaded, she is young, she is singing. Her eyes and her teeth gleam in the shadow, for she has laughing eyes and a laughing mouth. She is certainly a neighbor, and one who knows us well. In her arms she holds a pretty child, a little boy, quite naked, like the son of a goddess. About his neck is a medal attached to a little silver chain. I watch him as he sucks his thumbs, staring at me with his great eyes, and gazing upon this old world, as yet so new to him. At the same time the mother looks at me in a sly, mysterious way. Then she stops, blushes slightly, I think, and holds out the little creature to me. The baby has a pretty dimple between his wrist and his arm, another in his neck, and everywhere, from his head to his feet, others laugh in his rosy flesh.

The mother shows him to me with pride.

"Monsieur," she says, "my little boy is very pretty; don't you think so?"

She takes his hand, places it on his lips, and holds out his dear little rosy fingers towards me.

"Baby, throw a kiss to the gentleman," she says.

Then, folding the little creature in her arms, she glides away with the swiftness of a cat, and dis-

appears down a hallway, which, judging from its odor, leads to a kitchen.

I enter my own rooms.

"Thérèse, who is the young mother whom I saw bareheaded on the stairs with her pretty little boy?"

Thérèse replies that it is Madame Coccoz. I stare at the ceiling, as if to find there some further explanation. Thérèse recalls to my mind the poor peddler who a year ago came to sell me almanacs while his wife was ill.

"And what of Coccoz?" I asked.

The reply was that I would never see him again. The poor fellow had been laid away under ground without my knowledge, and, indeed, without the knowledge of many, a short time after the recovery of Madame Coccoz. I learned that his wife had become consoled. I followed her example.

"But, Thérèse," I asked, "has Madame Coccoz all she needs in her attic?"

"You will be very stupid, monsieur," replied my housekeeper, "if you give a thought to that woman. They notified her to leave the attic when the roof was repaired. But she is still there, in spite of the proprietor, the agent, the janitress, and the bailiff. I believe she has bewitched them all. She will leave the attic, monsieur, when she pleases, but she will leave it in her own carriage! Mark my words!"

Thérèse reflected a moment, then she made this remark, —

"A pretty face is a curse from Heaven!"

"I should thank Heaven, then, for having spared

me that curse. But take my hat and cane. I am going to read a few pages of Moréri for recreation. If my old fox scent tells me true, we are going to have a delicately flavored pullet for dinner. Attend to this estimable fowl, my good woman, and spare your neighbors, so that they may spare you and your old master."

So saying, I set about to study the gnarled branches of a princely genealogy.

May 7, 1851.

I have spent the winter in a manner most pleasing to sages, *in angello cum libello;* and now the swallows of the quay Malaquais find me, on their return, almost as when they left me. He who lives little, changes little, and using up one's days poring over ancient texts is scarcely living at all.

And yet to-day I feel myself a little more than ever imbued with that vague sadness that life gives out. My intellectual harmony (I scarcely dare acknowledge it to myself) has been troubled ever since that momentous hour when the existence of the clerk Alexander's manuscript was revealed to me. It seems strange that for a few pages of old parchment I should have lost sleep, but such is the truth. The poor man without desires possesses the greatest of all treasures, — he is master of himself. The rich man who has a desire is but a wretched slave. I am that slave. The sweetest pleasures, that of conversing with a man of an acute, bright mind, or dining with a friend, cannot make me for-

get the manuscript which I have wanted ever since I knew of its existence. I want it by day and by night. I want it in joy and in sorrow. I want it when I work, and I want it when I rest.

I recall to mind the desires of my childhood. How clearly I understand to-day all the intense wishes of those early years! I can still see with wonderful vividness a doll, which, when I was eight years old, was displayed in the window of a wretched little shop in the rue de Seine. Why that doll pleased me I have no idea. I was very proud of being a boy. I despised little girls, and I looked forward with impatience to the time (alas, it has come!) when a prickly white beard would bristle on my chin. I played soldier, and in order to obtain food for my hobby-horse I made ravages among the plants that my long-suffering mother tried to cultivate on the window-ledge. That was certainly a manly amusement. And yet I longed for a doll!

A Hercules has his weakness. Was the object of my love beautiful? No. I can see her now. She had a dab of vermilion on either cheek, short, flabby arms, horrible wooden hands, and long, shapeless legs. Her flowered skirt was fastened at the waist by two pins. I can still see the black heads of those two pins. She was a low-class doll, smelling of the *faubourg*. I well remember, little boy that I was and not yet in trousers, that I felt in my own way and very strongly, that this doll lacked grace and style. She was coarse and vulgar. Nevertheless, I loved her, in spite of her faults. I loved her for them. I loved her alone,

and I wanted her. My soldiers and my drums were no longer of any account. I had stopped putting into my hobby-horse's mouth stems of heliotrope and speedwell. That doll was everything to me. I planned schemes worthy of a savage, in order that my nurse Virginie might be obliged to take me by the little shop in the rue de Seine. I would flatten my nose against the window until my nurse had to take hold of my arm and drag me away. "Monsieur Sylvestre, it is late, and your mamma will scold you." Monsieur Sylvestre cared nothing in those days for the threatened scoldings and whippings. But his nurse raised him in her arms as if he were a feather, and Monsieur Sylvestre yielded to force. In after years, as he grew older, he became degenerate, and now yields to fear. But then he was afraid of nothing.

I was wretched. An inconsiderate but irresistible shame kept me from telling my mother of the object of my love. Hence my sufferings. For days that doll, constantly in my mind, danced before my eyes, and gazed fixedly at me, and opened her arms to me, assuming, in my imagination, a sort of life that made her seem strange and terrible to me, and much dearer and more to be coveted.

Finally, one day, a day I shall never forget, my nurse took me to see my uncle, Captain Victor, who had asked me to breakfast. I felt a deep admiration for my uncle, the Captain, as much from the fact of his having fired the last French cartridge at Waterloo, as because with his own hands, at my mother's table, he used to make *croûtons* rubbed

in garlic, which he then put into the chicory salad. I thought that was very fine.

My uncle Victor also filled me with great respect on account of his frogged coats, and especially on account of the way he had of turning the house topsy-turvy the moment he entered it. Even to-day I do not understand how he did it; but whenever my uncle Victor was in a company of twenty persons, he was the only one seen and heard. My good father, I believe, did not share my great admiration for my uncle Victor, who troubled him by his smoking, gave him friendly although hearty slaps on his back, and accused him of lack of energy. My mother, while she felt for the Captain all a sister's indulgence, sometimes asked him to pay less attention to the brandy bottle. But I had no part in these feelings of dislike, or in the reproaches that were heaped upon him. My uncle Victor inspired me with the greatest enthusiasm.

Therefore I entered his small lodgings in the rue Guénégaud with a feeling of pride. The entire breakfast, served on a round table in a corner of the fireplace, consisted of pork and sweets. The Captain filled me with cake and pure wine. He told me of countless acts of injustice of which he had been the victim. He complained especially of the Bourbons; and as he neglected to tell me who the Bourbons were, I somehow imagined that they were horse-dealers at Waterloo. The Captain, who interrupted himself only to fill our glasses, furthermore accused a number of young men, *jeanfesses* and good-for-nothings, whom I did not know at all, but

whom I hated with my whole heart. At dessert I thought that I heard the Captain say that my father was a man whom one could twist round one's little finger, but I am not sure that I understood him. My ears were ringing, and it seemed to me that the table was dancing. My uncle put on his frogged coat, took his hat, and we went out into the street, which seemed to me to have undergone a wonderful transformation.

I felt as if a long time had elapsed since I had been there. But when we came to the rue de Seine, the thought of my doll came back to my mind, and threw me into a wonderful state of exaltation. My head was on fire. I resolved to try a bold stroke. We were passing in front of the shop. There she was behind the glass, with her red cheeks, her flowered skirt, and her shapeless legs.

"Uncle," said I with an effort, "will you buy me that doll?"

Then I waited.

"Buy a doll for a boy! Damnation!" cried my uncle in a voice of thunder. "Do you want to disgrace yourself? So, it is that *Margot* that you want, is it? I congratulate you, my little fellow. If you grow up with such tastes you will never have any fun at all in life, and your friends will call you a precious ninny. If you asked me for a sword or a gun, I would buy it for you, my boy, with the last silver crown of my pension. But buy you a doll! A thousand devils! To disgrace you! Never in the world! If ever I catch you playing with such a

decked-out piece of finery as that, I tell you what, monsieur, son of my sister as you are, I'll never again own you for my nephew."

At these words my heart swelled so, that pride alone, a diabolic pride, kept me from crying.

My uncle, suddenly growing calm, returned to his ideas about the Bourbons. But I, still under the lash of his indignation, felt an unspeakable shame. My resolve was soon made. I inwardly swore that I would never disgrace myself. I firmly and forever gave up the red-cheeked doll. That day I felt for the first time the cruel sweetness of sacrifice.

Captain, although it is true that in your life you swore like a heathen, smoked like a beadle, and drank like a bell-ringer, nevertheless may your memory be honored, not merely because you were a brave soldier, but also because you showed your nephew, while he still wore short skirts, the sentiment of heroism! Pride and laziness made you almost unbearable, O uncle Victor! but a great heart beat beneath the frogs of your coat.

I remember you always wore a rose in your buttonhole. That flower which, as I now believe, you let the shop-girls pluck for you, that open-hearted flower which shed its petals on every breeze, was the symbol of your glorious youth. You scorned neither absinthe nor tobacco, but you despised life. Neither common-sense nor refinement could be acquired from you, Captain; but you taught me, at an age when my nurse still looked after me, a lesson of honor and self-sacrifice which I shall never forget. You have been sleeping now a long time in the

cemetery of Mont-Parnasse, beneath a humble slab which bears this epitaph:

HERE LIES
ARISTIDE-VICTOR MALDENT.
CAPTAIN OF INFANTRY.
CHEVALIER OF THE LEGION OF HONOR.

But, Captain, the inscription which you intended for your old bones, so long knocked about on battlefields and in haunts of pleasure, is not there. Among your papers we found this proud and bitter epitaph, which, in spite of your last wish, we dared not place on your tomb: —

HERE LIES
A BRIGAND OF THE LOIRE.

"Thérèse, to-morrow let us place a wreath of immortelles on the tomb of the Brigand of the Loire."

But Thérèse is not here. And how could she be near me on the "greeting" of the Champs-Elysées? Beyond, at the end of the avenue, the Arc de Triomphe lifts its huge portal against the sky, bearing beneath its vault the names of my uncle Victor's comrades-in-arms. Under the spring sunshine the trees along the avenue are unfolding their first leaves, still pale and tender. At my side the open carriages roll along to the Bois de Boulogne.

Unconsciously I have wandered into this fashionable avenue, and stop mechanically before an open booth filled with gingerbread and jars of liquorice-

water, with lemons for stoppers. A poor little urchin, clad in rags through which his chapped skin can be seen, stands with wide-opened eyes before the luxuries which are not for him. He shows his longing with the shamelessness of innocence. His round eyes stare fixedly at a tall man made out of gingerbread. He is a general, and bears some resemblance to my uncle Victor. I take him, pay for him, and hold him out to the little fellow, who scarcely dares to raise his hand, for from early experience he does not believe in good luck. He gazes at me with a look such as we see in the eyes of a big dog, and which seems to say, "You are cruel to make fun of me."

"Come, little simpleton," I say to him in the gruff tone which is habitual with me, "take it, take it, and eat it, for you are more fortunate than I was at your age, and can satisfy your wishes without disgracing yourself." . . .

And you, uncle Victor, now that this gingerbread general brings back to my mind your manly figure, come, glorious Shade that you are, and make me forget my new doll. We are forever children, always running after new toys.

The same day.

In the strangest possible way the Coccoz family has become associated in my mind with the clerk Alexander.

"Thérèse," said I, as I threw myself into my easy-chair, "tell me if the little Coccoz is well, and if he has cut his first teeth yet, and give me my slippers."

"He ought to have them, monsieur," replied Thérèse; "but I have not seen them. The first fine day of spring the mother disappeared with the child, leaving behind her furniture and clothes. Thirty-eight empty pomatum jars were found in the attic. It is beyond belief. Latterly she began to receive visitors, and you may be sure she has not entered a convent. The janitress's niece said that she saw her in an open carriage on the boulevards. I was right when I told you that she would come to a bad end."

"Thérèse," I replied, "this young woman has come neither to a bad nor a good end. Wait until her life is over before you judge her. And be careful not to gossip too much with the janitress. Madame Coccoz, of whom I caught a glimpse once on the stairs, seemed to me to be very fond of her child. This love should count for much in her favor."

"Oh, as to that, monsieur, the child lacked nothing. There could not be found another in the whole quarter that was better kept, better nourished, or more petted. Every day she put a white bib on him, and from morning till night she sang him songs that made him laugh."

"Thérèse, a poet has said, 'The child on whom his mother has not smiled, is worthy neither of the table of the gods nor of the couch of the goddesses.'"

July 8, 1852.

Having heard that they were relaying the pavement in the Chapel of the Virgin at Saint-Germain-

des-Prés, I went to the church in hopes of finding some inscriptions brought to light by the workmen. My hopes were not deceived. The architect kindly showed me a stone which he had just raised against the wall. I knelt down in order that I might see the words cut on the stone; and in a low tone, in the shadow of the ancient apse, I read these words, which made my heart leap: —

HERE LIES ALEXANDER,
MONK OF THIS CHURCH,
WHO HAD THE CHIN OF SAINT VINCENT AND
SAINT AMANT AND THE FOOT OF THE
INNOCENTS ENCLOSED IN SILVER.
IN HIS LIFETIME HE WAS EVER GOOD AND WORTHY.
PRAY FOR HIS SOUL.[1]

With my handkerchief I gently brushed away the dust which covered that mortuary stone. I could have kissed it.

"It is he! It is Alexander!" I cried; and from the vault of the church the name fell back upon me with a noise as if broken.

The grave, solemn face of the beadle, whom I saw coming towards me, made me ashamed of my enthusiasm; and I slipped away in spite of the two rival church mice that would have made the sign of the cross on me with holy water.

[1] *Cy-gist Alexandre, moyne de cette église, qui fist mettre en argent le menton de saint Vincent et de saint Amant, et le pié des Innocens; qui toujours en son vivant fut preud'homme et vayllant. Priez pour l'ame de luj.*

However, it was certainly my Alexander! There was no longer any doubt of it. The translator of "The Golden Legend," the author of the lives of Saint Germain, Saint Vincent, Saint Ferréol, Saint Ferrution, and Saint Droctoveus was, as I had supposed, a monk of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. And what a good, pious, and generous monk too! He had a silver chin made, a silver head, and a silver foot, in order that precious remains might be covered with an imperishable envelope. But am I never to know his work, or is the new discovery merely to augment my longing?

August 20, 1859.

"*I, who please some and who try all men, the joy of the good and the terror of the wicked, I, who make and unfold error, I take it upon myself to stretch my wings. Do not take offence if in my rapid flight I slide over years.*"

Who speaks thus? It is an old man whom I know only too well. It is Time.

Shakespeare, after having finished the third act of the "Winter's Tale," pauses, in order to give Perdita time to grow in wisdom and in beauty; and when he raises the curtain once more he evokes the ancient scythe-bearer to give an account to the spectators of the long days that have weighed down upon the head of the jealous Leontes.

Like Shakespeare in his comedy, I have left in this diary a long interval which I have passed over in silence; and, in the manner of the poet, I will summon Time to explain the silence of ten years.

For ten years I have written not one line in this journal; and now that I take up my pen again, I have no Perdita, alas! to describe as having "grown in grace." Youth and beauty are the faithful companions of the poets. But the charming phantoms visit the rest of us not even for the space of a season. We know not how to keep them. If, by some curious caprice, the shade of some Perdita should plan to enter my brain, she would be horribly bruised there against the piles of dried parchment. Happy poets! whose white locks do not frighten away the wavering shades of Helens, Francescas, Juliets, Julias, and Dorotheas! And Sylvestre Bonnard's nose alone would put to flight the entire swarm of Love's famous heroines!

Yet I, like many another, have known beauty; I have felt the mysterious charm which Nature, incomprehensible in itself, has given to animate forms. A living clay has made me tremble like the lover and the poet. But I have known neither how to love nor how to sing. Within my heart, hidden beneath a pile of ancient texts and old inscriptions, I can see again, like a miniature in an attic, a bright face with two violet eyes.

"Bonnard, my friend, you are an old imbecile! Read this catalogue, which was sent you this very morning by a Florentine bookseller. It is a catalogue of manuscripts, and promises a description of several noted ones, preserved by collectors in Italy and Sicily. This is what is suited to you; this is what is in keeping with your appearance."

I read; suddenly I give a cry. Hamilcar, who,

with age, has assumed a seriousness that frightens me, looks at me reproachfully, as if to ask if there is such a thing as peace in this world, since he cannot have it near me, who am old like himself.

In the joy of my discovery I need a confidant, and I turn to the sceptic Hamilcar with the impulsiveness of a happy man.

"No, Hamilcar, no," I say; "rest does not belong to this world, and the calm for which you long is incompatible with the work of life. But who says that we are old? Listen to what I read from this catalogue, and then tell me if this is a time to rest: —

"THE GOLDEN LEGEND" OF JACQUES DE VORAGINE.

Translated into French in the fourteenth century by the clerk Alexander.

A superb manuscript, ornamented with two miniatures marvellously painted, and in a perfect state of preservation, one representing the Purification of the Virgin, the other the Crowning of Proserpine.

Appended to "The Golden Legend" are the legends of Saints Ferréol, Ferrution, Germain, and Droctoveus. xxviij pages, and the "Miraculous Burial of Monsieur Saint Germain d'Auxerre," xij pages.

This valuable manuscript, which formed part of the collection of Sir Thomas Raleigh, is at present preserved in the collection of Monsieur Micael-Angelo Polizzi of Girgenti.

"Do you hear, Hamilcar? The manuscript of the clerk Alexander is in Sicily, in the home of Micael-Angelo Polizzi. If only this man is fond of scholars! I must write to him."

I did so without delay. In the letter I begged Signor Polizzi to allow me to see the clerk Alexander's manuscript, stating on what grounds I ventured to believe myself worthy of such a favor. At the same time I put at his disposition several unpublished texts in my possession, which were of no small value. I begged him to favor me with an early reply, and beneath my name I wrote all my honorary titles.

"Monsieur! monsieur! Where are you going like that?" cried Thérèse in fright, as she ran down the stairs after me, four steps at a time, my hat in her hand.

"I am going to post a letter, Thérèse."

"Good Lord! The idea of rushing out that way, bare-headed, like a crazy man!"

"I am crazy, Thérèse. But who is not? Give me my hat, quick."

"And your gloves, monsieur! and your umbrella!"

I had reached the foot of the stairs, but I still heard her calling and expostulating.

October 10, 1859.

I awaited Signor Polizzi's reply with ill-concealed impatience. I could not keep still. I grew nervous. I would open and close my books. One day I knocked down a volume of *Moréri* with my elbow. Hamilcar, who was washing himself, stopped suddenly, his paw behind his ear, and looked angrily at me. Had he any reason to expect such a tempestuous existence under my roof? Had we not tacitly

agreed to lead a peaceful life? I had broken our compact.

"My poor friend," said I, "I am the victim of a violent passion, that agitates and completely overmasters me. Passion is the enemy of peace, I admit, but without it there would be neither industry nor art in this world. Every one would sleep uncovered on a dunghill, and you could not lie all day long, Hamilcar, on a silken cushion in the City of Books."

I explained no more to Hamilcar regarding the theory of passion, because my housekeeper brought in a letter. It bore the postmark of Naples, and ran as follows:

Most Illustrious Signor,—

I have indeed in my possession the incomparable manuscript of "The Golden Legend," which has not escaped your close attention. All-important reasons, however, absolutely and tyrannically prevent my parting with it for a single day, a single instant. It would be a pleasure and an honor to show it to you in my humble home at Girgenti, which would be embellished and illuminated by your presence. So, in the impatient hope of greeting you, I dare to sign myself, Signor Academician, your humble and devoted servant,

MICAEL-ANGELO POLIZZI.

Dealer in Wines, and Archaeologist at Girgenti (Sicily).

Very well! I will go to Sicily.

"*Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem.*"

October 25, 1859.

My resolve taken and my arrangements completed, nothing remained but to notify my house-

keeper. I must confess that I hesitated a long time before telling her of my proposed departure. I was afraid of her remonstrances, her teasing, her prayers, and her tears. "She is a good girl," I said to myself, "and she is attached to me. She will want to prevent my going; and God knows that when she wants anything, words, gestures, and cries are nothing to her. In the present instance she will call to her aid the janitress, the floor-polisher, the mattress-maker, and the seven sons of the fruit-dealer. They will all fall on their knees in a circle at my feet. They will weep, and they will look so homely that I shall have to give in so as not to see them any more."

Such were the frightful visions, the hallucinations, that fear brought before my imagination. Yes, fear, "fruitful fear," as the poet says, engendered these monstrous ideas in my brain. For, in this private diary, I will confess that I am afraid of my housekeeper. I know that she realizes how weak I am, and in my struggles with her this fact takes away all my courage. These struggles occur frequently, and I invariably give in. But I had to announce my departure to Thérèse. She came into the library with an armful of wood to make a little fire, "a flame," she said, for the mornings are sharp. I watched her out of the corner of my eye as she bent down, her head under the hood of the fireplace. I have no idea where my courage came from, but I did not hesitate a moment. I rose and began pacing up and down the room.

"By the way," said I in a careless tone, with

that swaggering manner which is characteristic of cowards, "by the way, Thérèse, I am going to Sicily."

Having spoken, I waited, extremely anxious. Thérèse made no reply. Her head and her huge cap remained buried in the fireplace, and I saw nothing in her appearance that betrayed the slightest emotion. She was stuffing some paper under the logs, and was kindling the fire. That was all.

At length I saw her face again. It was calm, so calm that I grew angry.

"Really," I thought, "this old maid has no heart. She lets me go away without even saying 'Ah!' Is the absence of her old master of such small account to her?"

"Well, monsieur," she said at last, "go; but be back by six o'clock. We have a dish for dinner to-day that cannot be kept waiting."

NAPLES, *November* 10, 1859.

"*Co tra calle vive, magne e lave a faccia.*"

I understand, my friend. For three centimes I can drink, eat, and wash my face, all by means of one of these slices of watermelon which you display on a little table. But Occidental prejudices would prevent my honestly relishing this simple pleasure. How could I suck the watermelon? It is all I can do to keep my footing in this crowd. How brilliant and noisy the night is in the *Strada di Porto!* The fruit is piled up like mountains in the shops that are bright with multi-colored lanterns. On the stoves,

burning in the open air, the water boils in the kettles, and the frying things sing away in the pans. The odor of fried fish and hot meats tickles my nose, and makes me sneeze. At this point I find that my handkerchief has vanished from my coat pocket. I am pushed, turned about, and literally carried off my feet, by the gayest, the most reckless, the liveliest, and the nimblest people that can be imagined. Suddenly a young woman, whose magnificent black hair I am admiring, sends me flying, with a shove of her powerful and elastic shoulder, three steps backward, without hurting me, into the arms of a macaroni-eater, who welcomes me with a smile.

I am in Naples. How I arrived here with the few battered and mutilated remnants of my luggage, I cannot tell, for the simple reason that I do not know. I made my journey in a constant state of terror; and I know that in this brilliant city I looked, a while ago, just like an owl in the sunshine. To-night it is much worse! Wishing to study the habits of the people, I came into the *Strada di Porto*, where I am now. About me, animated groups are crowding before the eating-shops; and I float like a wreck at the mercy of these living waves, which, even as they carry one down, caress one still. For there is something indescribably sweet and gentle in the vivacity of these Neapolitans. I am not rudely jostled. I am rocked; and I think that by swaying me back and forth, these people want me to fall asleep while I am standing here.

As I make my way along the lava pavement of the strada, I cannot but admire the street porters and the fishermen who pass by, talking, singing, smoking, gesticulating, quarrelling and making up with wonderful rapidity. They live in all their senses at once, wise without knowing it, gauging their ambition by the shortness of life. I approach a well-frequented wine-shop, and read on the door this quatrain, in the patois of Naples: —

Amice, alliegre magnammo e bevimmo,
Nfui che n'ce stace noglio a la lucerna;
Chi sa s'a l' autro munno nc'e vedimmo?
Chi sa s'a l' autro munno nc'e taverna?

Come, Friends, let us merrily eat and drink,
As long as the lamp burns bright;
Who knows if we'll meet in the world to come,
Or if taverns are kept in the Realms of Light?

Horace gave similar counsels to his friends. You accepted them, Postumus; you heard them, Leuconoë, rebellious beauty, with your craving to know the secrets of the future; that future is now the past, and we know it. In truth, you were very wrong to trouble yourself for so little; and your lover showed himself to be a sensible man in advising you to be wise, and to strain your Greek wines. *Sapias, vina liques.*

Thus a beautiful land and a pure sky counsel us to pursue quiet pleasures. But there are souls troubled by a sublime discontent. These are the noblest. You were of these, Leuconoë; and coming

at the close of my life to the city where your beauty shone, I respectfully salute your melancholy shade. The souls like yours, who appeared in the age of Christianity, were the souls of saints; and their miracles fill "The Golden Legend." Your friend Horace left a less noble posterity; and I recognize one of his descendants in the person of the tavern-keeper poet, who even now is filling the cups with wine beneath his epicurean signboard.

Yet life proves our friend Flaccus right, and his philosophy alone is suited to the train of events. See that jovial fellow leaning against a covered vine-trellis, and eating an ice as he gazes at the stars. He would not stoop to pick up the old manuscript for which I am going in search with so much trouble. And truly, man is made rather to eat ices than to pore over old texts.

I continued to wander among the drinkers and the singers. There were lovers, who, their arms about each other's waists, were eating ripe fruit. Man must be naturally evil, for all this strange happiness saddened me deeply. The crowd made such a display of their artless delight in mere existence, that all the sensitiveness which years of writing had intensified in me seemed to revolt against it. Furthermore, I was disheartened at not understanding a word of the gay talk that buzzed through the air. It was a humiliating ordeal for a philologist, and so I was positively peevish when some words uttered behind me fell on my ear.

"Dimitri, that old man is certainly a Frenchman. He looks so bewildered that it troubles me. Shall

I speak to him? He has a good round back, hasn't he, Dimitri?"

The words were spoken in French, and by a woman. At the very first, it was extremely disagreeable to hear myself spoken of as an old man. Is one old at sixty-two? The other day on the Pont des Arts, my friend Perrot d'Avrignac complimented me on my youthful appearance; and he is a better authority on age, apparently, than this young crow who makes remarks about my back. My back is round, is it? Ah, ha! I suspected as much; but now I shall not believe it at all, since it is the opinion of a young simpleton. I will not even turn my head to see who the speaker is, but I am sure that it is a pretty woman. Why? Because she speaks in a capricious way, like a spoiled child. Homely women would be as capricious as pretty ones; but as they are never spoiled, and as no allowances are ever made for what they do, they are obliged to forget their whims or to hide them. On the other hand, pretty women may be as capricious as they please. My neighbor is of the latter class. However, as I think of it, she expressed a kindly thought about me, and that deserves my gratitude.

These reflections, including the last and crowning one, chased one another through my brain in less than a second; and if I have taken a whole minute to tell them, it is because I am a poor writer, a quality common to all philologists. Scarcely a second after the voice had ceased speaking, I turned, and saw a very vivacious and pretty little brunette.

"Madame," I said, bowing, "pardon my thought-

less indiscretion. I could not help overhearing what you just said. You wished to do a kindness to a poor old man. You have already done it, madame; the mere sound of a French voice is a pleasure to me, and I thank you for it."

I bowed again, and was about to move away, when my heel slipped on the rind of a watermelon, and I should certainly have kissed the Parthenopean soil had not the young woman raised her hand to catch me.

In circumstances, even the most trifling, there is a force that one cannot resist. I resigned myself to being the *protégé* of the unknown lady.

"It is late," said she; "do you not want to return to your hotel, which must be near ours, if not the same?"

"Madame," I replied, "I do not know what time it is, because my watch has been stolen; but I think, with you, that it is time to beat a retreat, and I shall be happy to return to the Hôtel de Gênes in the company of such kind compatriots."

So saying, I bowed again to the young woman and her companion, who was a silent giant, gentle, yet sad.

I had not gone far with them before I learned, among other things, that they were the Prince and Princess Trépof, and that they were making a trip around the world in pursuit of match-boxes, of which they were making a collection.

We walked along a winding, narrow *vicoletto* (alley), lighted by a solitary lamp burning before the niche of a Madonna.

The transparency and purity of the air gave even the darkness a heavenly light, and we made our way without difficulty under the limpid night. Then we plunged into a small street, or, to use the Neapolitan expression, a *sotto-portico* (arcade), which ran along beneath so many arches and projecting balconies that scarcely a ray of light reached us. My young guide took this route, she said, because it was shorter, but also, I imagine, in order to show us that she was thoroughly acquainted with Naples, and could find her way about. It was indeed necessary to know the city in order to venture by night within this labyrinth of subterranean alleys and stairways.

If ever man was docile in letting himself be guided it was I. Dante followed the steps of Beatrice no more trustingly than I those of the Princess Trépof.

This lady evidently took some pleasure in my conversation; for she offered me a seat in her carriage the next day, to visit the grotto of Posilippo and the tomb of Virgil. She declared that she had seen me somewhere before, but she did not know whether it was at Stockholm or Canton. In the former case I was a highly distinguished professor of geology; in the latter, a provision-merchant, whose courtesy and kindness had been greatly appreciated. However, she was certain that somewhere she had seen my back.

"Excuse me," she added; "my husband and I travel constantly in order to collect match-boxes, and to find new forms of ennui by finding new countries. Perhaps it would be better to content our-

selves with one kind of ennui alone. But all our arrangements are made for travelling; it is no trouble for us, and it would be very annoying if we had to stop anywhere. I tell you this that you may not be surprised if my ideas are somewhat confused. But when I first saw you this evening I felt, indeed I knew, that I had seen you before. But where? That is the question. Are you sure that you are neither the geologist nor the provision-merchant?"

"No, madame," I replied, "I am neither the one nor the other; and I regret the fact, since you have had occasion to be pleased with them. There is nothing in me to arouse your interest. I have spent my life among books, and I have never travelled. You must have seen that from my bewilderment, which you pitied. I am a member of the Institute."

"A member of the Institute! Oh, that is charming! You must write something in my album. Do you understand Chinese? I should so much like to have you write something in Chinese or Persian in my album. I will present you to my friend Miss Fergusson. She travels everywhere, in order to see every celebrity in the world. She will be delighted. Dimitri, did you hear? This gentleman is a member of the Institute, and has spent his life among books!"

The prince nodded his head approvingly.

"Monsieur," I said, trying to bring him into the conversation, "there is no doubt but that something is to be learned from books; but one can learn much more by travelling, and I greatly regret that I have not, like you, been all over the world. I have lived

in the same house for thirty years, and I scarcely ever go out."

"You have lived in the same house for thirty years! Is it possible?" exclaimed Madame Trépof.

"Yes, madame," I answered. "To be sure, the house is on the banks of the Seine, in the most noted and most beautiful spot in the world. My window looks out upon the Tuileries and the Louvre, the Pont-Neuf, the towers of Notre-Dame, the towers of the Palais de Justice, and the spire of Sainte-Chapelle. All these stones speak to me. They tell me stories of the days of Saint Louis, of the Valois, of Henry IV. and Louis XIV. I understand them, and I love them. It is but one small corner; but in all truth, madame, is there a more beautiful one?"

We had reached a square, a *largo*, bathed in the soft radiance of the night. Madame Trépof looked anxiously at me, her raised eyebrows almost touching her curly black hair.

"Where do you live?" she asked suddenly.

"On the quay Maloquais, madame, and my name is Bonnard. Not widely known, it is true; but it is enough for me that my friends do not forget it."

This announcement, unimportant as it was, produced an extraordinary effect on Madame Trépof. She immediately turned her back upon me, and seized her husband's arm.

"Come, Dimitri," said she, "do make haste! I am horribly tired, and you are so slow. We shall never get there. That is your road, monsieur, over there."

She pointed vaguely toward a dark *vicolo*, pushed

her husband in the opposite direction, and called out to me without turning her head, —

"Farewell, monsieur. We shall not go to Posilippo to-morrow, nor the day after, either. I have a frightful headache, frightful. Dimitri, you are unbearable, you are so slow!"

I stood petrified, trying, but in vain, to discover what I could have done to offend Madame Trépof. I was lost; and, so far as I could see, I should have to wander about all night. As to asking my way of any one, I should have to meet some one in order to do this, and I despaired of seeing a soul. In my despair I took a street at random, or, rather, a horrible looking alleyway. It certainly resembled the haunt of cut-throats; and, in fact, it was such, for I had not walked more than a few moments before I came upon two men using knives. They were fighting with their tongues even more than with their blades, and from the harsh words they interchanged I concluded that they were lovers. I prudently turned into a side alley, while the worthy fellows went on with their own affair without in the least troubling themselves about mine. I walked on for some time at random, and sat down discouraged on a stone bench, inwardly cursing the whims of Madame Trépof.

"How are you, signor? Are you just back from San Carlo? Did you hear the diva? One hears such singing only at Naples."

I looked up, and recognized my landlord. I was sitting against the façade of my hotel, beneath my own window.

MONTE-ALLEGRO, *November* 30, 1859.

My guides, the mules, and I, on our way from Sciacca to Girgenti, were resting at an inn in the wretched village of Monte-Allegro. The inhabitants, wasted away by *mal' aria*, were shivering in the sun. But they are Greeks, and their gayety rises above everything. Some of them surrounded the inn, full of smiling curiosity. A story, could I have told them one, would have made them forget all the ills of life. They looked intelligent; and the women, although sunburned and faded, wore their long black cloaks with much grace.

Before me were ruins bleached by the sea wind; not even grass grows on them. The mournful loneliness of the desert reigns in this arid land, the parched breast of which scarcely finds sufficient nourishment for a few dried mimosa, some cacti, and dwarf palms. Twenty paces distant, at the bottom of a ravine, some stones were gleaming white, like a trail of bones. My guide told me that they marked the bed of a stream.

I had spent a fortnight in Sicily. As I entered the Bay of Palermo, which opens between the two barren and mighty mountains of the Pellegrino and the Catalfano, and runs the length of the Golden Conch, I was filled with such admiration that I determined to travel in the island, so noted on account of its historic memories, and so beautiful in the outlines of its hills, which reveal the principles of Greek art. Old pilgrim that I was, grown white in the Gothic Occident, I dared to venture on this classic

soil; and, having arranged with my guide, I went from Palermo to Trapani, from Trapani to Selinonte, from Selinonte to Sciacca, which I left this morning for Girgenti, to find the manuscript of the clerk Alexander. The beautiful things that I have seen are so fresh in my mind that I consider the trouble of describing them a useless task. Why spoil my trip by gathering notes? Lovers who truly love never describe their happiness.

Wholly given over to the melancholy of the present and the poetry of the past, my mind filled with beautiful images, my eyes full of pure and harmonious lines, I was sipping the sirup-like dew of a fiery wine in the inn of Monte-Allegro, when I saw two persons enter the room. After a moment's hesitation I recognized them as Monsieur and Madame Trépof.

This time I saw the princess in the light, and such a light! When one has enjoyed that of Sicily, one understands better these expressions of Sophocles: —

"*O holy light! . . . Eye of the golden day!*"

Madame Trépof, in brown holland, and wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat, looked like a very pretty woman of about twenty-eight. Her eyes were like a child's, but her full chin showed a riper age. She is, I must confess, a very pleasant person. She is *souple* and variable. She is the shifting sea; but, thank Heaven, I am no sailor! I soon detected that she was in a bad humor; and this, after hearing her utter a few broken words, I attributed to the

fact that she had not met a single brigand on the way.

"Such things never happen except to us," she exclaimed, letting her arms fall with a gesture of discouragement.

She asked for a glass of iced water, and the host presented it to her with a grace which reminded me of those scenes of funeral offerings depicted on Greek vases.

I was in no haste to show myself before the lady who had left me so suddenly in the Square in Naples; but she caught sight of me in my corner, and her quick frown showed me very plainly that my presence was disagreeable to her.

She drank a swallow of the water; and then, either her whim changed, or she felt sorry for my solitude, but she came straight to me.

"Good-morning, Monsieur Bonnard," she said. "How do you do? What luck to meet you in this frightful country!"

"This country is not frightful, madame," I replied. "This land is a land of glory. Beauty is a thing so great and so dignified that it takes centuries of barbarism to efface it, and even then there will always remain some adorable traces of it! The majesty of ancient Ceres still broods over these arid valleys, and the Greek muse who made Arethusa and Mænalus re-echo with her divine accents still sings in my ears on the bare mountain and in the dried bed of the stream. Yes, madame, when this uninhabited earth shall, like the moon, roll its pale corpse in space, the soil that bears the ruins of

Selinonte shall even in death keep the everlasting stamp of beauty; and then, then at least, there will no longer be frivolous lips to blaspheme the grandeur of these solitudes."

I knew very well that my words were beyond the comprehension of the pretty little empty-head who heard them; but a man like myself, who has spent his life over books, cannot change his tone to suit every one. Besides, I was glad to teach Madame Trépof a lesson in reverence. She received it with such submission and with such an intelligent air, that I added, in as good-natured a manner as possible, —

"As to whether the chance which has thrown us together is fortunate or unfortunate I am at a loss to say, before knowing whether or not my presence is disagreeable to you. The other day at Naples you seemed suddenly to grow weary of my company. I can attribute your actions only to my natural disagreeableness, since at that time I had the honor of meeting you for the first time in my life."

My words seemed to cause her the most indescribable delight. She smiled on me most graciously, and held out her hand, which I raised to my lips.

"Monsieur Bonnard," she said vivaciously, "do not refuse a seat in my carriage. You shall talk to me on the way about antiquities, and I shall be greatly interested."

"My dear," said the prince, "it shall be just as you say; but you know the carriage is not an easy riding one, and I fear that you are only giving

Monsieur Bonnard a chance to suffer from a horrible backache."

Madame Trépof tossed her head to show that she did not hesitate at any such consideration; then she took off her hat. The shadow fell from her black hair over her eyes, bathing them in a velvety softness. She stood motionless, her features assuming a far-away, dreamy expression. But suddenly her eyes fell on a basket of oranges which the innkeeper had brought in; and taking them up one by one, she put them into a fold of her gown.

"They are for our drive," she said. "You are going to Girgenti, and so are we. Do you know why we are going there? I will tell you. My husband, you know, is collecting match-boxes. We bought thirteen hundred at Marseilles. But we heard that there was a factory of them at Girgenti. We were told that it was a small factory, and that its products, which are very ugly, never go outside of the city and its suburbs. So! we are going to Girgenti to buy these boxes. Dimitri has tried all sorts of collections, but at present he is interested in nothing but match-boxes. He already has five thousand two hundred and fourteen different kinds. We have some that were a great deal of trouble to find. For instance, we knew that at Naples boxes were once made with the portraits of Mazzini and Garibaldi on them, and that the police had seized the plates from which they were printed, and imprisoned the manufacturer. By hunting and inquiring we secured one of these boxes for a hundred francs, instead of two sous. That was not very dear, but we were in-

formed against. We were taken for conspirators. Our baggage was searched. They did not find the box, however, which I had carefully hidden; but they found my jewels, and took them. They still have them. The affair caused some talk, and we were on the point of being arrested. But the king heard of it, and ordered us to be let alone. Until then I thought it stupid to collect match-boxes; but when I found that our liberty and perhaps our life were at stake, I developed a sudden liking for it. Now I have a perfect craze for collecting match-boxes. Next summer we are going to Sweden to complete our collection. Are we not, Dimitri?"

I felt (must I admit it?) considerable sympathy for these intrepid collectors. No doubt I should rather have found Monsieur and Madame Trépof interested in antique marbles and painted vases in Sicily. I should like to have seen them studying the ruins of Agrigentum and the poetical traditions of the Eryx. But no matter; they were making a collection, they belonged to the brotherhood, and could I laugh at them without laughing at myself? Besides, Madame Trépof had spoken of her collection with a mingling of enthusiasm and irony that made the idea a very pleasing one. As we were about to leave the inn, we saw some men with carbines under their dark cloaks, coming down-stairs from the upper rooms. To me they had the appearance of thorough-going bandits, and after they had gone I told Monsieur Trépof my opinion of them. He calmly replied that he thought as I did, — that they were bandits; and our guides advised us to

take an escort of gendarmes. But Madame Trépof begged us to do nothing of the kind. There was no need, she said, to spoil her trip.

Turning a pair of pleading eyes to me, she added, —

"Is it not true, Monsieur Bonnard, that nothing in life is worth anything but sensations?"

"No doubt, madame," I replied; "but still, we must understand the nature of the sensations. Those that are inspired by a noble memory or a grand spectacle are of course the best element of life; whereas it seems to me that those resulting from threatening danger should be carefully avoided. Should you think it pleasant, madame, if at midnight among the mountains the muzzle of a carbine were pressed against your forehead?"

"Oh, no," she answered; "comic operas have made carbines perfectly absurd, and it would be a great misfortune for a young women to be killed with an absurd weapon. But a knife-blade is another thing. A polished, cold knife-blade! That makes one shiver."

She herself shivered as she spoke, closed her eyes, and threw her head back. Then she resumed, —

"You are happy — you are interested in all sorts of things."

She gave a side glance at her husband as he stood talking with the innkeeper. Then, leaning towards me, she said in a low tone, —

"Dimitri and I are both bored to death, you see. To be sure, we have the match-boxes left, but one

tires even of them. Besides, before long our collection will be completed. What shall we do then?"

"Ah, madame," I said, touched by the moral wretchedness of this pretty woman, "if you had a son, you would know what to do. The aim of your life would be very apparent then, and your thoughts would be at once more serious and more cheerful."

"I have a son," she replied. "He is grown now; he is almost a man. He is eleven years old, and is already wearied of life. Yes, really, my George, he, too, suffers from ennui. It is very distressing."

Again she glanced at her husband, who was superintending the harnessing of the mules on the road, and examining the girths and straps. Then she asked me if, during the last ten years, there had been many changes on the quay Malaquais. She said she never went there, because it was too far away.

"Too far from Monte-Allegro?" I asked.

"Oh, no!" she answered; "too far from the Avenue des Champs-Elysées, where we live."

Then, as if to herself, she murmured in a low tone, —

"Too far! too far!" with a dreamy expression, the meaning of which I could not fathom.

Suddenly she smiled and said to me, —

"I like you immensely, Monsieur Bonnard, immensely."

The mules were harnessed. The young woman picked up the oranges, which had fallen from her lap, rose, and, looking at me, began to laugh.

"How I should like to see you struggling with

brigands!" she cried. "You would say such extraordinary things to them! Do take my hat and hold my parasol for me, will you, Monsieur Bonnard?"

"Well," said I to myself as I followed her, "well, she is a queer little mortal! Nature must have been unpardonably thoughtless when she gave a son to such a silly creature!"

GIRGENTI, *The same day.*

Her manners had shocked me. I let her settle herself in her *lettica* (litter), and I made myself as comfortable as I could in mine. These wheelless vehicles are borne by two mules, one in front, the other behind. This style of litter or chair is of ancient usage. I often used to see similar ones depicted in French manuscripts of the fourteenth century. I did not know then that some day I should be using one of them. It is well for us not to count too certainly on anything.

For three hours the mules jingled their little bells, and beat their hoofs on the sunburnt soil. On either side the arid and prodigious shapes of an African landscape came slowly into view. When we had gone half the distance we paused to let our mules take breath. Madame Trépof stepped from her litter, and, coming to me, took my arm, and drew me forward a few steps. Then, all at once, in a voice that I could not believe was hers, she said to me,—

"Do not think me a bad woman. My George knows that I am a good mother."

We walked a space in silence. She raised her head, and I saw that she was weeping.

"Madame," I said, "do you see this soil that is cracked by five months' heat? A little white lily has sprung from it."

And with the end of my cane I pointed to the frail stalk ending in a double blossom.

"Your heart also," I said, "however arid it may be, yet bears its white lily. This in itself proves that I do not think you to be, as you said, a bad woman."

"Yes, I am! yes, I am!" she cried, with the obstinacy of a child. "I am a bad woman; but I am ashamed of it before you, who are so good, so very good."

"You know nothing about it," I said.

"Yes, I do; I know you," she said with a smile. And with a quick step she returned to her *lettica*.

GIRGENTI, *November* 30, 1859.

The following day I awoke at Girgenti, in the house of Gellias. Gellias was a wealthy citizen of ancient Agrigentum. He was as noted for his generosity as for his opulence, and he endowed his city with a large number of free hotels. Gellias has been dead for more than thirteen hundred years, and there is no longer free hospitality among civilized peoples. But the name Gellias now belongs to a hotel, where, as I was worn out with fatigue, I was able to get a good night's rest.

Modern Girgenti raises its narrow, closely built

houses above the acropolis of ancient Agrigentum, and over all a sombre Spanish cathedral looks down. From my windows I see, half-way down the hill toward the sea, the white line of half-destroyed temples. These ruins are the sole touch of freshness. All else is dried up. Water and life have deserted Agrigentum. Water, the divine Nestis of Empedocles of Agrigentum, is so necessary to life that nothing lives far from streams and springs.

But a brisk trade is carried on at the port of Girgenti, three kilometers from the city.

"So," said I to myself, "in this sad city, on this abrupt height, the manuscript of the clerk Alexander is to be found!"

I had Signor Micael-Angelo Polizzi's house pointed out to me, and went there.

I found Signor Polizzi clad in white from head to foot, engaged in cooking sausages in a frying-pan. At sight of me he let go the handle of the pan, raised his arms, and gave a cry of delight. He was a small man, whose pimpled face, hooked nose, projecting chin, and round eyes made a remarkably expressive physiognomy.

He addressed me as Your Excellency, said that this was a red-letter day, and asked me to be seated. The room in which we were, opened into the kitchen, the parlor, the sleeping-room, the workshop, and the cellar.

I saw furnaces, a bed, some canvases, an easel, several bottles, some bunches of onions, and a magnificent colored spun-glass chandelier. I glanced at the pictures with which the walls were covered.

"Art! art!" cried Signor Polizzi, again raising his arms to heaven. "Art! What an honor! What a comfort! I am a painter, Your Excellency."

He showed me an unfinished Saint Francis, which might well have remained so without loss to art or religion. Then he called my attention to some old pictures of a somewhat better quality, but they seemed to me to have been restored indiscriminately.

"I repair ancient paintings," said he. "Oh, what soul, what genius, the old masters had!"

"Is it true, then?" I asked, "are you painter, antiquary, and wine-merchant all in one?"

"At your service, Your Excellency," he replied. "At present I have a *zucco*, every drop of which is a pearl of fire. I will have your lordship taste it."

"I esteem the wines of Sicily highly," I answered; "but I have not come to see you on account of your bottles, Signor Polizzi."

He. — "For my paintings, then. You are an amateur. It is a great delight to me to receive such men. I will show you the masterpiece of 'Monrealese;' yes, Your Excellency, his masterpiece! 'The Adoration of the Shepherds!' It is the gem of the Sicilian school!"

I. — "It will give me pleasure to see this masterpiece. But let us first speak of what has brought me here."

His small, restless eyes, brimming over with curiosity, fastened themselves on me; and I saw with a sharp pang that he did not even suspect the object of my visit.

Anxious, feeling the cold perspiration on my brow, I pitifully stammered out something to this effect, —

"I have come from Paris on purpose to see a manuscript of 'The Golden Legend,' which you wrote that you had in your possession."

At these words he raised his arms, opened wide his mouth and eyes, and showed the greatest agitation.

"Oh! the manuscript of 'The Golden Legend'! A gem, Your Excellency, a ruby, a diamond! Two miniatures so perfect that they seem to give you a glimpse of Paradise. What softness is there! The wonderful tints robbed from the corolla of a flower are honey for the eyes! A Sicilian could not have done better!"

"Show it to me!" I cried, unable to conceal my impatience or my hope.

"Show it to you!" cried Polizzi. "How can I, Your Excellency? I no longer have it! I no longer have it!"

And he seemed as if he would tear his hair from his head. He might have pulled every bit of it out of his hide before I would have stopped him. But he grew calm before he had done himself much damage.

"What!" I cried in my wrath; "do you mean that you led me to come from Paris to Girgenti by offering to show me a manuscript, and when I arrive you tell me that you no longer have it? It is shameful, monsieur. I will expose you to all good men."

Had any one seen me then, he would have gained a good idea of an enraged sheep.

"It is shameful! shameful!" I repeated, shaking my trembling arms.

Micael-Angelo Polizzi sank into a chair in the manner of a dying hero. His eyes filled with tears; and his hair, which until then had stood on end, fell in disorder about his forehead.

"I am a father, Your Excellency, I am a father!" cried he, clasping his hands. He added between sobs, —

"My son Rafael, the son of my poor wife whose death I have mourned for fifteen years, Rafael, Your Excellency, wanted to set up a business in Paris. He rented a shop in the Rue Laffitte in order to sell curios. I gave him everything of any value that I possessed, — my handsomest majolica ware, my most beautiful faïence from Urbino, my finest paintings — such paintings, signor! They still dazzle me in imagination. And they were all signed! I gave him the manuscript of 'The Golden Legend.' I would have given him my flesh and blood. He was my only son, the child of my poor, sainted wife!"

"So," said I, "while I, trusting to your given word, was coming to the heart of Sicily in quest of the clerk Alexander's manuscript, this manuscript lay in a shop-window in the rue Laffitte, not fifteen hundred meters from my own lodgings!"

"It was there, that is positive," replied Signor Polizzi, suddenly growing calm again; "and it is still there, or at least I trust so, Your Excellency."

He took from a shelf a card which he handed to me, saying,—

"Here is my son's address. You will greatly oblige me by letting your friends know it. Faïence, enamels, draperies, paintings, a complete assortment of objects of art, all at the most reasonable prices, all guaranteed, on my word of honor. Go and see him. He will show you the manuscript of 'The Golden Legend.' Two miniatures of wonderful clearness."

I was weak enough to accept the card he handed me. This man took advantage of my weakness in again asking me to mention the name of Rafael Polizzi to my friends.

My hand was already on the door-knob, when the Sicilian grasped my arm. He seemed inspired.

"Ah, Your Excellency," he cried, "what a city is ours! It gave birth to Empedocles. Empedocles! What a man he was! What a citizen! What boldness of thought he possessed! What virtue! What soul! Down there at the port, there is a statue of Empedocles; and whenever I pass it I uncover. When my son Rafael was on the point of setting out to open a shop of antiquities in the rue Laffitte, in Paris, I went with him to the port of our city, and at the feet of the statue of Empedocles, I gave him my paternal blessing. 'Remember Empedocles!' I said to him. Ah! signor, our unhappy country needs another Empedocles to-day! Should you like me to show you the statue, Your Excellency? I will be your guide to the ruins. I will show you the temple of Castor and Pollux, the temple of Jupiter Olym-

pus, the temple of Lucinian Juno, the ancient well, the tomb of Theron, and the Golden Gate. Professional guides are all ignorant mules! but we will make excavations, if you wish, and we will discover treasures. I understand the science, the gift of making treasure-troves, a gift of Heaven."

Finally I succeeded in getting away. But he ran after me, stopped me at the foot of the stairs, and whispered in my ear, —

"Listen, Your Excellency! I will guide you about the city. I will make you acquainted with some of our girls! What a race they are! What a type! What figures they have! Sicilian girls, signor! the ancient beauty!"

"The Devil take you!" I cried in anger; and I rushed into the street, leaving him discoursing in a lofty style equal to his enthusiasm. When I was out of his sight I sank down on a stone, and clasping my head in my hands, began to ruminate.

"Was it," thought I to myself, "was it to listen to such propositions that I came to Sicily? This Polizzi is a scoundrel, his son is another, and together they have tried to ruin me. But what plot have they arranged?"

I could not understand it. In the meanwhile, was I not sufficiently humiliated and disappointed?

A burst of merry laughter made me raise my head; and I saw Madame Trépof running in front of her husband, and waving a diminutive something in her hand. She seated herself by my side, and showed me, amid bursts of fresh laughter, a

wretched little pasteboard box, on which was a bluish-red head, indicated in the description as that of Empedocles.

"Yes, madame," I said; "but that wretched Polizzi to whom I advise you not to send Monsieur Trépof has disgusted me for life with Empedocles, and this picture of him is not calculated to make this ancient philosopher any more agreeable to me."

"Oh," said Madame Trépof, "it is homely, but it is rare. These boxes are not exported. They have to be bought on the spot. Dimitri has six others just like this in his pocket. We took them in order to exchange with collectors, you see. We were at the factory at nine o'clock this morning. So you see we have not wasted our time."

"I certainly do see that, madame," I replied in a bitter tone; "but I have wasted mine."

I saw then that she was a kind woman. All her merriment disappeared.

"Poor Monsieur Bonnard! Poor Monsieur Bonnard!" she whispered; and taking my hand in hers she added, "tell me about your troubles."

I told her. It was a long story, but she was touched; for afterwards she asked me a number of minute questions, which I looked upon as a proof of her interest. She wanted to know the exact title of the manuscript, its size, appearance, and age. Then she asked me for Signor Rafael Polizzi's address. I gave it to her (O fate!), doing exactly as that wretched Polizzi had asked me to do.

It is sometimes difficult to stop. I began my suf-

ferings and imprecations all over again. This time Madame Trépof commenced to laugh.

"Why do you laugh?" I asked her.

"Because I am a wicked woman," she replied. Then she fled away, leaving me alone and mystified on the stone.

PARIS, *December* 8, 1859.

My trunks, still unpacked, were piled up in the dining-room. I was seated before a table laden with all the good things that France produces for an epicure. I was eating a *pâté de Chartres*, which alone would make one love one's country. Thérèse, her hands clasped over her white apron, stood watching me with kindness, anxiety, and pity. Hamilcar was rubbing against me wild with joy.

The following verse of an old poet came to my mind: —

"*Happy is he, who, like Ulysses, has made a good journey.*"

"Well," I thought to myself, "I have journeyed in vain, I have returned empty-handed, but, like Ulysses, I have made a good journey."

I swallowed my last drop of coffee, and asked Thérèse for my hat and cane. She handed them to me with a look of distrust, fearing a second departure. But I reassured her by asking her to have dinner ready by six o'clock.

It was always a delight to me to saunter along the streets of Paris, every cobble and flagstone of which I worship. But I had an object in view, and

I went direct to the rue Laffitte. I was not long in finding Rafael Polizzi's shop. It attracted attention because of its great array of old paintings. These, although bearing a diversity of famous signatures, nevertheless showed a certain family likeness, which would have given one the idea of the touching fraternity among geniuses, had it not betrayed rather the tricky mannerisms of Polizzi senior. Enriched by these dubious masterpieces, the shop was brightened by various curios, swords, flagons, goblets, vases, brass godroons, and Spanish-Arabian dishes of metallic lustre.

On a Portuguese armchair in embossed leather lay a copy of Simon Vostre's "Hours," open at the page that is embellished with an astrological figure; and an old Vitruvius on a chest displayed its masterly engravings of caryatides and telamones. This seeming disorder, which concealed a wise arrangement, this way in which the objects were thrown apparently at random, and yet by which they were placed in the most favorable light, would have increased my distrust; but that, which the mere name of Polizzi roused in me, could not be augmented, as it was boundless to begin with.

Signor Rafael, who seemed to be the sole genius of all this incongruous and heterogeneous mass, struck me as a phlegmatic young man, a sort of Englishman. He showed none of his father's transcendental faculties of buffoonery and declamation.

I told him the object of my coming. He opened a closet, and brought out a manuscript which he

placed on a table, that I might examine it at my leisure.

Never in my life have I felt such a sensation except during a few months of my boyhood, the memory of which, should I live to be a hundred, will be at my last hour as fresh in my mind as on the first day. It was actually the manuscript described by Sir Thomas Raleigh's librarian. It was indeed the clerk Alexander's manuscript that I saw before me, that I touched! Voragine's work was evidently abridged, but that was of small consequence. The priceless additions of the monk of Saint-Germain-des-Prés were there. That was the great point! I tried to read the legend of Saint Droctoveus, but it was in vain. All the lines were blurred before my eyes, and my ears rang with the sound of a mill-wheel at night in the country. I saw, however, that the manuscript offered points of the most undeniable authenticity. The two drawings of the Purification of the Virgin and the Crowning of Proserpine were weak in design and crude in color. Greatly damaged in 1824, as the catalogue of Sir Thomas states, they had since then regained their freshness. But this miracle was not surprising to me. And, besides, what did I care for the two miniatures? The legends and the poem of Alexander were the treasures! I took in as much of it as my eyes could see.

I affected an indifferent manner, and asked Signor Rafael the price of the manuscript, inwardly praying, while I waited his reply, that the figures would not be beyond my small savings, which

already had been greatly diminished by my expensive journey. Signor Polizzi replied that he could not sell the manuscript because it did not belong to him. This, with other manuscripts and a few *incunabula*, was to be put up at auction in the Hôtel des Ventes.

It was a cruel blow to me. I strove to hide my feelings, and answered somewhat in this way, —

"You greatly surprise me, monsieur. Your father, whom I have recently seen at Girgenti, told me that you were the possessor of this manuscript. You surely do not want to make me doubt your father's word."

"I was," Rafael replied with perfect sincerity; "but it is no longer mine. That manuscript, the great value of which has not escaped you, I sold to a private collector whose name I am forbidden to mention, and who, for reasons which I must also decline to state, is obliged to dispose of his collection. Honored by the confidence of my client, I am ordered by him to arrange the catalogue and direct the sale, which will take place the twenty-fourth of next December. If you care to leave your address, I will take pleasure in sending you the catalogue, which is now in press, and in which you will find 'The Golden Legend' described under No. 42."

I gave him my address and left.

I was as disagreeably impressed by this man's calm dignity as by his father's impudent mummery. From the bottom of my soul I detested the tricks of these wretched traffickers. It was clear to me that the two scoundrels were in league, and that they had

devised this auction sale merely for the sake of raising to an exhorbitant price the manuscript I wanted, and had secured the aid of an auctioneer so as to avoid any recrimination. I was completely in their hands. Even the noblest passions have one serious drawback: they compel us to yield to others, and thus make us become dependent. This thought was deeply painful to me, but it did not rid me of the wish to own the manuscript of the clerk Alexander. Suddenly, while I was meditating, I heard a driver swear; but not until I felt the pole of his carriage in my ribs did I realize that I was the one at whom he was angry. I stepped aside in time to escape being run over; and whom did I see through the coupé window but Madame Trépof, driving into the street which I had just left. She had two spirited horses, and a driver dressed in fur like a Russian nobleman. She did not see me. She was smiling to herself with that childish expression which still gave her, at thirty, the charm of a girl.

"Well," said I to myself, "she is laughing, is she? She must have found a new match-box."

And full of disappointment I reached the Bridges.

Ever indifferent, Time brought the twenty-fourth of December with haste and without delay. I went to the Hôtel Bullion, and took my stand in Room No. 4, at the foot of the desk where Boulouze, the auctioneer, and the expert Polizzi were to conduct the sale. I saw the room fill gradually with well-known faces. I shook hands with several old booksellers of the quay; but discretion, which every

great desire inspires in even the most confident, prevented my explaining my unusual presence in the Hôtel Bullion. On the contrary, I asked these gentlemen what possible interest they could have in the Polizzi auction, and I had the satisfaction of hearing them speak of everything else but the object of my desires.

The room filled slowly with interested and curious spectators; and at the end of half an hour the auctioneer with his ivory gavel, the clerk with his account-book, the expert with his catalogue, and the crier provided with a wooden bowl fastened to the end of a stick, filed in with the solemnity of a peasant funeral, and took their places on the platform.

The hall-boys stood around below the desk. The officers announced that the sale was about to begin, and for a moment there was partial silence.

First (at a reasonable price) was sold an ordinary lot of *Preces piæ* with miniatures. It is needless to say that the latter were absolutely modern.

The insignificance of the bids encouraged the crowd of second-hand bookdealers; and they mingled with us, and began to grow familiar. The coppersmiths came in their turn; and while they were waiting for the doors of an adjoining room to open, their ribald jokes drowned the voice of the crier.

A magnificent manuscript of the *Guerre des Juifs* stirred some interest. It gave rise to a long and lively rivalry.

"Five thousand francs, five thousand!" shouted the crier; while the coppersmiths, filled with admiration, kept still. Seven or eight antiphonaries went

at a low price. A huge bareheaded woman, encouraged by the size of the volume and the low bidding, secured one of the antiphonaries for thirty francs.

Finally the expert Polizzi announced No. 42, "The Golden Legend," a French manuscript unpublished; two superb miniatures; started at three thousand francs."

"Three thousand! Three thousand!" shouted the crier.

"Three thousand!" dryly repeated the auctioneer.

My temples throbbed; and, as though through a mist, I saw a crowd of serious faces turned toward the manuscript, which a boy was carrying open around the room.

"Three thousand and fifty!" I cried. I was startled at the sound of my own voice, and confused at seeing, or thinking that I saw, all faces turned toward me.

"Three thousand and fifty on the right!" called the crier, taking my bid.

"Three thousand one hundred!" cried Signor Polizzi.

Then began a heroic duel between the expert and myself.

"Three thousand five hundred!"

"Six hundred!"

"Seven hundred!"

"Four thousand!"

"Four thousand five hundred!"

Then by an appalling jump, Signor Polizzi suddenly raised the bid to six thousand.

All I had at my disposal was six thousand francs. For me it was the possible. I risked the impossible.

"Six thousand one hundred!" I shouted.

Alas! Even the impossible did not suffice.

"Six thousand five hundred," was Signor Polizzi's calm response.

I lowered my head, and sat with my mouth open, daring to say neither yes nor no to the crier who shouted to me, —

"The bid of six thousand five hundred is mine, not yours there on the right, but mine! No mistake! Six thousand five hundred!"

"That is understood," cried the auctioneer. "Six thousand five hundred. That is clearly understood. Well? Is there no one who offers more than six thousand five hundred francs?"

A solemn silence filled the room. Suddenly I felt as if my head were bursting. It was the auctioneer's hammer, which, with a quick, short tap on the desk, irrevocably knocked down No. 42 to Signor Polizzi. At the same time the clerk ran his pen across the stamped paper, and registered the great fact in a simple line.

I was absolutely crushed, and felt the necessity of rest and solitude. Yet I did not leave my seat. By degrees I began to think. Hope is tenacious; and I still had one hope. It occurred to me that the buyer of "The Golden Legend" might be an intelligent and liberal book-lover, who would let me see the manuscript, and even allow me to publish the more important facts of it. Therefore, when

the sale was over, I accosted the expert who was coming from the platform.

"Monsieur," said I, "did you buy No. 42 for yourself, or on commission?"

"On commission. I was ordered not to let it go at any price."

"Can you tell me the name of the buyer?"

"I am very sorry to disappoint you, but that is absolutely forbidden."

I turned from him in despair.

December 30, 1859.

"Thérèse, don't you hear? the bell has been ringing for the last quarter of an hour."

Thérèse does not reply. She is gossiping in the lodge with the janitress. Of this I am sure. So this is the way you celebrate your old master's birthday! You leave me even on the eve of Saint-Sylvestre! Alas! If good wishes do come to me on this day, they must come out of the ground; for everything that ever loved me has long since been buried. I do not know of what use I am in the world. There is the bell again!

I leave the fireplace slowly, with stooping shoulders, and open the door myself. Whom do I see at the head of the stairs? Not Cupid with dripping wings, and I am not the old Anacreon; but I see a pretty little boy of ten. He is alone. He raises his head, and looks at me. His cheeks are rosy, but his little saucy nose has a roguish expression. He has feathers in his cap, and a great ruff of lace on his blouse. Such a pretty little fellow! In his arm

he carries a package as big as himself. He asks if I am Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard; and upon my saying that I am, he hands me the package, which he says is from his mamma; then he darts downstairs.

I descend a few steps, and leaning over the balusters I see the little fellow flying around the spiral staircase like a feather in the breeze. "Hallo! my little boy!" — I should have been so glad to speak to him. But what should I have asked him? It is not nice to ply children with questions. Besides, the package will probably tell me more than the messenger. It is a very large package, but not very heavy. Returning to my library, I remove its ribbons and wrappings, and find — what? A log, a great log, a real Christmas log, but so light that I conclude it must be hollow. In fact, I discover that it consists of two pieces fastened together by clasps, and opening on hinges. Pushing back the clasps, I am suddenly inundated with violets! My table, my knees, the carpet, are covered with them. They pour into my waistcoat, and into my sleeves. I am all perfumed by them!

"Thérèse! Thérèse! Fill some vases with water and bring them to me! Here are some violets, come I know not from what country or by what hand; but it must be a sweet country, and a gentle hand. Old crow, don't you hear me?"

I have put the violets on my table, which is completely hidden beneath their fragrant masses.

But, there is something else in the log, — a book, a manuscript. It is — I can scarcely believe my eyes,

yet there it is — "The Golden Legend," the manuscript of the clerk Alexander. Here is the Purification of the Virgin, and the Crowning of Proserpine, and the legend of Saint Droctoveus. I gaze at the relic, which is sweet with the odor of the violets. I I turn over the leaves, between which some of the demure little blossoms have found their way, and opposite the legend of Saint Cecilia, I find a card bearing this name : —

PRINCESS TRÉPOF.

Princess Trépof! You, who laughed and cried by turn so prettily under the lovely sky of Agrigentum — you, whom a crabbed old man took for a little simpleton, have convinced me to-day of your rare and beautiful folly ; and the man whom you overwhelm with joy will go and kiss your hand, and offer you an edition of this precious manuscript in such an accurate and sumptuous form as will satisfy both science and himself.

Just then Thérèse, in a great state of agitation, came hurrying into my library.

"Monsieur," she cried, "guess whom I have just seen at the door, in a carriage bearing a coat-of-arms ?"

"Madame Trépof," I cried.

"I have no idea who Madame Trèpof is," replied my housekeeper. "The lady I saw just now was dressed like a duchess. She had with her a little boy whose clothes were all trimmed with lace. And it was that little Madame Coccoz to whom you sent

a log when she was confined eleven years ago. I recognized her instantly."

"Madame Coccoz!" I exclaimed quickly; "the almanac peddler's widow? You don't say so!"

"The very same, monsieur. The coach-door was wide open as her little boy was getting into the carriage — where he had come from I'm sure I don't know. She has changed scarcely any. And why should such women grow old? They have no cares at all. Madame Coccoz is merely somewhat stouter than formerly. The idea of a woman who was received here out of charity coming to display her velvet and diamonds in a carriage with her coat-of-arms on it! Is it not shameful?"

"Thérèse!" I cried in a voice of thunder, "if you speak of this lady in any but terms of the highest respect, we shall quarrel. Bring me my Sèvres vases for these violets. They give to this City of Books a charm it has never had before."

While Thérèse with heavy sighs went for the Sèvres vases, I looked at the beautiful violets which lay about me, spreading their perfume around like the sweetness of some gentle soul, and I asked myself how I could have failed to recognize Madame Coccoz in the Princess Trépof. But the young widow who held out her little naked child to me on the stairway had been but a fleeting vision. I had much greater cause to reproach myself for having passed by a kind and beautiful heart without discovering it.

"Bonnard," I said to myself, "you know how to decipher ancient texts, but you are utterly incapa-

ble of reading the Book of Life. This giddy little Madame Trépof, who you believed had no more heart than a bird, has in her gratitude displayed more spirit and energy than you have ever shown for the sake of obliging any one. She has royally repaid you for the log you sent her that day when her child was born.

"Thérèse, you *were* a magpie, but you are turning into a tortoise. Do come, and bring me some water for these Parma violets!"

Part II.

CLÉMENTINE'S DAUGHTER.

THE FAIRY.

I.

When I left the train at the Melun station, night was spreading her peace over the silent land. The earth, heated all day long by the blazing sun, — the "broad sun" (*gras soleil*), as the expression is among the harvesters of the Valley of Vire, — exhaled a warm, pungent odor. A breath, laden with the heavy perfume of grasses, now and again swept along the ground. I brushed off the dust of the car, and exultingly drew in a deep breath. My travelling-bag, which my housekeeper had packed with linen and various toilet articles, Horace's *munditiis*, weighed so little in my hand, that I swung it back and forth as a boy just out of school swings his strap full of class-books.

Would to Heaven I were still a little school-boy! But fifty years have passed since my good mother, with her own hands, made me a plum tart, which she put into a basket, the handle of which she slipped over my arm. Thus fortified, I was taken to the school kept by Monsieur Douloir, in a house that stood between a court and a garden, in a corner of the Passage du Commerce well-known to the sparrows.

Monsieur Douloir was a huge man, who smiled at us in a pleasant way, and patted my cheek, in

order, no doubt, the better to express the affection which I immediately inspired in him. But no sooner had my mother crossed the court, startling the sparrows as she went, than Monsieur Douloir ceased to smile on me, and showed me no further marks of attention. On the contrary, he seemed to consider me a very troublesome little fellow, and very much in the way. I afterwards discovered that he cherished similar feelings for all his pupils. He distributed ferulings with an agility which one would not have expected in a man of his excessive corpulence. But his early affection showed itself whenever he spoke to our mothers in our presence. Then he would praise our beautiful dispositions, and at the same time look down at us with affection; yet those were indeed happy days that we spent on the benches at Monsieur Douloir's, with the little maids, who, like myself, laughed and cried by turn, with their whole heart, from morning to night.

After half a century, these memories come fresh and clear to the surface of my mind, under this starry sky, which is forever the same. Undoubtedly those calm and steady lights will look down on other school-children such as I was, and see them grow into men like myself, — gray-haired, and subject to catarrh.

Stars that have shone on each frivolous or serious head among all my forgotten ancestors, your brightness has caused me to feel a pang of keen regret! I would that I had a son who, when I no longer could behold you, might still gaze up at you. How

I should love him! Ah! he would now — what am I saying? — he would now be twenty years old, had you so willed it, Clémentine — you whose cheeks were so fresh beneath your rosy hood!

But you married a clerk in a bank, — that same Noël Alexandre, who afterwards made so many millions. I have not seen you since your marriage, Clémentine; yet I always think of you with your golden curls and your rosy hood.

A mirror! A mirror! Give me a mirror! I should like to see how I look now with my white locks, breathing the name of Clémentine to the stars. However, it is not well to end ironically that which one has begun in a spirit of faith and love. Clémentine, if your name came to my lips this beautiful night, may it be blessed; and may you, a happy mother, a happy grandmother, enjoy to the very end, with your opulent husband, the bliss which you thought, as you had the right to think, you could not have with the poor young scholar who loved you! If, although I cannot imagine it, your hair has grown white, Clémentine, carry with dignity the bunch of keys intrusted to you by Noël Alexandre, and teach your grandchildren the sweet domestic virtues!

What a beautiful night! She reigns with languorous gentleness over man and beast, freed from the daily yoke; and I feel her kindly influence, though from habit confirmed by sixty years, I no longer feel things except by the signs which represent them. There is for me in this world nothing but words, such a philologist have I become. Each

in his own way dreams the dream of life. I have dreamed mine in my library; and when the hour comes for me to depart from this world, may the good God take me as I stand on my ladder before my shelves of books!

"Why, yes, here is the man himself! Good-evening, Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard! Where are you going, tramping over the country with your light step, while I have been waiting for you at the station with my carriage? I missed you when the train went out, and I was on my way back to Lusance. Give me your valise, and get into the carriage here beside me. Do you know it is seven good kilometers from here to the château!"

Who is calling to me thus in a loud voice from his high-seated carriage? Monsieur Paul de Gabry, nephew and heir of Monsieur Honoré de Gabry, peer of France in 1842, who recently died at Monaco. And I was on my way to Monsieur Paul de Gabry's, with my valise which my housekeeper had packed. This excellent young fellow, conjointly with his two brothers-in-law, had just come into possession of the property. The uncle, the descendant of a very ancient and distinguished family of jurists, had preserved, in his château at Lusance, a library, rich in manuscripts, some of which dated back to the fourteenth century. And I had come to Lusance, in order to make an inventory and catalogue of these manuscripts, at the urgent invitation of Monsieur Paul de Gabry, whose father, a man of honor and a distinguished bibliophile, had during

his lifetime been on friendly terms with me. Truth to tell, the son has not inherited his father's refined tastes. Monsieur Paul is devoted to all kinds of sport; he thoroughly understands horses and dogs; and I believe, that of all the sciences suited to satiate or deceive the inexhaustible curiosity of man, those of the stable and the kennel are the only ones of which he is master.

I cannot say that I was surprised to meet him, since I had an appointment with him; but I confess that, carried away by the natural trend of my thoughts, I had forgotten the Château of Lusance and its owners; so that when a country gentleman called out to me, just as I was starting down the road, which unwound before me like *un bon ruban de queue*, as they say, his voice fell on my ears at first like an unaccustomed sound.

I have reason to fear that my physiognomy showed my absent-mindedness by a certain expression of stupidity, which it assumes in most of my social transactions. My valise found a place in the carriage, and I followed my valise. My host pleased me by his frank and simple manner.

"I know nothing about your old parchments," said he, "but you will find some companionable people at our house. Without counting the curate, who writes, and the physician, who is very likable, though a radical, you will find one who will keep pace with you. I mean my wife. She is not very learned, but I think there is nothing which she does not get at the heart of. I hope to keep you long enough so that you may meet Mademoiselle Jeanne;

she has the fingers of a magician and the spirit of an angel."

"Is this gifted young lady," I asked, "a member of your family?"

"No, indeed," replied Monsieur Paul.

"A friend, then, I presume?" I asked, inanely enough.

"She is an orphan, without father or mother," replied Monsieur de Gabry, with his eyes fixed on his horse's ears, while the hoof-beats resounded on the hard road, that gleamed blue in the moonlight. "Her father involved us in great trouble, and we got out of it; but it cost us much more than mere fear."

Then he shook his head, and changed the subject. He warned me of the state of decay in which I should find the park and the château. They had been absolutely deserted for thirty-two years.

I learned from him that Monsieur Honoré de Gabry, his uncle, had been, during his lifetime, on bad terms with the poachers of the country, and had shot at them as if they were rabbits. One of them, a vindictive peasant who had received a charge of shot full in the face, one night lay in wait for the seigneur, behind the trees along the mall, and almost killed him, for he scored the tip of his ear with a bullet.

"My uncle," added Monsieur Paul, "tried to discover who fired the shot, but he could not make out, and he returned to the château without hurrying. The following day he called his steward, told him to close the manor and the park, and not to allow a

living soul to enter. He expressly forbade anything to be touched, repaired, or kept in order on the estate, or in his home, until his return. He added, between his teeth, that he would return at Easter or Trinity, as in the song; and, as in the song, Trinity passed, and he was not seen. He died last year, at Monaco; and my brother-in-law and I were the first to enter the château since it was abandoned, more than thirty-two years ago. We found a chestnut-tree growing in the middle of the drawing-room, and the park is still inaccessible for lack of paths."

My companion grew silent. Nothing was heard save the regular trot of the horse, and the hum of the insects in the grass. In the fields, on both sides of the road, the rows of sheaves, with the uncertain moonlight falling on them, looked like tall white women kneeling. Like a child I gave myself up to the wonderful fascinations of the magic night. We passed under the thick shadows of the mall, and turning at right angles, our carriage rolled along a magnificent avenue, at the end of which the château suddenly appeared in all its massive blackness, with its pepper-box towers. We followed a sort of causeway, which led to the court-of-honor, and which passed over a moat filled with running water, taking the place, no doubt, of a drawbridge long since destroyed. The loss of the drawbridge was, I think, the first humiliation to which the warlike manor had to submit before it was finally reduced to the peaceful conditions under which it welcomed me.

The stars were reflected with marvellous clearness

in the dark water. Monsieur Paul, being a most courteous host, escorted me to my room, which was in the top of the château, at the end of a long corridor. Then apologizing, on account of the lateness of the hour, for not presenting me at once to his wife, he bade me good-night.

My chamber, painted white and hung with chintz, bore traces of the sprightly grace characteristic of the eighteenth century. Still glowing embers filled the fireplace, and made me feel what pains had been taken to dispel all dampness from the room. On the mantel-piece stood a bisque bust of Queen Marie Antoinette. On the white frame of the dark and specked glass, two brass hooks, which once had held ladies' chatelaines, offered a fitting place for my watch, which I was careful to wind. For, contrary to the maxims of Thelemites, I think that man is master of Time, which is Life itself, only when he has divided it into hours, minutes, and seconds; that is to say, into spaces proportioned to the brevity of human existence.

And I thought that life seems short to us only because we foolishly measure it by our irrational hopes. All of us, like the old man in the fable, have a wing to add to the house we are building. I want to finish, before I die, the "History of the Abbots of Saint-Germain-des-Prés." The time that God gives to each of us is like a precious tissue, which we are to embroider to the best of our ability. I have worked my woof with every kind of philological design.

Thus my thoughts wandered on; and in tying my

silk nandkerchief about my head, the idea of time took me back to the past; and for the second time in the turn of the dial, I thought of you, Clémentine, and blessed you in your posterity, if you have any, before I blew out my candle, and fell asleep to the songs of the frogs.

II.

During breakfast I had many opportunities of gaining a high idea of Madame de Gabry's taste, tact, and intelligence. She told me how the château was haunted by ghosts, and especially by the lady "with the three wrinkles in her back," who in her lifetime had poisoned people, and whose soul was now doomed to eternal torment. I cannot describe the spirit and vivacity which she infused into the telling of this old nurse's tale. We drank our coffee on the terrace, the balusters of which, grasped and torn from their stone railing by a lusty ivy, were held between the knots of the wanton plant in the hopeless attitude of the Athenian women in the arms of wicked Centaurs.

The château was built in the form of a four-wheeled cart, re-enforced by a tower at each corner; but it had been repaired so many times that it had lost all its originality. It was a roomy, dignified structure — nothing more. It did not strike me as having suffered much damage during its thirty-two years of abandonment; but when Madame de Gabry showed me the large drawing-room on the ground-floor, I perceived that the flooring was heaved up,

the plinths rotten, the woodwork cracked, the paintings of the piers turned black and three-quarters out of their frames. A chestnut-tree had pushed through the flooring, and was growing there, its broad leaves turned toward the glassless window. Although the sight had a charm for me, yet I viewed it with anxiety, when I thought how Monsieur Honoré de Gabry's rich library in the adjoining room had been exposed for so long to these destroying influences. But as I looked at the young chestnut-tree in the drawing-room, I could not help admiring the magnificent force of Nature, and that irresistible power which pushes every germ toward the development of life. On the other hand, I grew sad when I thought how painful, and yet fruitless, is the effort which we scholars make to keep and preserve anything that is dead. Whatever has lived is a necessary aliment for new life. The Arab who builds himself a hut with marble from the temples of Palmyra is a greater philosopher than all the guardians of the museums in London, Paris, and Munich.

August 11.

Thank God, the library, situated toward the east, has not suffered irreparable damage. Except the shelf containing the heavy folio volumes of old *coutumiers*, which the mice have riddled, the books are untouched in their grated cases.

I have been spending the whole day in classifying manuscripts. The sun came in through the high, curtainless windows; and in the midst of my read-

ing, which at times was very interesting, I heard the drowsy bumblebees striking heavily against the window-panes, the cracking of the woodwork, and the flies, blinded with light and heat, buzzing in circles about my head. Towards three o'clock their buzzing became so loud that I raised my head from a document that was of great value for the history of Melun in the thirteenth century, and I began to watch the concentric movements of these little animals, or *bestions* as they are called by Lafontaine, who found the term in the old popular idiom whence comes the expression "tapestry *à bestions*," that is, tapestry with little figures on it. I had to confess that heat affects the wings of a fly in a very different manner from what it does the brain of a student of old manuscripts; for I found it very hard to think, and fell into a pleasant revery, from which I had difficulty in rousing myself. The dinner-bell surprised me in the midst of my labors; and I had just time to slip on my new coat, so as to appear respectable in Madame de Gabry's eyes.

The meal, which consisted of several courses, was naturally long. As a connoisseur of wine, I have a talent perhaps above the average. My host, who soon discovered the extent of my knowledge, was gracious enough to uncork for me a bottle of Château-Margaux of the genuine vintage of Bordeaux. With real reverence I drank this wine, so royal in its origin, so noble in its flavor, with a bouquet and fire beyond all praise. This glowing liquid infused itself into my veins, and awakened in me the spark of youth. Seated on the terrace with Madame de

Gabry, in the twilight which now spread a soft melancholy over the trees of the park, and bathed even the smallest objects in a mysterious light, I had the pleasure of telling my lively hostess my impressions, with a vivacity and fluency most remarkable in a man like me, devoid of all imagination.

I described to her spontaneously, and without the help of a single old quotation, the soft melancholy of the twilight, and the beauty of the mother-earth that nourishes us, not only by bread and wine, but by ideas, feelings, and beliefs, and which will receive us again into her maternal bosom, as if we were little children wearied after a long day.

"Monsieur," said this good lady, "look at these old towers, these trees, this sky. How naturally the heroes of stories and songs came from them all! Over there is the path by which little Red Riding Hood went to the woods to gather nuts. This ever-changing and half-veiled sky was marked by fairy chariots, and the northern tower might have hidden at one time beneath its painted roof the old dame whose spindle pricked the Sleeping Beauty of the woods."

I was still thinking of these pretty fancies, while Monsieur Paul puffed a strong cigar, and told me about some action which he had brought against the commune concerning a water-privilege. Madame de Gabry, feeling the evening dampness, shivered, though her husband had thrown a shawl over her shoulders, and left us to go to her room.

I then determined that instead of going to mine, I would return to the library, and continue my ex-

amination of the manuscripts. So, in spite of Monsieur Paul's protest, I went to what, in old-fashioned language, I shall call the *librairie*, or book-room, and set to work by lamp-light.

After I had read fifteen pages, which had evidently been written by an ignorant and careless clerk, for I experienced some difficulty in making out their meaning, I plunged my hand into the open pocket of my coat to get my snuff-box; but this ordinary and, as it were, instinctive movement, this time cost me some effort and fatigue. Nevertheless, I opened the silver box, and took out a pinch of the odorous powder, spilling it all down my shirt-front under my baffled nose.

I am sure that my nose showed its disappointment, for it is a very expressive nose. Many times it has betrayed my innermost thoughts, and especially in the public library of Coutances, where, under the very beard of my colleague Brioux, I discovered the "Cartulary of Notre-Dame-des-Anges." How great was my joy! My small, dull eyes, screened by their glasses, did not betray me. But at the mere sight of my broad pug-nose, trembling with joy and pride, Brioux surmised that I had found a treasure-trove. He saw the volume which I held, noted the shelf where I replaced it, took it down as soon as I had gone, copied it secretly, and published it without delay, in order to play me a turn. But the edition swarms with blunders, and I had the satisfaction of criticising several of his gross mistakes.

But to resume. I suspected that a heavy stupor

Gras weighing upon my mind. I was looking at a cahart, the interest of which every one can appreciate when I say that mention is made in it of a rabbit-hutch sold to Jehan d'Estouville, priest, in 1312. But although I realized at the time its great value, I did not pay it the attention that such a document deserved. In spite of all my efforts, my eyes kept turning to one side of the table where there was nothing important as far as learning was concerned. There was merely a great German volume there, bound in pig-skin, with brass studs on the sides, and heavy raised bands at the back. It was a fine example of that compilation so well known under the name of "Cosmography of Munster," valuable merely on account of the wood engravings with which it is adorned. The volume, with its covers somewhat spread apart, stood face down on its edge.

I could not say how long I had been gazing without any apparent reason on this sixteenth century folio, when my eyes were attracted by a sight so unusual, that even a man totally devoid of imagination, like myself, would have been very much startled by it.

Suddenly I noticed, though I had not seen any one come into the room, a diminutive young woman, seated on the back of the book, with one knee folded under her, the other leg hanging down in almost the same position as that taken by the Amazonian horseback riders in Hyde Park or in the Bois du Boulogne. She was so small that her swinging foot did not reach the table, on which lay the train of

her gown in a serpentine line. She had the face and figure of a well-developed woman. Her full bust and ample waist left no doubt on this point, even to the mind of an old scholar like myself.

I may add, without fear of being mistaken, that she was very beautiful and of proud mien; for my iconographic studies have long since accustomed me to recognize the purity of a type and the character of a physiognomy. The face of this lady, who had so unexpectedly seated herself on the back of a "Cosmography of Munster," expressed a noble pride, mingled with waywardness. She had the air of a queen, but of a whimsical queen; and I judged from the glance of her eye that somewhere she exercised great authority in a very capricious way.

There was a proud and ironical expression about her mouth, and a disquieting smile gleamed in her blue eyes, under her delicately arched black brows.

I have always understood that black eyebrows are very becoming to blondes, and this lady was very blond. In short, the impression she gave was one of greatness.

It may seem strange that a person no taller than a bottle, and whom I might have hidden in my coat-pocket if it had not been disrespectful to put her there, should give one the idea of greatness. But in the proportions of the lady seated on the "Cosmography of Munster," there was such a proud daintiness, such a dignified harmony, her attitude was at once so easy and so noble, that she seemed great to me. And she was great, and imposing too, in her sprightliness; although my inkstand, which

she gazed at with an ironical attention, as if she could read in advance every word that would come from the end of my pen, was for her a deep basin, in which she would have got her pink silk stockings, with their yellow clocks, black up to the garters.

Her costume, suited to her style, was very rich. It consisted of a robe of gold and silver brocade, and a cloak of *nacarat* velvet, lined with small *vair*. Her coiffure was a sort of *hennin*, with two horns; and pearls of beautiful water made it gleam as bright as the crescent moon. In her small white hand she held a wand. This wand attracted my attention all the more strongly for the reason that my archæological studies had taught me to recognize with some certainty the signs by which the noted characters of legend and of history are distinguished. This knowledge came to my mind in the midst of the strange conjectures I was making.

I looked at the wand, which seemed to me to have been cut from a hazel branch.

"It is a fairy wand," I said to myself, "and consequently the lady who holds it is a fairy."

Happy at thus recognizing the lady who sat before me, I strove to collect my ideas, and pay her a respectful compliment. I should have felt some satisfaction, I confess, in speaking to her in a learned way of the part played by her compeers, both among the Saxon and Germanic races, and in the Latin Occident. Such a dissertation was, to my thinking, an ingenious way of thanking this lady for having appeared before an old scholar, contrary to

the usual custom of her people, who show themselves only to innocent children and ignorant villagers.

Being a fairy does not make one any less a woman, I said to myself; and since Madame Récamier, if I may credit J. J. Ampère, used to blush with pleasure when the little chimney-sweeps opened their eyes wide in order to see her as well as they could, the supernatural little lady seated on the "Cosmography of Munster" would no doubt feel flattered to hear a scholar discoursing in a learned manner about her, as if she were a medal, a seal, a buckle, or a token.

But such a venture, which was a trial to a man like myself, became entirely out of the question when I beheld the lady of the "Cosmography" quickly draw from a purse at her side some nuts, smaller than any I had ever seen, crack them between her teeth, and throw the shells into my face, while she craunched the kernels with the seriousness of a nursing child.

Under such circumstances, I did what the dignity of science demanded, — I was silent. But as the shells tickled me disagreeably, I raised my hand to my nose, and to my great surprise found that my spectacles were straddling the end of it, and that I was looking at the lady, not through them, but over them; a most incomprehensible thing, because my eyes, weakened by work on old manuscripts, could not, without the aid of spectacles, distinguish a melon from a carafe, even if both were held directly in front of my nose.

This nose, remarkable on account of its size, shape, and color, naturally attracted the attention of

the fairy; for she seized my goose-quill, which rose from the ink-well like a plume, and tickled my nose with the feather end of it.

I have had in society, now and then, occasion to become a cheerful victim to the innocent pranks of young girls, who, drawing me into their games, offered me their cheeks to kiss through the back of a chair, or asked me to blow out a candle which they immediately raised out of the reach of my breath. But until then no one of the fair sex had ever subjected me to such a familiar trick as tickling my nose with the feathers of my own pen.

Happily I recalled a maxim of my late grandfather, who had a habit of saying that everything is allowed to the ladies, and that anything that they do is a favor and a compliment. Therefore I received the nut-shells and the feathers of my pen as if they were favors and compliments, and I strove to smile. More than this! I spoke

"Madame," I said, with dignified courtesy, "the honor of your visit you confer on no child or peasant, but on a book-lover, who is happy indeed to make your acquaintance, and who knows that in days gone by you used to entangle the manes and tails of mares in their cribs, and to drink the milk from foaming bowls, to pour prickly burs down the backs of our great-grandmothers, to make the hearth snap sparks into the faces of worthy people, and, in a word, to fill the house with confusion and merriment. Moreover, you can boast of having, at night in the woods, given belated couples many a good fright! But I thought you had vanished at least

three centuries ago. Is it possible, madame, that you are seen in these days of railways and telegraphs? My janitress, who in her day was a nurse, does not know your story; and my little neighbor, still in his nurse's care, says that you no longer exist."

"What do *you* say about it?" cried she, in a silvery voice, drawing up her royal little person in a cavalier-like manner, and beating the back of the "Cosmography of Munster" as if it had been a hippogriffe.

"I do not know," I answered, rubbing my eyes.

This reply, stamped with a profoundly scientific scepticism, produced the most deplorable effect on my visitor.

"Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard," said she, "you are nothing but a pedant. I have always suspected it. The smallest of the little urchins who go along the street with their shirts sticking out of their ragged trousers knows me better than all the spectacled people of your institutes and your academies. Knowledge is nothing, imagination is everything. Nothing exists except what we imagine. I am imaginary, and that is living! People dream of me, and I appear! Everything is but a dream; and since no one dreams of you, Sylvestre Bonnard, *you* do not exist. I delight the world. I am everywhere, on a moonbeam, in the ripple of a hidden spring, in the moving foliage that sings, in the white vapors rising every morning from the wilds of the meadows, among the pink heath, everywhere! — I am seen, I am loved. There are sighing, there

are trembling hearts wherever my light footsteps fall, causing the dead leaves to sing. I make little children smile, I give humor to the dullest-minded nurses. Stooping over cradles, I tease, I console, I lull to sleep, and you are in doubt as to my existence! Sylvester Bonnard, your warm-lined coat covers the hide of an ass!"

She became silent. Her delicate nostrils quivered with indignation; and while, in spite of my vexation, I was admiring the noble anger of this little creature, she dipped my pen in the ink-well, as one would an oar in a lake, and threw it at my nose, the point foremost.

I rubbed my face, and felt that it was covered with ink. She had vanished from sight. My lamp had gone out. A moonbeam had stolen down the window-pane, and lay upon the "Cosmography of Munster." A cool breeze, which had risen without my perceiving it, was blowing away pens, papers, and wafers. My table was covered with ink. I had left my window partly open during the storm. How imprudent

III.

I wrote to my housekeeper, as I promised, that I was well and happy. I was very careful not to mention the head cold which I caught from having slept that evening in the library with the window open, for the good woman would have been no more sparing of remonstrances than are parliaments to kings.

"To be so careless at your age, monsieur," she would have said. She is simple enough to think that sense increases with years. I seem to her an exception to the rule. Not having the same reasons for withholding my experience from Madame de Gabry, I told her all the details of my dream, in which she took great interest.

"Your dream," said she, "is charming. One must have real cleverness to have such visions!"

"You mean that I am clever when I am asleep," I said.

"When you dream," she replied; "and you are always dreaming!"

I know very well that in speaking thus Madame de Gabry had no thought other than to make me happy, but her intention deserves my warmest thanks. It is with a deep sense of gratitude and kindly remembrance that I copy down her words in my diary; and I shall always feel the same when I read them over and over, until I die, but no one besides myself shall read them.

I spent the following days in completing the inventory of the manuscripts in the library of Lusance. A few confidential words which escaped Monsieur Paul de Gabry caused me painful surprise, and made me determined to carry on my work in a different manner from that in which I had begun it. From those few words, I learned that Monsieur Honoré de Gabry's property had been badly managed for years, and to a great measure lost by the failure of a banker, whose name I do not know, and that the old French nobleman's heirs received nothing

from it except hypotheticated real estate and uncollectable accounts.

Monsieur Paul, by agreement with his joint heirs, had decided to sell the library; and I was commissioned to arrange for the sale on the most advantageous terms. But, as I am wholly unacquainted with the methods of business and trade, I resolved to ask the advice of a friend of mine, who is a bookseller. I wrote to him to come to Lusance; and while waiting for his arrival, I took my hat and walking-stick, and went out to visit the churches of the diocese, in some of which are epitaphs as yet never correctly copied.

So I took leave of my hosts, and set out on my pilgrimage. Every day I explored churches and cemeteries, visited curates and village notaries, supped at inns with peddlers and cattle-dealers, and slept between lavender-scented sheets, thus spending a week of calm, profound enjoyment, thinking of the dead, and watching the living busy with their daily labor. So far as the object of my researches was concerned, I made but ordinary discoveries, such as caused me no great delight; and on that very account my pleasure was healthful and not fatiguing. I deciphered some interesting epitaphs, and added to this small store several recipes for country dishes, which a worthy *curé* was kind enough to bestow on me.

With these treasures I returned to Lusance, and crossed the court-of-honor with the deep satisfaction of a countryman returning home. This was caused by the kindness of my hosts, and the sensations

which at that time I felt on their threshold proves better than any argument their kind hospitality.

I reached the large drawing-room without meeting any one; and the young chestnut-tree, which spread out its broad leaves there, seemed like a friend. But what I next saw on the pier-table was such a surprise to me, that I adjusted my spectacles with both hands, and pinched myself in order to get at least a superficial idea of my own existence. Twenty or more ideas came to my mind in an instant; and of them all, the most likely was that I had gone mad. It seemed to me impossible that what I saw was really there, yet I could not see it except as existing. The cause of my surprise, as I have said, was on a pier-table beneath a dull and specked mirror.

I caught sight of my own reflection in this mirror, and I may say that for once in my life I saw the living image of stupefaction. But I made allowances for myself, and approved of myself for being stupefied by a stupefying thing. The object, at which I was gazing with an astonishment not diminished by reflection, accepted the examination without moving. The persistency and fixity of the phenomenon excluded all idea of hallucination. I am absolutely free from those nervous troubles which affect the sight. This is generally due to indigestion, and thank Heaven I have a good digestion. Moreover, the illusions of sight are accompanied by peculiar and abnormal conditions, which affect the victims themselves, and inspire them with a sort of terror. But I felt nothing of all this. And the ob-

ject before me, although impossible in itself, appeared to me under every condition of actual reality. I noticed that it had three dimensions and color, and that it cast a shadow. Ah! How I watched it! The tears came into my eyes, and I was obliged to wipe my spectacles.

At last I had to yield to the evidence, and confess that I saw before me the fairy of whom I had dreamed the other evening in the library. It was she! I assure you it was she! She still had her child-queen air, that proud yet supple attitude. In her hand she held her wand of hazel-wood. She wore the two-horned *hennin*, and the train of her brocade robe lay in serpentine folds about her little feet. The same face and figure as before. It was indeed she; and to make assurance doubly sure, she was seated on the back of a heavy old volume that looked very much like the "Cosmography of Munster." Her immobility half reassured me; but I feared that she would again draw some nuts from her purse, and throw the shells into my face.

I stood there, my arms raised, my mouth open, when Madame de Gabry's laughing and musical voice fell on my ear.

"So you are studying your fairy, are you, Monsieur Bonnard?" exclaimed my hostess. "Well, do you see any resemblance?"

It was said quickly; but in the meantime I had time to see that my fairy was a statuette modelled in colored wax, with evident feeling and taste, by the hand of some amateur. But the phenomenon, thus rationally explained, was still a surprise to me.

I caught sight of my own reflection in the mirror.

How and by whom had the lady of the "Cosmography" come into plastic existence? This was what I had still to learn.

Turning to Madame de Gabry, I saw that she was not alone. A young girl dressed in mourning stood beside her. She had large, intelligent eyes, of a gray as soft as the sky of the Isle de France, and with an expression in them indicating both strength and innocence. Her arms were somewhat thin, her hands restless and small, and red as the hands of a young girl usually are. In her merino dress she looked like a young sapling. Her mouth was large, indicating frankness. I cannot tell how greatly this young girl pleased me at first glance. She was not beautiful; but she had three merry dimples in her cheeks and chin, and her whole person, though betraying the awkwardness of inexperience, had in it something strong and fine.

My eyes went from the statuette to the young girl; and I saw the latter blush, but frankly, deeply, the blood rushing like a torrent over her face.

"Well," said my hostess, who, being accustomed to my absent-mindedness, repeated her question, "is that the lady who came in to see you through the window which you left opened? She was very bold, but you were just as imprudent. Tell me, do you recognize her?"

"It is her very self," I replied. "I see her once more — on this pier-table, just as I saw her on the library table."

"If that is so," replied Madame de Gabry, "the responsibility for this resemblance you may charge

first to yourself, who for a man devoid of all imagination, as you say you are, can describe your dreams so vividly; next to me, who remembered your dream, and repeated it faithfully; and lastly, and above all, to Mademoiselle Jeanne, whom I present to you, and who, following out my suggestions, modelled the wax figure that you see."

As she spoke, Madame de Gabry took the young girl's hand; but Mademoiselle Jeanne tore herself away, and was already down in the park, darting away as if on wings.

"You silly girl!" cried Madame de Gabry as she ran. "Why be so shy? Come back to be scolded and kissed!"

But no reply came, and the frightened bird disappeared within the shrubbery. Madame de Gabry sat down in the only armchair the deserted room possessed.

"I should be greatly surprised," said she, "if my husband had not already spoken to you of Jeanne. We love her deeply, and indeed she is a good girl. Tell me frankly, what do you think of the statuette?"

I replied that it showed taste and spirit, but that the artist needed study and practice. But I was greatly touched because her young fingers had worked out an old man's rough sketch, and portrayed with such brilliancy an old dotard's dreams.

"My reason for asking your advice," gravely resumed Madame de Gabry, "is because Jeanne is a poor orphan. Do you think she could make her living by modelling statuettes like this one?"

"No; I do not," I replied. "And it is not to be

greatly regretted. You say the girl is affectionate and gentle. I believe you. I see it in her face. An artist's life has temptations which lead generous spirits beyond proper rules and limits. This young creature is moulded out of loving clay. Keep her for the home and fireside. There alone is true happiness."

"But she has no dowry!" replied Madame de Gabry. Then, holding out her hand to me, she added, "You are our friend, and I may tell you all. This child's father was a banker, and a friend of ours. He tried to engineer various colossal speculations; and this, in fact, was what ruined him. He survived but a few months after his failure, in which (Paul must have told you) three-fourths of my uncle's fortune was sunk, and more than half of ours.

"We knew him at Monaco the winter that we spent with my uncle. He had an adventurous disposition, but so plausible! He deceived himself before deceiving others. The greatest skill lies in that, does it not? My uncle, my husband, and I were drawn into it; and we risked more than a reasonable amount in a dangerous speculation. But what matter, as Paul says, since we have no children. Moreover, we have the satisfaction of knowing that the friend in whom we trusted was an honest man. You must know his name, it was so constantly in the papers and on posters, Noël Alexandre. His wife was very sweet. I did not know her until she was already faded; but she still retained traces of beauty, and a taste for great style and show that well became her. She was somewhat fond of excite-

ment, but she showed great courage and dignity after her husband's death. She died a year later, leaving Jeanne alone in the world."

"Clémentine!" I exclaimed.

Upon hearing what I had never imagined, and the mere thought of which would have roused to rebellion all the forces of my soul, on learning that Clémentine was no more on earth, a great silence, as it were, took possession of me; and the feeling which swept over my whole being was not a sharp, sudden pang, but a calm and solemn sadness. I felt an indescribable peace, and my thoughts suddenly rose to heights unknown.

"From where you are to-day, Clémentine," I said to myself, "look down on this heart now grown cold with years, but whose pulse once beat warmly for you, and tell me if it does not again waken at the thought of loving all that is left of you on earth. All is over since you are gone; but life is immortal, and it is this we must love in its constantly renewed form. The rest is child's play; and I, with my books, am, as it were, a little boy playing with knucklebones. O Clémentine, you have revealed to me the aim of life." Madame de Gabry roused me from my reflections by the words,—

"The child is poor."

"Clémentine's daughter poor!" I exclaimed. "How fortunate that is! None other than I must provide for her, and give her a dowry. No! Clémentine's daughter shall not receive a dowry from any one but me!"

I approached Madame de Gabry, who had already

risen, and taking her right hand, I kissed it, laid it upon my arm, and said, "Take me to the grave of Noël Alexandre's widow." And I heard Madame de Gabry say to me,—

"Why are you weeping?"

LITTLE SAINT GEORGE.

April 16.

SAINT DROCTOVEUS and the early abbots of Saint-Gemain-des-Prés have taken up my time and attention for forty years, but I do not know whether or not I shall write their history before I go to join them. I have been an old man for many years. One day last year, on the Pont des Arts, one of my colleagues of the Institute was complaining to me of the trials of growing old.

"Still," Sainte-Beuve answered him, "that is the only way yet discovered of living long."

I have used this method, and I know what it is worth. The pity lies, not in living too long, but in seeing every one around us die. Mother, wife, friends, children, Nature makes and unmakes these divine treasures with calm indifference, and we find that in the end we have been loving and embracing mere shadows. But there are some very dear ones!

If ever any one glided like a shadow into a man's life, it was the young girl whom I loved when (how incredible it now is!) I was a young man. And the memory of this shadow is even to-day one of the dearest realities of my life.

A Christian sarcophagus from the catacombs of Rome bears a form of curse, the dreadful meaning of which I have learned to understand with time. It reads: —

"*If any wicked person violates this tomb, may he die last of all his race!*"

As an archæologist I have opened tombs and removed their ashes, in order to collect from them shreds of cloth, metal ornaments, and various gems. But I did this with a scientific curiosity, not lacking reverence and pity. May the curse cut on the tomb of a martyr, by one of the early disciples of the apostles, never fall upon me! I ought not to fear lest I outlive my friends, so long as there are men on earth, for there are always some whom one can love.

But the power to love grows weak, and finally is lost with age, like every other faculty of man. Example proves it, and this is what frightens me. Am I sure that I have not already suffered in this way? Certainly I should have done so, had not a happy meeting rejuvenated me. The poets speak of the Fountain of Youth. It exists; it bubbles under the earth at our every step, and we pass without drinking of it!

The young girl whom I loved, having been married according to the dictates of her heart to a rival, grew old, and entered into eternal rest. I have found her daughter; so that my life, which was of no further use, has once more acquired some meaning and excuse.

To-day I "take the sun" as they say in Provence. I take it on the terrace of the Luxembourg at the foot of the statue of Marguerite of Navarre. It is the sunshine of spring, as intoxicating as young wine. I sit and ponder. My thoughts escape from

my head like the foam on a beer-bottle. They are light, and their sparkles amuse me. I am dreaming. This, I think, is allowable in a man who has published thirty volumes of old texts, and contributed for twenty-six years to the *Journal des Savants*. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I did my task as well as I could, and of having fully exercised the ordinary talents with which nature endowed me. My efforts have not been entirely in vain, and I have contributed my small share to the number of historic works which will be an honor to this restless century. I shall surely be counted among the ten or twelve who have revealed to France her literary antiquities. My publication of the poetic works of Gautier de Coincy inaugurated a judicious system, and made an epoch. The severe serenity of old age makes it permissible for me to claim this de served reward; and God, who sees my heart, knows whether pride or vanity has any part in the justice I render myself.

But I am weary, my eyes are dim, my hand trembles, and I see an image of myself in those old men of Homer, who, by reason of their feebleness, were out of the combats, and who, seated along the ramparts, raised their voices like cicalas in a bower.

Thus my thoughts were roaming, when three young men sat down near me. I do not know whether each came in three *paleaux*, like La Fontaine's monkey, but the three certainly sat down on a dozen chairs! I took great pleasure in watching them, not that there was anything extraordinary about them, but because they had that happy, joy-

ous air that belongs to youth. They were college men; I was sure of it, perhaps less from the books in their hands than from the character of their faces. For all who devote themselves to intellectual pursuits are recognizable at first sight by an indescribable something which is common to all of them. I am very fond of young people; and these pleased me, in spite of certain wild and annoying ways that vividly recalled my own student days. But they did not wear their hair long, as we did, over velvet doublets. They did not walk, as we did, with a death's head, or cry out, as we did, "Hell and damnation!" They were correctly dressed, and neither their costume nor their language was at all suggestive of the Middle Ages.

I must add that they had keen eyes for the women who passed on the terrace, and that they showed their admiration of some of them in rather lively language. But their ideas on this subject did not go so far as to compel me to leave my seat. Besides, when young men are studious, I do not grudge them their fun.

One of them made a witty remark about some girl: —

"What's that?" cried the smallest and darkest of the three, with a slight Gascon accent. "Let us physiologists occupy ourselves with living matter. And you, Gélis, who, like all your archæological friends, live only in the past, why don't you occupy yourself with those stone women who are your contemporaries?"

He pointed across to the statues of the ladies of

ancient France that rose in a white semicircle under the trees along the terrace. This by-play, trifling in itself, showed me at least that the one called Gélis was a student in the École des Chartes. From the rest of the conversation, I learned that his silent, sarcastic neighbor, light complexioned and as pale as a shadow, was Boulmier, his fellow-student. Gélis and the future doctor (I hope he may become one some day) talked together with much liveliness and wit. In the midst of the most serious speculations, they played on words and perpetrated jokes after the absurd style characteristic of wits — I mean they got off prodigious absurdities. I need not add, need I, that they scorned to maintain anything but the most colossal paradoxes. They used all their imagination to make themselves ridiculous, and all their logic to support the opposite of common-sense. Good for them! I do not like young people to be too sensible.

The medical student looked at the book that Boulmier had in his hand.

"What," said he, "you reading Michelet!"

"Yes," replied Boulmier seriously; "I like novels."

Gélis, who excelled the others by his handsome, slender figure, his imperious bearing and ready flow of words, took the book, glanced over a few pages, and said, —

"Michelet has always had a tendency for the romantic. He shed sentimental tears over Maillard, that nice little man who introduced scribbling into the massacres of September. But, as tenderness leads to madness, behold him suddenly grown furi-

ous at his victims. What can you expect? This is modern sentimentality. We pity the assassin, and consider the victim as unpardonable. In his later manner, Michelet has become more Michelet than ever. It no longer has any common-sense in it. It is amazing! Neither art nor science, neither criticism nor narrative. Only outbursts of anger, fainting-fits, an epileptic seizure, on account of facts which he never deigns to expound. Infantile shrieks, woman's unreasonable cravings, and a style, my friends, with never a familiar commonplace in it! It is astonishing!"

He returned the book to his friend.

"Their fun is amusing," said I to myself, "and not so devoid of reason as it seems. This young man, in his jesting way, has keenly hit the weak point in the armor."

But the student from Provence declared that history was nothing but a despicable and thoroughly rhetorical study. His idea was that the only real history was the natural history of man. Michelet was on the right road when he came upon the fistula of Louis XIV., but he fell back almost immediately into the old rut.

Having given expression to this wise idea, the young physiologist rose, and joined a group of passing friends. The two archæological students, having fewer acquaintances in the garden, — it was a long distance from the rue Paradis-au-Marais, — remained behind, and began talking of their studies. Gélis, who was near the end of his third year, was preparing a thesis, the subject of which he told with boy-

ish enthusiasm. The subject seemed to me a good one, especially as I had recently thought it my duty to treat a notable part of it. It was the *Monasticum gallicanum.*

The young erudite (I give him this name as an omen) was planning to mention all the plates engraved about 1690 for the work that Dom Michel Germain would have had published had it not been for the one single obstacle that one scarcely ever foresees, and never avoids.

Dom Michel Germain at least left his manuscript complete and in good order when he died. Shall I do as much with mine? But that is not the question.

Monsieur Gélis, so far as I could understand, proposed to consecrate an archæological notice to each abbey pictured by the humble engravers of Dom Michel Germain.

His companion asked him if he was acquainted with all the manuscripts and publications relating to the subject. Then, indeed, I strained my ears to listen. They spoke first of original sources; and I must say that they did it systematically enough, in spite of their countless and wretched puns. Then they mentioned the works of contemporary criticism.

"Have you read," asked Boulmier, "the notice of Courajod?"

"Good!" said I to myself.

"Yes," answered Gélis; "it is correct."

"Have you read the article by Tamisey de Larroque in the *Review of Historical Questions?*" asked Boulmier.

"Good!" said I to myself a second time.

"Yes," answered Gélis; "and it is full of information."

"Have you read," asked Boulmier, "the 'Picture of the Historical Abbeys of the Benedictines in 1600,' by Sylvestre Bonnard?"

"Good!" I exclaimed a third time.

"Mercy, no!" replied Gélis. "Bonnard is a fool."

I turned my head, and saw that night's shadows were creeping over where I sat. The air was growing damp, and I thought myself very foolish to risk taking cold while listening to the impertinent remarks of two young coxcombs.

"Ha! Ha!" said I to myself, as I rose. "Let this young chatterbox write his thesis and support it. He will find that my colleague Quicherat, or some other professor of the school, will show him his crass ignorance. I have good reason to call him a blackguard; and really, in thinking of the matter as I do now, what he said about Michelet is intolerable and outrageous. The idea! To speak in such a way of an old master so full of genius. It is abominable!"

April 17.

"Thérèse, give me my new hat, my best coat, and my silver-headed cane."

But Thérèse is as deaf as a coal-sack, and as slow as justice. Age is the cause of it. The worst of it is, that she thinks her hearing good and her steps agile; moreover, she is proud of her sixty

years of honest housekeeping, and she serves her old master with the most watchful despotism.

What did I say — ? . . . Here she is unwilling to give me my silver-headed cane, for fear of my losing it. It is true that I quite frequently leave umbrellas and sticks in the 'buses and book-shops. But I have a good reason to-day for carrying my old cane, the carved silver head of which represents Don Quixote galloping with poised lance against the wind-mills, while Sancho Panza, his arms raised to heaven, begs him in vain to stop.

This cane is all that I inherited from my uncle, Captain Victor, who in his lifetime resembled Don Quixote rather than Sancho Panza, and who loved blows as naturally as one usually fears them. For thirty years I have carried this cane on every memorable or solemn walk I have taken, and the two figures of the knight and the squire inspire and console me. I can almost hear them. Don Quixote says to me, —

"Think deeply of serious things, and know that thought is the only reality in the world. Lift nature up to your own height, and let the whole world be for you but the reflection of your heroic spirit. Fight for honor — this alone is worthy of a man; and if you are wounded, spill your blood like generous dew, and smile."

And Sancho Panza says in turn, —

"Remain what Heaven made you, brother! Prefer the crust of bread drying in your wallet to the ortolans that are roasting in the duke's kitchen. Obey your master, whether he be wise or foolish,

and do not load your brain with too many useless facts. Fear blows; 'tis tempting God to seek danger."

But if the incomparable knight and his unparalleled squire exist as merely figures on the head of my cane, they themselves are in my innermost conscience. All of us have a Don Quixote and a Sancho within us, to whom we listen; and even while Sancho persuades us, it is Don Quixote whom we must admire.

But a truce to this nonsense! Let us go to Madame de Gabry about a matter which is of more importance than the ordinary affairs of life.

The same day.

I found Madame de Gabry dressed in black, and just buttoning her gloves.

"I am ready," said she.

Ready! I have always found her so, on every occasion for doing good.

After a few pleasant words regarding the good health of her husband, who had gone for a walk, we went down-stairs, and stepped into the carriage. I know not what secret spell I feared to break by speaking; but we drove without a word along the wide, deserted boulevard, studying the shops where crosses, gravestones, and funeral-wreaths were waiting for their purchaser. The cab stopped at the final bourn of the land of the living, before the gate, on which are graven words of hope.

"Follow me," said Madame de Gabry, whose height I now noticed for the first time. We went down a walk bordered by cypress-trees, then fol-

lowed a narrow path between the tombs. Finally we stopped in front of a flat stone.

"It is here," said she; and she knelt down.

In spite of myself I could not help noticing the unconsciously graceful way in which this Christian woman fell on her knees, letting the folds of her gown spread about her as they chanced. With the exception of two Polish exiles one evening in a deserted church of Paris, never had I seen any woman kneel so unaffectedly, and in such utter lack of self-consciousness.

The picture flashed through my mind like lightening; and then I saw nothing but the low slab on which was cut the name — CLÉMENTINE. What I felt was something profound and intangible and inexpressible, unless by the sound of exquisite music. I heard instruments of a celestial sweetness making melody in my old heart. With the solemn tones of a funeral hymn were mingled the muted notes of a love-song, for into the same feeling my soul mingled the solemn sadness of the present and the well-known graces of the past.

I cannot say whether or not we had been before the tomb of Clémentine for long, when Madame de Gabry rose. We crossed the cemetery without speaking, but when we were once more among living men my tongue became unfettered.

"As I followed you," I said to Madame de Gabry, "I was thinking of those legendary angels whom one meets on the mysterious borders of life and death. The grave to which you have taken me — and I was as ignorant of it as of almost all else

concerning her whom it covers — recalled certain unparalleled emotions of existence, comparable in the dulness of this life to a light on a dark road. The farther one goes, the farther away is the gleam. I am almost at the foot of the last slope, and yet I see the light as distinctly as ever every time I look back.

"You, madame, who knew Clémentine as she was, with white hair, a wife and mother, you cannot imagine her as she was when I saw her, a fair-haired young girl, with cheeks like roses and skin so white! Since you have been good enough to be my guide, I think I should tell you, dear madame, what feelings this grave aroused. Recollections are crowding into my heart. I am like an old, gnarled, and moss-grown oak, which sways its branches, and awakens nests of singing birds. Unfortunately the song of my birds is as old as the world, and can amuse no one but myself."

"Tell me your recollections," said Madame de Gabry. "I cannot read your books, for they are written for scholars; but I like to listen when you talk, because you make the most ordinary things in life interesting. Speak to me as if I were an old woman. This morning I found three white hairs on my head."

"Behold them come without regret, madame," said I. "Time deals gently only with those who take it gently. And when, in a few years, a light silver foam will float on the ripples of your dark hair, you will be clothed in a new beauty, less vivid, but more touching than the first, and you will see

that your husband will love your white hair just as much as he did the black curl which you gave him when he married you, and which he wears in a locket, as if it were something sacred. These boulevards are wide and but little frequented. We can talk at our ease as we drive along. I will tell you first how I became acquainted with Clémentine's father. But pray expect nothing extraordinary, nothing remarkable; for if you do you will be greatly disappointed.

"Monsieur de Lessay occupied the second story of an old house on the Avenue de l'Observatoire. The plaster façade, ornamented with antique busts, and the great rambling garden near it, were the first images that stamped themselves on my childish eyes, and in all probability they will be the last which, when the inevitable day arrives, will fade from under my heavy lids. For in this house I was born. In this garden I played, and learned to feel and know some fragments of this old universe. Happy hours! sacred hours! when the pure soul discovers the world revealing itself by a kindly light and with a mysterious charm. For, madame, the universe is but the reflection of our own soul.

"My mother was a being happily endowed. She rose with the sun, like the birds; and she resembled them by her domestic industry, by her maternal instinct, by the necessity which she felt to be always singing, and by a sort of graceful abruptness, all of which I thoroughly appreciated, though I was only a child. She was the soul of the house, filling it with her well-regulated and happy energy. My father was as slow as she was sprightly. I well re-

call his placid face, over which now and then would pass an ironical smile. He was weary, and he loved his weariness. Seated near the window in his deep armchair, he used to read from morning till night. From him I inherited my love of books. I have in my library a Mably and a Raynal which he annotated with his own hand from beginning to end. But it was not to be expected that he would trouble himself about practical affairs. When my mother strove by gentle tact to draw him out from his indifference, he shook his head with that inexorable sweetness which is the strength of weak characters. He was the despair of the poor woman who had no manner of sympathy with this contemplative wisdom, and understood nothing of life but its daily cares and the happy work of each hour. She thought he was ill, and feared that he would grow worse. But his apathy arose from another cause.

"My father entered the navy department under Monsieur Decrès in 1801, and showed marked talent as administrator. There was a great activity at that time in connection with the navy, and in 1805 my father became chief of the second administrative division. That year the emperor, to whom he had been recommended by the minister, ordered him to draw up a report on the organization of the English navy. This work was stamped with a deeply liberal and philosophical spirit, though the writer himself was not aware of the fact. It was not finished until 1807, about eighteen months after the defeat of Admiral Villeneuve at Trafalgar. Napoleon, who after that ill-fated day never again wished to hear

a ship mentioned, wrathfully glanced over the pages, and then threw the report into the fire, crying, 'Phrases, nothing but phrases. I have already said that I do not like ideologists!' They brought back word to my father that the emperor was so angry that he had ground the manuscript down into the fire with his boot. At all events, it was his habit when he was irritated to poke the fire with his boot until the very sole was scorched.

"My father never recovered from this disgrace, and the failure of all his efforts to do his duty was certainly the cause of the apathy into which he fell later. Nevertheless, Napoleon, on his return from the Island of Elba, sent for him, and ordered him to draw up, in a patriotic and liberal spirit, proclamations and bulletins for the fleet. After Waterloo, my father, more saddened than surprised, went into retirement, and was left unmolested. Only it was generally said of him that he was Jacobin and blood-thirsty, a man to be avoided.

"My mother's elder brother, Victor Maldent, captain of infantry, retired on half pay in 1814 and dismissed in 1815, added, by his wrong attitude, to the difficulties which the fall of the emperor had brought on my father. Captain Victor noised it about in the cafés and in public balls that the Bourbons had sold France to the Cossacks. He showed every one a tricolored cockade that was hidden in his hat-lining; he carried with great ostentation a cane, the twisted handle of which had been wrought so that the shadow it made was the silhouette of the emperor.

"Unless, madame, you have seen certain lithographs by Charlet, you can form no idea of my uncle Victor, and how he looked in his tight-fitting frogged coat, with the cross of honor and some violets on his chest, as he strolled up and down the garden of the Tuileries with that fierce dignity of his. Idleness and intemperance had the worst possible effect on his political passions. He used to insult people whom he saw reading the *Quotidienne* or the *Drapeau blanc*, and force them to fight with him. In this way he had the grief and shame of wounding a lad only sixteen years old in a duel. In short, my uncle Victor was the opposite of a wise man; and as he used every day to come to our house for his breakfast and dinner, his evil reputation clung to our fireside. My poor father suffered deeply from the eccentricity of his guest; but as he was kind-hearted, he said nothing, and opened his house to the captain, who despised him cordially in return.

"What I am telling you now, madame, I learned later. At that time my uncle filled me with the greatest enthusiasm, and I determined that some day I would be as much like him as possible. One fine morning, in order to begin the desired resemblance, I struck an attitude, my hands on my hips, and swore like an infidel.

"My good mother gave me such a stinging slap on my cheek, that for a moment I stood perfectly stupefied, before bursting into tears. I can still see the armchair, covered with yellow Utrecht velvet, behind which that day I shed countless tears.

"I was at that time a very little fellow. One

morning my father raised me in his arms as was his habit, and smiled at me with that touch of irony which gave a piquant look to his gentle expression. While I sat on his knees, playing with his long white hair, he told me things which I did not understand very well, but which interested me deeply, simply because they were mysterious. I think, although I am not positive, that on that morning he was telling me the story of the little King of Yvetot, as we find it in the song. Suddenly we heard a great noise, and the windows rattled. My father let me slip to his feet, and with trembling arms uplifted, he shook his fists. His face was pallid and lifeless looking, his eyes preternaturally large. He strove to speak, but his teeth chattered. At last he muttered, 'They have shot him!' I did not know what he meant, and I felt a vague terror. Afterwards I learned that he was speaking of Marshal Ney, killed on the 7th of December, 1815, beneath the wall which enclosed an empty lot adjoining our house.

"About this time I often used to meet on the stairs an old man (he was not so very old perhaps), whose little black eyes shone with wonderful brightness from his calm, swarthy face. To me he did not seem alive, or at least it did not seem as if he were alive like other men. At Monsieur Denon's, where my father had taken me, I had seen a mummy, brought from Egypt; and I really thought that Monsieur Denon's mummy awoke when it was alone, crept out of its gilded case, put on a drab-colored coat and a powdered wig, and that then it became Monsieur de Lessay. And even to-day, my

dear madame, although I repel the idea as without foundation, I must confess that Monsieur de Lessay greatly resembled Monsieur Denon's mummy. This is equivalent to saying that this man was an object of terror and at the same time of fascination to me.

In reality, Monsieur de Lessay was a small gentleman and a great philosopher. A disciple of Mably and Rousseau, he flattered himself that he was unprejudiced, and this pretension was in itself a great prejudice. He detested fanaticism, but he possessed that of tolerance. I speak, madame, of a contemporary of a bygone age. I fear that I may not be understood, and I am sure that I do not interest you. It is all so far away from us! But I am abridging as much as possible. Besides, I did not promise you anything interesting, and you could not expect to hear of great adventures in the life of Sylvestre Bonnard."

Madame de Gabry begged me to go on, and I did so in these words: —

"Monsieur de Lessay was curt with men and courteous to women. He used to kiss my mother's hand, though she was not accustomed to such gallantry, the customs of the Republic and the Empire being very different. Through him I touched the age of Louis XVI. Monsieur de Lessay was a geographer; and no one, I believe, was prouder than he to discuss the face of the earth. Under the Ancient Régime he had done something in agriculture from a philosophical standpoint, and in this way consumed his estates to their last acre. No longer having an inch of land left to call his own, he took possession

of the whole earth, and made a wonderful number of maps, based on the accounts of travellers.

"But as he had been nourished on the purest marrow of the encyclopædia, he was not satisfied with enclosing human beings within so many degrees, minutes, and seconds of latitude and longitude. He looked after their happiness, alas! It is noticeable, madame, that men who have looked after the happiness of people in general have made their own household very unhappy. Monsieur de Lessay, a greater geometrician than Dalembert, a greater philosopher than Jean-Jacques, was yet a greater royalist than Louis XVIII. But his love for the king was nothing in comparison to his hatred for the emperor. He took part in the conspiracy of Georges against the First Consul; but the court, having forgotten him, or thinking him of no consequence, he was not included in the list of the guilty. He never forgave Bonaparte for this insult; and he called him the Ogre of Corsica, to whom, he said, he would never intrust a regiment, because he found him such a contemptible soldier.

"In 1820 Monsieur de Lessay, who had been a widower for many years, married again, at the age of nearly sixty. His wife was a very young woman, and he set her to work, without mercy, on his maps. After a few years of marriage, she died in giving birth to a daughter. My mother nursed her in her short illness, and saw that the child wanted nothing. This child was named Clémentine.

"The relations of my family with Monsieur de Lessay begin with that birth and that death. As I

was just then emerging from the first years of childhood, I was beginning to grow big and stupid. I lost the charming gift of insight and feeling. Things no longer caused me the delightful surprise that is the charm of youth. So I have no remembrance of the years which followed the birth of Clémentine. I know only that within a few months I experienced a grief, the mere thought of which still makes my heart ache. I lost my mother. A great silence, a great coldness, and a great shadow, suddenly filled our home.

"I fell into a sort of stupor. My father sent me to college, but I had great difficulty in rousing myself from my torpor.

"However, I was not altogether an idiot, and my professors taught me almost all they thought necessary; that is, a little Greek, and much Latin. I had no acquaintances, except with the ancients. I learned to esteem Miltiades, and to admire Themistocles; became familiar with Quintus Fabius, so far as any one could be familiar with such a great consul. Proud of these lofty relationships, I no longer condescended to look at little Clémentine and her old father; besides, they set out one fine day for Normandy, nor did I give a thought to their return.

"But they did return, madame, they did return! Ye Influences of Heaven, ye Forces of Nature, ye Mysterious Powers that give to man the ability to love, you know how I again saw Clémentine! They entered our sad home. Monsieur de Lessay no longer wore a wig. Bald, with a few grizzled locks on his purple temples, he looked the picture of robust

old age. But the beautiful, glowing creature whom I saw on his arm, and whose presence lighted up our old faded drawing-room, was not a vision — no! it was Clémentine! I am telling the truth. Her blue eyes, blue as the flowers of the periwinkle, seemed to me supernatural; and even to-day I cannot believe that those two living gems can have suffered the trials of life and the decay of death. She was somewhat embarrassed when she met my father, for she did not recognize him. Her cheeks had a soft, becoming color; and her parted lips wore a smile that made one think of the Infinite, probably because it betrayed no particular thought, and expressed only the joy of living and the delight of being beautiful. Her face shone beneath a pink hood like a jewel in an open casket. She wore a cachemire shawl over a white muslin dress, which was plaited at the waist, and which came to the tops of her reddish-brown boots. Do not smile, madame; that was the style then, and I am not sure if our modern fashions have as much simplicity, freshness, and graceful propriety.

"Monsieur de Lessay told us, that, as he had begun the publication of an historical atlas, he intended to live in Paris once more, and would be glad to re-occupy his old apartment if it was vacant. My father asked Mademoiselle de Lessay if she was glad to be in the capital. Yes, she was; for she smiled still more radiantly. She smiled at the windows that opened on the shining green garden; she smiled at the bronze Marius seated among the ruins of Carthage on the top of the clock; she

smiled on the old yellow velvet chairs, and on the poor student who dared not lift his eyes to her. From that day, how I loved her!

"But here we are in the rue de Sèvres, and soon we shall see your windows. I am a poor story-teller; and if ever I were to try the impossible and undertake a novel, I should never succeed. I have spun out a long introduction for a story which I am going to tell you in a few words; for there is a certain delicacy, a certain feeling of the heart, that would be shocked by an old man calmly enlarging upon the sentiments of even the most innocent love.

"Let us drive for a few moments along this boulevard, with its row of convents, and my story will be finished by the time we reach that little steeple yonder.

"Monsieur de Lessay, learning that I was just finishing my studies at the École des Chartes, thought me capable of working with him on his historical atlas. The point at issue was to determine, on a series of maps, what this philosophic graybeard called 'the vicissitudes of empires' from Noah down to Charlemagne. Monsieur de Lessay had stored away in his head every error of the eighteenth century concerning antiquities.

"As to history, I belonged to the new and advanced school, and was at an age when one does not know how to pretend. The way in which the old man understood, or rather failed to understand, the barbarous ages, his obstinacy in seeing in remote antiquity, ambitious princes, hypocritical and covetous priests, virtuous citizens, poet-philosophers and

others, who never existed save in the romances of Marmontel, caused me great unhappiness, and inspired me at first to raise every sort of objection, — reasonable, no doubt, but perfectly useless, and at times dangerous. Monsieur de Lessay was very irascible, and Clémentine was very beautiful. Between the two I spent hours of torture and delight. I was in love; I was a coward; and soon I conceded to him all that he demanded regarding the historical and political figure that this earth, destined later to bear Clémentine, offered in the time of Abraham, Menes, and Deucalion.

"As we finished drawing the maps, Mademoiselle de Lessay tinted them in water-colors. Leaning over the table, she held her brush between two fingers; a shadow fell from her eyelashes upon her cheeks, and bathed her half-closed eyes in a soft shade. Occasionally she would raise her head, and I saw her parted lips. There was such expression in her beauty that she could not breathe without seeming to sigh, and her most ordinary movements filled my soul with dreamy ecstasy. As I gazed at her, I agreed with Monsieur de Lessay that Jupiter ruled once as a despot over the mountainous regions of Thessaly, and that Orpheus was unwise in intrusting to the clergy the teaching of philosophy. To this day I do not know whether I was a coward or a hero when I yielded these points to the obstinate old man.

"Mademoiselle de Lessay, I must confess, did not pay much attention to me. But her indifference seemed so reasonable and so natural that I did not

think of complaining about it. I suffered on account of it, but unconsciously I was full of hope. We were then only at the first Assyrian Empire.

"Monsieur de Lessay came every evening for a cup of coffee with my father. I cannot understand in what way they were congenial, for never were two natures so completely opposed to each other. My father had few admirations and a forgiving soul. As he grew older, he came to hate all exaggeration. He clothed his ideas with a thousand delicate shades, and never stated an opinion save with all sorts of reservations.

"These habits of a gentle mind roused the dry, hard old gentleman whom moderation in an adversary never disarmed — quite the contrary! I scented danger; the danger was Napoleon. My father cherished no affection for him; but having worked under his orders, he did not like to hear him abused, especially to the advantage of the Bourbons, against whom he had deep grievances.

"Monsieur de Lessay, more of a Voltairean and a legitimist than ever, credited Bonaparte with being the source of every political, social, and religious evil. In this state of affairs Captain Victor was my greatest anxiety. That dreadful uncle of mine had grown perfectly intolerable since his sister was no longer there to quiet him. The harp of David was broken, and Saul was given over to his madness. The fall of Charles X. augmented the old Bonapartist's audacity, and he did all sorts of wild things. He seldom came to our house, for it had grown too gloomy for him; but occasionally at dinner-time we

saw him come in, covered with flowers, like a mausoleum. Usually he sat down to table swearing in his deep voice, and, as he ate, boasting of the success which, as an old veteran warrior, he had enjoyed with the ladies. Then, when dinner was finished, he would fold up his napkin in the shape of a bishop's bonnet, swallow half a decanter of brandy, and take his departure as hastily as if he feared to spend, without drinking, even a moment alone with an old philosopher and a young scholar. I knew well enough that if ever he should meet Monsieur de Lessay, all would be lost.

"The day came, madame!

"On that occasion the captain was quite hidden by his flowers, and looked so much like a monument erected in memory of the glories of the Empire that any one would have longed to put a wreath of immortelles on each of his arms. He was in unusually good humor; and the first person who benefited by his happy disposition was the cook, whom he seized about the waist just as she was placing the roast on the table.

"After dinner he pushed aside the decanter offered him, saying that he would burn the brandy in his coffee. I asked him tremblingly if he would not rather have his coffee at once. My uncle Victor was suspicious and by no means dull. The haste which I displayed seemed to him in poor taste; for he looked hard at me, and said, —

"'Patience, nephew. It is not the place of the child of the regiment to sound the retreat. The devil! You are in great haste, Master Pedant, to see if I have spurs on my heels.'

"It was evident that the captain had suspected that I wanted him to go. Knowing this, I was certain that he would stay, and he did! The slightest details of that evening are indelibly impressed on my memory. My uncle was perfectly jovial. The mere idea of his being in the way kept him in good humor. He told us in fine barracks' style, *ma foi*, about a monk, a trumpeter, and five bottles of Chambertin — a story that would be greatly enjoyed in a garrison, but which I would not attempt to tell you, madame, even if I had the time to recall it. When we went into the drawing-room, the captain called our attention to the bad condition of our andirons, and discoursed in a knowing way on the use of tripoli for polishing brass. Not a word of politics. He was conducting himself cautiously. Eight o'clock struck from the ruins of Carthage. It was time for Monsieur de Lessay to arrive. A few moments later he entered the room with his daughter. The evening's usual routine began. Clémentine occupied herself with her embroidery near the lamp, the shade of which enveloped her pretty head with soft shadow, and threw a light upon her fingers that made them almost luminous. Monsieur de Lessay spoke of a comet predicted by the astronomers, and advanced some theories which, though they were extravagant, showed some intellectual culture. My father, who knew considerable about astronomy, expressed a few sensible ideas, ending with his eternal, 'But what do I know, after all?'

"In my turn I gave the opinion of our neighbor in the observatory, the well-known Arago. Uncle

Victor declared that comets have an influence on the quality of wines, and in order to uphold his theory, cited a rollicking tavern story. I was so pleased with this conversation, that, calling to my aid my latest readings, I strove to prolong it by a lengthy exposition of the chemical constitution of the clusters of nebulæ which, scattered through celestial space for millions of leagues, could be contained in a bottle. My father, somewhat surprised at my eloquence, looked at me with that calm, ironical expression of his. But we cannot always be in the clouds. Then, while my eyes rested on Clémentine, I spoke of a comet of diamonds that I had admired the night before in a jeweller's showcase. This was a most unfortunate inspiration on my part.

"'My dear nephew,' cried Captain Victor, 'your comet was not equal to that which sparkled on the head of the Empress Josephine when she came to Strasbourg to distribute crosses to the army.'

"'That little Josephine was very fond of jewelry,' said Monsieur de Lessay between two sips of coffee, 'and I do not blame her. There was some good in her, frivolous as she was. She was a Tascher, and it was a great honor to Buonaparte when she married him. A Tascher is not much, but a Buonaparte is nothing at all.'

"'What do you mean by that, Monsieur le Marquis?' demanded Captain Victor.

"'I am no marquis,' dryly replied Monsieur de Lessay; 'and what I mean is, that Buonaparte would have been well matched had he married one of those cannibal women Captain Cook describes

in his voyages, — naked, tattooed, a ring in her nose, and in the habit of devouring with ecstasy decayed human bodies.'

"I knew it, thought I to myself, and in my anguish (oh poor human heart!) my first thought was to notice the correctness of my predictions. I must say that the captain's reply had in it a touch of sublimity. Placing his hands on his hips, he measured Monsieur de Lessay scornfully from head to foot, and said, —

"'Napoleon, sir,[1] had another wife besides Josephine and Marie Louise. You are not acquainted with this companion, but I have seen her close at hand. She wears an azure mantle dotted with stars; she is crowned with laurels; the cross of honor sparkles on her breast. Her name is Glory.'

"Monsieur de Lessay put his cup on the mantelpiece, and said quietly, —

"'Your Buonaparte was a scoundrel.'

"My father rose calmly, and slowly raising his hands, said very gently to Monsieur de Lessay, —

"'Whatever the man may have been who died at Saint Helena, I worked ten years in his government, and my brother-in-law was thrice wounded under his eagles. I beg you, my dear sir, my friend, not to forget this in future.'

"That which the captain's lofty and burlesque impertinences could not do, my father's courteous remonstrance accomplished at once, — it made Monsieur de Lessay furiously angry.

[1] In the original the captain calls his opponent "Monsieur le Vidame" (*Vidame*, a sprig of nobility) in contradistinction to his former use of the title marquis.

"'I forgot,' cried he, livid with rage, his teeth clinched, his lips foaming; 'I was wrong. The herring-cask always smells of herring; and when one has been in the service of scoundrels' —

"At this word the captain sprang at his throat. Had it not been for his daughter and me, I think he would have been choked to death. My father, somewhat paler than usual, stood with folded arms, watching the spectacle with an indescribable expression of pity. What followed was sadder still — but of what use is it to dwell on the anger of two old men? At last I succeeded in separating them. Monsieur de Lessay beckoned to his daughter, and went out. She followed him. I ran to the stairs after her.

"'Mademoiselle,' I cried, distracted, pressing her hand, 'I love you! I love you!'

"For an instant she held my hand in hers, her lips half opened. What was she going to say? But all at once, raising her eyes to her father, who was ascending the stairs, she withdrew her hand, and made me a gesture of farewell. I never saw her again. Her father took rooms near the Panthéon, in an apartment which he had rented for the sale of his historical atlas. He died there a few months later from a stroke of apoplexy. His daughter, I was told, went to live at Caen with an aged lady, a relative of hers. There, some years later, she married a bank-clerk, the Noël Alexandre who became so rich and died so poor. As for me, madame, I live alone in peace by myself. My life, free from great sorrows as well as from great joys, has been

tolerably happy. But for years I could not, without a great pang at heart, see an empty armchair near mine on a winter evening. Last year I heard through you, who knew her, of her old age and death. I met her daughter at your house. I have seen her; but I will not say as yet, as did the aged man of the Scriptures, 'And now, O Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' If an old fellow like me can be of use to any one, I should like, with your help, to devote my last years to this orphan girl."

I uttered these words on the vestibule of Madame de Gabry's home; and I was about to take leave of this kind friend, when she said to me, —

"Dear friend, I cannot aid you in this as much as I could wish. Jeanne is an orphan and a minor. You cannot do anything for her without her guardian's consent."

"Ah! I never thought for an instant that Jeanne might have a guardian."

Madame de Gabry looked at me with ill-concealed surprise. She had not expected to find the old man quite so simple-minded.

"Jeanne Alexandre's guardian," said she, "is Maître Mouche, a notary at Levallois-Perret. I fear that you will not get on very well with him. He is a serious man."

"Ah! good Heavens!" I cried; "whom do you think I should get on with at my age, if not with serious people?"

She gently smiled, with a mischievous expression in her eyes, just as my father used to do, and replied, —

"With those who, like you, are innocent and generous. Monsieur Mouche is not exactly of that kind. He is artful and light-fingered. Although I find little pleasure in meeting him, we will go together, if you wish, and ask permission to see Jeanne, whom he has put in a boarding-school at les Ternes, where she is very unhappy."

We appointed a day. I kissed Madame de Gabry's hand, and we parted.

May 2–5.

I have seen Maître Mouche, Jeanne's guardian, in his office. Small, thin, and dried-up, his complexion looks as if it were made of the dust of his old papers. He is a spectacled animal, for one could not imagine him without his glasses. I have heard Maître Mouche speak; he has the voice of a rattle, and he uses carefully chosen terms. I should have liked it better if he had not chosen them at all. I have observed Maître Mouche; he is ceremonious, and watches one from the corner of his eye, behind his spectacles.

Maître Mouche is happy, he tells us he is delighted, at our interest in his ward. But he does not think that we are on this earth in order to amuse ourselves. No, he does not think so; and I must say, in all justice, that one is of his opinion, when with him, so little enjoyment does he inspire. He fears that it would be giving a false and pernicious idea of life to his dear ward if he allowed her too much pleasure. That is why he asks Madame de Gabry to invite her but seldom to her home.

We left the dusty notary and his dusty office,

with his consent given in due form (everything that Maître Mouche does is in due form) to see Mademoiselle Jeanne Alexandre the first Thursday of every month, at the home of her instructor, Mademoiselle Préfère, rue Demours, aux Ternes.

The first Thursday in May I set out for Mademoiselle Préfère's, whose establishment I saw from afar by its sign in blue letters. The blue tint was the first indication I had of Mlle. Virginie Préfère's temperament, which I afterwards had ample opportunity of studying. A scared-looking maid-servant took my card, and left me, without a word of hope, in an icy parlor, where I noticed that stale odor characteristic of the dining-rooms of boarding-schools. The floor of this room had been waxed with such pitiless energy that I stood with fear and trembling even on the threshold. Happily, however, I noticed some small woollen squares that lay on the floor before the hair-cloth chairs; and by stepping from one to the other of these carpet islands, I succeeded in reaching the corner of the fireplace, where I sat down out of breath.

Over the mantel-piece in a great gilt frame, there hung an Honor List, enrolling in flaming Gothic script a long list of names, among which I did not have the pleasure of finding Jeanne Alexandre's. I read several times over the names of those pupils, who in the eyes of Mademoiselle Préfère were worthy of such honor, and then I began to grow uneasy at hearing no one coming. Had it not been for the countless swarms of sparrows that had chosen her court for a gathering-place where they

might chirp and squabble, Mademoiselle Préfère would certainly have succeeded in establishing within her house of learning the perfect silence of the celestial regions. It was a delight to hear the birds, but (I beg to ask) how could one see them through the ground-glass windows? I had to be satisfied with what I could find in the parlor, the four walls of which were adorned, from floor to ceiling, with drawings done by the scholars. There were vestal virgins there, flowers, cottages, capitals, volutes, and an enormous head of Tatius, King of the Sabines, signed Estelle Mouton. For several minutes I had been admiring the energy which Mademoiselle Mouton had spent in delineating the ancient warrior's bushy eyebrows and infuriated gaze, when a slight noise, like that made by a dead leaf wafted by the wind, made me turn my head. It was not a dead leaf at all; it was Mademoiselle Préfère. With clasped hands she advanced across the polished mirror of the floor, as the saints in "The Golden Legend" glide over the crystal waters. But at any other time I think Mademoiselle Préfère would not have reminded me of the holy virgins so dear to mystic fancy. Her face alone would have reminded me of a pippin apple kept over winter in the attic of a thrifty housewife. On her shoulders she wore a fringed pèlerine. In itself there was nothing remarkable about this; but she wore it as if it were a holy vestment, or the mark of some high civil office.

I explained to her the object of my visit, and handed her my letter of introduction.

"You have seen Monsieur Mouche, then," said she. "Is he in very good health? He is such a worthy man, such a"—

She did not finish the sentence, but raised her eyes to the ceiling. I did the same; and I saw a narrow spiral of paper lace, which hung in the place of the chandelier, and was meant, I suppose, to attract the flies, and turn them from the gilt frames of the mirrors and the List of Honor.

"I have met Mademoiselle Alexandre at Madame de Gabry's," said I, "and I can appreciate the young girl's noble character and quick intelligence. I was well acquainted with her parents, and I should like to transfer to her some of the interest I felt for them."

For answer Mademoiselle Préfère sighed deeply, drew her mysterious pèlerine closely about her, and again gazed at the little paper spiral. At last she said,—

"Since you were the friend of Monsieur and Madame Alexandre, monsieur, I am glad to believe that you, like Monsieur Mouche and myself, regret the foolish speculations which brought them to ruin and their daughter to poverty."

As I listened to her words, I thought how deeply wrong it is to be unfortunate, and how unpardonable this wrong is on the part of those who for a long time were worthy of envy. Their fall avenges and flatters us, and we are pitiless.

After having declared in all sincerity that I was entirely ignorant of the bank trouble, I asked the mistress of the school if she was pleased with Mademoiselle Alexandre.

"The child is incorrigible," cried Mademoiselle Préfère, assuming a deeply pedantic attitude in order to symbolize the situation in which she was placed by such a fractious pupil.

Then, returning to a calmer mode of speech, —

"This girl is not without intelligence," said she, "but she cannot make up her mind to learn facts by principles."

What a strange woman was Mademoiselle Préfère! She walked without raising her feet, and spoke without moving her lips. Without dwelling longer than a reasonable amount of time on these details, I replied that principles no doubt were excellent things, and that I deferred to her intelligence on this point, but that, after all, when one knew a fact, it did not much matter whether one had learned it in one way or another.

Mademoiselle Préfère made a slow gesture of denial. Then she sighed again.

"Ah, monsieur, people who are strangers to education have very wrong ideas on the subject. I am sure that they speak with the best intent in the world; but they would do better, much better, to refer such questions to those who are competent."

I dropped the subject, and asked if I might see Mademoiselle Alexandre without further delay.

She contemplated her pèlerine as if to read in the tangle of its fringe, as in a conjurer's book, what answer she ought to make. At length she said, —

"Mademoiselle Alexandre has a penance to do and a lesson to give, but I should be inconsolable to have you make a useless trip here. I will have

her called. But allow me, sir, as a matter of form, to write your name on our visitors' register."

She sat down before the table, opened a large blank-book, and drawing Maître Mouche's letter from under her pèlerine where she had slipped it, she said, —

"'Bonnard' has a *d*, has it not? Pardon my insisting on this detail. But in my opinion, proper names have an orthography. Here, sir, we have dictations in proper names — historical names, of course, you understand!"

She inscribed my name in a scrawly hand, and then asked if she could not append a title of some kind, something like retired merchant, employé, stockholder, or some other. Her registry had a column for titles.

"Why, of course, madame, if you feel you must fill out your column, put 'Member of the Institute.'"

I still saw before me Mademoiselle Préfère's pèlerine, but it was no longer Mademoiselle Préfère who wore it. She was another person, pleasing, gracious, wheedling, merry, and radiant. Her eyes smiled; the little wrinkles on her face (and there were many) smiled; her mouth smiled too, but only in one corner. I have since learned that it was the good corner. When she spoke, her voice was in accordance with her manner, — it was like honey.

"You said just now, monsieur, that our dear Jeanne was very intelligent. I have noticed it, and I am proud to agree with you. Indeed, this young girl is a source of great interest to me. She has

what I call a happy disposition. But forgive me for wasting your precious time."

She called the servant, who came in greater haste and looked more frightened than ever, and who disappeared with the order to tell Mademoiselle Alexandre that Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard, a Member of the Institute, was waiting for her in the parlor.

Mademoiselle Préfère had only time to confide to me that she had a profound respect for the decisions of the Institute, whatever they might be, when Jeanne appeared out of breath, as red as a peony, her great eyes wide open, her arms swinging, charming in her innocent awkwardness.

"How you are dressed, dear child!" murmured Mademoiselle Préfère, with the gentleness of a mother, as she arranged the girl's collar.

Jeanne, in truth, was dressed in a queer fashion. Her hair was drawn back into a net, from which stray locks escaped; her thin arms were covered to the elbow with lustring sleeves; her hands were red and chapped, and she seemed greatly ashamed of them; her dress was too short, showing a pair of baggy stockings and shoes trodden down at the heels; a jumping-rope was wound about her waist like a belt, and the entire combination made Jeanne rather unpresentable.

"Crazy little thing!" murmured Mademoiselle Préfère, this time no longer the mother, but the elder sister. Then she escaped, gliding like a shadow over the slippery floor.

I said to Jeanne, —

"Sit down, Jeanne, and talk to me as to a friend.

Are you not more contented here than you were last year?"

She hesitated; then with a sweet smile of resignation, she replied, —

"Not much more."

I begged her to tell me what she did in the school. She began by enumerating all sorts of studies, piano, style, chronology of the kings of France, sewing, drawing, dancing, catechism, good manners — I know not what else! in the meantime unconsciously holding the two ends of the rope with which she marked off her list. Suddenly, however, she noticed what she was doing, blushed, stammered, and I had to give up further knowledge of the complete list of studies in the Préfère Institute.

I questioned Jeanne on various points; but, obtaining the most confused answers, I saw that the rope was occupying the whole attention of the young girl, and I bravely touched upon this serious subject.

"You jump rope, I see," I said to her. "It is good exercise, but must not be carried to excess; for then it might seriously injure your health, and I should never cease regretting it, Jeanne, never."

"You are very good, monsieur," replied the young girl, "to come to see me, and speak to me as you do. I did not think of thanking you when I first came in, I was so surprised. Have you seen Madame de Gabry? Tell me about her, monsieur, will you?"

"Madame de Gabry," I replied, "is very well. I might say of her, Jeanne, what an old gardener said of the lady of the manor, his mistress, when some

one asked anxiously about her, 'Madame is on her road.' Madame de Gabry is on hers; and you know how good a one it is, and with what even steps she walks there. The other day I went a long distance with her, and we spoke of you. We spoke of you, my child, at your mother's grave."

"I am very glad," said Jeanne, and she began to cry.

I let the young girl's tears flow in silence. Then, as she dried her eyes, I asked, —

"Jeanne, will you not tell me why this rope troubled you just now?"

"Yes, indeed, monsieur. It was because I should not have come into the parlor with a rope. You know that at my age a girl does not jump rope. When the maid told me that an old gentleman — oh! — a gentleman was in the parlor and wished to see me, I was making the children jump. Then I tied the rope round my waist so as not to lose it. That was wrong. But I am so little used to receiving guests! Mademoiselle Préfère never excuses faults in good manners. She will certainly punish me, and I am very sorry."

"Yes, Jeanne, that is too bad."

She looked very serious. "Yes, monsieur, that is too bad, because when I am punished I have no more authority over the little children."

I had no very clear idea on this unpleasant subject; but Jeanne explained that she was expected by Mademoiselle Préfère to dress the children of the youngest class, wash them, teach them manners, the alphabet, the use of the needle, to play with them

and to put them to bed, and that she could exact no obedience from these restless little ones when she was condemned to wear her nightcap in the classroom, or while standing to eat her food from a plate turned upside down. Secretly admiring the penalties imposed by the Lady of the Enchanted Pèlerine, I said, —

"If I understand you, Jeanne, you are both pupil and teacher. This is no uncommon thing in the world. You are punished and you punish, in turn."

"Oh, monsieur!" she exclaimed, "I never punish."

"And I imagine that this indulgence draws the reprimands of Mademoiselle Préfère upon you."

She smiled, and nodded her head.

I told her then that the troubles we brought upon ourselves in trying to do our best, according to the dictates of our conscience, should not disgust or weary us, for they were helpful trials. This philosophy appealed to her but slightly. She seemed perfectly indifferent to my sermon. And what more natural? Do I not know that only those who are no longer innocent take delight in moralizers? I was wise enough to cut short my preaching.

"Jeanne," I said, "you spoke just now of Madame de Gabry. Let us speak of your fairy. She was very well made. Do you model wax figures here?"

"I have no wax," she replied, dropping her arms, "no wax!"

"No wax," I cried, "in a realm of bees!"

She laughed.

"And then, you see, monsieur, my little *figures*, as

you call them, are not on Mademoiselle Préfère's program. But I began a little Saint-George for Madame de Gabry, a miniature Saint-George with a golden breastplate. A golden breastplate is fine for a Saint-George, is it not, Monsieur Bonnard?"

"Very fine, Jeanne. But what became of it?"

"I will tell you. I kept it in my pocket, for I had no other place to put it — and I sat down on it."

She drew a little wax figure from her pocket. It no longer had any human shape, and its broken limbs were scarcely held together by their wire thread. At sight of her hero thus destroyed, she was filled with grief and merriment. The latter got the better of her, and she burst into a peal of laughter, which suddenly came to an end.

Mademoiselle Préfère stood at the door of the parlor, smiling.

"The dear child!" sighed the mistress of the school in her tenderest tone; "I fear she will weary you. Besides, your time is precious."

I begged Mademoiselle Préfère to dismiss that illusion, and rose to take leave, first drawing from my pockets some chocolate tablets and other sweets that I had brought with me.

"Oh! oh!" cried Jeanne; "there are enough for the whole school."

The Lady of the Pèlerine interposed.

"Mademoiselle Alexandre," said she, "thank the gentleman for his generosity."

Jeanne gave her a rather sullen look; then, turning to me, she said with remarkable firmness, —

"I thank you, monsieur, for your kindness in coming to see me."

"Jeanne," said I, holding both her hands, "be a good and brave girl. Good-by."

As she ran off with her packages of chocolate and her sweets, the ends of her rope hit the back of a chair. Mademoiselle Préfère was greatly shocked, and pressed both hands to her heart under her pèlerine. I expected to see her scholastic soul vanish in a swoon.

When we were alone, her serenity returned; and I must say, without flattering myself, that she smiled on me with one whole side of her face.

"Mademoiselle," said I, taking advantage of her good humor, "I noticed that Jeanne Alexandre is a little pale. You understand better than I how, at her age, a girl needs rest and care. Do not let me give offence by asking you to watch more closely over her."

My words seemed to delight her. She gazed with ecstasy at the spiral in the ceiling, and clasping her hands, exclaimed, —

"How well these noted men understand how to stoop to the smallest details!"

I observed that the health of a young girl was not a small detail, and I had the honor of bidding her good-day. But at the threshold she paused, and said in a confidential way, —

"Excuse my foolishness, monsieur. I am a woman, and I love glory. I cannot hide from you the fact that I am honored by the presence of a Member of the Institute in my humble institution."

I excused the foolishness of Mademoiselle Préfère; and thinking of Jeanne, with the blindness of

egotism I kept asking myself as I walked along, "What shall we do with this child?"

June 3.

That day I escorted to the cemetery of Marnes an old friend who, according to Goethe's dictum, had consented to die. The great Goethe, whose vital power was extraordinary, believed that one dies only when one wishes to do so; that is, when the last of the forces which resist final decay, and the totality of which makes life itself, are entirely destroyed. In other words, he thought that one dies only when one can no longer live. Well, it is only necessary to understand one another; and the beautiful thought of Goethe, when one knows how to take it, leads to the song of La Palisse.

So my good friend had consented to die, thanks to two or three persuasive attacks of apoplexy, the last of which was unanswerable. I had known him but slightly during his lifetime; but it seemed that as soon as he was no more I became his friend, for our colleagues told me, in a solemn tone and with melancholy faces, that I was to be one of the pall-bearers, and speak at the grave.

Having read, very poorly, a short address which I had written as well as I could, — and that is not saying much, — I went for a stroll among the woods of Ville-d'Avray, and followed, without leaning too heavily on the captain's cane, a hidden path, over which the sunlight fell in golden disks. Never had the odor of the grass and the damp leaves, or the beauty of the sky above the trees, and the great stillness of all vegetable growth, penetrated so deeply

into my heart and soul; and the sadness that I felt in this silence, broken by a sort of continual tinkling, weighed both on my senses and on my soul!

I sat down in the shadow of the roadside beneath a clump of young oaks. And then I promised myself that I would not die, or at least that I would not consent to die before sitting again beneath an oak, where, in the calm of the open country, I could think about the nature of the soul and the final aim of man. A bee, whose brown corsage sparkled in the sun like an armor of old gold, lighted on a mallow-flower of sombre richness, in full bloom upon its tufted stalk. Surely it was not the first time I had seen such a common sight, but I noticed it then for the first time with such affectionate and intelligent curiosity. I discovered that between the insect and the plant there were all sorts of sympathies, and a thousand ingenious relations which until then I had never suspected.

Satiated with nectar, the insect flew away in a straight line, and I rose as well as I could and readjusted myself on my legs.

"Adieu," I said to the flower and the bee, "adieu. May I live long enough to know the secret of your harmonies! I am very weary. But man is so made that he finds rest from one labor only by another. The flowers and the insects shall rest me, if God is willing, after my philology and diplomatics. What sense there is in the ancient myth of Antæus!"

I have touched the earth, and I am a new man; and here at the age of seventy new interests rise in

me, as one sees shoots sprouting from the hollow trunk of an old oak.

June 4.

I love to look from my window at the Seine and its quays on these soft gray mornings that give such infinite softness to all things. I have gazed on the azure sky which unfolds its shining calm across the Bay of Naples. Our Parisian sky is more animated, more kind, more intelligent. It smiles, threatens, caresses, is sad and gay, like a human gaze. Just now it is pouring a soft light over the men and beasts of the city as they perform their daily labors. Beyond, on the opposite bank, the longshoremen of the Port Saint-Nicolas are unloading cargoes of cattle-horns, while a line of men standing on a gangplank briskly toss from one to the other, sugar-loaves which are finally stowed away within the hold of a steamship. On the northern quay the cab-horses, standing in rows beneath the shadow of the plane-trees, their heads in their nose-bags, are tranquilly eating their oats, while the fat coachmen are drinking before the bar of the wine-shop, all the time keeping a sharp lookout for morning customers.

The dealers in old books deposit their cases on the parapet. These good merchants of knowledge constantly live out-of-doors, with blouses played upon by every breeze; and so hardened have they grown by the air, the rain, the hail, the snow, the fog, and the broad sun, that they come to look like the old statues on cathedrals. They are all friends of mine; and I scarcely ever pass their stalls without

finding some old volume which, until then, I have needed without in the least suspecting it.

On my return home, my housekeeper cries out that I am tearing all my pockets, and filling the house with old pamphlets which attract the rats. Thérèse is wise on this point, and it is just because she is wise that I pay no heed to her; for in spite of my quiet manner, I have always preferred the folly of the passions to the wisdom of indifference. But because my passions are not such as burst forth to hurt and kill, the ordinary person does not notice them. However, they stir me; and more than once I have lost sleep over a few pages written by a forgotten monk, or printed by some humble apprentice of Peter Schöffer. And if these lively emotions are dying out in me, it is because I am dying out myself. Our passions are ourselves. My old books are myself. I am old and motheaten like them.

A light breeze sweeps up the dust of the road with the winged seeds of the plane-trees, and the bits of hay that have fallen from the horses' mouths. It is nothing but a cloud of dust; but seeing it rise recalls to my mind that in my boyhood I saw a similar cloud of dust rise, and my old Parisian heart is deeply moved by it. Everything that I see from my window, — the horizon extending on my left to the hills of Chaillot, the Arc de Triomphe that looks like a block of stone, the Seine, river of glory, and its bridges, the linden-trees of the terrace of the Tuileries, the Louvre of the Renaissance, cut like a jewel; on my right, by the side of the Pont-Neuf, *pons lutetiae novus dictus*, as we read on old prints,

the ancient and venerable Paris with its towers and spires — all that is my life, myself; and I should be nothing without these things which are reflected in me with my thousand shades of thought, and which inspire and animate me. This is why I love Paris with such a deep affection.

Yet I am weary; and I realize that no one can rest in the heart of this city, which thinks so much, which has taught me to think, and which ceaselessly urges me to think. How can one help but be excited in the midst of the books which constantly rouse my interest, and weary without satisfying it? Now it is a date that must be found, now a place which it is necessary to determine precisely, or some old expression, the real meaning of which it is interesting to know. Words? Yes, they are words; and as a philologist, I am their king; they are my subjects, and I, like a good king, give them my whole life.

Can I not abdicate some day? I imagine that somewhere, far from here, there is, at the edge of the wood, a little cottage, where I should find the rest I need, while waiting for the great irrevocable Rest that will envelop me forever. I dream of a bench at the door, and of fields as far as eye can see. But a young face must smile beside me, in order to reflect and concentrate all the freshness about me. I could imagine myself a grandfather; then the whole void of my life would be filled.

I am not a man of violent temper; and yet I am easily irritated, and all my labors have caused me as much pain as pleasure. I do not know why I gave a thought, three months ago, to the silly and

impertinent remark which my young friend of the Luxembourg took the liberty to make about me. I do not use the word "friend" in any ironical sense, for I love studious youth with its audacities and mental flights. But my young friend went beyond all limit. Master Ambroise Paré, the first to understand the ligature of the arteries, and who, having found surgery practised by barbers on empirical lines, raised it to where it is to-day, was attacked in his old age by every conceited young leech. Taken to task by a thoughtless youngster, who might have been the best son in the world, but who lacked all feeling of reverence, the aged master replied to him in his treatise on *The Mummy, the Unicorn, Poisons and the Plague.*[1] "I beg of him," said the great man, "I beg of him, if he desires to oppose my reply, to give up personal feelings, and treat the old man more kindly."

This reply is admirable from the pen of Ambroise Paré; but had it come from a village bone-setter, grown old over his work, and ridiculed by a stripling, it would still be praiseworthy.

It will perhaps be thought that this remembrance is but the awakening of contemptible resentment. I thought so, too, and blamed myself for giving a thought to a mere boy, who had no idea of what he was saying. But my ideas on this subject turned into a better channel; this is why I note them down in my diary. I remembered that one fine day, when I was not more than twenty (more than half a century ago), I was walking with some companions in

[1] *De la Mumie, de la Licorne, des Venins et de la Peste.*

this same garden of the Luxembourg. We were talking of our old masters; and one of us mentioned Monsieur Petit-Radel, a respectable scholar, who was the first to throw a gleam of light on the origin of the Etruscans, but who had been unfortunate enough to prepare a chronological table of the lovers of Helen. This table caused us much merriment; and I cried, —

"Petit-Radel is an ass, not of three letters, but of a dozen volumes!"

That youthful remark is too light to weigh upon an old man's conscience. If I have hurled only such harmless missiles in the battle of life! But I ask myself to-day, if, during my lifetime, I have not done, though unconsciously, something as foolish as the chronological table of the lovers of Helen. The progress of sciences renders useless the works which have most aided that progress. As these labors are no longer of much account, youth naturally believes that they have never been of use — she despises them; and if any antiquated idea is found, she laughs at it. That is why, at the age of twenty, I made fun of Monsieur Petit-Radel and his honest chronological table. That is why, yesterday, in the Luxembourg, my young and disrespectful friend —

"*Look to thyself, Octavius, nor complain.*
Wouldst thou hope to be spared, thou, that sparest in vain?"[1]

June 6.

It was the first Thursday of June. I closed my books, and took leave of the holy Abbot Droctoveus,

[1] "*Rentre en toi-même, Octave, et cesse de te plaindre.*
Quoi! tu veux qu'on t'épargne et n'as rien épargné?"

who, as he is now enjoying celestial happiness, is in no haste. I think to see his name and his works glorified on this earth in a humble volume by my hands. Shall I admit it? that mallow-stock that I saw the other day, and the bee that lighted upon it, have occupied my thoughts much more than all the old abbots with their crosses and mitres. In my youth, when I read everything, I came across a volume by Sprengel, which contained some theories about the loves of the flowers. These came back to me after having been forgotten for half a century; and I am so much interested in them to-day, that I am sorry that I did not consecrate my humble talents to the study of insects and plants.

Just now my housekeeper surprised me at the kitchen window, examining, through a magnifying-glass, the corolla of a gillyflower.

These reflections occurred to me as I was looking for my cravat. But having rummaged in vain through a number of drawers, I resorted to my housekeeper. Thérèse came limpingly into the room.

"Monsieur," said she, "you should have told me that you were going out, and I would have given you your cravat."

"But, Thérèse," I replied, "would it not be better to have some place for it where I could find it without your help?"

Thérèse did not deign to reply. She no longer allows me to make arrangements about anything. I cannot have even a handkerchief without asking her for it; and as she is deaf and infirm, and what

is still worse, is losing her memory, I languish in a constant state of destitution. But she exercises her domestic authority with such a tranquil pride that I have not the courage to attempt a stroke of state-policy against the government of my wardrobe.

"My cravat! Thérèse, do you hear? My cravat! or if you drive me to distraction by further delay, I shall not need a cravat, but a rope with which to hang myself."

"You are in great haste, monsieur," replies Thérèse. "Your cravat is not lost. Nothing is lost here, for I look after everything. But at least give me time to find it."

"Behold," I think to myself, "behold the result of half a century of devotion. Ah! if by some happy chance this inexorable Thérèse had once, only once in her life, failed in her duty as a servant, if, for an instant, she had been at fault, she would not hold this despotic rule over me, or at least I should have dared to resist her. But how can one rebel against goodness? People without any weakness are dreadful. One has no hold upon them. Take Thérèse, for example: she has not a fault to which I can take exception. She doubts neither herself, nor God, nor the world. She is the strong woman, the wise virgin of the Scriptures; and if men do not know her, I do. In my mind's eye I see her, bearing in her hand a lamp, a humble household lamp, that shines beneath the joists of a rustic roof, and which will never go out while held by that meagre arm, as scraggy and as strong as a vine-shoot.

"Thérèse, my cravat! Do you not know, wretched woman, that to-day is the first Thursday in June, and that Mademoiselle Jeanne is expecting me? The mistress of the school will undoubtedly have had her floor highly waxed. I am sure that already one can see one's self in it; and it will be a distraction for me when I break my bones, which I certainly shall do before long, to see my sad face in it, as in a mirror. Then, taking as a model the good and excellent hero whose image is carved on my uncle Victor's cane, I shall try not to make too hideous a face. See the beautiful sunshine. The quays are gilded with it, and the Seine smiles in countless little sparkling wrinkles. The city is golden — a light golden dust-cloud, like a wealth of hair, floats over its beautiful contours. Thérèse, my cravat! Ah! I sympathize now with good master Chrysal, who used to lay his neckbands between the pages of a thick Plutarch. I will follow his example, and hereafter I will put all my cravats between the leaves of the *Acta Sanctorum*."

Thérèse in silence proceeded with her search, letting me talk. At last I heard a gentle ring at our door.

"Thérèse," said I, "some one is ringing. Give me my cravat, and go and open the door; or rather, go and open the door first, and then, by the help of Heaven, you may give me my cravat. But do not stand like that, I beg you, between my dressing-table and the door, like, if I dare to use such a simile, a hackney between two saddles."

Thérèse strode to the door as toward an enemy.

My good housekeeper is becoming very inhospitable as she grows old. A stranger is a suspicious character to her. According to her own account, this feeling comes from a long experience with men. I never had the time to consider if the same experience made by another experimenter would produce the same result. Maître Mouche was waiting for me in my library.

Maître Mouche is even yellower than I thought. He wears blue glasses, and his eyes keep shifting behind them like mice behind a screen.

Maître Mouche apologizes for troubling me at a time — he does not designate what time, but I think that he means to say at a time when I have no cravat on. But this, as you know, is not my fault. Maître Mouche, who knows nothing about it, does not seem at all offended. He simply fears that he has arrived at an inconvenient hour, but I partly reassure him. He says that, as the guardian of Mademoiselle Alexandre, he has come to speak to me. In the first place, he begs me to pay no attention to the restrictions which at first he had thought best to place upon the permission given us for seeing Mademoiselle Jeanne in school. Henceforth the establishment of Mademoiselle Préfère will be open to me every day between twelve o'clock and four. Knowing the interest I take in this young girl, he thinks it his duty to tell me something of the person to whose care he has intrusted his ward. Mademoiselle Préfère, whom he has known for years, has his entire confidence. According to his ideas she is an intelligent woman, of sound common-sense and fine manners.

"Mademoiselle Préfère," said he, "is a woman of principles, and that is a rare thing, monsieur, in these days. There has been a great change, and this age is not equal to those that have preceded it."

"Take my stairway, for example, monsieur," I replied. "Twenty-five years ago it used to let me climb it with perfect ease, and now it tires my legs and makes me out of breath to mount the very first steps. It has become spoiled. There are the papers, and the books too, that once I devoured in the moonlight without any difficulty; but to-day, in the brightest sunlight, they mock my interest, and show me nothing but white and black when I am without glasses. I have gout in my limbs. This, again, is one of the evils of the times."

"Not only that, monsieur," gravely replied Maître Mouche, "but the real evil of the present age is the fact that no one is satisfied with his position. There is an uneasiness, an unrest, a thirst for the comforts of life in every class of society, from the lowest to the highest."

"Heavens, monsieur!" I cried, "do you consider that this thirst for comfort is a sign of the times? Men have at no time had a desire for discomfort. They have always tried to better their condition. This constant effort has produced constant change. It still continues, that is all."

"Ah, monsieur," replied Maître Mouche, "it is easy to see that you live among your books, far from the world. You do not see, as I do, the conflicts of interest, the struggle for money. You find in the great and the small the same effervescence.

People give themselves up to unbridled speculation. What I see frightens me."

I was beginning to wonder if Maître Mouche had come to my house simply to tell me his virtuous misanthropy; but soon I heard more cheering words from him. Maître Mouche described Virginie Préfère to me as a woman worthy of respect, of esteem, and of sympathy; the soul of honor, capable of affection, educated, discreet, a good reader, modest and skilful in the art of applying blisters. I understood then that he had given me such a gloomy picture of universal corruption in order to bring out by contrast the virtues of the schoolmistress. I was told that the establishment of the rue Demours was well patronized, successful, and highly esteemed. In order to give emphasis to his statements, Maître Mouche waved his hand with its black woollen glove. Then he added, —

"In the practice of my profession I have come to know the world. A notary is somewhat of a confessor. I considered it my duty, monsieur, to tell you these facts, now that a happy chance has brought you into relationship with Mademoiselle Préfère. I have but one word to add. This lady, who is absolutely ignorant of my visit to you, spoke to me of you the other day in terms of the highest praise. I should only weaken them by repeating them to you; moreover, I could not tell them without, in a way, betraying the confidence of Mademoiselle Préfère."

"Do not betray it, monsieur," I replied, "do not betray it. To tell you the truth, I was quite unaware that Mademoiselle Préfère had the slightest

knowledge of me, However, since you have the advantage of such a long-standing friendship with her, I will profit by your good will towards me, and beg you to use your influence with your friend in favor of Mademoiselle Jeanne Alexandre. The child, for she is still such, is overtaxed with work. At once pupil and teacher, she has too much to do. More than this, she is punished in an absurdly childish manner; and hers is a generous nature, which by humiliation may be driven to revolt."

"Alas!" replied Maître Mouche, "she must be prepared for life. We are not in the world to enjoy ourselves, and to have our own way."

"We are in the world," I replied with some warmth, "to take pleasure in the good and the beautiful, and to follow our own way when it is noble, holy, and generous. An education which does not train the will is one that depraves the mind. The instructor must teach us how to will."

I imagined that Maître Mouche thought me a poor sort of fellow. He proceeded with great calmness and assurance, —

"Remember, monsieur, that the education of the poor should be made with great care, and with a view toward the state of dependence which they will hold in society. Possibly you are not aware that the late Nöel Alexandre died insolvent, and that his daughter is brought up almost by charity."

"Oh, monsieur!" I cried, "do not say that. To say it is to pay one's self back, and then it could no longer be true."

"The debts of the estate exceeded the assets,"

continued the notary; "but I have arranged with the creditors in favor of the minor."

He offered to explain in detail; but I declined to put him to that trouble, being incapable of comprehending business affairs in general, and those of Maître Mouche in particular. The notary began again to uphold Mademoiselle Préfère's system of education, and said to me in conclusion, —

"We do not learn by amusing ourselves."

"We learn only by amusing ourselves," I replied. "The art of teaching is but the art of rousing the interest of young minds in order to satisfy it later, and interest is alert and healthy only in happy minds. Knowledge, forced and crammed into the mind, chokes and suffocates it. In order that knowledge may be digested, it must be swallowed with relish. I know Jeanne. If this child were intrusted to my care, I would make of her not a student, for I wish her well, but a girl of quick intelligence and full of life, in whom everything beautiful in nature and art would evoke a sweet yet brilliant response. I would teach her to live in sympathy with the beautiful country, with the ideal scenes of poetry and history, with music that appeals to our noblest emotions. I would make lovable everything that I wanted her to love. I would give distinction even to needlework, by the selection of fabrics, the choice of embroideries, and the style of laces. She should have a beautiful dog and a pony, in order that she might know how to govern animals; she should have birds to care for, that she might learn the value of a drop of water and a crumb of bread. And in order to

give her still another pleasure, I should want her to find pleasure in being charitable.

"Then, since sorrow is inevitable, since life is full of grief, I would teach her that Christian wisdom which lifts us above every grief, and makes even sorrow beautiful. That is how I would direct a young girl's education."

"I bow before you," said Maître Mouche, clasping his hands in their black woollen gloves. Then he rose.

"You understand, of course," said I, as I went with him to the door, "that I do not pretend to impose on Mademoiselle Préfère my system of education, which is essentially a home-training, and entirely incompatible with the organization of the best schools. I merely beg you to ask her to give Jeanne less work and more play, to punish her only in case of necessity, and to allow her as much freedom of mind and body as confirms to the rule of the school."

Maître Mouche assured me, with a weak and mysterious smile, that my wishes would be taken in good part, and that they would have great weight.

He then made me a little bow and went away, leaving me in a state of worry and unrest. I have had to deal in my life with various kinds of people, but never with any like this notary or this school mistress.

July 6.

Maître Mouche kept me so long by his visit that I gave up going to see Jeanne that day. Professional duties detained me at home for the rest of the

week. Although I have reached the age when most men retire from active duties, I am still bound by a thousand ties to the life in which I have lived. I preside at meetings of academies, congresses, and societies. I am overwhelmed with honorary functions. I fill as many as seven of these in one government department. The offices would like to get rid of me, and I of them; but habit is stronger than they and I together. So, limpingly, I mount the stairways of the state buildings. After I pass, the old clerks will point me out to one another, wandering like a shadow through the halls. When one is very old, it becomes extremely difficult to disappear. However, it is time, as runs the song, to retire on my pension, and prepare for a peaceful end.

An old marchioness of a philosophic turn, a friend of Helvetius in her early days, — I used to see her at my father's in her old age, — received, during her last illness, a visit from her curate, who came to prepare her to die.

"Is it really necessary?" she asked him. "I see that every one succeeds perfectly the first time."

My father went to see her a short time after, and found her very ill.

"Good-evening, my dear friend," said she, as she pressed his hand; "I am going to see if God improves on acquaintance."

That is how the "beautiful friends" of the philosophers used to die. Their method is not vulgarly impertinent, and frivolous remarks such as theirs are not begotten in the heads of fools. But they shock me. Neither my hopes nor my fears are

compatible with such a mode of departure. For mine, I should want meditation; and therefore I must begin to think, in a year or two, about giving myself up to myself. Without this, I should risk — but hush! if He be passing, let Him not hear the sound of His name and turn back! I am still able to raise my burden alone.

I found Jeanne very happy. She told me that last Thursday after her guardian's visit, Mademoiselle Préfère had excused her from the rules of the school, and lightened many of her duties. Since that happy Thursday she could walk freely in the garden, where only flowers and leaves were lacking. She had even the facilities for modelling her unfortunate little Saint-George.

"I know very well that I owe all this to you," said she, smiling.

I spoke to her of other things, but I noticed that her attention wandered in spite of her.

"I see that something is on your mind," said I. "Tell me about it, or else we shall be talking to no purpose, and that would not be worth while for either of us."

She answered, —

"Oh, monsieur! I heard you perfectly; but it is true that I was thinking of something else. You will forgive me, will you not? I was thinking that Mademoiselle Préfère must be very fond of you to have grown so good to me all of a sudden."

She looked at me in a smiling, yet frightened way that made me laugh.

"So that surprises you, does it?" I asked.

"Yes, very much," she replied.

"Why? if you do not mind telling."

"Because I do not see any reason, not the least — but there! — no, not the least in the world, why you should please Mademoiselle Préfère."

"Do you think me so very disagreeable, Jeanne?"

She bit her lips as if to punish them for what they had said; then, opening her great soft eyes like those of a water-spaniel, she continued in a wheedling tone, —

"I know very well that I have made a blunder, but truly I do not see any reason why you should please Mademoiselle Préfère. And yet you do please her very, very much. She called me to her, and asked me all sorts of questions about you."

"Did she really?"

"Yes; she wanted to know about your home. Just imagine! she asked me how old your housekeeper was."

And Jeanne burst out laughing.

"Well," said I, "what do you think about it?"

For several moments her eyes were fixed on the worn-out cloth of her boots. She seemed lost in deep meditation. At last she raised her head.

"I am suspicious," said she. "It is very natural, is it not, that we should be anxious about what we do not understand. I know well enough that I am silly, but I hope you are not angry with me."

"No, indeed, Jeanne. I am not at all angry."

I confess that her surprise was beginning to affect me, and I kept revolving in my old head the girl's words, 'we are anxious about what we do not un-

derstand.' But with a fresh burst of laughter, she cried, —

"She asked me — guess! I will give you a hundred, I will give you a thousand guesses. Do you give it up? Well, she asked me if you liked good living."

"And how did you answer all this storm of questions, Jeanne?"

"I answered, 'I do not know, mademoiselle.' And then mademoiselle said, 'You are a little goose. The smallest details in the life of a great man should be noticed. You must know, mademoiselle, that Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard is one of the glories of France.'"

"Nonsense!" I cried. "And what do you think about it, mademoiselle?"

"I think that Mademoiselle Préfère was right. But I do not care — (what I am going to tell you is naughty!) — I do not care, I don't care at all whether Mademoiselle Préfère is right or not about anything."

"Well, then, be contented, Jeanne; Mademoiselle Préfère was not right."

"Yes, she was, yes, she was; she was perfectly right. But I wanted to love every one who loves you, without one exception, and I cannot do so; for it never would be possible for me to love Mademoiselle Préfère."

"Listen to me, Jeanne," I replied gravely. "Mademoiselle Préfère has become good to you, be good to her."

She answered in a hard tone, —

"It is very easy for Mademoiselle Préfère to be good to me, and it would be very hard for me to be good to her."

In a still more serious tone, I said, —

"My child, the authority of a teacher is sacred. Your schoolmistress takes the place of the mother whom you have lost."

Scarcely had I uttered this solemn nonsense ere I repented bitterly. The young girl's face grew white, her eyes filled.

"Oh, monsieur!" she cried, "how can you say such a thing? You did not know mamma."

Ah, just Heaven! but I had known her mother, and how could I have said such a thing? She kept saying over and over, —

"Mamma! my dear mamma, my poor mamma!"

Chance prevented my becoming a perfect fool. I do not know how it happened that I looked as if I were crying. At my age one does not cry! It must have been a bad cough that drew the tears to my eyes. It was a natural mistake. Jeanne made that mistake.

Oh, what a fine, what a radiant smile shone under her pretty wet lashes, like the sunlight among the branches after a summer rain! We took each other by the hand, and stood for a long time in happy silence. The heavenly strains that I had heard in my heart, at the grave to which a good woman had taken me, echoed again in my heart with infinite sweetness. The child whose hands I held heard them no doubt; and the poor old man and the innocent young girl, carried away from the world, saw for an instant the same spirit hovering over them.

"My child," said I at last, "I am very old, and many of the secrets of life which you will learn by degrees are already revealed to me. Believe me, the future is the outgrowth of the past. All that you do in order to live a good life here, without rebellion and bitterness, will help you to live some day in peace and joy in your home. Be gentle, and learn how to suffer. When one knows how to suffer, one suffers less. If some day you should have real cause for complaint, I shall be there to hear you. If any one offends you, Madame de Gabry and I shall be offended too."

"Is your health very good indeed, my dear monsieur?"

It was Mademoiselle Préfère. She had come in stealthily, and she smiled as she asked me the question. My first thought was to tell her to go to the devil; my second to remark that her mouth was about as well adapted for smiles as a saucepan for playing the violin with; my third was to return her courtesy, and say that I hoped she was well.

She sent the young girl to walk in the garden. Then, with one hand on her shawl, and the other raised toward the Honor List, she pointed to the name of Jeanne Alexandre written in round letters at the head of the list.

"I see with genuine pleasure," said I, "that you are pleased with this child's conduct. Nothing could delight me more, and I must attribute this happy result to your loving care. I have taken the liberty to have some books sent to you, which may interest and instruct the young ladies. After you have

glanced at them, you will readily see if you wish to give them to mademoiselle and her companions."

The schoolmistress's gratitude went so far as to become tearful, and still continued in words. In order to cut it short, I said, —

"What a beautiful day it is!"

"Yes," she replied; "and if it continues, these dear little girls will have fine weather for their outing."

"I suppose you mean their vacation. But Mademoiselle Alexandre, who is an orphan, cannot leave the school. What in the world will she do in this great empty house?"

"We will give her all the pleasure in our power. I will take her to the museums, and" —

She hesitated, blushed, and added, —

"And to your house, if I may."

"Why, of course!" I cried; "that is an excellent idea."

We parted very good friends. I, because I had obtained what I wanted. She, from no apparent reason; and that, according to Plato, places her in the highest circle of the hierarchy of souls.

And yet I have a presentiment of misfortune in bringing this woman into my house. I should like it if Jeanne were in some other hands than hers. Maître Mouche and Mademoiselle Préfère are beyond my comprehension. I never know why they say what they say, or why they do what they do. There is a mysterious depth to them that makes me feel uneasy. As Jeanne said just now, "We are anxious about what we do not understand."

Alas! at my age, we know too well how seldom life is free from evil; we know too well what we lose by dwelling in this world, and we have confidence only in youth.

August 16.

I was waiting for them. Indeed, I was impatiently waiting for them. I have been exerting all the talent I possess in the art of pleasing and coaxing, so as to wheedle Thérèse into welcoming them kindly; but my powers are limited.

They came. Jeanne was very smart looking indeed! She is not her mother, of course; but I noticed to-day, for the first time, that she has a pleasing face, which in this world is very advantageous to a woman. I thought that her hat was somewhat crooked; but she smiled, and the City of Books was illuminated.

I looked at Thérèse to see if her old-guardian sternness had relaxed at sight of the young girl. I saw her gazing at Jeanne with her dull eyes, her long face, her hollow mouth, and her pointed chin that looks like that of some powerful old fairy. But that was all.

Mademoiselle Préfère, dressed in blue, advanced, retreated, skipped, trotted, cried out, sighed, raised her eyes, lowered her eyes, stammered, she did not dare, she dared, again she did not dare, yet she dared again, courtesied — in short, it was like the manœuvres in a riding-school.

"Oh, what quantities of books!" she cried; "and you have read them all, Monsieur Bonnard?"

"Yes, unfortunately," I replied; "and that is why

I know nothing at all; for there is not one of these books that does not contradict some other, so that when you have read them all, you know not what to think. This is my case, madame."

At this point she called Jeanne to tell her how she felt about it. But Jeanne was looking out of the window.

"How beautiful it is!" she said to us. "I do so love to watch the river. It makes one think of all sorts of things."

Mademoiselle Préfère having removed her hat, and displayed a brow adorned with blond curls, my housekeeper pounced upon the hat with emphasis, saying that she did not like to have clothes lying about on the furniture. Then she asked Jeanne for her things, calling her *ma petite demoiselle* ("my little lady)." The little lady gave up her cloak and hat, exposing to view a graceful neck and a rounded figure, the lines of which stood out in beautiful relief against the strong light from the windows. I could have wished that she might be seen at that moment by some one else besides an antiquated housekeeper, a schoolmistress frizzed like a sheep, and an old fossil whose life had been given to archæology and books.

"So you are looking at the Seine," I said to her. "See how it sparkles in the sun."

"Yes," she said, as she leaned out with her elbow on the window-ledge; "it looks like a running flame. But see how cool it looks over there under the willows on the bank that it reflects. I like that little nook better than all the rest."

"Come," said I, "I see that the river charms you. What would you say if, with the consent of Mademoiselle Préfère, we were to make an excursion to Saint-Cloud by the steamboat that is sure to be below the Pont-Royal?"

Jeanne was delighted with the idea, and Mademoiselle Préfère was willing to make any sacrifice. But my housekeeper would not hear of our going in any such way She took me into the dining-room, where I followed her in fear and trembling.

"Monsieur," said she, when we were alone, "you never think of anything, and I have to think of everything. Fortunately I have a good memory."

I did not think it a seasonable moment to shatter this rash illusion. She continued, —

"The idea of your going away without telling me what the little lady likes. Girls at her age are stupid; they have no special tastes; they eat like birds. You are very hard to please, monsieur, but at least you know what is good. It is not so with these young things. They know nothing about cooking. They often think that the worst is the best; and the worst seems good to them, because their stomachs are not yet formed, so that one does not know what to do for them. Tell me, does the little lady like pigeons with sweet pease and vanilla cream?"

"My good Thérèse," I replied, "get whatever you think best, and it will be right. These ladies will be pleased with a simple dinner, such as we usually have."

Thérèse answered dryly, —

"Monsieur, I am speaking to you of the little lady. She must not leave the house without having had some good of it. As to the old frizzle-head, if my dinner does not suit her, she may suck her thumbs. What do I care about her?"

I returned with a quiet mind to the City of Books, where Mademoiselle Préfère was crocheting as calmly as if she had been at home. I almost believed she was. She occupied but a small space, it is true, in a corner by the window. But she had chosen her chair and her stool so well that they seemed made for her.

Jeanne, on the other hand, was gazing at the books and pictures with a look almost of sadness, which seemed to be bidding them an affectionate good-by.

"Here," said I, "amuse yourself in looking over this book, which cannot fail to please you, for it contains some beautiful engravings;" and I laid before her the collection of costumes by Vecellio. Not a cheap copy, I will beg you to observe, poorly reproduced by modern artists, but a magnificent and venerable copy of the *editio princeps*, which in beauty equals the noble women upon its yellow pages, made more beautiful by time.

Jeanne looked over the engravings with girlish interest, and turning to me, said, —

"We were speaking of an excursion, but you are taking me on a journey. I should like to go a long, long way!"

"Well, then, mademoiselle," said I, "you must arrange yourself comfortably for travelling. You are

sitting on the edge of your chair, and tipping it up on one leg, and Vecellio must be tiring your knees. Sit down comfortably, put your chair straight, and lay the book on the table.

She obeyed me with a laugh.

I watched her. At last she cried out, —

"Oh! come and see this lovely costume! (It was that of a doge's wife.) How splendid it is, and what magnificent ideas it gives one! I am going to tell you something — I adore pretty things."

"You must not express such thoughts, mademoiselle," said the schoolmistress, lifting her shapeless little nose from her work.

"And yet there is no harm in that," said I; "there are sumptuous minds that have an inborn love of sumptuousness."

The shapeless little nose sank down again immediately.

"Mademoiselle Préfère loves pretty things too," said Jeanne; "she cuts out paper transparencies for the lamps. That is an economical form of luxury, but it is luxury just the same."

Returning to Venice, we were making the acquaintance of a patrician lady clothed in an embroidered dalmatic, when I heard the door-bell. I supposed it was some *patronnet* with his basket, when the door of the City of Books opened, and — ah, Maître Sylvestre Bonnard, you were wishing a moment ago that other eyes than those that were faded and hidden behind spectacles might see your *protégée* in her beauty, your wishes are answered in a most unexpected manner. And as to the imprudent Theseus a voice calls out to you, —

"Beware, my Lord, beware lest pitiless Heaven
Hate you enough to hearken to your prayer.
Oft Heaven in wrath accepts our sacrifices,
Its gifts are oft chastisements for our crimes." [1]

The door of the City of Books opened, and a handsome young man appeared, shown in by Thérèse. That simple old soul knows no more than to open and close the door for people.

She understands nothing of the etiquette of the reception-room and the parlor. In her code of laws, there is nothing about announcing a caller or asking a person to wait. She shoulders people out on the landing of the stairs or hurls them at your head.

But there is the young man already inside, and I cannot hide him like a treasure in the adjoining room. I wait for him to explain his errand. This he does without embarrassment; but it seems to me that he has noticed the young girl, who is leaning over the table turning the pages of the Vecellio.

I look at him. If I am not greatly mistaken, I have seen him somewhere before. His name is Gélis, a name I have somewhere heard. Monsieur Gélis (since Gélis it is) is a nice-looking young fellow. He says that this is his third year in the École des Chartes, and that for the last fifteen or eighteen months he has been working on his graduating thesis, the subject of which is the condition of the Benedictine abbeys in 1700. He has just read my

[1] "*Craignez, Seigneur, craignez que le Ciel rigoureux*
Ne vous haïsse assez pour exaucer vos vœux !
Souvent dans sa colère il reçoit nos victimes,
Les présents sont souvent la peine de nos crimes."

works on the *Monasticon;* and he knows positively that he cannot finish his thesis without my advice, in the first place, and then, without a certain manuscript which I have in my possession, and which is no other than the register of the accounts of the abbey of Citaux from 1683 to 1704.

Having enlightened me on these points, he hands me a letter of introduction from one of the most distinguished of my colleagues.

Ah! at last I remember who he is. Monsieur Gélis is the very young man who a year ago, while we sat under the chestnut-trees, called me a fool; and as I open the letter of introduction, I think to myself, —

"Ha! ha! you unfortunate young man. You have no idea that I heard you, and that I know what you think of me, or at least what you thought of me then — for these young heads are so fickle! I have you now, my friend. You are in the lion's den; and you came so suddenly that the old lion is taken by surprise, and knows not what to do with his prey. But you, old lion, would you be an imbecile? If you are not one, you were one. You were a fool to listen to Monsieur Gélis at the foot of the statue of Marguerite de Valois; a double fool for hearing him; and a triple fool for not forgetting what it would have been better not to hear at all."

Having thus reprimanded the old lion, I exhorted him to be kind. He did not seem to be very reluctant in this, and soon became so gay that he had to suppress his feelings in order that they might not burst forth in a joyous roar.

From the way in which I read my colleague's letter, it might have been thought that I did not know my letters. It took me a long time, and Monsieur Gélis might have grown tired waiting; but he was watching Jeanne, and took his punishment patiently. Jeanne occasionally turned her head in our direction. One cannot keep perfectly still, can one? Mademoiselle Préfère patted her curls, her breast heaving with little sighs. I must say that many times I have been honored by these little sighs.

"Monsieur," said I, folding the letter, "I am happy to be of service to you. You are occupied with researches which have been of great interest to me. I have done what I could. I realize as you do, and even more than you do, how much there still remains to be done. The manuscript that you ask for is at your service. You may take it away if you wish; but it is not of the smallest size, and I fear"—

"Oh, monsieur!" said Gélis, "heavy books do not frighten me."

I begged the young man to wait for me; and I went into an adjoining closet for the register, which at first I failed to find, and which I even despaired of ever finding, as I saw by certain signs that Thérèse had been putting the closet in order. But the volume was so large and so heavy that Thérèse had been unable to hide it completely. I raised it with difficulty, and was delighted to find it as heavy as I could have wished.

"Now, my boy," said I to myself, with a smile which I meant to be very sarcastic, "now I am about to crush you. First this will be too much for

your arms, and then too much for your brain. This is Sylvestre Bonnard's first revenge. We shall see what next."

When I returned to the City of Books, I found Monsieur Gélis and Mademoiselle Jeanne talking together, if you please, as if they were the best of friends. Mademoiselle Préfère was preserving a discreet silence, but the other two were chattering like magpies. And about what? About Venetian red? Yes, exactly! About Venetien red! The little insinuating Gélis was telling Jeanne the secret of the dye with which, according to authentic accounts, the women of Titian and Veronese's times colored their hair. And Mademoiselle Jeanne was giving her opinion as to the *blond de miel* and the *blond d'or*. I guessed that this rascal of a Vecellio was in the conspiracy, that they had been bending over the book, and that together they had admired the late doge's wife, or some other patrician lady of Venice.

But never mind! I appeared with my huge old book, thinking that Gélis would make a face. It was a porter's burden, and my arms ached from it; but the young man took it as if it were a feather, and tucked it smilingly under his arm. Then he thanked me with few words, as I like to be thanked, reminded me that he had need of my advice, and having made an appointment for another meeting, he bowed to us with all the ease in the world, and left.

"Fine fellow, that," said I. Jeanne turned over some of the pages of Vecellio without speaking.

"Well! well!" I thought —

And we went to Saint-Cloud.

September-December.

The visits to the old man have been repeated with such regularity that I am deeply grateful to Mademoiselle Préfère. At last she has a corner set apart for her in the City of Books. She says now, "my chair," "my stool," "my pigeon-hole." Her pigeon-hole is a shelf from which she exiled the poets of La Champagne in order to make room for her work-bag. She is very amiable, and I must be a monster not to like her. I suffer her in the literal sense of the word. But what would one not suffer for Jeanne's sake? She gives to the City of Books a charm, the recollection of which is sweet to me long after she is gone. She is utterly ignorant, but so gifted that when I show her a beautiful thing it seems to me as if I had never before seen it, and that she is the one who is showing it to me. So far, I have found it impossible to make her follow my thoughts; but I have often taken pleasure in following the bright but erratic train of hers.

A more sensible man than myself would think of making her useful. But is not the faculty of being pleasant in itself useful in life? Without being pretty, she attracts, and to attract is perhaps of as much use as to darn stockings. Besides, I am not immortal, and in all probability she will not be very much older when my notary (who is not Maître Mouche) will read her a certain paper that I signed lately.

I do not want any one but myself to provide for her, and give her a dowry. I am not, indeed, very rich, and the paternal heritage has not increased in

my hands. One does not gather crowns by poring over old manuscripts. But my books, at the price paid to-day for this noble kind of merchandise, are worth something. On that shelf there are some poets of the sixteenth century that bankers would contend for with princes. And I think that these *Heures* of Simon Vostre would not pass unnoticed in the Hôtel Silvestre, any more than these *Preces piæ* collected for the use of Queen Claude. I have been careful to gather together and preserve all these rare and curious editions of which the City of Books is full, and for a long time I used to think that they were as necessary to my life as air and light. I have loved them well, and even to-day I cannot help smiling on them and caressing them. These morocco bindings are so pleasing to the eye, and these vellums so soft to the touch! There is not a single one of these books that, for some particular reason, is not worthy of the esteem of a good man. What other owner will know how to prize them as they deserve? If only I were sure that their next master would not leave them to go to rack and ruin, or mutilate them under the impulse of some ignorant whim. Into whose hands will fall this incomparable copy of the *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés*, on the margins of which the author himself, as Jacques Bouillard, wrote substantial notes with his own hand?

Maître Bonnard, you are an old booby! Your housekeeper, poor thing, is kept in bed to-day by a severe attack of rheumatism. Jeanne is coming with her chaperon; and, instead of thinking how

best to entertain them, you are dwelling on a thousand foolish thoughts. Sylvestre Bonnard, you will never accomplish anything, and I tell you so myself!

At this moment I see them from my window, getting out of the omnibus. Jeanne springs down like a kitten; but Mademoiselle Préfère intrusts herself to the strong arms of the conductor with the modesty of a Virginia saved from shipwreck, and resigned this time to letting herself be saved. Jeanne raises her head, sees me, and laughs; and Mademoiselle Préfère checks her as she is about to wave her parasol at me. There is a degree of civilization which Mademoiselle Jeanne will never reach. You may teach her, if you will, every art (I am not speaking especially to Mademoiselle Préfère now), but you will never teach her manners. Being agreeable, she makes the mistake of being so in her own way. Only an old scatterbrain like myself could forgive this. As to the young scatterbrains (some of them are still found), I do not know what they think about it; it is none of my business.

See her as she trips along the sidewalk, wrapped in her cloak, her hat tilted back, the feather blowing in the breeze like a brig adorned with flags. And truly she has the graceful, proud bearing of a fine sailing-vessel; so much so, that I recollect how one day when I was at Havre —

But must I tell you again, Bonnard, my friend, that your housekeeper is in bed, and that you must open the door yourself? Open it, Good Old Winter — Spring is ringing the bell!

It is Jeanne herself — Jeanne, rosy red. After a

moment or two, Mademoiselle Préfère reaches the landing breathless and scandalized.

I explained about my housekeeper, and suggested dining at the restaurant; but Thérèse, all-powerful still, on her bed of pain, decided that we must dine at home. Respectable people, in her opinion, do not dine at restaurants. Moreover, she had arranged for everything. The dinner was bought, and the janitress was to cook it.

Rash Jeanne wanted to go and see if the poor old sick woman did not need something. As you may suppose, she was sent quickly back to the drawing-room without ceremony, but with less roughness than I had reason to fear.

"If I need anything, which I don't, thank God," came the answer, "I will find some one less dainty than you. I need rest. This is a merchandise which you do not find sold at fairs under the sign of 'place a finger on your lips.' Go back and have a good time, and do not stay here, for fear old age may be contagious."

Jeanne told us what she said, and added that she greatly liked to hear old Thérèse talk, whereupon Mademoiselle Préfère reproached her for having such low taste.

I strove to excuse her by mentioning the example of Molière.

Then it happened that as she climbed up on my ladder to look for a book, Jeanne let a whole row fall. They made a loud crash; and Mademoiselle Préfère, in her affectation of sensitiveness, had a slight attack of hysterics. Jeanne quickly followed

the books to the foot of the ladder. She was the kitten changed to a woman, catching mice metamorphosed into old books. One of them attracted her; and she began to read, seated on her heels. It was *Prince Grenouille*, she said. Mademoiselle Préfère seized this opportunity to complain that Jeanne had so little liking for poetry. She could not be made to recite perfectly the *Death of Joan of Arc*, by Casimir Delavigne. It was all she could do to remember the *Petit Savoyard*. The schoolmistress did not approve of reading the *Prince Grenouille* before knowing by heart the stanzas by Duperrier. Carried away by her enthusiasm, she recited in a voice that was softer than the bleating of a sheep: —

"Ta douleur, Duperrier, sera donc éternelle,
Et les tristes discours
Que te met en l'esprit l'amitié paternelle
L'augmenteront toujours;

. . . . . .

Je sais de quels appas son enfance était pleine,
Et n'ai pas entrepris,
Injurieux ami de consoler ta peine
Avecque son mépris."

Then she went into raptures.

"Oh, how beautiful it is! What harmony! How is it possible not to admire such sweet, such touching verses. But why did Malherbe speak of this poor Monsieur Duperrier, who was already broken down from the loss of his daughter, as an *injurieux ami? Injurieux ami.* You must admit that the term is harsh."

I explained to the poetic creature that the *injurieux ami* which so greatly shocked her was an apposition, etc. What I told her seemed to clear her head to such a degree that she was seized with a great longing to sneeze. *Prince Grenouille*, meantime, must have been very funny; for Jeanne, from her seat on the floor, could scarcely keep from laughing aloud. When she had finished with the prince and princess of the story, and the innumerable children they never fail to have, she assumed a beseeching expression, and teased me to let her, as a favor, put on a white apron, and go into the kitchen to see about the dinner.

"Jeanne," I replied with the seriousness of a master, "I think that if it is a question of breaking the plates, notching the dishes, denting the saucepans, and staving in the kettles, the creature whom Thérèse has established in the kitchen is all-sufficient, for at this very moment I seem to hear disastrous sounds from there. However, Jeanne, I put you in charge of the dessert. Go and get a white apron. I will tie it around you myself."

I solemnly tied the linen apron around her waist; and she fled into the kitchen, where, as we discovered later, she proceeded to concoct preparations unknown to Vatel, unknown even to the great Carême, who began his treatise on fancy dishes as follows: "*The Fine Arts number five: Painting, Music, Poetry, Sculpture, and Architecture, the principal branch of which is Pastry.*"

I could not congratulate myself on this little arrangement; for Mademoiselle Préfère, now that

she was alone with me, began to behave in a very alarming manner. She gazed at me with eyes full of tears and strange lights, and heaved deep sighs.

"I am so sorry for you," said she. "A man like you, a man of such refinement as you are, to live alone with a coarse servant (for she is coarse, there is no denying that). What a hard life! You need rest, care, attention of every kind; you may be taken ill. And there is not a woman who would not consider it an honor to bear your name and share your existence. No, not one. My heart tells me so."

And she pressed both hands upon her heart, which, apparently, was in constant danger of escaping from her.

I was literally at my wits' end. I strove to show Mademoiselle Préfère that I had not the slightest intention of making a change in my mode of living at my advanced age, and that I was as happy as I could be with my disposition and circumstances.

"No!" cried she; "you are not happy. You need a soul close by you that is capable of understanding you. Rouse yourself from your torpor, and look about you. You have wide connections and delightful acquaintances. One cannot be a member of the Institute without mingling in society. See, think, compare. No sensible woman would refuse you. I am a woman, monsieur, and my instincts do not deceive me. There is something in my heart that tells me you would find happiness in marriage. Women are so devoted, so loving (not all, of course, but some). And then, they are

sensitive to glory. You know that at your age a man needs, like Œdipus, an Egeria. Your housekeeper is no longer strong. She is deaf; she is infirm. Suppose anything should happen to you in the night! The very thought of it makes me shudder!"

And she actually shuddered. She closed her eyes, clinched her fists, and stamped her foot. My dismay was unspeakable. With what terrifying ardor she continued, —

"Your health! Your dear health! The health of a member of the Institute! I would gladly give every drop of my blood to prolong the life of a scholar, a writer, a man of distinction. And a woman who would not be willing to do as much, I should despise. Monsieur, I once knew the wife of a great mathematician, a man who made long calculations in blank-books, and filled the closets of his house with the volumes. He had trouble with his heart, and was visibly wasting away. I saw his wife sitting quietly by his side. I could not help saying to her one day, 'My dear, you have no feeling. If I were in your place, I should do, I should do — I do not know what I should do!'"

She paused, exhausted. I was in a terrible position. It was out of the question to tell Mademoiselle Préfère all I thought of her suggestions, for if I made her angry I should lose Jeanne. Therefore I took it quietly. Besides, she was my guest. This thought helped me to be more courteous.

"I am very old, mademoiselle," said I; "and I fear that your advice comes a little too late. How-

ever, I will think of it. In the meantime, I beg you to be calm. A glass of *eau sucrée* would do you good."

To my great surprise, my words calmed her at once; and she returned quietly to her chair in her corner, near her pigeon-hole, her feet on her stool.

The dinner was completely spoiled. Mademoiselle Préfère, lost in her own thoughts, took no notice of it. I am usually very sensitive about such things; but this one was such fun for Jeanne, that after a while I, too, couldn't help enjoying it. I had never known before, even at my age, that there was anything funny in a chicken burned on one side and raw on the other; but Jeanne's merry laughter showed me that such was the case. This chicken was the cause of our making a thousand very witty remarks, all of which I have now forgotten, and I was delighted that it had not been properly cooked. Jeanne put it back again on the spit; then she took it and broiled it; then she stewed it in butter. And each time it came back to the table it was less palatable and more hilarious than before. When we ate it at last, it was a thing which had no name in any kitchen.

The almond cake was still more extraordinary. It was brought in in its pan, because it could not be got out of it. I asked Jeanne to serve it herself, thinking to embarrass her. But she broke the pan, and gave us each a piece. The idea would never enter any but the most innocent head that one at my age could eat such things. Mademoiselle Préfère, aroused from her musing, indignantly re-

pulsed the piece of earthenware covered with burnt sugar, and took the opportunity to inform me confidentially that she excelled in making candy.

"Oh!" cried Jeanne, in a tone of surprise not wholly devoid of mischief.

Then she wrapped all the pieces of the pan in a bit of paper, intending to take them to her young friends, and especially to the three Misses Mouton, who are naturally inclined to gormandizing.

Secretly I was very much troubled. It seemed to me almost impossible to remain long on good terms with Mademoiselle Préfère, whose matrimonial designs had burst forth with such fury. And that lady gone, good-by to Jeanne!

I took advantage of the moment when the gentle soul went for her cloak, to ask Jeanne exactly what her own age was. She was eighteen years and one month old. I counted on my fingers, and found that she would not be of age till the end of two years and eleven months. What should we do during all that time?

When she parted from me, Mademoiselle Préfère squeezed my hand with so much meaning that I trembled in every limb.

"Good-by," I said gravely to the young girl. "Listen to me, my dear; this friend of yours is old, and may fail you. Tell me that you will always be true to yourself, and I shall be easy. God bless you, my child!"

I closed the door, and opened my window to watch her go. But the night was dark, and I saw only dim shadows gliding across the black quay. A

great, dull hum rose about me, and my heart almost stopped beating.

Poor child!

December 15.

The King of Thule had a golden goblet which his mistress had left him as a souvenir. When he was almost dying, feeling that he had drunk from it for the last time, he flung the goblet into the sea. I am keeping this book of memories as the aged prince of the misty seas kept his golden goblet; and just as he threw his love-token into the waves, I will burn this book of memories. Not from any feeling of haughty avarice or selfish pride shall I destroy this record of a humble life; but I am afraid that the things which are dear and sacred to me may, because of their being inartistically expressed, seem ordinary and absurd to others.

I do not say this in view of what follows. Absurd I certainly was when, having been invited to dine at Mademoiselle Préfère's, I sat down in an easy-chair (it was indeed such) on the right of this alarming person. The table was set in a small drawing-room, and I saw from the poor condition of the table furniture that the schoolmistress was one of those ethereal beings that soar above the realities of earth. Broken plates, odd glasses, loose-handled knives, yellow forks — nothing was missing to take away the appetite of an honest man.

I was told that the dinner had been cooked for me — for me alone, though Maître Mouche was there also. Mademoiselle Préfère must have imagined that I had a Sarmatian's taste for butter; for

that which she offered me, made into little thin pats, was to the last degree rancid.

The roast put the finishing stroke to my disgust. But I had the pleasure of hearing Maître Mouche and Mademoiselle Préfère talk about virtue. I said the pleasure, I should have said the shame, for the sentiments they expressed are far too much for my worldly nature.

What they said showed me as clear as day that devotion was their daily bread, and that self-sacrifice was as necessary to them as air and water. Seeing that I was not eating, Mademoiselle Préfère tried in a thousand ways to overcome what she was good enough to term my discretion.

Jeanne was not of the company; because it was said, her presence, as an exceptional favor, would have been contrary to the rule of impartiality so necessary to maintain among so many young girls. I inwardly congratulated her on having escaped the Merovingian butter, the huge radishes, as empty as ballot-boxes, the tough roast, and the various other curiosities of cooking to which I had exposed myself for love of her.

The weary-looking servant served a liquid which for some occult reason they called a "cream," and then disappeared like a shadow.

Then, with great ecstasy, Mademoiselle Préfère related all that she had said to me in the City of Books, while my housekeeper was in bed. Her admiration for a member of the Institute, her fear that I might be ill and alone, the certainty she felt that an intelligent woman would be proud and happy to

share my lot — she made no concealment of any of it; on the contrary, she added new absurdities. Maître Mouche nodded approvingly as he cracked the nuts; then, after all this waste of words, he asked, with a pleasant smile, what I had answered.

Mademoiselle Préfère, placing one hand on her heart, and raising the other toward me, cried, —

"He is so affectionate, so superior, so good, and so great! He answered — but I could not — I, a simple woman, repeat the words of a member of the Institute. All I can do is to give you the substance of them. He answered, 'Yes; I understand you. Yes.'"

Having thus spoken, she seized one of my hands. Maître Mouche, greatly moved, rose and took the other.

"I congratulate you, monsieur," said he.

I have at times in my life known the meaning of fear, but never before had I experienced such a nauseating terror. I felt a sickening fright.

Disengaging my two hands, I rose, in order to give all possible dignity to my words.

"Madame," said I, "either I made a poor explanation at my house, or I have misunderstood you here. In either case, a positive explanation is necessary. Permit me, madame, to make it in plain words. No, I did not understand you. I am absolutely ignorant of the match you may have in view for me, if indeed you have planned any such. In any case I do not wish to marry. At my age it would be an unpardonable folly; and even now, at this late day, I cannot imagine how any sensible

woman like yourself could suggest such a thing to me. I have even every reason to think that I am mistaken, and that you suggested nothing of the kind. If this is the case, you will forgive an old man, who has become unfamiliar with the ways of society, and but little accustomed to the conversation of ladies, and who is heartbroken over his blunder."

Maître Mouche went quietly back to his chair, and, as the nuts were all cracked, began to whittle a cork.

Mademoiselle Préfère gazed at me for an instant out of her small round dry eyes with a peculiar expression, which I had never seen there before, and then resumed her usual grace and sweetness. In a voice like honey she exclaimed, —

"Oh, these scholars! these cloistered men! they are like children. Yes, Monsieur Bonnard, you are a veritable child!"

Then, turning to the notary, who sat in silence, his nose on his cork, she cried in a beseeching tone, —

"Oh, do not accuse him! Do not condemn him! Do not think ill of him! I beg you, do not. Must I beg you on my knees?"

Maître Mouche examined his cork on every side without vouchsafing any word.

I was furious; and, to judge from the heat in my head, my cheeks must have been crimson. This circumstance, I suppose, must be the explanation of the words which I heard through the buzzing in my ears: —

"Our poor friend frightens me. Monsieur Mouche,

be kind enough to open the window. Perhaps an arnica compress would be good for him."

I rushed into the street with an indescribable feeling of shame.

My poor Jeanne!

December 20.

A week passed without my hearing a word from the Préfère Institute. Not being able to wait longer without news of Clémentine's daughter, and thinking, too, that I owed it to myself not to give up going to the place, I set out on the road to les Ternes. The parlor seemed colder, damper, more inhospitable, more hateful, and the servant more scared and more silent than ever. I asked for Jeanne; but after the lapse of some time Mademoiselle Préfère herself appeared, stern and pale, with drawn lips and cruel eyes.

"Monsieur," said she, folding her arms under her *pélerine*, "I deeply regret my inability to allow you to see Mademoiselle Alexandre to-day, but it is impossible."

"And why so?" I asked in astonishment.

"Monsieur," she replied, "the reasons that compel me to have your calls here made less frequently are of a peculiarly delicate nature, and I beg you to spare me the embarrassment of mentioning them."

"Madame," I replied, "I am authorized by Jeanne's guardian to see his ward every day. What reason can you have for opposing the wish of Monsieur Mouche?"

"Mademoiselle Alexandre's guardian" (she dwelt on the word guardian as on a firm support) "is as

anxious as I am to have your assiduities come to an end."

"If this is the case, be kind enough to give me his reasons as well as yours."

She gazed at the little paper spiral, and replied with stern calmness, —

"You really wish this? Although such an explanation is hard for a woman to make, I yield to your demand. This house, monsieur, is a respectable house. I have my responsibility. I must watch like a mother over each of my pupils. Your attentions to Mademoiselle Alexandre cannot continue without harming this young girl. My duty is to see that they are stopped."

"I fail to understand you," I said; and it was the truth. She replied slowly, —

"Your constant visits to this house are interpreted by people, even by the most respectable and the least suspicious, in such a way that I am obliged in the interest of my school, as well as in the interest of Mademoiselle Alexandre, to stop them as soon as possible."

"Madame," I cried, "I have heard a great many foolish things in my life, but never one that can compare to what you have just said!"

She replied simply, —

"Your insults do not affect me in the least. A woman is very strong in the performance of a duty."

And she pressed her *pélerine* against her heart, this time not to restrain, but probably to caress, that generous heart.

"Madame," said I with uplifted finger, "you

have roused the indignation of an old man. Act in future in such a way that the old man may forget you, and add no new misdeeds to those I already have witnessed. I warn you, that I shall not keep from watching over Mademoiselle Jeanne Alexandre. If in any way whatsoever you harm her, it will go hard with you!"

As I grew angrier she became more calm, and she put on a fine air of indifference as she replied, —

"Monsieur, I am too well acquainted with the nature of the interest you take in this young girl, not to do all in my power to withdraw her from the surveillance with which you threaten me. Seeing the more than equivocal intimacy in which you live with your housekeeper, I should have prevented you from ever coming into contact with an innocent young girl. I shall do so in the future. If hitherto I have been too unsuspicious, not you, but Mademoiselle Alexandre, can reproach me. But she is too artless, too pure, thanks to me, to suspect the nature of the danger to which you have exposed her. You will not compel me, I presume, to enlighten her in regard to it."

"Well," said I to myself, shrugging my shoulders, "you have had to live until now, my poor Bonnard, to know exactly what a bad woman is. At present your knowledge is complete in this line."

I went out without a word; and I had the pleasure of seeing, from the quick blush on the schoolmistress's face, that she was more affected by my silence than she had been by my words. I crossed the

court, looking right and left for Jeanne. She was on the watch for me, and came running to me.

"If a hair of your head is touched, Jeanne, write me. Good-by."

"No! not good-by!"

I answered, "No, no! not good-by. Write to me."

I went straight to Madame de Gabry's.

"Madame is in Rome with monsieur. Did you not know, monsieur?"

"Ah, yes," I replied; "madame wrote me about it." So in truth she had done. I must have lost my head to forget it. This was probably what the servant thought; for he looked at me as much as to say, "Monsieur Bonnard is in his dotage," and he leaned over the railing of the stairs to see if I did not do something peculiar. But I walked down as usual, and he withdrew disappointed.

On my return, I was told that Monsieur Gélis was in the drawing-room. This young man is constantly at my house. His judgment is sometimes faulty, but his mind is above the ordinary. This time his call brought nothing but embarrassment on me. "Alas!" I thought, "I shall certainly say something foolish to my young friend; and he, too, will think I am breaking down. And yet I cannot explain to him that I have been sought in marriage, and condemned as an immoral man; that Thérèse is under suspicion, and that Jeanne is in the power of the most wicked woman on earth. I am in a fine state of mind to discuss Cistercian abbeys with a young and over-critical scholar. But come, let us go in.

Thérèse stopped me, however.

"How red your face is, monsieur!" she said in a tone of reproach.

"It is the spring," I answered.

"The spring in the month of December!" she cried.

True, it is the month of December! Ah! how my head feels! What a strong support am I to poor Jeanne!

"Thérèse, take my cane, and put it, if you possibly can, where it can be found. Good-afternoon, Monsieur Gélis. How are you?"

No date.

The following day the poor old fellow started to rise, but the poor old fellow was unable to do so. Cruel was the unseen hand that laid him low upon his bed. The poor old fellow, pinned down as he was, resigned himself to the inevitable, but his thoughts were not idle.

He must have had a high fever; for Mademoiselle Préfère, the abbots of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and Madame de Gabry's servant appeared to him under fantastic forms, especially the servant, who leaned over him, grinning like a gargoyle on a cathedral. I had an idea that there were a great many people, too many, in my room.

This room is furnished in olden style. On the wall hang the portrait of my father in full-dress uniform, and that of my mother in a cachemire robe. The wall-paper has a design of green leaves and flowers. I realize this. I even realize that it is all very much faded, but an old man's room does not

need to be daintily pretty. It is enough if it is clean, and Thérèse sees to that. Then, furthermore, it is sufficiently decorated to please my fancy, which is a trifle childish and prosaic. On the walls and the furniture there are figures which ordinarily speak to me and enliven me. But why are all these things angry at me to-day? They seem discordant; they grin at me; they threaten me. The statuette, copied from one of the cardinal Virtues at Notre-Dame de Brou, unaffected and graceful as it usually appears, is now making contortions, and putting out its tongue at me. And that beautiful miniature, which represents one of Jehan Fouquet's most gracious disciples, girt with the cord of the sons of Francis, offering, on bended knee, his book to the good Duke of Angoulême — who has removed it from its frame, and substituted a great cat's head, glaring at me with phosphorescent eyes? The designs on the wall-paper have become heads too, green and shapeless. No, they are not; they are to-day what they were twenty years ago, — nothing but stamped leaves and flowers. No, I was right, they are heads — heads with eyes, noses, and mouths! Heads! I understand; they are heads and flowers at the same time. I wish I did not see them at all.

There, on my right, the graceful miniature of the Franciscan friar has returned; but it seems to me that I retain it by a superhuman effort of my will, and that if I relax my effort the wretched cat's head will come back. I am not delirious. I see Thérèse perfectly at the foot of my bed. I hear her speaking to me, and I should answer with perfect clear-

ness if I were not busy keeping everything about me in its natural form.

Here comes the doctor. I did not send for him, but I am glad to see him. He is an old neighbor, to whom I have been of little profit, but whom I like exceedingly. Although I do not say much to him, I am at least perfectly conscious, even strangely crafty; for I notice his gestures, his looks, the smallest wrinkles on his face. But he is shrewd, and I do not really know what he thinks of me. The mighty thought of Goethe comes to my mind, and I say, —

"Doctor, this old man has consented to grow ill, but he will allow nature no further concessions this time."

Neither the doctor nor Thérèse smiles at my jest. They cannot have understood it.

The doctor takes his leave, daylight fades, and all sorts of shadows form and break, like clouds, among the folds of my curtains. They pass in crowds before me, and through them I see the impassive face of my faithful servant. All at once a cry, a sharp cry of distress, falls upon my ear. Is it you, Jeanne, calling to me?

Night has come. The shadows cluster about my bed, to remain by me through the long night.

At daybreak I feel a peace, a wonderful peace, about me.

Art thou opening thine arms to me, O Lord, my God?

February, 186–.

The doctor is perfectly jovial. It seems that I am doing him great honor by recovering. Numberless

ills, I understand, have been poured out over my old body.

These ills, which are the bane of man, have names which are the bane of the philologist. They are hybrid names, half Greek, half Latin, ending in *itis*, indicating the inflammatory state, and in *algia*, expressing pain. The doctor uses them with a number of adjectives ending in *ic*, which serve to characterize their detestable qualities — in short, a good half of the complete copy of the medical dictionary contained in the too authentic box of Pandora.

"Doctor, that story of Pandora is a good one. If I were a poet, I would put it into French verse. Shake hands, doctor. You have brought me back to life. I forgive you. You have restored me to my friends, and I thank you. I am all sound, you say. No doubt, no doubt; but I have endured a great deal. I am an old piece of furniture, quite like my father's armchair. It was an armchair which that honest man inherited, and in which he sat from morning to night. Twenty times a day, when I was a little boy, I used to perch on the arm of that old chair. So long as it was in good condition, no one paid any attention to it; but the moment it began to limp with one leg, we said what a good chair it was. After a while, three of its legs went lame, the fourth squeaked, and both of its arms were half gone. Then we exclaimed, 'What a strong armchair!' We wondered how, being without a sound arm or a firm leg, it could still look like an armchair, retain an upright position, and be of use. But the horsehair came out of its body, and it gave up the ghost.

And when Cyprien, our servant, cut off its legs for fire-wood the shouts of admiration increased. 'The fine, the wonderful old armchair! It was used by Pierre-Sylvestre Bonnard, dry-goods merchant, by his son Epiménide Bonnard, and by Jean-Baptiste Bonnard, chief of the third maritime division and a Pyrrhonic philosopher. What a strong and venerable armchair!' In reality it was a dead armchair. Well, doctor, such an armchair am I. You think me sound because I have resisted attacks which would have killed many, but which killed me only three-quarters. Many thanks. Nevertheless, I am an irrevocably damaged article."

The doctor strives, by the help of long Greek and Latin terms, to prove that I am still hale and hearty; but French is too simple a language for an explanation of that kind. However, I admit what he says, and escort him to my door.

"Good!" says Thérèse. "That is the way to put out a doctor. If you will only repeat it two or three times, he will not return, and that would be a good thing."

"Well, Thérèse, now that I am a strong man again, do not detain my letters any longer. There is a good pile of them, no doubt, and it would be wicked to keep me longer from reading them."

Thérèse, after some delay, gave them to me. But what did it matter? I looked at every envelope, and not one was written by the little hand that I longed to see here, turning over the pages of Vecellio. I tossed aside the whole pile, for they no longer appealed to me.

April-June.

The discussion has been a warm one.

"Wait, monsieur, until I put on some suitable things," said Thérèse, "and I will walk out again with you. I will take your folding-chair as I have done for the past few days, and we will go and sit in the sunshine."

The truth is, Thérèse thinks that I am infirm. I have been ill, no doubt, but there is an end to all things. Madame Illness departed long since; and three months ago her pale and gentle-faced handmaid, Dame Convalescence, politely bade me good-by. Were I to listen to my housekeeper, I should be "Monsieur Argant," and I should wear a night-cap trimmed with ribbons for the rest of my days. Anything but that! I intend to go out by myself. Thérèse will not hear to it. She brings my folding-chair, and follows me.

"Thérèse, to-morrow we will take our seat by the wall of *la petite* Provence if you like, but to-day I have important business to attend to."

Business! She thinks I refer to money matters, and explains that there is nothing important to be decided.

"So much the better! But there is other business besides that in the world."

I tease, I scold, I escape.

The day is fair. By means of a hack, and by the help of God, I shall accomplish my adventurous design.

Here is the wall, bearing in blue letters the words: PENSIONNAT DE DEMOISELLES, TENU PAR MA–

DEMOISELLE VIRGINIE PRÉFÈRE. Here is the iron gate which would give entrance into the court of honor if it ever were opened. But the lock is rusty; and between the bars, sheet-iron has been placed, as a protection against indiscreet eyes that might be turned upon the young souls, whom, no doubt, Mademoiselle Préfère instructs in modesty, sincerity, justice, and disinterestedness. Here, indicating the domestic part of the establishment, is a barred window, with painted panes, like a sightless eye, the sole opening to the outside world.

The narrow door by which I have entered so often, and which henceforth is closed to me, is the same as it was, with its barred grating. The stone steps leading to it are worn; and though the eyes behind my glasses are none too good, I can distinguish little white scratches made on the stone by the nails in the scholars' heels as they pass in and out. Cannot I also enter? It seems to me that Jeanne must be suffering in this gloomy house, and that she is secretly calling me. I cannot go away. I am filled with anxiety. I ring the bell; the frightened servant-girl answers it, looking more frightened than ever. The order has been given. I cannot see Mademoiselle Jeanne. I at least ask how she is. The servant, having glanced to the right and left, replies that she is well, and shuts the door in my face. Once more I am in the street.

And since then how often have I wandered beneath that wall, before that little door, ashamed, and in despair at being weaker than the poor girl who has no other protection on earth but mine!

June 10.

I overcame my repugnance, and went to see Maître Mouche. I noticed at first glance that his office was dustier and mustier than it was a year ago. The notary appeared with his angular gestures and his restless eyes behind their glasses. I made my complaint to him. He replied — but of what use is it to note down in a diary that will be burned my reminiscences of a downright scoundrel. He approves of all that is done by Mademoiselle Préfère, whose mind and character he has for many years held in high appreciation. It is not for him to give an opinion on the subject under discussion; but on the face of it, he must say that appearances are against me. That concerns me but little. He adds — and this concerns me more — that the paltry sum which he had in his hands for his ward's education is exhausted, and that under these circumstances he cannot but admire the disinterestedness of Mademoiselle Préfère, who has consented to keep Mademoiselle Jeanne with her.

A brilliant flood of sunshine, the light of a fair day, pours its incorruptible waves into this sordid den and illuminates this man. Without, it spreads its glory over all the poverty and wretchedness of a thickly populated district.

How sweet is this light with which my eyes have so long been filled, and which in a short time I shall no longer enjoy!

I go away, and in a dreamy state of mind, with my hands behind my back, wander along the fortifications, and find myself, to my surprise, in one of the

out-of-the-way faubourgs where mean little gardens abound. By the dusty roadside I come upon a plant, the flower of which, at once bright and sombre, seems made to be associated with the noblest and the purest grief. It is the columbine. Our fathers called it *Le gant de Notre-Dame*. Only a Notre-Dame who should make herself very small, so as to be seen by children, could slip her dainty fingers into the tiny capsules of this flower.

Here comes a big bumblebee, diving into it with brutal energy; but his mouth cannot reach the nectar, and the glutton strives in vain. At last he gives up, and comes out all smeared with pollen. He resumes his heavy flight; but there are few flowers in this faubourg, blackened by the soot of factories. He comes flying back to the columbine; and this time he pierces the corolla, and drinks the nectar through the opening he has made. I would not have believed that a bumblebee would have so much sense. It is wonderful!

The more I observe insects and flowers, the more they surprise me. I am like the good Rollin, who found such intense delight in the flowers of his peach-trees. I should like to own a beautiful garden, and live on the edge of a wood.

August–September.

One Sunday morning the idea came into my mind to watch the pupils of Mademoiselle Préfère's school as they went to mass in the parish church. I saw them pass two by two, the smaller ones leading, with serious faces. Three of them were plump,

short, important-looking girls, dressed exactly alike. These I recognized as the Misses Mouton. Their elder sister is the artist who drew the terrible head of Tatius, King of the Sabines. A little aloof from the line, the under-teacher, with her prayer-book in her hand, was fussing about and scowling darkly. The middle class, and then the big girls, passed along whispering. But I did not see Jeanne.

I asked at the department of education if there was not among the records something about the school in the rue Demours. I succeeded in having some female inspectors sent there. They returned, bringing the best accounts. In their opinion the Préfère school was a model institution. If I instigated any investigation, Mademoiselle Préfère would surely receive scholastic honors!

October 3.

This Thursday being a holiday, I met the three little Misses Mouton near the rue Demours. I bowed to their mother, and asked the eldest, who might have been ten years old, how her friend Mademoiselle Jeanne Alexandre was. Little Mademoiselle Mouton replied without an instant's hesitation, —

"Jeanne Alexandre is not my friend. She is a charity pupil in the school, and so she is made to sweep the class-rooms. Mademoiselle said so. And Jeanne Alexandre is wicked too, and she is shut up in a dark room, and it serves her right. I am good. They do not shut me up in a dark room."

The three little ladies resumed their walk, followed

closely by Madame Mouton, who gave me a look of distrust over her broad shoulder.

Alas! I am forced to resort to questionable expedients. Madame de Gabry will not return to Paris for three months at the earliest. Away from her I have neither tact nor sense. I am but a clumsy, awkward, and deleterious machine.

Nevertheless, Jeanne must not be a servant in a boarding-school!

December 28.

The thought of Jeanne sweeping the class-rooms had become perfectly intolerable to me.

The weather was cold and gloomy. Night was already beginning to fall. I rang at the little door with the calmness of a man whose mind was made up. As soon as the frightened servant appeared, I slipped a gold piece into her hand, and promised her another if she succeeded in letting me see Mademoiselle Alexandre. She answered,—

"In an hour, at the grated window."

And she slammed the door in my face so violently that it knocked my hat into the gutter.

I waited a long hour in the midst of a whirling snow-storm; then I approached the window. Nothing! The wind howled, and the snow fell thickly. The workmen as they passed by with their utensils on their shoulders, their heads bent beneath the thick falling snowflakes, brushed roughly against me. Nothing! I feared that I should be observed. I knew that I had done wrong in bribing a servant, but I did not regret it. Evil to him who is not able to overstep the social laws if need be! A quarter

of an hour passed. Nothing! At last the window was partly opened.

"Is that you, Monsieur Bonnard?"

"Is that you, Jeanne? Tell me in a word how are you getting along?"

"I am doing well, very well."

"But tell me more!"

"I have been put into the kitchen, and they make me sweep the rooms."

"Into the kitchen! And you do the sweeping! Goodness!"

"Yes; because my guardian no longer pays for my schooling."

"Goodness! It seems to me your guardian is a scoundrel."

"Ah, you know then —"

"What?"

"Oh, do not make me say it. But I would rather die than be alone with him."

"Why have you not written to me?"

"I have been watched."

At that moment my resolution was taken, and no power could have made me alter it. The thought came to me that I might not be acting according to law, but what did I care for that? Being determined, I was prudent. I acted with remarkable calmness.

"Jeanne," I asked, "does the room in which you are connect with the court?"

"Yes."

"Can you open the street door yourself?"

"Yes; unless some one is in the lodge."

"Go and try, and be sure not to let any one see you."

I waited, watching both door and window. At the end of five or six seconds Jeanne reappeared behind the grating.

"The *bonne* is in the lodge," said she.

"Good," said I. "Have you a pen and ink?"

"No."

"A pencil, then?"

"Yes."

"Hand it to me."

I took from my pocket an old newspaper; and between the gusts of wind, which almost blew out the street-lights, and under the falling snow which blinded me, I put a paper band about the newspaper, and addressed it as well as I could to Mademoiselle Préfère.

While I was writing, I said to Jeanne, —

"When the postman comes along, he puts the letters and papers in the box, does he not, rings the bell, and goes on? The *bonne* opens the box, and immediately carries the mail to Mademoiselle Préfère, does she not? That is what takes place, is it not, every time the mail comes?"

Jeanne thought it was.

"Well, we shall see. Jeanne, keep watch, and as soon as the *bonne* has left the lodge, pull the rope and come out."

So saying, I slipped the paper into the box, gave the bell a vigorous pull, and hid in the shelter of an adjoining doorway.

I had been there a few moments, when the small

door moved, and opened part way; then a young girl thrust her head out. I took hold of her, and drew her towards me.

"Come, Jeanne, come."

She looked at me with uncertainty. She certainly thought I had gone mad. On the contrary, I was to the last degree rational.

"Come, come, my child."

"Where?"

"To Madame de Gabry's."

Then she took my arm. We ran for some distance as if we were thieves. But running is not an exercise suited for a man of my size; and half-suffocated, I paused, and leaned on something which proved to be the stove of a chestnut-dealer, at the corner of a wine-shop where several cab-drivers were drinking. One of them asked if we did not want a carriage. Of course we did! The man of the whip set his glass down on the bar, mounted the box, and urged his horse forward. We were saved!

"Whew!" I cried, mopping my brow; for in spite of the cold, I was all of a perspiration.

Strange as it may seem, Jeanne apparently realized the enormity of what we had done more than I did. She was very serious and visibly nervous.

"In the kitchen!" I cried indignantly.

She nodded her head, as if to say, "What does it matter whether I am there or anywhere else!"

And in the light of the lamps I noticed with sorrow that her cheeks were thin, and her features drawn. I missed the vivacity, the spontaneity, the quick change of expression, which had been her

great charm for me. Her eyes were dull, her gestures lifeless, her whole bearing dejected. I took her hand. It was calloused, rough, and clammy. The poor child must have suffered indeed. I questioned her. She calmly told me that one day Mademoiselle Préfère had summoned her, and for some unfathomable reason had called her a monster and a little viper.

"She said, moreover, 'You shall not see Monsieur Bonnard again. He has been giving you bad advice, and has treated me shamefully.' I said to her, 'That, mademoiselle, I will never believe.' Mademoiselle gave me a box on the ear, and sent me back to the schoolroom. The announcement that I was not to see you any more was like night falling about me. You know how blue and sad you sometimes feel at evening, when the darkness settles down upon you. Well! imagine that feeling extending into weeks and months. Do you remember my little Saint-George? Until then I had worked at it to the best of my ability for the mere fun of the thing; but after I had given up all hope of ever seeing you again, I went to work at my wax figure in a very different way. I no longer used the ends of matches to model with, as before, but hairpins. I even used invisible hairpins. But perhaps you do not know what these are. I worked with more delicacy than you can imagine. I put a dragon on the Saint-George's helmet, and spent hour after hour in modelling a head, eyes, and a tail for him. Especially the eyes. I never stopped till I had given him red eyes, white eyelids, eyelashes — everything. I am foolish.

Then she took my arm.

I had an idea that when my little Saint-George was finished I should die. I worked at it during vacations, and Mademoiselle Préfère let me alone. One day I heard that you were in the parlor with mademoiselle. I was on the watch for you; we said '*Au revoir*' to each other, and I was somewhat consoled. But one Thursday, a short time after that, my guardian wanted me to go out with him. I refused to go to his house. But do not ask me why, monsieur. He replied very gently that I was a whimsical little thing, and left me in peace. But the following day Mademoiselle Préfère came to me with such an evil look on her face that I was frightened. She held a letter in her hand. 'Mademoiselle,' said she, 'your guardian tells me that he has spent all the money that belongs to you; but you need have no fear, I will not desert you. But you will admit that it is right for you to earn your own living.'

"Then she set me to work cleaning her house; and when I made any mistake, she shut me up for days in a garret. That is what has occurred since we last met, monsieur. Even if I could have written to you, I am not sure that I should have done so, because I did not think it possible for you to take me out of the school; and as Maître Mouche did not come to see me again, there was no haste about anything. I could wait in the garret and in the kitchen."

"Jeanne," I cried, "if we have to flee to Oceanica, this abominable Préfère shall never again take you. I swear it. And why should we not go to Oceanica? The climate is mild, and I read in a newspaper the

other day that there were pianos there. Meanwhile, we will go to Madame de Gabry, who, fortunately, came back to Paris three or four days ago. We are like two children, and we are in great need of aid."

While I spoke, Jeanne's face grew pale and lifeless. A shadow fell before her eyes, a movement of pain contracted her half-open lips, and her head sank down on her shoulder. She had fainted.

I raised her in my arms, and carried her up Madame de Gabry's steps as though she were a child, asleep. When she regained consciousness, I myself, overcome with fatigue and emotion, was on the point of giving way.

"Ah, so it is you!" said she; "I am so glad!" In this state, we rang at the door of our friend's home.

The same day.

It was eight o'clock. Madame de Gabry, you may well believe, was greatly surprised when she saw us. But she welcomed the old man and the child with that kindness which was manifested in her sweet manner. It seems, if I may use the devotional language natural to her, it seems as if some celestial grace flows from her hands every time she opens them; and even the perfume she wafts as she passes, suggests the sweet, calm intoxication of charity and good works.

Surprised she was, certainly; but she did not ask a single question, and this reticence seemed to me most commendable.

"Madame," said I, "we have both of us come to you for protection. And first of all, we beg for

something to eat, especially for Jeanne, for she fainted a moment ago in the cab from sheer exhaustion. For myself, I could touch nothing at this late hour without suffering a night of agony. I trust that Monsieur de Gabry is well."

"He is here," she replied; and she called him.

"Paul! come and see Monsieur Bonnard and Mademoiselle Alexandre."

He came. I was glad to see his pleasant, honest face, and to grasp his firm, square hand. All four of us went into the dining-room; and while they set before Jeanne some cold meat, which she did not touch, I told our story. Paul de Gabry asked if he might smoke his pipe, then listened to me in silence. When I had finished, he scratched the short, thick beard which covered his cheeks, and uttered an emphatic *sacrebleu!* But seeing that Jeanne turned a pair of wide-opened, frightened eyes first on him and then on me, he added, —

"We will speak of this to-morrow morning. Come into my library, I want to show you an old book, and ask your opinion about it."

I followed him into his library where, against a dark background, carbines and hunting-knives glimmered in the lamplight. Pulling me down on a leather sofa, he cried, —

"What have you done! Good God, what have you done! Carrying off a minor! abduction! kidnapping! You have got into a pretty mess! You are simply liable to five or ten years' imprisonment."

"Mercy!" I cried; "ten years' imprisonment for having saved an innocent girl!"

"That is the law," replied Monsieur de Gabry. "I am well acquainted with it, my dear Monsieur Bonnard, not because I have studied law, but because, as mayor of Lusance, I had to read up in it in order to enlighten my subordinates. Mouche is a rascal, Préfère a vile wretch, and you a — I can find no word strong enough."

He opened his bookcase, which was filled with dog-collars, horsewhips, stirrups, spurs, cigar-boxes, and a few books of reference, and taking down a law-book, turned over its leaves.

"'*Crimes and Misdemeanors . . . Sequestration of Persons*' . . . that is not your case. '*Abduction of Minors*' . . . here we are. '*Article 354. Whosoever, by fraud or by violence, shall have abducted or caused to be abducted any minors, or shall have enticed, conveyed, or removed them, or shall have caused them to be enticed, conveyed, or removed from the places in which they were put by those to whose authority or direction they were consigned or intrusted, shall be liable to imprisonment. See* PENAL CODE, *21 and 28.*

"'*21. The term of imprisonment shall not be less than five years. 28. Sentence to imprisonment shall involve the loss of civil rights.*' That is very clear, is it not, Monsieur Bonnard?"

"Perfectly clear."

"Let us continue: '*Article 356. If the abductor be under the age of twenty-one years, he shall be punished only.*' . . . We certainly cannot invoke that article. '*Article 357. In case the abductor shall have married the girl whom he has abducted, he*

can be prosecuted only on the complaint of the persons who, according to the Civil Code, have the right to demand that the marriage be declared null and void, nor can he be condemned until after the marriage shall have been declared null and void.'

"I do not know whether it is your idea to marry Mademoiselle Alexandre or not. You see that the law is kind, and that it offers you this loophole. But it is wrong of me to jest, for your position is serious. How could a man like you have imagined that any one in Paris, in the nineteenth century, could carry away a young girl with impunity? We are not living in the Middle Ages; abduction is no longer allowed."

"Do not imagine," said I, "that abduction was allowed under the ancient laws. In Baluze you will find a decree issued by King Childebert at Cologne, in 593 or 594, on this question. Besides, who does not know that the famous ordinance of Blois, in May 1579, formally enacted that death should be the penalty for those who were found guilty of abducting a boy or a girl under twenty-five years of age, whether under promise of marriage or otherwise, without the full knowledge, will, or express consent of father, mother, or guardians? And the ordinance adds, '*And likewise all those shall suffer condign punishment who shall have been in any way implicated in said abduction, and who shall have given counsel, help, or aid in any manner whatsoever.*' Those are the exact, or almost the exact, terms of the ordinance. As to the article of the Napoleonic Code to which you have just re-

ferred, and by which the abductor is exempt from punishment if he marries the girl he has carried off, it reminds me of the law of Bretagne, where abduction, followed by marriage, was not punishable. But this custom, which gave rise to abuse, was suppressed in 1720.

"I give you the date within ten years. My memory is not very good now; and I can no longer recite by heart without even pausing for breath, as I once could, fifteen hundred verses of Girart de Roussillon.

"In regard to the capitulary of Charlemagne, regulating the punishment for abduction, I need not speak, for no doubt you remember it. You may clearly see, then, my dear Monsieur de Gabry, that abduction was considered a crime deserving of the severest punishment under the three dynasties of ancient France. It is entirely wrong to suppose that the Middle Ages were a time of chaos. On the contrary, you must remember" —

Monsieur de Gabry interrupted me, —

"You know the ordinance of Blois, Baluze, Childebert, and the Capitularies," said he, "yet you are ignorant of the Napoleonic Code!"

I told him that I had never read that Code, and he seemed surprised.

"Do you realize now," said he, "the seriousness of the act you have committed?"

In truth I scarcely did realize it as yet. But little by little, as I listened to Monsieur Paul's very sensible words, I began to see that I should be condemned, not for my innocent intentions, but for the

act itself, which is punishable. Then I lost hope, and began to lament.

"What shall I do?" I cried. "What shall I do? Am I, then, hopelessly lost? and shall I drag down with me the poor girl whom I tried to save?"

Monsieur de Gabry filled his pipe in silence, and lighted it so deliberately that for three or four minutes his kind, broad face was as red as a blacksmith's in the fire of his forge.

"You ask me what you shall do. Do nothing, my dear Monsieur Bonnard. For the love of Heaven and for your own sake, do nothing at all. Your position is bad enough now. Do not become entangled any deeper for fear of fresh trouble. But promise me to approve of all I am going to do. Early to-morrow morning I shall go to Monsieur Mouche; and if he is what we believe him to be, a downright scoundrel, I can easily find (even though the Devil himself should take his part) a way to make him perfectly harmless. For everything depends on him. It is too late this evening to carry Mademoiselle Jeanne back to the school, but my wife will take care of her. That frankly and plainly constitutes the misdemeanor of complicity, but in this way we shall avoid anything equivocal in the young girl's position. And do you, my dear monsieur, return as fast as you can to the quay Malaquais; and if any one comes in search of Jeanne there, you can easily prove that she is not in your house."

During this conversation of ours, Madame de Gabry was getting a sleeping-room in readiness for her young guest.

When she bade me good-night, she held on her arm a pair of linen sheets perfumed with lavender.

"That is a sweet and wholesome smell," said I.

"Of course," said Madame de Gabry; "we are peasants."

"Ah!" I exclaimed; "if only I too might be a peasant! If only some day I might breathe the woodland odors as you do at Lusance, beneath a vine-covered roof; and if this is too ambitious a wish for an old man whose life is nearly spent, I will wish, at least, that my shroud may be perfumed with lavender, as is this linen which you have on your arm!"

It was decided that I should come to breakfast the next morning, but they absolutely forbade my appearing before noon. Jeanne kissed me good-night, and begged me not to let her go back to the boarding-school. We parted sad and anxious.

I found Thérèse at the head of my stairs, in such a condition of nervous anxiety as to make her furious. She spoke of nothing less than locking me up in future.

What a night I spent! I did not close my eyes for a single instant. Sometimes I laughed like a boy at the success of my adventure; then, with inexpressible agony, I saw myself dragged before the magistrates, and compelled to answer at the bar for the crime that I had so naturally committed. I was filled with terror, yet I felt neither remorse nor regret. The sun crept into my room, and fell caressingly across the foot of my bed. Then I prayed:—

"O God, *thou who didst make the sky and the dew*, as it says in *Tristan*, judge me in thy equity, not according to my acts, but according to my intentions, which were pure and upright. Then will I say, '*Glory to thee in the highest, Peace on earth, Good will toward men.*' I leave in thy hands the young girl whom I stole away. Do what I was unable to do. Keep her from all her enemies, and may thy name be forever blessed!"

December 29.

When I returned to Madame de Gabry's, I found Jeanne transformed.

Had she, like myself, at early dawn, called upon the name of Him *who made the sky and the dew?* She wore such a sweet and peaceful smile.

Madame de Gabry called her back to finish her hair, for this kind friend had taken it upon herself to arrange her young visitor's locks in a becoming manner. Having reached the house a little ahead of time, I had interrupted the pretty toilet, and as a punishment I was made to wait alone in the drawing-room.

Monsieur de Gabry very soon joined me. He evidently came from out-of-doors, for his forehead still bore the mark of his hat. His open countenance expressed joyous animation. I felt that I had best not ask him any questions, and we all went in to breakfast. When the servants had withdrawn, Monsieur Paul, who had been keeping his story for dessert, said to us, —

"Well, I have been to Levallois."

"Did you see Maître Mouche?" asked Madame de Gabry eagerly.

"No," he replied, studying our faces, which showed the disappointment we felt.

The good man enjoyed our anxiety for a reasonable time in silence; then he added, —

"Maître Mouche is no longer at Levallois. He has left France. Day after to-morrow it will be a week since he locked his door, and went off with all his clients' money, a good round sum too. I found his office closed. A woman who lived near him told me the story, with many curses and imprecations. The notary took the 7.55 train, but he did not go alone. He eloped with the daughter of a Levallois barber, a young girl well known about the country for her beauty and her accomplishments. It is said that she could shave better than her father. But Mouche has eloped with her. The fact was confirmed by the chief of police. And really, could he have gone away more opportunely? Had he postponed his plans for a week, as the representative of society, he might have sent you, Monsieur Bonnard, like a criminal, into the blackest of dungeons. But now we have nothing further to fear. To Maître Mouche's health!" he cried, pouring out a glass of white wine.

I should like to live long that I might long remember that morning. We four were assembled about the polished oaken table in the great white dining-room. Monsieur Paul's delight was intense, and perhaps a trifle boisterous in its expression; and the good fellow drained his glass again and again.

Madame de Gabry smiled at me with her gentle, pure, and noble smile. Such a woman should save her smiles as a reward for good deeds, that every one about her might do good. As a compensation for our troubles, Jeanne, who had recovered her sprightliness, kept up a storm of questions for a quarter of an hour, the answers to which would have included, at least a dissertation upon nature, man, the physical and the metaphysical, the macrocosm and the microcosm, without mentioning the ineffable and the unknowable. She drew from her pocket her little Saint-George, which had suffered cruelly in our flight. It no longer had any arms or legs, but its golden helmet with the green dragon was still intact. Jeanne took a solemn vow to restore it in honor of Madame de Gabry.

I left these good friends, overwhelmed with fatigue and delight.

On my return home, Thérèse met me with the liveliest remonstrances. She was utterly incapable of understanding my new mode of living. To her way of thinking, monsieur had lost his mind.

"Yes, Thérèse, I am a crazy old man, I'll admit, and you are a crazy old woman. There is no doubt of it. May the good Lord bless us, Thérèse, and give us fresh strength, for we have new duties. But let me lie down on this sofa, for I cannot stand up any longer."

January 15, 186–.

"Good-morning, monsieur," said Jeanne, opening our door for me, while Thérèse, who was not so

quick as the young girl, stood grumbling in the shadow of the corridor.

"Mademoiselle, I beg that you will call me solemnly by my proper title. Say, 'good-morning, guardian.'"

"It's all settled, then? Oh, good!" cried the girl, clapping her hands.

"Yes; it has been settled, mademoiselle, in the court-room, in the presence of the justice of the peace, and you are henceforth subject to my authority. You laugh, do you, my ward? I see it in your eyes. You have some silly idea in your head. Another whim?"

"Oh, no, monsieur — my guardian; I was looking at your white locks. They fall from beneath the brim of your hat like honeysuckle over a balcony; your hair is very beautiful, and I like it immensely!"

"Sit down, my ward; and if you can possibly help it, stop saying such silly nonsense. I have something serious to tell you. Listen! You are not absolutely bent, I suppose, upon returning to Mademoiselle Préfère's? . . . No? What should you say if I were to keep you here in order to finish your education, until — but how do I know? for always, as the expression is?"

"Oh, monsieur!" exclaimed the girl, flushing with delight.

I continued, —

"There is a little back room that my housekeeper has cleaned and put in order for you. You will take the place of the old books just as day succeeds

night. Go with Thérèse, and see if the room is habitable. Madame de Gabry understands that you will sleep there to-night."

She was already darting off, but I called her back.

"Jeanne, listen to me further. So far you have got on very well with my housekeeper, who, like all old women, is naturally somewhat cross. Treat her with consideration. I have thought it my own duty to humor her, and to put up with her irritability. I beg of you, Jeanne, respect her. And in speaking in this way, I do not forget that she is my servant and yours, and she will not forget it either. But you should respect her great age and her great heart. She is a humble creature who has grown old in usefulness, and she has become confirmed in this habit. Bear with the sternness of this upright soul. If you command her wisely, she will obey. Go, my dear girl, arrange your room in whatever way may best suit your work and your comfort."

Having started Jeanne with this Viaticum on her career as a housekeeper, I turned to a review, which, although edited by young men, is excellent. The tone of it is unpolished, but the spirit is full of earnestness. The article I read surpasses, so far as the strength and accuracy are concerned, all that was done in my early days. The author of the article, Monsieur Paul Méyer, notes every mistake with clear, incisive criticism.

In those days we were not so mercilessly impartial. Our indulgence was immense. It sometimes went so far as to heap equal praise on the scholar and on

the ignoramus. Yet one should be able to condemn; nay, it is an imperative duty. I remember little Raymond (for that was his name). He did not know anything, and his mind was incapable of acquiring knowledge, but he was devoted to his mother. We were careful not to denounce the ignorance of such a good son; and little Raymond, thanks to our indulgence, made his way to the very top. He had lost his mother, but every honor was lavished on him. He was all powerful, to the great detriment of his colleagues and science. But here comes my young friend of the Luxembourg.

"Good-afternoon, Gélis. You look happy to-day. My dear boy, what has happened?"

It seems that he has sustained his thesis very well, and that he has taken a high rank. He tells me this, adding that my works, which were discussed incidentally in the course of the meeting, were unreservedly praised by the professors of the school.

"That is good," I replied; "and I am glad, Gélis, to see my old reputation associated with your young laurels. I was greatly interested, as you know, in your thesis; but domestic affairs made me forget that you were to sustain it to-day."

Here Mademoiselle Jeanne came in just in time to enlighten him in regard to these domestic affairs. The little madcap rushed into the City of Books like a fresh breeze, exclaiming that her room was a perfect dream. She blushed deeply on seeing Monsieur Gélis, but no one can escape his fate.

Monsieur Gélis asked her how she was, in the

tone of a youth who takes advantage of a previous meeting, and who poses as an old acquaintance. Oh! do not fear! she had not forgotten him. It was apparent enough, when under my very nose they took up their conversation of a year ago, on the Venetian *blond*. They carried it on in a lively vein. I asked myself what was I doing there, forsooth! In order to make myself heard, there was nothing for me to do but to cough. As to talking, they scarcely gave me a chance to utter a word. Gélis spoke with enthusiasm, not only of the Venetian colorists, but also of everything else relating to man and nature. And Jeanne answered him, —

"Yes, monsieur, you are right. . . . That is exactly what I thought, monsieur. . . . Monsieur, you express very clearly what I feel. . . . I will think over what you have just said, monsieur."

When I speak, mademoiselle does not reply in that tone. What I say she tastes with the tip of her tongue, and a good half of it she will not touch at all. But Monsieur Gélis is authority on all subjects. To all his chattering I hear her replies of, "Oh, yes! Oh, certainly!"

And Jeanne's eyes! I never saw them so large and so steady; but her glance, as always, was frank, innocent, and brave. Gélis pleased her. She admired Gélis, and her eyes betrayed her feelings. They might have betrayed it to the whole world. That is all very fine, Maître Bonnard; but while you are watching your ward, you are forgetting that you are her guardian. You have been her guardian since this morning, and this new function is already im-

posing delicate duties upon you. You should devise some tactful way of keeping this young man at a distance. Bonnard, you should — but do I know what I ought to do? . . .

I have taken up a book at random from the nearest shelf. I open it, and enter with feelings of respect into the midst of a drama of Sophocles. The older I grow, the more I love the two great civilizations of antiquity, and I now keep the poets of Greece and of Italy within arm's reach in the City of Books.

Monsieur and mademoiselle, seeing that I am not bothering myself about them any more, condescend to pay me some little attention. I really believe that Mademoiselle Jeanne is asking me what I am reading. No, indeed, I will not tell her. I am reading of the sweet and glorious chorus that unrolls its beautiful melopœia in the midst of a powerful scene, — the chorus of the old men of Thebes. Ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν —

O Invincible Love, thou who descendest upon the wealthy,
Thou that makest thy couch on the soft cheeks of the maiden,
Thou who passest over the seas, and enterest the shepherd's hut,
None either of the immortals can escape thee,
Or of men whose life is but a span of years.
And whosoever possesses thee is subject to madness.

And when I had read that delicious chant once more, the figure of Antigone appeared before me, in all her unalterable purity. What images, ye gods and goddesses who hovered in the azure heavens! The blind old man, the beggar-king who has wandered for years, led by Antigone, at last has received

holy burial. His daughter, as beautiful as the most beautiful pictures that the human mind has ever conceived, resists the tyrant, and piously buries her brother. She loves the tyrant's son, and this son loves her. And as she goes to execution, the victim of her filial love, the old men sing, —

O Invincible Love, thou who descendest upon the wealthy, Thou who makest thy couch on the soft cheeks of the maiden —

"Mademoiselle Jeanne, do you really want to know what I am reading? I am reading, mademoiselle, I am reading how Antigone, having buried the blind old man, embroidered a beautiful tapestry, on which were woven joyous figures."

"Oh!" exclaimed Gélis, laughing, "that is not in the text."

"That is a scholium," I replied.

"It is unpublished," said he, rising.

I am not selfish. I am careful. I have to bring up this young girl. She is too young; I cannot let her be married yet. No! I am not selfish; but I must keep her a few years with me, with me alone. Can she not wait until after I am dead? Be not anxious, Antigone, old Œdipus will in due time find the holy place for his burial.

Meanwhile Antigone is helping our housekeeper to clean the carrots. She says that this suits her, as it is like sculpture.

May.

Who would recognize the City of Books? There are flowers now on every table. Jeanne is right.

These roses are very beautiful in this vase of blue faïence. Every day she goes to market with Thérèse under pretext of helping the old servant buy the provisions, but she brings back nothing but flowers. Flowers are indeed beautiful creatures. Some day I must carry out my idea, and study them in their own domain among the fields, in the most systematic way I can.

And what is there for me to do here? Why continue to spoil my eyes with old parchments which no longer tell me anything worth while? I used to decipher these old texts with the most disinterested enthusiasm. What did I hope to find in them then? The date of the endowment of some pious institution, the name of some monk, illuminator, or copyist, the price of a loaf, of an axe, of a field, an administrative or judicial enactment, that and something more, something mysterious, vague, sublime, that roused my enthusiasm. But for sixty years I have sought, and I have not found that something. More worthy men than I, the masters, the truly great, the Fauriels, the Thierrys, who made so many discoveries, have died without finding this something any more than I have found it. It has no body, and has no name, and yet without it no intellectual work could be undertaken on this earth. Now that I am seeking only for what I am sure I can find, I no longer find anything at all; and it is probable that I shall never finish the history of the abbots of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

"My guardian, guess what I have in my handkerchief."

"To all appearances, Jeanne, it is flowers."

"Oh, no! it is not flowers. Look!"

I look, and see a little gray head thrusting itself out of the handkerchief.

It belongs to a little gray cat. The handkerchief opens. The animal springs to the carpet, shakes itself, raises first one ear, then the other, and cautiously investigates the place and the people.

While this is going on, Thérèse makes her appearance, out of breath, her basket on her arm. The kitten, evidently not over and above satisfied with the result of his investigation, walks slowly away from her, without, however, either touching my legs or approaching Jeanne, though she calls him pet names with wonderful volubility. Thérèse, one of whose faults is that she never dissimulates, vehemently reproaches mademoiselle for bringing a strange cat into the house. Jeanne, in order to justify herself, tells the story. As she was passing with Thérèse in front of a drug-store, she saw a clerk kick a kitten out into the street. The kitten, surprised and distressed, was in doubt whether to remain in the street, in spite of the passers-by who jostled against him and frightened him, or whether to return to the shop at the risk of being kicked out a second time. Jeanne saw that he was in a trying position, and understood his hesitation. He acted as if he were stupid, but she thought his appearance of stupidity came from indecision. So she took him up in her arms; and as he had been happy neither in-doors or out, he allowed her to hold him in mid air. Then, while she still kept soothing him

by her caresses, she said boldly to the druggist's clerk, —

"There is no need of kicking this poor little creature, even if you do not like him. You must give him to me."

"Take him," replied the clerk.

"That's the whole story!" exclaimed Jeanne in conclusion; and she began again in a soft voice to make all sorts of sweet promises to pussy.

"He is very thin," said I, examining the pitiful-looking little animal; "moreover, he is very homely."

Jeanne thinks he is not homely, but she acknowledges that he acts stupider than ever. But now it is not indecision, it is surprise, which, in her opinion, gives such a disagreeable aspect to his physiognomy. She wants us to put ourselves in his place. We try to do so, and acknowledge that it must be out of the question for him to understand what has happened to him. We burst out laughing at the poor beast, who gazes about in a serio-comic fashion. Jeanne wants to take him in her arms; but he hides underneath the table, and will not come out even at sight of a saucerful of milk.

We turn our backs — the saucer is empty!

"Jeanne," I say, "your *protégé* is a sad-looking creature. He is naturally suspicious. I trust that he will not do anything in the City of Books that will necessitate our sending him back to his drug-store. In the meantime we must give him a name. I would suggest Don Gris de Gouttière, but perhaps that is a trifle long. Pilule, Drogue, or Ricin[1]

[1] Pill, Drug, or Castor-Oil.

would be shorter, and would also have the advantage of recalling to mind his early conditions. What do you say?"

"Pilule would be good," answered Jeanne; "but it would not be kind to give him a name which would constantly remind him of the troubles from which we have rescued him. That would be making him pay dearly for our hospitality. Let us be more generous, and give him a pretty name, in the hope that he will deserve it. See how he watches us! He sees that we are talking about him. He is not half so stupid now that he is not so unhappy. I am not joking. Unhappiness makes one stupid; I know it very well."

"Well, Jeanne, if you would like, we will call your *protégé* Hannibal. The fitness of this name does not strike you at first. But the Angora who preceded him in the City of Books, and to whom I was in the habit of confiding my secrets, for he was a wise and discreet creature, was named Hamilcar. It is natural that the one name should beget the other, and that Hannibal should succeed Hamilcar." We all agreed on this point.

"Hannibal!" cried Jeanne, "come here." Hannibal, frightened by the strange sound of his new name, ran and crouched down under a bookcase in a space so small that a rat could not have squeezed himself into it.

It was a fine way of carrying a mighty name.

That day I felt in a humor for writing, and I had already dipped my pen into the ink when I heard the bell. If ever any idle person should read these

pages, scrawled by an old man devoid of imagination, he would smile at the sound of the bell which every moment rings out in the course of my story without ever introducing a new personage or an unexpected scene.

On the stage it is different. Monsieur Scribe never lets a door open without some good reason, without furnishing some new enjoyment for the ladies, old and young. That is art. I should rather be hanged than have to write a play. Not because I scorn life, but because I should not be able to invent anything amusing. Invent! For that one must have inspiration. The gift would be fatal in my case! Imagine if, in my history of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, I should invent some petty monk. What would our young scholars say? What a disgrace to the School! As for the Institute, it would say nothing, probably it would not even think about it. Although my colleagues still do a little writing, they no longer read. They are of the opinion of Parny, who said, —

> "*Une paisible indifférenee*
> *Est la plus sage des virtus.*" [1]

To be the least possible in order to be the greatest possible is what the Buddhists are striving for without knowing it. If there is wiser wisdom, I will go and announce it in Rome. All this because Monsieur Gélis rings the door-bell!

This young man has undergone a great change

[1] "A calm indifference
Is the wisest of virtues."

in his manner toward Jeanne. He is now as serious as he was once frivolous, as silent as he was talkative. Jeanne follows his example. We have reached the phase of suppressed passion. For, old as I am, I am not deceived in it. These two young people are deeply and lastingly in love with each other. Jeanne avoids him now. When he comes into the library, she hides in her room. But how well she finds him again when she is alone! Then, she speaks to him every evening in the music which she plays on the piano with a quick, vibrating touch, which is the new expression of her new heart.

Well, why should I not say it? Why not acknowledge my weakness? Would my selfishness become any the less blameworthy if I were to hide it from myself? I will admit it, then. Yes, I expected something else — yes, I hoped to keep her for myself alone, as my child, my daughter, not for always, not even for long, but for a few years more. I am so old! Could she not have waited? And who knows? with the aid of the gout, perhaps I should not have abused her patience for long. That was my desire, my hope; but I did not take her into my calculations. I did not take this silly young man into my calculations. And the mistake is none the less hard for me because I miscalculated.

Yet it seems to me, Sylvestre Bonnard, my friend, that you are blaming yourself quite too easily. If you wanted to keep this young girl a few years longer, it was for her interest as well as for your own. She has much to learn, and you are not a master to be scorned. When that notary Mouche,

who was discovered in his rascalities at such an opportune moment, honored you by a call, you set forth your system of education with all the enthusiasm of an adept. You have been zealously striving to apply this system; but Jeanne is an ungrateful girl, and Gélis a very seductive youth.

But still, if I do not show him the door, an act which would be detestably ill-mannered and unkind, I must receive him. He has been waiting long enough in my little drawing-room opposite the Sèvres jars which were graciously presented to me by King Louis-Philippe. *The Moissonneurs* and the *Pêcheurs* by Leopold Robert are painted on these porcelain jars, and Gélis declares that they are frightful; and Jeanne, whom he has bewitched, claps her hands in delight.

"My dear boy, pardon me for not seeing you at once, I was finishing some work." I told the truth. Meditation is work, but that is not what Gélis understands by it.

He supposes that I refer to archæology; and being set at ease as to the health of Mademoiselle Jeanne (I said she was "very well," in a dry tone which showed my moral authority as her guardian), we two begin learnedly to discuss historical subjects. We begin with generalities. Generalties are a great help. I strive to inculcate into Gélis a little respect for the generation of historians to which I belong. I say to him, —

"History, which used to be an art, and which afforded room for all flights of the imagination, has of late years become a science, in which we must work in accordance with a rigorous system."

Gélis begs leave to differ with me. He says that he does not think that history is a science, or that it ever will become a science.

"In the first place," he says, "what is history? The written representation of past events. But what is an event? Is it any trifling occurrence? Certainly not. You say, it is an important occurrence. But how can the historian judge whether the occurrence is important or not? He judges it arbitrarily, according to his taste, his fancy, his idea. In short, he judges it as an artist! For facts (from their very nature) are not divided into historical facts and non-historical facts. A fact is something extremely complex. Does the historian represent these facts in their complexity? No; that is impossible. He will represent them stripped of the greater part of the characteristics which made them what they were. That is, he represents them mangled, mutilated, different from their original nature. As to the interrelation of the facts we need not speak. If a so-called historical fact is brought out (and this is possible) by one or more facts which are non-historical, and on this account unknown, how can the historian note the relation of these facts to one another? And in all that I say, Monsieur Bonnard, I am supposing that the historian has under his eyes positive proofs, while in reality he trusts this or that witness only on sentimental reason. History is not a science, it is an art; and one succeeds in it only by imagination.

At this point, Monsieur Gélis reminds me of a certain young lunatic, whom I heard one day uttering

wild sophistries in the garden of the Luxembourg, beneath the statue of Marguerite of Navarre. But by a turn of the conversation, we come face to face with Walter Scott, whom my scornful young friend considers rococo, troubadourish, and *dessus de pendule*.[1] These were his very expressions.

"But," said I, warming up in defence of the magnificent creator of *Lucy* and of the *Fair Maid of Perth*, "the whole Past lives in his beautiful novels. It is history; it is epic poetry!"

"It is nonsense!" replied Gélis.

And would you believe it? This rattle-brained youth declares that no matter how learned one may be, one cannot know exactly how men lived five or ten centuries ago, since it is only with great difficulty that one imagines them as they were ten or fifteen years ago. In his opinion, the historical poem, the historical novel, the historical painting, are all abominably false forms of art.

"In all the arts," he adds, "the artist can only paint his own soul. His work, however it may be clad, is his contemporary, because his spirit is in it. What do we admire in the 'Divine Comedy,' if not the great soul of Dante? And what do the marbles of Michael Angelo show us above the ordinary, unless it be Michael Angelo himself? If a man is an artist, he must give his own life to his creations, or else he makes mere puppets, and dresses dolls!"

What paradoxes and what lack of reverence! But

[1] *Dessus de pendule* is the ornament which some years ago used to be the accompaniment of French clocks; hence, anything inartistic and conventional; here, "behind the times" might express the idea.

boldness in a young man does not displease me. Gélis rises, and sits down again. I know very well what is on his mind, and what he is waiting for. He speaks to me of the fifteen hundred francs he makes above and beyond the small yearly income of two thousand francs which he has inherited. I am not deceived by these confidences. I know very well that he tells me of his affairs so that I may know that he is well established, steady, settled, with a yearly income, fitted to marry, *q. e. d.*, as the geometricians say.

He has risen and sat down again twenty times. He rises for the twenty-first time, and not having seen Jeanne, he goes out, disappointed.

As soon as he has gone, Jeanne comes into the City of Books under the pretext of looking for Hannibal. She, too, is disappointed, and melancholy is the tone in which she calls her *protégé* to come and get his milk. See her sad face.

Bonnard! Tyrant, behold your handiwork! You have kept them apart; but the look on their faces is the same, and you see from this, that in spite of you they are united in thought. Cassandra, be happy! Bartholo, rejoice! This is what it is to be a guardian? Do you see her as she kneels on the carpet, holding Hannibal's head between her hands.

Yes! caress the stupid little beast! Pity him! Moan over him! We know very well, you sweet little pretender, the object of your sighs, the cause of your complaints. Nevertheless, they make a pretty picture, and I gaze at it for some time. Then, glancing at my book-shelves, I say, —

"Jeanne, all these books weary me. Let us sell them."

September 20.

It is all over. They are engaged. Gélis, who, like Jeanne, has neither father nor mother, made his proposal through the medium of one of his professors, a colleague of mine, highly esteemed for his character and his learning. But what a messenger of love, good heavens! A bear — not a bear from the Pyrenees, but a literary bear, and the latter is much more ferocious than the former.

"Right or wrong (wrong in my opinion), Gélis cares nothing about the dowry. He will take your ward just as she is. Say yes, and the affair is settled. And I beg you to make haste; for I want to show you two or three rather curious tokens from Lorraine, and which are new to you, I am sure."

This is literally what he said to me. I told him I would ask Jeanne, and I took no small pleasure in adding that my ward had a dowry! Her dowry! There it is! It is my library. Henry and Jeanne are a thousand miles from suspecting it, and it is a fact that I am generally supposed to be richer than I am. I look like an old miser. My appearance belies me certainly, but it has brought me much consideration. There's no kind of person whom the world respects so much as a rich skinflint! I have consulted Jeanne, but did I need to listen to her words to know her answer? It is done now! They are engaged!

It is not in keeping either with my face or with my character to play the spy upon these

young people in order to note their words and gestures.

Noli me tangere is the motto of love affairs. I know my duty. It is to respect the secret of this innocent heart which was intrusted to my guardianship. Let them love each other! the dear children! Not a word of their love-making, not a word of their frank avowals, shall be put down in this diary by the old guardian whose authority was so gentle and so brief!

At any rate, I do not fold my arms; for if they have their affairs, I have mine. I am making out my own catalogue of my library, with a view toward selling it by auction. It is a task which both pains and delights me. I linger over it perhaps somewhat longer than I ought to do; and I turn over the leaves in the volumes that are so familiar to my thought, to my hand, to my eyes, spending more time than is necessary or best for me. But it is a farewell to them, and it has ever been man's nature to prolong his leave-takings.

This thick volume which has done me such good service for thirty years, can I say good-by to it without showing to it the respect that a good old servant deserves! And this one, that many a time has comforted me by its wholesome doctrine, must I not salute it for the last time as I would a master? But whenever I come across a book that has led me into error, that has caused me trouble by its incorrect dates, its omissions, its falsehoods, and other such faults, — the torment of the antiquarian, — "Go!" I say in cruel joy, "go! impostor, traitor, false

witness! flee far from me, *vade retro*, and mayest thou, ridiculously bedizened with gold as thou art, and thanks to thy stolen reputation and thy fine morocco covers, find a place behind the glass doors in the library of some bibliomaniac stockbroker, whom thou canst not deceive as thou hast me, since he will never read thee."

I laid aside the books that had been given me as souvenirs, with the design of keeping them always. As I placed among them the manuscript of "The Golden Legend," I could not refrain from kissing it, in memory of Madame Trépof, who, in spite of her high position and her wealth, remained grateful, and who, in order to show her gratitude, became my benefactress. Thus I began a system of keeping back. Then first I made the acquaintance of crime.

The temptations kept coming to me during the night, and by dawn they were irresistible. So, while the house still slept, I rose and crept stealthily from my room. Shades of darkness, Phantoms of night, if, lingering in my house after the crowing of the cock, you saw me stealing on tiptoe about the City of Books, you certainly did not cry out, as did Madame Trépof at Naples, "That old man has a good back!"

I would enter the library. Hannibal, his tail in the air, would come rubbing against my legs, purring. I would seize a volume from the shelf, some old Gothic manuscript, or a great poet of the Renaissance, the jewel, the treasure, of which I had dreamed the livelong night. I would take it up and slip it as far as I could into the closet, where I hid

the books I was keeping back, and which was already full enough to burst. It is horrible to tell: I was stealing Jeanne's dowry. And when the crime had been committed, I would set to work again, cataloguing industriously, until Jeanne came to consult me about some detail of her dress or trousseau. I never quite understood what it was, because I did not know the modern vocabulary of dress-making and dry goods. Ah! if a fourteenth-century bride had come by chance to consult me about her apparel, I should have understood her. But Jeanne belongs to another age than mine, and I have to send her to Madame de Gabry, who is like a mother to her at this time.

Night comes! The night has come! Leaning out of the window, we watch the great dark expanse covered with dots of light. Jeanne, as she bends over the window-bar, holds her forehead against her hands, and seems sad. I watch her, and say to myself, "Every change, even the happiest, has its sadness; for what we leave is a part of ourselves. We must die in one life, in order to enter another."

As if in reply to my thought, the young girl says to me, —

"My guardian, I am very happy; and yet I feel like crying!"

LAST PAGE.

BROLLES, *August* 21, 1869.

Page eighty-seven. Only a few lines more, and my book on the insects and flowers will be finished. Page eighty-seven, and the last. . . . "*As we have*

just seen, the visits of insects are of the greatest importance to plants. Their function, indeed, is to carry the pollen of the stamens to the pistil. It seems that the flower prepares and decks herself, in the expectation of this nuptial visit. I think I have shown that the nectary of the flower distils a sweet liquid, which attracts the insect, and compels it unconsciously to carry out the fertilization, either direct or crossed. The latter mode is the more common. I have said that the flowers are colored and scented in such a manner as to attract insects, and so constructed as to their inner formation as to offer these visitors a passage by which they may reach the corolla, and so leave upon the stigma the pollen with which they are covered. Sprengel, my respected teacher, said, apropos of the down which lines the corolla of the wood geranium, 'The wise Author of nature did not create one useless hair.' I say in my turn, 'If the lily of the fields is more richly clothed, as the Scriptures say, than King Solomon, its purple cloak is a wedding-cloak, and this rich covering is necessary for the perpetuation of its life.'" [1]

Brolles! My house is the last on the road between

[1] Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard was unaware that some very noted naturalists were making, at the same time as himself, researches in regard to the relation between insects and plants. He was unacquainted with the works of Monsieur Darwin, Dr. Hermann Müller, as well as with the observations of Sir John Lubbock. It is worthy of note that Monsieur Sylvestre Bonnard's conclusions are very similar to those of the three scientists above mentioned. It is less important, but perhaps rather interesting, to remark that Sir John Lubbock is, like Monsieur Bonnard, an archæologist, who began late in life to devote himself to the natural sciences. — *Publisher's Note.*

the village and the forest. It is a gabled house, the slate roof of which shines in the sun like the breast of a pigeon. The weather-cock on my roof has won for me more consideration in the country than all my works on history and philology. There is not an urchin in the village who does not know Monsieur Bonnard's weather-vane. It is rusty, and squeaks shrilly when the breeze shifts. Sometimes it refuses to work at all, like Thérèse, who now allows herself, though grumblingly, to be helped by a young peasant girl. The house is not large, but I am very comfortable in it. My room has two windows, and the early sun pours into it. Above is the children's room. Jeanne and Henry come to occupy it twice every year.

Little Sylvestre had his cradle there. He was a pretty boy, but very pale. When he played on the grass, his mother would watch him with an anxious look, and every few minutes she would lay aside her sewing to take him on her lap. The poor little fellow did not like to go to sleep. He said that when he slept, he went far, very far away, where it was dark, and where he saw things that frightened him, and that he did not want to see any more.

Then his mother would call me, and I would sit down by his cradle. He would take one of my fingers in his little hot, dry hand, and say to me, —

"Godfather, you must tell me a story."

I would tell him all sorts of stories, to which he would listen with a serious face. He was interested in them all, but one in particular filled him wonder and delight. It was "The Blue Bird." When I

had finished, he would say, "Again! Again!" and I would begin once more; and after a while his pale little face, in which the veins stood out clearly, would fall back on the pillow.

To all our questions the doctor replied, —

"There is nothing much the matter with him!"

No, there was nothing much the matter with little Sylvestre. One evening, a year ago, his father called me.

"Come," said he; "our little one is worse."

I stepped to the cradle, by the side of which the mother stood motionless, held there by every fibre of her being.

Little Sylvestre slowly turned his eyes to me; their pupils had rolled up under his lids, and would never come down again.

"Godfather," said he, "you need not tell me any more stories."

No, it was not necessary to tell him any more stories!

Poor Jeanne! poor mother!

I am too old to feel very deeply, but the death of a child is a strangely sad mystery.

To-day the father and the mother have come back to spend six weeks under the old man's roof. They are just returning from the forest, arm in arm. Jeanne is closely wrapped in her black shawl, and Henry wears a band on his straw hat; but they are both bright with youth, and they smile gently at each other. They smile at the earth which bears them, at the air which plays about them, at the light which each sees shining in the other's eyes. I wave

my handkerchief to them from my window, and they smile at the poor old man!

Jeanne comes lightly up the stairs, kisses me, and whispers something in my ear, which I guess at rather than hear. And I answer, "God bless you, Jeanne, you and your husband, and your most distant posterity. *Et nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine.*" ... pace.

Lord, now lettest
thou thy servant
depart in peace