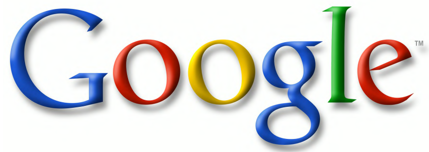


This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

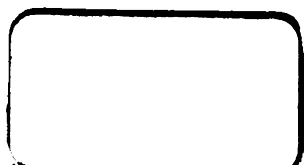
+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

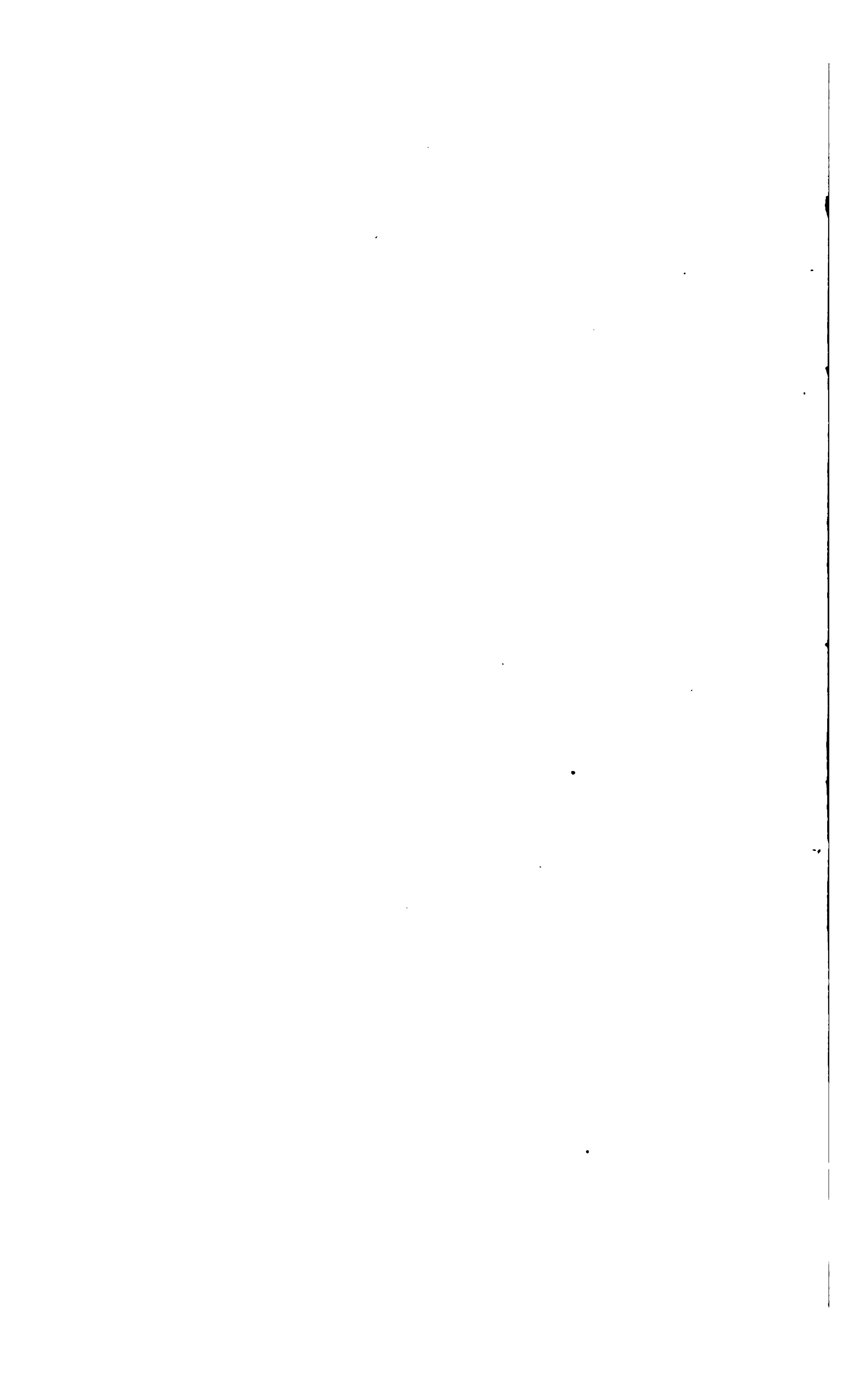
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3433 07574222 5

1. No subject





THE

EMPRESS EUGENIE'S BOUDOIR.

BY

GEORGE W. M. REYNOLDS,

AUTHOR OF THE FIRST AND SECOND SERIES OF "THE MYSTERIES OF LONDON," "THE MYSTERIES OF THE COURT OF LONDON," "MARY PRICE," "JOSEPH WILMOT," "ROSA LAMBERT," "THE SOLDIER'S WIFE," "THE NECROMANCER," "POPE JOAN," "THE PIXY," "ROBERT MACAIRE," "KENNETH," "THE DAYS OF HOGARTH," "WAGNER THE WEHR-WOLF," "THE RYE HOUSE PLOT," "THE BRONZE STATUE," "THE LOVES OF THE HAREM," "OMAR," "LEILA," "THE SEAMSTRESS," "THE CORAL ISLAND," "MARGARET; OR, THE DISCARDED QUEEN," "MAY MIDDLETON," "FAUST," "PICKWICK ABROAD," "ELLEN PERCY," "AGNES; OR, BEAUTY AND PLEASURE," "CANONBURY HOUSE," ETC., ETC.

BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED, FOR THE PROPRIETOR, BY JOHN DICKS,
No. 7, WELLINGTON STREET NORTH, STRAND.
1857.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
287591B

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
B 1944 L

PREFACE.

In the following pages will be found several scenes of *clairvoyance;* and from the manner in which they are described it may possibly be supposed by some of my readers that I am a believer in that alleged mystic faculty. I beg therefore to assure them of the contrary. I have merely availed myself of the novelist's or romancist's license to seize upon a particular material for the purposes of a tale of fiction, in the same way that I introduced demonological marvels in "Faust" and "Wagner," or spiritual apparitions in "Kenneth."

The narrative which occupies the Fourteenth Chapter is not an original emanation from my pen: it is a translation (with much expurgation) of the beautiful novel of *Sœur Anne* by Paul de Kock. Having made this translation, several years ago, with great carefulness, I was unwilling that it should be lost, as it were, from amidst the assemblage of my literary productions; and I therefore resolved upon introducing it, with proper explanations, into the present volume.

INDEX TO ENGRAVINGS.

Page		See Page
1.	THE EMPRESS EUGENIE.	
9.	The Boudoir	8
17.	The Tent	18
25.	The Officers and the Lorettes	26
29.	MIRA.	
33.	Marmande and Julie	38
41.	JULIE TALMONT.	
49.	THE COUNTESS DE MAULEON.	
57.	The Carriage	59
65.	Father and Son	67
69.	The Condemned	68
73.	Victor and Louise	77
81.	The Gin Shop	91
90.	The Orgie	94
97.	LOUISE.	
105.	The Cadgers' Hall	100
113.	The Tragedy	107
121.	MISS TERRYWHIST.	
129.	Louise a Suppliant	131
137.	The Fearful Game	144
145.	The Court Ladies	147
149.	The Guardian Angel	148
153.	Dubourg Asleep	155
161.	MADAME DERNANGE.	
169.	GOTON.	
177.	Punch and Judy.	178
185.	The Portrait	186
193.	THE DUMB GIRL.	
201.	Love-Making at Grenoble	200
209.	The Lady's Pony	205
217.	The Drawing-Room	220
225.	Genoveva de Brabant	236
233.	CONSTANCE.	
241.	Frederic and Constance	262
249.	The Young Peasants	267
257.	Another Portrait of CONSTANCE.	
263.	General de Valmont's Country-Seat.	
273.	The Subject of a Picture	282
281.	The Four Bridesmaids	284
289.	The Scene at the Party	295
297.	Frederick's Return	309
305.	Pere la Chaise	320
313.	The Grand Fatigue	322
321.	The Guillotine	322

THE EMPRESS EUGENIE'S BOUDOIR.

THE EMPRESS EUGENIE.

CHAPTER I.

THE COUNTESS DE MAULEON.

In one of the best streets of the Chaussée d'Antin, or most fashionable quarter of Paris, was situated the mansion of the Countess de Mauleon. This lady was about five-and-twenty years of age: she was a widow, and possessed a handsome income. Having been sacrificed, when a young creature of seventeen, to the passion of a nobleman old enough to be her grandfather, she had found herself after about four years of marriage released from so unsuitable an alliance by the death of her husband; and as no children had resulted from the union, she had no cares to shackle the freedom of her widowhood.

Many of our English readers will naturally be inclined to ask how it was that the Countess de Mauleon did not marry again, and now that she was possessed of wealth, select a somewhat more suitable companion than the antiquated

noble on whom she had bestowed the beauty of her girlhood? For she was now in the bloom of a splendid womanhood, and possessed all the advantages which personal attractions, ample fortune, elegant accomplishments, and brilliant position could possibly combine together to render her what in this country would be termed "a most excellent match." But young widows in France seldom tempt the matrimonial lottery a second time. They are too fond of the liberty which they have regained to be inclined to surrender it up very easily once more; and if by their first marriage they have obtained wealth, a patrician name, and a good position, they feel that they have acquired all the social advantages which matrimony can confer. As for *love* acting as a motive power towards a second marriage, this is scarcely to be thought of in the sphere of French fashionable society; for it is looked upon as a *penchant* or a sentiment which can take its course very pleasantly without any marriage at all; so that while on the one hand there is no necessity for a handsome young widow to lead the life of a nun within the walls of her own mansion, on the other hand there need be no loss of liberty involved in the secret yielding to her tender inclinations. From all that we have just said, therefore, the reader may comprehend that it was not for want of eligible offers that the Countess de Mauleon declined to change her widowed position; but that she now regarded the liberty and license which she enjoyed as the well-merited rewards earned by that early self-sacrifice which, when a portionless girl, she had made to obtain rank, wealth, and social position.

The Countess de Mauleon was the veritable type of French women moving in the fashionable sphere. Her conduct was outwardly marked by the strictest propriety; so that she seemed to the uninitiated to be a woman whose very pride would prevent her from placing herself in the power of any human being;—and yet if the veil were drawn aside, it might be seen that it would be somewhat inconvenient for her to quarrel with her confidential maid. Yet to a few of her most intimate friends,—ladies situated pretty well like herself, be it well understood,—she would just suffer a corner of the veil to be now and then lifted for a moment, so that a partial glimpse might be obtained of what was concealed behind. She would not acknowledge it outright —neither would she deny it in set terms; but she would leave it floating in the mind as a suspicion which there was not evidence enough to form into a substantial shape. In short, she did not choose to affect the prude or seem to arrogate the merit of being better than her acquaintances; while on the other hand she was careful that no positive and actual cognizance should be obtained of the little frailties and weaknesses into which she might be led. It was thus that she coquetted, so to speak, with her character as at times she coquetted with her charms. And on this latter point be it observed that she knew full well the effect of a glance sent flashing forth—vibrating as if with all the eloquence of an avowal or with all the significancy of an overture—and then instantaneously curtained by the dropping of the thickly fringed lids, leaving the mind bewildered as to whether it were a mere random look innocently meaningless, or whether it were one thrown out with purpose and with aim. Full well did she likewise know how the transient revelation of the bosom, by the throwing back of a scarf, or by stooping to pick up a flower or a kerchief seemingly dropped by accident, would be fraught with a far more seductive power than a longer and more deliberate exposure; and that the same argument also applied to the mere momentary display of the exquisitely shaped foot and well-turned ankle beneath the sweeping train-like skirt of the dress. Without appearing to have the slightest thought upon the point, and far less to be making such a subject her study, the Countess was always so regulating her demeanour and proceedings as to appeal to the imagination. This was the purpose and the zest of that artful decency itself which veiled the bosom and dropped the skirt over the ankle after a moment's exposure: it was at bottom the veriest coquetry: for full well she knew that the imagination to which she thus appealed would endow her with all the most glowing beauties while completing the picture of those charms of which a transient glimpse only was permitted.

The Countess de Mauleon, like all Frenchwomen in fashionable life, was a very pleasant companion, willing to converse at all times, and able to skim the surface of all topics with a facility and gracefulness which actually made you forget that she was able to dive profoundly into none,—constantly disposed to be amusing, and easily amused in her turn. She was vivacious and full of animal spirits—but never noisy nor boisterous; and even her most intimate friends and those who knew her best, could never say that they had found her insipid or dull. It was just as possible to catch her in an untidy dress or slovenly morning toilet, as to find her in a mood incapable of either entertaining or being entertained: and all these indeed were absolute *impossibilities*. But on the other hand, she was as deficient in soft sensibility of the soul as she was of true moral principle; and it was only because she was so brilliant in her beauty, so fascinating in her manners, and had such an air of saying everything with so winning a grace, that the dazzled and delighted eyes of those with whom she came in contact failed to detect the undercurrent of frivolity and levity which assuredly belonged to her character.

Such was the Countess de Mauleon; and inasmuch as perhaps the reader may wish to have her portrait sketched somewhat more in detail, we will add that though only slightly above the medium stature, yet she possessed one of those striking and brilliant figures which add as it were to the height, especially as in every movement and gesture there was dignity commingling with grace. Her hair, of a dark chesnut, too light to be accurately denominated brown, was luxuriant and glossy, and she wore it in a style which set off her well-shaped head to the utmost advantage. Her eyes were of the hazel hue; and they were capable of all

those varieties of expression which might be made successively to correspond with the kaleidoscope phases of her mind. Her features were regular: her lips had a half serious, half smiling expression; and her chin was softly, almost sensuously rounded. Her bust was full; her arms were superbly modelled; and her complexion was fair, without being what may be termed delicate. As for her toilet, it was invariably of the most exquisite description; and yet such was the well-bred ease with which the Countess de Mauleon wore the richest dresses or the costliest ornaments, that it would seem to even the most hypercritical observer as if she embellished her toilet rather than was embellished by it.

It was in consequence of her rank and fortune, her position as a star of fashionable society, her elegant manners, and her finished taste in all that related to the *beau monde*—as well as on account of belonging to a family which had ever shown itself devoted to the Bonapartist cause—that the Countess de Mauleon had been selected as one of the principal ladies to form the courtly retinue of the beautiful Empress Eugenie. The Countess had therefore her apartments at the Tuileries, as well as her own house in the fashionable quarter of the Chaussée d'Antin: but it was only when her fortnightly turn came to attend upon her imperial mistress that she occupied her suite of rooms at the palace.

Our narrative opens in the first week of October, 1854, when the intelligence of the battle of the Alma was still electrifying all Europe. It was about noon; and the Countess de Mauleon was seated in a handsomely furnished apartment at her own private mansion. She was still in her morning *deshabillée:* but how elegant was that toilet! The very air of negligence which belonged to it, constituted one of its charms, and was as totally distinct from untidiness as a gracious ease of manner from a vulgar familiarity. The muslin wrapper, fastened at the throat—undulating over the contours of the bust, which it completely concealed—gathered in at the waist—and then flowing in an ample skirt down to the feet, which in their elegant shoes, and in no slipshod style, rested upon the ottoman,—delineated all the flowing outlines of the form of the beautiful woman. A book lay upon her lap: it was the first volume of a new novel; but the Countess had not read more than to the middle of the second page. She was not reading now: she seemed to forget that the book was there. We have already said that in public she was ever gay, ready to amuse and to court admiration for her vivacity as well as for her beauty: but in private, when unseen within four walls, she played no false part and wore no illusive mask. We therefore now find her pensive—but not actually melancholy: she was vexed and annoyed, but not nearly to the degree which may be termed grief or affliction. Her vanity had been somewhat wounded: but her heart scarcely felt the effect of the blow,—though it was nothing more nor less than the loss of a lover which she had to reflect upon, if not actually to deplore. The final explanation had not yet taken place; but she knew that it was close at hand; and as she slowly raised her beautiful hazel eyes to the time-piece on the mantel and saw that it was near the hour of noon, she murmured to herself, "In a few minutes he will be here."

The silver bell of that clock began to strike—the door opened gently, almost noiselessly indeed—and a genteel, pretty-looking lady's-maid glided into the apartment. At the very moment that the door began thus to move on its hinges, the Countess caught up the book, opened it as far as the middle, and appeared to be reading with the utmost attention.

"Ah, Adele?" she ejaculated, as if she were utterly unconscious of the damsel's presence until she had approached close up to the sofa on which she was seated: "how you startled me!"

"Indeed, madame!" responded the maid. "I am very sorry——"

"It is of no consequence," interrupted the Countess: "but this new novel is so very interesting that I became quite absorbed in its contents. What has brought you hither?"

"Captain Marmande is waiting in the ante-room, madame," rejoined Adele.

"Ah, the Captain? To be sure——I quite forgot!" said the Countess, with a very slight degree of ejaculatory accent. "Show him in, Adele."

Captain Marmande had not however waited for this permission to enter the sitting-room. Adele had left the door of communication ajar; he had overheard what passed between the lady and her dependant; and he bit his lip with mortified vanity as he somewhat abruptly threw the door open. The discreet Adele at once glided forth from the apartment, closing the door behind her, and thus leaving her mistress and the Captain alone together.

"It seems, madame," said the officer, who was a light-haired young man, about twenty-eight years of age, good-looking, well-mannered, and of fine military appearance,—"it seems, madame, that either my billet must have miscarried, or else you must have forgotten its purport."

"Indeed, Faustin," responded the Countess, with the languid air of well-bred indifference, "your note did not miscarry—it reached me exactly at half-past ten. I am enabled to be thus accurate, because the billet was brought in to me at the same time as this book;—and it must have taken me at least an hour and a half," she added, glancing at the time-piece, "to have read three hundred pages."

Captain Marmande bit his lip with renewed vexation: and then, in order to appear as if he were quite unconcerned, he twirled his moustache. All this time he remained standing; for a French gentleman would not take a seat, even in the presence of his mistress (at least when it was her own house) unless she invited him to do so.

"Oh, pray sit down, Faustin," said the Countess de Mauleon, now extending her hand as if it were quite an after-thought to present him with that fair hand of her's. "See! I will shut up my book—although I confess that I long to see how the heroine gets out of her trouble, and whether the wicked

nobleman succeeds in conquering her virtue at last."

Captain Marmande had taken the beautiful hand of the Countess, and had touched it with his lips. It was more an act of deference and homage to the lady of the house, than a token of love, or indeed than as an indication of any remnant of the good understanding which was wont to exist between himself and the Countess. She perceived the coolness, the indifference, or the spite—whichever it were; but she looked just for all the world as if she had not noticed it; and she was immediately avenged when she made the observation about shutting up the book. For she caught up a note which lay apparently tossing idly upon the sofa; she tore a piece off, and put it in as a marker for her page,—at the same time crumpling up the remainder of the billet and tossing it with a negligent air into the fire. Marmande was almost furious: it was a continuation of insults—or at least of supercilious evidences of consummate indifference, begun even before he had entered into her presence! He could restrain himself no longer; and though he kept back an outburst of passion, he nevertheless spoke in a thick voice which showed how poignantly he really felt the conduct of the Countess.

"Madame," he said, "perhaps you will condescend to explain the meaning of this scene in which you are bearing so singular a part? You receive a note from me at half-past ten o'clock this morning, intimating that I shall be here at the hour of noon precisely. As the clock strikes I am in your ante-room. Your maid enters—you seem to be totally oblivious of my intended visit—you are absorbed in the volume which you have been reading, or affected to be reading, from the very moment you received my billet——"

"I never affect anything, Faustin," interjected the Countess, with a calmness that was the more provoking because it was accompanied with a smile that had all the sweetness of lady-like courtesy and yet all the significancy of thorough indifference.

"And now, madame," continued the Captain, as if not noticing this fresh slight on her part, "you tear up my letter before my eyes in a manner which in itself is an indignity, and after everything that has taken place between us——"

"Ah," said the Countess with a slight mocking laugh; "after everything that has taken place between us——"

"Yes, madame," interrupted Faustin, fixing his large blue eyes upon her:—and then, after some little degree of hesitation, as if he were fearful that he was about to utter an insult which a certain remnant of manly feeling made him pause ere consummating, he added, "For two years past I have been your lover and you have been my mistress."

"And was it to tell me this," inquired the Countess, with a smile of mingled contempt and surprise, "that you wrote me a formal billet this morning, announcing your intention to visit me at noon if I should be at liberty to receive you?"

"No, madame—such was *not* my intention," was the officer's response. "But I will at once come to explanations, in order that I may accomplish all that an honourable man ought to do in certain circumstances, and that you may decide whether we may not henceforth be on terms of friendship, seeing that in all other respects we must exist as objects of indifference to each other."

"Proceed," said the Countess: and then with another slightly mocking laugh, she added, "I can promise you my attention."

"For some few weeks past, madame," resumed Faustin Marmande, "you have reproached me with what you have denominated a growing coldness; and yesterday you charged me outright with no longer entertaining the same sentiments towards you as heretofore. I therefore resolved to come to explanations; and I penned a billet in terms of the most respectful friendship, soliciting an interview at this hour,—that billet which you have treated as if it were the vilest scrap of paper that any scavenger would scorn to pick up and put into his rag-basket! But let that pass, madame—and let me proceed to assure you that I have not been indifferent to your kindness towards me in many respects. At the same time, I must deal candidly by declaring that I always felt I was the mere object of your fantasy—the toy of your sensual passion. Therefore, when my heart began to be inspired with the sentiment of a pure love for a young and innocent creature—and when I had made up my mind to woo her upon honourable terms—I deemed it a mere act of duty towards herself, towards you, and towards myself likewise, to break off a connexion——"

"Oh, I thank you!" exclaimed the Countess ironically. "This is indeed most considerate on your part! You have transferred your affections to another: or rather I should say," she added still more sarcastically, "you are tired of serving as the object of *my* sensual passion—and you are thus with a species of deliberate courtesy disposing of your mistress before you think of taking unto yourself a wife!"

"Though disliking the phraseology in which you have explained the point, madame," rejoined Marmande, "it is literally and substantially correct. And now will you be pleased to tell me where and in what my conduct merits so much malevolence—for I really can style it nothing else—on your part?"

"Indeed, Captain Marmande," replied the Countess, with another smile, the very sweetness of which was (saving the paradox) most provokingly bitter; "I am incapable of malevolence. Indeed, the whole proceeding is too trivial and insignificant for any strong feeling whatsoever. But might I ask how long it is since you first entertained this pure and virtuous sentiment for the innocent young lady to whom you have alluded?"

"I will answer with candour," rejoined Faustin. "It may be about six weeks ago that on analyzing my own feelings and seriously interrogating myself, I began to be assured that my heart was experiencing sensations which it had never known before——"

"Enough, monsieur!" interrupted the Countess. "It is precisely for *this* that I should blame you—if I thought it worth while to blame you for anything at all."

"For this?" exclaimed the Captain, with a real surprise. "What? because, not being the master of my own feelings——"

"No—you mistake me," said the Countess; "or else perhaps I failed to render myself sufficiently intelligible. I meant to intimate that I should blame you—if I blamed at all—for having continued to visit me on particular terms *after* your mind had been impressed with the conviction that you loved another. It only seems to me, from the slight casual glance I have chosen to fling upon the matter, that you did not act a manly part—you have been deficient in moral courage——nay, worse! for six weeks past you have been perpetrating a continuous treachery towards me—having in your mind the settled purpose of severing our connexion, and yet overwhelming me with protestations of continued love every time I sought the reason of your apparent coolness."

"Well then, madame," exclaimed Faustin, "granting that I was deficient in moral courage—granting that I ought to have come to an explanation with you the very moment that I felt my affections were turning towards another,—is my sin unpardonable?"

"Oh! as for being unpardonable," said the Countess, with a low laugh of pity—that pity which is worse than scorn and more galling even than contempt—"it really is not worth while to discuss such a point! But look you, monsieur! I have a few more words to add. Is there nothing of self-sufficiency—nothing of self-arrogating importance in the way in which you write me a formal note, heralding your visit by one hour and a-half, to prepare me as it were for the mighty calamity which you thought was to overtake me—and if not so prepared, to overwhelm me? Now, confess, my friend—for friends we will remain, if you will—friends as the world goes—that is to say, speaking acquaintances,——confess, then, I repeat, do you not think that you gave yourself mighty airs when you made up your mind thus pompously to announce to me the fact that I am no longer to be your mistress? Did you not suppose that I should consider myself a cast-off——"

"Ah! if you have taken it thus seriously," ejaculated Marmande,—"if you——"

"But I tell you, my good friend," interrupted the Countess, with another of her provokingly sweet smiles, and with a look of the most compassionating pity, "your conceit and vanity blind you! I have *not* taken it at all seriously. For you must remember," she added, with a little display of dignity mingled with an indescribable gracefulness, "I am the Countess of Mauleon—young, rich, and not particularly bad-looking; and although you are a captain in the army, and junior aide-de-camp to his Majesty the Emperor——"

"Oh, I know what you would say!" exclaimed Faustin: "you are too highly placed and too independent in every sense to care about the loss of such a lover as I am! Well, pray let this sparring and duelling and skirmishing between you and me cease! Heaven knows that if I have given any offence and played the coxcomb in the way in which I sought to bring this explanation about, *you* have sufficiently punished me within the last half-hour! You said we might be friends: let us be so."

"Yes—friends, I repeat, as the world goes," rejoined the Countess. "You shall lift your hat to me when we pass in the streets—or you may come up to my carriage-window and chat with me for five minutes. When we meet at the palace you may hand me a chair——But no!" exclaimed the Countess, suddenly checking herself in the midst of her ironical enumeration of the cold every-day courtesies which thenceforth must subsist between them.

"What do you mean?" inquired Faustin, with a sudden confusion in his looks.

"I mean that in public," she replied, "you had better show me as little attention as possible; because if the object of your affections has by any possibility heard a whisper—if the slightest breath of suspicion should happen to reach her ears—it might lead to jealousy."

"Then have you fathomed my secret?" asked the Captain, looking scrutinizingly upon the countenance of Madame de Mauleon.

"What secret?" she asked, with an air of the most perfect innocence.

"The secret?—why, I mean the young lady towards whom I feel myself so irresistibly attracted."

"Oh, no indeed!" exclaimed the Countess. "How on earth could I have fathomed a secret whereof I have only just now received the slightest hint for the first time? But of course I presume that the young lady moves in the best society: if so, I must necessarily meet her—perhaps indeed I already know her——"

"Yes—you know her," interjected Faustin; "and if I thought that you would not take any step to prejudice her against me——"

"I indeed?" said the Countess, with a contemptuous curl of her beautiful lip. "So completely is everything at an end between you and me, that I would not take half-a-dozen steps across this room either to help or to mar the progress of your matrimonial speculation."

"However uncourteously you have worded the assurance," said Marmande, "I at least take it as a pledge of complete neutrality on your part. But do not for a moment think that I have played so insulting a part towards you as to make an avowal of my love to the young lady or to demand her hand before I had come to this explanation."

"Ah, then," said the Countess, in a mere conversational strain, "the young lady is as yet ignorant of your favourable feelings towards her?"

"She can scarcely be altogether ignorant," rejoined Faustin, "since my looks must have told her something."

"Well, now then, at least you are free," said the Countess, "to go and make your avowal as soon as you think fit. Pray do not delay on my account! We are now just the same to each other as if the last two years of our exist-

ence could be utterly obliterated. Farewell, Captain Marmande —— Ah, by the bye! I think you were going to tell me who the young lady is?"

"Yes—as a secret."

"Well—as a secret, so long as you may choose it to remain so."

"Why, you know, my dear Countess," rejoined Faustin, "until I have avowed myself to the young lady, and spoken to her parents, and obtained their consent—and moreover, as a matter of duty, until we shall both have respectively obtained the sanction of the Emperor and Empress——"

"The Empress?" ejaculated Madame de Mauleon, with an air of surprise, but yet with a sly smile for a moment on her lips. "I can understand how you, as an aide-de-camp, must obtain the imperial consent: but the young lady——"

"And what if she be attached to the person of the Empress?" asked the Captain with a significant look.

"Ah, that is different!" said the Countess. "And now indeed I do perceive how all these circumstances render it expedient that the secret should be kept for the present. Do not trust me with it if you think I shall betray it ——and yet I never *did* betray a secret which I promised to keep!"

"And therefore I will trust you," replied Marmande; "because after everything that has taken place between us, you have a right to know. Yet cannot you guess? Of all the ladies attached to her Imperial Majesty——"

"If I had ever perceived that you paid particular attention to any one," said the Countess, with an assumed air of dignity, "you may rest assured that I should not have waited for such explanations as those which have taken place between us within this hour. Name therefore the young lady to whom you allude."

"I will," answered Faustin. "It is Mademoiselle Talmont."

"Ah, Julie Talmont!" ejaculated the Countess, with a look that seemed to be full of surprise. "Oh, then, my poor friend, I think you are very unfortunate in your choice!"

"Madame?" ejaculated Marmande fiercely. "Mademoiselle Talmont is a paragon of virtue!"

"Oh, I fully believe it," responded the Countess, with that same provoking half-smiling, half-serious coolness which she had so much adopted during the earlier part of the present interview. "But in return for your secret I will tell you another;—and pray be careful, Captain Marmande, to keep it entirely to yourself; for although I just now boasted of my own fidelity and stanchness in keeping secrets, I am really about to violate my character on that point."

"Tell me, madame—tell me," exclaimed the Captain, quivering with suspense, "what do you mean? what is this secret? why do you call me unfortunate? what do you know in reference to Julie Talmont?"

"Simply this," rejoined the Countess,—"that her faith is secretly plighted to a young infantry lieutenant now serving in the Crimea ——a certain Henri Vigors."

"Ah! is this indeed true?" demanded Faustin, turning very pale and quivering with emotion.

"I swear it," replied the Countess. "Mademoiselle Villefranche is Julie Talmont's confidante, and she has revealed this secret to me."

Faustin Marmande looked hard at the Countess de Mauleon for several moments, as if to assure himself that she was speaking the truth; and then, with an abrupt start, he exclaimed in a tone of corresponding curtness, "We shall see."

Having thus spoken, he bowed to the Countess, and hastened forth from the apartment where this singular scene had taken place.

"The last vengeance which I prepared for him was the best of all!" said the Countess to herself as the door closed behind the Captain: for she had in reality perceived for some little time past that Faustin, when fancying himself unobserved, had thrown tender glances upon Mademoiselle Talmont.

To the post of that same day the following letter was consigned:—

"Paris, October 5, 1854.

"My dear Clive,

"As I am aware of the friendly feeling which leads you to associate with my fellow-countrymen, it is probable that you may form the acquaintance of several at the seat of war. Try, my dear friend, to ascertain something of a certain Henri Vigors, a lieutenant in the ——th regiment of light infantry. But if you should happen to become acquainted with this very individual himself, do not mention the receipt of this letter from me. The truth is I have particular reasons for wishing to know all about him,—his character, his personal appearance, the family to which he belongs, his pecuniary possessions or prospects, and so forth. I know that for old friendship's sake I can ask such a favour of *you*; and it is for the very reason of my having no better or dearer friend amongst my own fellow-countrymen, that I address myself on this important point to you.

"Believe me, my dear Clive,

"Your's ever sincerely,

"FAUSTIN MARMANDE."

The letter was addressed to "Captain Clive, ——th Cavalry Regiment of the British Army before Sebastopol."

By the same post another communication was despatched to the seat of war; and this latter was written in a beautiful feminine hand, though a disguised one. The contents were as follow:—

"A friend, who is acquainted with the secret engagement existing between yourself and Mademoiselle Talmont, considers it a mere duty to inform you that this young lady has now become the object of the addresses of a certain Captain Faustin Marmande, who some few months back obtained the appointment of junior aide-de-camp to his Imperial Majesty. These addresses, which are as yet but faintly developed, will speedily declare themselves more pointedly; and if rejected

(as no doubt they will be) they may possibly be changed into a veritable persecution; for Faustin Marmande is not the man to be daunted by any difficulties that may present themselves at the outset of an enterprise. You can act upon this information in whatsoever way you may deem most consistent with prudence and propriety: but you are charged as a man of honour to destroy this letter immediately upon reading it; and in whatsoever course you may pursue, you will conceal from every one the fact that the hint thus conveyed to you emanated from an anonymous female source in the French capital."

The letter which we have just quoted, was addressed to "Lieutenant Vigors, ——th Regiment of Light Infantry of the French Army before Sebastopol."

CHAPTER II.

THE BOUDOIR.

The scene we are about to describe took place about a fortnight after the incidents which occupied our opening chapter. We must now introduce our readers into one of the most exquisitely furnished apartments in the palace of the Tuileries. A stranger entering that room for the first time, would not so much be struck by the richness of the appointments and the costliness of the decorations, as by the admirable taste which pervaded the whole. This taste was refined to the very highest degree, showing an accurate appreciation of the harmony of colours where it was proper that the hues of cushions, carpets, or draperies should be thus harmonious,—and displaying likewise a rare intelligence in forming contrasts that without for a single moment shocking the eye, produced the most striking effects. There were superb porcelain vases exhaling a degree of perfume that was just sufficient to impart a delicious sweetness to the atmosphere, without rendering it oppressive or sickly; and the lights were so arranged as to illuminate the entire room completely, leaving no corner in the shade: but still it was not with a flood of lustre so brilliant as to dazzle the eyes—it was mellowed and subdued into a softer refulgence.

This apartment was the boudoir of the Empress Eugenie. There may be some of our English readers who though often meeting with the name of *boudoir* in books, have nevertheless formed only vague or erroneous notions concerning the nature of the apartment itself. It is neither a bed-chamber, nor a dressing-room: but yet it is more or less a species of sanctuary into which only a very limited number of persons may be allowed to penetrate. Amongst the wealthy classes in France a lady has her own special suite of apartments communicating one with another: and one of these rooms is the boudoir. It is an elegantly furnished sitting-room, where the lady may shut herself up to write, or to read, or to think, according to her inclinations,—where she may nurse herself if she be indisposed, and where she may receive the visits of those intimate friends to whom she does not mind showing herself *en deshabillée*. A discreet husband would never think of penetrating into the boudoir without first ascertaining from a lady's-maid whether his wife be disengaged at the moment and willing to receive him: so that the boudoir is the very paradise for gossips, who are sure to remain undisturbed while their tongues run the gamut of all the scandal of Paris. This same boudoir may likewise serve as the bower of love, according to circumstances. It is as much the sanctuary of the lady as the "study" is the sanctum of the master of the house. But where there is an admirable accord between the husband and wife, the former is often enabled to appreciate the comforts of the boudoir. On returning home from the opera or theatre, cold and hungry, how still more chilling would it be to repair to the spacious dining-room, to sit down at the large table formally spread with supper, and with the footmen in ceremonious attendance! But how delightful, on the other hand, to hasten to the boudoir, to find an elegant little supper spread upon the table which is only just large enough for the sociable accommodation of a very few persons—to have it drawn close in front of the fire—to put on dressing-gowns and slippers—to dismiss the maids into the adjacent rooms—to eat and drink and converse without restraint!—Ah! this is indeed one of the enjoyments of the boudoir!

We have endeavoured to convey to our previously uninitiated readers some idea of the uses which the boudoir serves amongst our Continental neighbours: but we have now especially to speak of the boudoir of the Empress Eugenie. It can easily be understood how this apartment might serve as an agreeable resort for the Empress when wearied with Court ceremonies, she would wish to be alone with some half-dozen of her ladies-in-waiting,—that formality being thrown aside, she might converse without restraint on the leading topics of the day, or indulge her musical taste, or listen while some new work was being read to her.

It was, as we have said, about a fortnight after the incidents related in the opening chapter, and between five and six o'clock in the evening, that the Empress was seated in the boudoir with some of the principal ladies attached to her person. They were all in full evening attire, and prepared for the announcement that dinner was served up—but previous to which they might reckon on a full hour of agreeable discourse in the elegant retirement of that boudoir.

The Empress—the central star of the beautiful group—was half reclining upon a sofa. She was about twenty-six years of age, and exceedingly beautiful. Nothing could transcend the transparent fairness of her complexion, with the delicate tint of the rose upon the cheeks, and with the bright carnation of the lips, the freshness of which were characteristic of health. Her light auburn hair—luxuriant in quantity, soft and fine in quality,

and shining with a rich natural gloss—was arranged in bands, and gathered in a large knot low down at the back of the head, thus setting off the beauty of that well-shaped head to its fullest advantage. Her eyes were dark, and with their lashes and brows many shades deeper than the hair, formed a species of contrast therewith, producing the most pleasing effect—giving animation to the whole countenance—and enhancing, if possible, the brilliant fairness of the complexion. The features were faultlessly regular, and the countenance formed a perfect oval. Slightly above the middle height, the figure of the Empress was remarkably handsome and graceful in its symmetry. Though a Spaniard by birth, she possessed the fair complexion of the Englishwoman, with the lively and agreeable manners of the French. All who approached her were particularly fascinated by the sweetness of her smile and by the goodness which beamed in her looks. If such high positions as that which she occupies in the world must perforce exist, infinitely more worthy thereof was she than nine-tenths of any of the females who were embellished with the prestige of Royalty from their very birth;—and we may add that pity 'twas such a being as Eugenie should have become the spouse of a man who had waded knee-deep in blood in order to seat himself upon a throne! But on this subject we shall say no more; for politics have nothing to do with the narrative which we are now giving forth to the public.

Let us endeavour to make our readers acquainted with the ladies who on the present occasion were in attendance on the Empress Eugenie. Her Majesty, as we have said, was half-reclining upon a sofa: at the foot stood the Countess de Mauleon, holding in her hand a small bouquet of flowers, enclosed in a piece of snowy-white paper, for fear lest the stalks should soil the delicate gloves which the lady wore. On an ottoman close by, sat a young and beautiful girl, about eighteen years of age, whose dark brown hair served as a frame-work for a countenance full of candour and ingenuousness, and in the liquid depths of whose large dark blue eyes the purest thoughts of an innocent soul might be read. This was Julie Talmont, whose name is already familiar to our readers.

At the head of the sofa three ladies were standing. One, who was placed immediately behind the Empress, was the same Mademoiselle Villefranche who was alluded to in the preceding chapter as the confidante of Julie Talmont. She was a fair-haired beauty, with a figure the least thing inclined to *embonpoint*, but nevertheless perfectly symmetrical. Next to her stood the Baroness de Cardillac—a superb woman, of tall stature and magnificent shape. She was married, and her husband was a high dignitary about the person of the Emperor. She bore the Christian name of Juno; and assuredly no appellation could have been more appropriate, for there was something in her majestic looks, in the expression of her fine aquiline countenance, and in the imposing majesty of her grand and striking figure, which might well remind the observer of the Queen of the Olympian heaven. The remaining young lady was Mademoiselle Lesparre—a beautiful creature, about the same age as Julie Talmont, and of the same style of loveliness.

Thus, of the five ladies now in attendance upon the Empress, one was married—that is to say, the Baroness de Cardillac: one was a widow—namely, the Countess de Mauleon; and the other three were single. When the Empress found herself alone with her ladies on such occasions as this of which we are writing, she treated them as friends and companions—she strove to place herself on a footing of equality with them—and she bade them be seated if such were their inclination. Thus, if some of them were now standing round the sofa whereon the Empress herself was placed, it was not through any observance of a formal etiquette, nor because they felt themselves to be under any restraint: it was simply because each was doing at the moment that which best suited her fantasy or inclination—so that while Julie Talmont only was seated, all the rest were standing.

Within the last fortnight the Countess of Mauleon had displayed a great friendship towards Julie Talmont: she appeared to be attaching herself to this young lady, and demonstrating all those little amiabilities and kindnesses which seemed to be the overtures of a warm friendship. Julie was artless, right-principled, and generous-souled; and she therefore met the Countess de Mauleon's advances with as much cordiality as a certain natural timidity of disposition would allow her to display. But let us now see what is taking place within the boudoir of the Empress Eugenie.

The conversation turned first of all upon the war; and then Julie Talmont's heart palpitated with mingled hope and fear, as she thought of her absent lover,—hope that he might find opportunities of distinguishing himself as well as that he might escape all peril,—and fear lest in the pursuit of glory he should encounter death! But she did her best to veil her emotions while the discourse dwelt upon the warlike topic; for, as we have already seen, this love-affair of her's was a secret which she had revealed only to her confidante Georgette Villefranche, and which she little imagined to be within the knowledge of the Countess de Mauleon.

The Countess, perceiving that the topic was in reality more or less painful to Julie Talmont, sought an opportunity of changing it so soon as she could do so without appearing to trench upon the prerogative of the Empress, who on all such occasions was supposed to give the conversation its tone and impulse. We do not exactly know how it came about—nor is it needful to pause to inquire; but certain it is that something was said which induced the Empress to inquire, "Can any one tell me whether it be really true that this *clairvoyant*—somnambulist—mesmerist—or whatever he may style himself—is performing such wonderful things and creating such a sensation?"

"There can be no doubt, your Majesty," answered the Baroness de Cardillac, "that this youth Alexandre has made himself talked

No. 2.—The Empress Eugenie.

about throughout the entire metropolis. As for my husband the Baron, he is a perfect believer in M. Alexandre's powers."

"And yet, my dear Juno," said the Empress, "every one gives your husband the credit of being a shrewd, strong-minded man."

"True, your Majesty," rejoined the Baroness: "but after that incident in respect to my husband's uncle the banker, M. Bonvard——"

"I have not heard it," said the Empress. "Was it to this that the Countess was just now referring?"

"Oh, your Majesty should hear this tale!" exclaimed Georgette Villefranche: "it is really most remarkable!"

"Upon no other authority would I have believed it," interjected Annette Lesparre, "than on that of such respectable personages as the banker and the Baron."

"You have all heard the story, then," said the Empress, smiling, but at the same time manifesting a considerable degree of curiosity; "and you all appear to believe it?"

"I beg your Majesty's pardon," said the beautiful Julie Talmont; "but I have not heard the story——and indeed, until the topic was now started, I never bestowed any particular attention on the subject of *clairvoyance*, somnambulism, or mesmerism."

"Well, my dear Julie," rejoined the Empress, with a smile, "we will soon see whether we are to become converts to the belief in those mysteries. Now, Juno, we are all impatient for your narrative."

"It was about a fortnight ago," began the Baroness de Cardillac, "that M. Bonvard, my husband's uncle the opulent banker, who has had the honour of being presented to your Majesty, despatched a box of gold bullion by the railway, addressed to M. Dubois, a banker at Marseilles. A letter was sent by the post to inform that banker of the precise time when he might expect the box at Marseilles. Two days afterwards M. Bonvard received a telegraphic message to the effect that the bullion case had not arrived. The electric wires were instantaneously set to work along the whole line: and the results were these:—The box had arrived in safety at Lyons, where it had to be changed into another train; the guard first having charge of it gave it into the care of the guard who was to convey it to Marseilles; the latter guard did not deny that such was the case, but declared that he fancied he had seen it safe in the care of a porter to convey it to his own train; that he did not think anything more of it until he arrived at Marseilles, and then it was not to be found. In short it had disappeared at Lyons, or at all events could be traced no farther than that point. Such was the position of the matter; and although two of the cleverest agents of the Parisian police were sent down to co-operate with the detectives of Lyons, no farther information could be obtained: the fate of the bullion box continued to be involved in the deepest mystery. But the disappearance of the box was not the only calamity involved in the business; for it seemed impossible to determine on whose head the loss was to fall. M. Bonvard insisted upon reparation from the railway company: the company on the other hand proclaimed certain neglected rules and unfulfilled forms in the transmission of the box as a reason for disputing the claim. Thus it seemed that an appeal to the law courts was inevitable. At that moment some one suggested that application should be made to the *clairvoyant* Alexandre. M. Bonvard treated the proposition with a smile of pity; my husband, who was with him at the time, laughed outright; while the two agents of police, who had returned from Lyons, shrugged their shoulders in disgust and scorn. Nevertheless, the friend who offered the suggestion persevered, and vowed that if his advice were not adopted he would go alone to Alexandre and consult him on the point. He also cited some marvellous tales in respect to the youthful *clairvoyant's* wondrous powers; so that at length M. Bonvard began to waver, and my husband remarked that it could at least do no harm, even if it produced no good, to consult M. Alexandre."

"And so they went?" said the Empress inquiringly.

"Yes, your Majesty," was the response: "they went and consulted the *clairvoyant* when he was in a profound sleep or state of coma. This, be it understood, was precisely one week after the box of gold disappeared at Lyons. The box was minutely described to Alexandre, M. Bonvard not forgetting to mention that it had been addressed to M. Dubois, Banker, Marseilles. Presently Alexandre spoke; and he said that at that very moment he beheld a box answering the given description, on the quay of the port of Boulogne; but that there was no such address then upon it. After a little while the *clairvoyant* added that this was the address which he now read on that box:—*M. Legrand, Paris:* then a penmark had been drawn through the word *Paris*, and underneath were written these words, *via Boulogne for England.* Furthermore Alexandre declared that close by this box stood a tall dark-looking man, with beard and moustache, and with a deep scar upon his left temple. He was elegantly dressed; and in addition to the box, had a portmanteau and a carpet-bag at his feet. Having given this information, the *clairvoyant* awoke; but when further questions were put to him, he did not recollect a single thing that he had been saying or that he had seen in his visions; nor could he again be thrown into a state of coma."

"This is really very interesting," said the Empress.

"Very," murmured Julie Talmont, in a lower tone.

"Those who had proceeded with a feeling of incredulity to the lodging of the *clairvoyant*," resumed the Baroness de Cardillac, "departed thence in a somewhat altered state of mind, for the exterior description of the box was most minutely accurate, with the exception of the substitution of one address for another. The telegraph was at once set to work: the electric queries flew with lightning-velocity along the wires to Boulogne; and after a brief interval, they brought back the responses. Yes—there *was* such an individual as the one described, in the town of Boulogne; he had intended to

embark for England—he had been on the port with his luggage—and a portion of that luggage consisted of a box of precisely the form and appearance as the one that was missing, with the exception of the difference of the address printed in large bold ink-letters upon it. But this address corresponded precisely with the one which the *clairvoyant* Alexandre had particularized. It farther appeared that the individual with his luggage had not embarked: a violent storm was raging—the wind was blowing a hurricane—the sea was running mountains high—and no vessel dared put out of Boulogne harbour; so that the traveller and his baggage had gone back to the hotel. Your Majesty may easily conceive what step was then taken. Another message flew down the wires: in half an hour the answer came back: the instructions were obeyed—M. Legrand was arrested, and his luggage was under embargo. Away went M. Bonvard down to Boulogne; and on his representations the box was opened. Yes!—it proved to be the lost property, and was at once identified. M. Legrand was brought up to Paris; and he confessed to the detectives that he had stolen the box at the railway station at Lyons—that he had overheard the instructions given by one guard to the other, and therefore knew what it contained—that he had travelled across the country in postchaises and other hired vehicles, so as to avoid the lines of railway—and that he had thus been so delayed in various ways as to be a week in getting to Boulogne, whence it was his intention to pass over to England and there dispose of his plunder. I need only add," said the Baroness de Cardillac, "that when the bullion was discovered, M. Bonvard sent a very handsome present to the *clairvoyant* Alexandre; and I believe that the directors of the railway company followed the example as liberally—which indeed they were bound to do, for the results of the extraordinary exercise of the youth's powers were to clear up a strange mystery, to exonerate the suspected characters of the two railway guards, to restore lost property, and to prevent a costly lawsuit."

"This is most remarkable!" said the Empress. "It is no wonder that the banker, the Baron de Cardillac, and all concerned, now put implicit faith in the powers of the *clairvoyant*. I should conceive that even the police-agents themselves must be cured of their scepticism?"

"I believe," responded the Baroness de Cardillac, "that those were the only persons who have abstained from expressing any positive opinion on the point: but, as my husband told me, they only shrugged their shoulders and looked at each other more mysteriously than ever."

"For myself," said the Empress, "I cannot do otherwise than firmly believe the tale, given as it is upon such respectable authority. And you, my dear Julie?"

Mademoiselle Talmont was absorbed at the moment in profound meditation: she suddenly started on being thus appealed to by the Empress; and with a blush upon her beautiful cheeks, she said tremulously, "Oh, I, your Majesty? I think the narrative is very wonderful—but it is impossible to doubt it!"

Dinner was now announced; and the Empress Eugenie, attended by her ladies, repaired to the drawing-room, where the Emperor and several nobles of his household were waiting to be thus joined by the remaining portion of the imperial company.

CHAPTER III.

THE THREE COURT LADIES.

The Emperor and Empress were to be present that evening at one of the principal theatres; and thus at eight o'clock they rose from table. The Empress was attended to the theatre by the Baroness de Cardillac and Mademoiselle Lesparre: so that the Countess de Mauleon, Mademoiselle Villefranche, and Mademoiselle Talmont remained behind in the apartments of their imperial mistress at the Tuileries.

We ought to avail ourselves of this opportunity to state that Julie Talmont was the daughter of the Imperial Procurator (or local attorney-general) of an important city in the south of France. It was in that city she had formed the acquaintance of Henri Vigors,—a subaltern in an infantry regiment, and who possessed nothing but his pay. The young lovers felt that it would be utterly useless to implore the assent of M. Talmont and his wife to their betrothal and engagement; for Julie's parents had formed high notions on behalf of their daughter. Thus, when some few months previous to the opening of our narrative, the regiment to which Henri Vigors belonged was ordered to the East, the lovers plighted their vows in secret; for Julie was almost distracted at the idea of separation; and her affection for the handsome Henri, on whose breast she was weeping at the time, got the better of the sense of duty and obedience which she owed to her parents. By those parents her engagement remained unsuspected; and shortly afterwards the Procurator's interest obtained for his daughter the post of Maid of Honour about the person of the Empress Eugenie. The post combined that of *Lectrice*, or "reader," to her Imperial Majesty; and thus Julie Talmont lived altogether in the palace, and did not take her duty by turns, as was the case with the other Maids of Honour as well as with the Ladies of the Bedchamber.

A great friendship had speedily sprung up between Julie Talmont and Georgette Villefranche; and as every young damsel must necessarily have a confidante in her love, the reader will be prepared to learn that there was no exception to the rule in the present instance. But it will sometimes happen that young ladies who are made the confidantes of others, burn to disclose the secret to some other confidantes in turn; and this is especially the case with French ladies, who above all things enjoy a little bit of gossip and mysterious whispering in reference to love-affairs. Georgette Villefranche was really not mischievous, nor treacherous, nor ill-disposed; but she had the foibles of her sex and nation—she could not keep Julie's secret—and so

she one day confidentially whispered it to the Countess of Mauleon. Perhaps it would have gone no further if it had not been for the dissolution of the connexion betwixt the Countess and her lover Faustin Marmande; and then the Countess revealed the secret to *him*, as a means of wreaking a portion of the vindictive spite which she entertained against him.

After having given these little requisite explanations, we will resume the thread of our narrative. It was eight o'clock; and now we find the Countess de Mauleon, Georgette Villefranche, and Julie Talmont seated together in the boudoir. The last-mentioned young lady was pensive and silent: the Countess de Mauleon failed not to notice it—indeed she had perceived that such was Julie's mood throughout dinner-time. What could be the cause of it? The Countess was not merely full of curiosity, but she had likewise displayed great friendship towards Julie during the last fortnight; and there was now an opportunity of making another demonstration of the same kind.

"My dear Julie," she said, taking the young maiden's hand, "you are in low spirits—you are dull? I am afraid you are unhappy?"

Julie started, blushed, and looked confused, just as she had done before dinner when the Empress had appealed to her for her opinion in reference to the story of the *clairvoyant* and the box of bullion.

"Now, my dear friend," the Countess at once proceeded, "if you have anything to vex or grieve you, pray let Georgette and myself have the opportunity of offering consolation. If you need advice, you shall not vainly appeal to us. You know that Georgette is your friend; I hope you will look upon me as your friend likewise?"

"O, yes!" exclaimed Julie: "You have been so kind to me!"

"And let me be your confidante," said the Countess: "reveal to me and to our amiable Georgette here whatsoever is occupying your mind——at least, I mean, if there be nothing indiscreet in asking you thus to confide in us."

"Oh, indiscreet — no!" ejaculated Mademoiselle Talmont. "How can I ever be sufficiently grateful to you for these proofs of friendship? Georgette is already in my confidence:"—and the beautiful girl, with continued blushes on her cheeks, bent a look of mingled archness and confusion upon Mademoiselle Villefranche.

"Ah! I see that it is some little love-affair!" exclaimed the Countess. "Well, my dear Julie, you are young and charming — it is natural that your heart should be susceptible——"

"Oh, tell the Countess everything!" suddenly interrupted Julie, thus addressing herself to Mademoiselle Villefranche: "tell her everything, my dear Georgette—though of course it is all a secret!"

"Oh, decidedly!" ejaculated the Countess de Mauleon. "Come, Georgette:"—and she gaily led her off into an adjoining room.

Of course there was no revelation to make—because, as the reader has seen, Mademoiselle Villefranche had already communicated Julie's secret to the Countess. But they remained in that adjoining room for some ten minutes for the sake of appearances; and then they returned into the boudoir, where Julie started up from another deep reverie the instant that the door was opened.

"Ah, my dear young friend," exclaimed the Countess, hastening forward to embrace her, "I give you all my sympathy—and I will render you all my assistance in whatsoever way my services can be made available. I myself will pretend to have some deep interest in your Henri Vigors—I will speak to influential friends—and they in their turn shall speak to the Minister of War, and to the Emperor; so that we may ensure the promotion of the young subaltern. Or we may get him a good Staff appointment—we will push him on—we will raise him so high that M. Talmont, the Imperial Procurator, will not hesitate to give his assent to the union of his daughter with Henri Vigors!"

Julie pressed the hand of the Countess with the most grateful fervour; and then, with an air as if there were a certain confusion and bewilderment in her thoughts, she said with a singular abruptness, "Do you really put faith in that tale which was told just now?"

"Ah!" responded the Countess; "if you ask me whether I believe that the incidents were precisely as Juno de Cardillac related them, I answer in the affirmative: but if you inquire whether I believe in *clairvoyance*, that is quite another thing!"

"And I confess that I do!" ejaculated Georgette Villefranche. "And if you believe, Countess, in the incidents as related by Juno, you must necessarily put faith in the power by which the lost bullion-box was recovered and the thief has been lodged in the hands of justice."

"Perhaps," said the Countess, with a smile, "there is a certain levity in my disposition—or else a certain disinclination to believe in the marvellous—which made me answer off-hand and with too little consideration. Well then, I recant," she added deliberately; "and I think that I must confess I *do* believe."

"Ah!"—and so suddenly as well as so singularly did the ejaculation burst forth from Julie Talmont's lips, that both the Countess and Georgette gazed upon her with an air of surprise. Again was the young damsel seized with an indescribable confusion; and as if endeavouring to check the progress of her own thoughts, she exclaimed, "No! no! I will not be so foolish!"

A light flashed in unto the mind of the Countess of Mauleon; and taking Julie's hand, she said with a most friendly smile, "I can fathom your wishes. Nay! do not be ashamed! There is no harm in harbouring such an inclination!—there would be no harm in gratifying it! We have got nothing to do ——I had ordered my carriage for nine o'clock, as I intended to go home for an hour or two: but if you like, Georgette and I will accompany you."

"What on earth does all this mean?" asked Mademoiselle Villefranche, opening her large azure eyes in the most unfeigned amazement.

"You are talking in enigmas, Countess—at least so far as I am concerned; though Julie appears to comprehend them."

"Oh, how dull you are, my dear friend!" ejaculated Madame de Mauleon. "Do you not see that we are thinking of paying a visit to the *clairvoyant* Alexandre?"

"Ah! that would be delightful!" cried Georgette. "If I had a lover who was hundreds of miles off, I would very soon consult M. Alexandre, to assure myself that the beloved one is in good health!"

"And these are precisely the ideas," said the Countess, "which our friend Julie has been entertaining. Come! we will proceed together to the *clairvoyant's!* But let us muffle ourselves well up in cloaks or shawls, and put on thick veils, so that we may not be recognised."

"But do you not think me very, very foolish?" asked Julie Talmont, with a tremulous voice and blushing countenance.

"Foolish?—no!" and this ejaculation on the part of the Countess was at once echoed by Georgette.

The three ladies accordingly separated to their respective chambers in that department of the palace: but in about ten minutes they again met in the boudoir, whence they descended to the Countess de Mauleon's carriage, which was in waiting. The Countess first of all gave the order to drive to her own residence, so that the domestics of the palace who were lounging about at the entrance where the equipage drew up might not become informed of their real intention: but when some little distance had been accomplished, the Countess pulled the check-string and issued a different mandate. The carriage accordingly drove in another direction. It presently entered a narrow street, and at length stopped at a house some half-way down this thoroughfare to which we are alluding. No summons was needed at the bell; for the moment the equipage drove up, a wicket in the large carriage-gates of the habitation opened. As the three Court ladies passed in, the wicket at once closed behind them; for it was managed with a wire and a spring communicating with the porter's lodge. It must not however be supposed that Alexandre the *clairvoyant* occupied an entire mansion or kept a porter at his gate: but for the sake of our untravelled readers we will observe that nearly all the houses in Paris are of immense size, built in the form of squares, with court-yards in the midst, whence three or four staircases open up; and the huge carriage-gates, with the appurtenances of a porter and lodge, are thus to be seen at almost every one of these houses. Each house itself contains numerous suites of apartments, varying in size and appointments, from the ground floor to the highest, and thus apportioned to all standards of rent. Twenty or thirty families—sometimes even double that number—may therefore all live as it were beneath the same roof—all as complete strangers to each other and as entirely ignorant of each other's names, as the same number of families would be if living in London in as many houses all forming a row and denominated "a street."

The three ladies, ere alighting from the carriage, had put on their black veils, and had muffled themselves in the plainest and commonest travelling-cloaks which their wardrobes could furnish. On passing through the wicket, the Countess de Mauleon stepped up to the window of the porter's lodge, and simply spoke the name—"M. Alexandre."

It was an inquiry: the porter knew what it meant; and he answered, "The first to the right—third floor."

The ladies accordingly took the first staircase on the right hand: it was well lighted with gas, and they hastily ascended it. They passed the door of the suite of apartments on the first floor: a physician dwelt there. They passed the door of the suite of apartments on the second floor; some private family dwelt there. They reached the landing of the third floor; and on the outer door of that suite of apartments, appeared the name of M. Alexandre on a small oval zinc plate.

But now the courage which had been inspired by ardent love's anxious curiosity on the part of Julie Talmont, began to fail; and stopping short, she said in a tremulous whisper to her two companions, "Oh, what if I were doing wrong?—what if I were seeking to penetrate unduly into hidden mysteries, and to court the agency of powers which may be less allied to inspirations from heaven than from another and very different source!"

"Be not frightened, my dear friend," said the Countess de Mauleon, who liked the adventure well enough. "Taking for granted every point of Juno's story, it is quite evident that M. Alexandre's powers are exercised for a good purpose. Besides, we have gone too far to retreat without overwhelming ourselves with ridicule in each other's eyes."

"Then let us proceed," said Julie.

The Countess of Mauleon rang the bell; and the door was immediately opened by an elderly woman, plainly dressed, and of rustic appearance. She respectfully saluted the three ladies, but said nothing—and at once conducted them through a little lobby, or hall, into an ante-room well lighted and heated by a shut-up stove.

"Is M. Alexandre disengaged?" inquired the Countess de Mauleon.

"Yes," responded the woman; "and you could not have come more opportunely: for though this is the hour when the spiritual humour is chiefly upon him, yet it is likewise the time of the day when he has fewest visitors. He is at present alone."

"Then lead the way, my good woman," said the Countess: "for we wish to consult him."

"But you must enter separately," replied the female. "The one who chooses to consult my son first, may come with me."

"Indeed! is it so?" ejaculated Madame de Mauleon. "For my part, I have nothing to learn in which your son's agency can serve me."

"Nor I," added Georgette Villefranche: and then both the ladies turned towards their friend Julie Talmont.

Again did this young maiden's courage fail her: indeed a sensation of awe had taken pos-

session of her—and she would fain have retreated. But she remembered what the Countess had said in reference to overwhelming themselves with ridicule: and thus a certain little feeling of pride—or rather, we should say, a fear of contempt—urged her on. The woman stood with her fingers upon the handle of an inner door—Julie stepped forward—the Countess whispered "Courage!" and the young maiden accompanied the female into the adjacent apartment.

It is not however our purpose to follow her; but we must remain with the Countess de Mauleon and Georgette Villefranche in the ante-room. They conversed together for some little while in a subdued tone, for they were not altogether exempt from the same sensation of awe which had gradually closed in as it were upon the mind of their young friend. They expressed a wonder whether she would sustain her courage becomingly—what she would hear—whether it would be agreeable—whether it would prove true—or whether it would be the mere random assertions of empiricism? But after a little while their discourse gradually dwindled into silence: Georgette Villefranche found her superstitious sensation growing more and more oppressive; and even the Countess felt her usual vivaciousness and cheerfulness failing her. The two ladies sat down and gave way to their reflections.

Half an hour elapsed from the moment that Julie Talmont had passed away from their presence; and now the inner door opened and she came forth. The veil was still over her countenance, so that her two friends could not see how she looked; but it struck them both that she staggered, or at all events walked unsteadily, as if labouring under some powerful emotion. The woman was behind her; but her countenance was just as calm and unruffled as when she had first given the three ladies admission.

"Come away! come quickly!" said Mademoiselle Talmont, in a low, hurried, and altered voice, as the Countess hastily approached her.

"Good heavens, my sweet friend!" exclaimed Madame de Mauleon, now smitten with alarm: "has anything happened?"

"Come quick, I say!—let us leave this place!" responded Julie; and it was still in a voice that sounded most unnaturally unlike her own.

"Are there any fees to liquidate?" asked the Countess, turning towards the woman; for she thought that Julie might have possibly forgotten this part of the business in the midst of the agitation under which she was evidently labouring.

"The fees are paid," answered the mother of the *clairvoyant*.

She then opened the outer door of the suite of apartments; and the Countess said in a hurried whisper, "Lean on my arm, dear Julie!"

"No, I thank you," replied the young lady, in a voice that was no longer tremulous,—but cold, level, and monotonous, as if emanating from fixed despair itself.

Madame de Mauleon saw that this was not the moment to ask for explanations; and she led the way down the staircase, Julie following, and Georgette closing the rear. The last-mentioned young lady was even more pained and anxious than the Countess herself on her friend's account, because she really possessed a better heart and more sensibility than Madame de Mauleon. In a couple of minutes they were all three seated in the carriage; and the Countess ordered the coachman to drive to her own mansion. But Julie at once said, "No, I beseech you! Let us return to the palace—for I do not feel very well—I am anxious to seek my own chamber—I require a night's rest to—to——"

The Countess comprehended that Mademoiselle Talmont had received some shock which it would probably take a few hours to get over; and therefore she at once determined to comply with the young lady's request.

"Yes—drive to the palace," she said to the lacquey who was awaiting orders.

"Stop one moment!" ejaculated Mademoiselle Talmont; and opening her cloak, she looked at her watch by the light of the lamp which was over the gateway whereat the carriage was standing. "Twenty-five minutes to ten," she said. "*Twenty-five minutes to ten!*" she still more emphatically repeated. "And now drive on."

The footman leapt up to his place on the box by the side of the coachman; and the equipage rolled rapidly away.

"Twenty-five minutes to ten!" again repeated Julie Talmont: "in the evening of the 19th of October," she went on to say in a musing tone, but in a voice which sounded so strange and altered from its natural accents that it was painful to hear it:—then suddenly seeming to recollect that she had companions with her, she exclaimed quickly, "And you too, my dear friends, bear in mind this hour and this date!"

"Good heavens, my dear Julie!" said the Countess; "what can you possibly mean? Something has distressed you——"

"Oh!" cried Georgette Villefranche, "how bitterly, bitterly do I deplore that we should have yielded to this fantasy—that we should have given way to this idle whim!"

"Blame not yourselves," interrupted Julie Talmont, now speaking firmly and as if with a mind courageously nerved. "It was all my own fault. I sought by illegitimate means to obtain a knowledge——but no matter! Perhaps it is all for the best."

"Is it possible that you have heard some evil tidings?" inquired the Countess, whose curiosity amounted almost to a veritable agony. "Has anything happened to your lover? Is he wounded—ill——"

"Do not ask me, I beseech you!" interrupted Julie Talmont. "If you are both really my friends, you will not question me on the subject!—you will never again allude to it! No!—nor yet let the name of Henri Vigors be ever again breathed in my hearing! I adjure you by all that there is sacred and solemn in the feeling of friendship, to grant me these favours!"

"The mystery is dreadful!" said Georgette

Villefranche, shuddering: "but still you have a right to dictate, Julie, in the name of friendship—and you shall be obeyed!"

The Countess de Mauleon dared not urge any further queries or give rein to her own curiosity, after the generous speech which Georgette had just made; and she therefore was compelled to add, "Yes, my dear friend—you shall be obeyed!"

The equipage reached the Tuileries; and Mademoiselle Talmont, now raising her veil, embraced both her friends ere retiring to her own chamber; and they noticed that she was pale as death, and they felt her countenance was also as cold as that of a corpse.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CRIMEAN TENT.

THE scene now changes; and we must transport our readers to the interior of a tent belonging to the English encampment in front of Sebastopol. But though it is to the Crimea that we thus for a time transfer the theatre of our story, yet we deem it proper not to lose an instant in notifying that our purpose will be to have as little concern as possible with the tremendous events which occurred in that clime, and which have ere now taken their proper places in the pages of history.

The tent to which we purpose to introduce our readers, belonged to a young officer named Clement Stirling, and who was a lieutenant in an infantry regiment. He was about four or five and twenty years of age—slender, well-made, and tolerably good-looking. The interior of his tent was not utterly devoid of every comfort, although it assuredly afforded a striking contrast to the handsomely furnished apartment which Lieutenant Stirling was wont to occupy when his regiment had been quartered in England. Yet now, within that tent, there was the camp-bedstead, made of iron and with brass ornaments—a light and even elegant manufacture; and there was an ample supply of bedding. A portable stove stood near the opening of the tent, so that the smoke might escape by the same avenue that served as a door. A cheerful fire was blazing, and a kettle was sending forth its steam; for the water was boiling to make punch for the behoof of Clement Stirling and a friend who had dropped in to bear him company for an hour or two. There was no table; but this deficiency was supplied by a trunk, which was covered with bottles and glasses; and a couple of camp-stools served for the accommodation of the master of the tent and his guest.

It was between six and seven o'clock in the evening when we thus peep into the interior of that tent; and as it suits the purpose of our tale to be very particular in reference to dates, we will add that it was the 19th of October—the very same day, in short, on which occurred the incidents so faithfully described in the preceding chapter. Perhaps our readers will have the goodness to bear in mind these coincidences of date, as they may possibly have more to do with the development of our narrative than may at present appear.

We have already said that Clement Stirling was a tolerably good-looking young man; and if we now contemplate him, as he is seated on his camp-stool, leaning in a *nonchalant* way against the pole supporting the tent, smoking his cigar, and discoursing with his companion on the battle of the Alma, the flank march to Sebastopol, and the preparations that were making for the grand siege, we should say that he was a good-tempered young man—not particularly overburdened with brains—somewhat thoughtless—courageous, but not boastful—and with but a very superficial knowledge indeed of military affairs. His companion was Captain Clive—an officer in a cavalry regiment, who was some five or six years older than the infantry lieutenant. Captain Clive had strongly marked features of the aquiline cast: he wore a moustache, and was already suffering his beard to grow: he was tall and strongly built, and altogether had a veritable martial appearance. As he sat smoking his meerschaum pipe, and conversing with his companion, a strong contrast might have been perceived between the looks of the two officers; for whereas there was something off-hand and frank, and even generous in the expression of Lieutenant Stirling's countenance, there were on the other hand all the evidences of the shrewd, calculating, experienced man of the world depicted on the features of Captain Clive.

After Clement Stirling had been talking for a while—somewhat flippantly and superficially withal—on recent events and military matters in general—and after Edward Clive had dogmatized in an authoritative, arrogant, self-sufficient style for an equal length of time on the same subject—there was a pause in the discourse, while the glasses were being replenished.

"By the bye," exclaimed Clement Stirling, suddenly recollecting something, "I expect another fellow to smoke a cigar here presently."

"Do I know him?" inquired Clive.

"No: he belongs to our neighbours," responded Stirling. "A devilish fine specimen of a young French officer he is too!"

"Well, I don't know how it is," observed Clive, "but those French officers never impressed me with the idea of being gentlemen. They all look as if they had risen from the ranks——"

"Come, come, Clive!" ejaculated Stirling, "that's being a little too severe on our neighbours. I tell you what!—I think we ought to be generous and do them all the justice possible, now that we are fighting alongside of them——"

"And who the devil wants to do them an injustice?" demanded Clive, almost gruffly. "I don't say the officers ain't brave: but I say that they don't look like gentlemen. I know deuced well they don't shrink from the smell of powder: but I'll also take my oath that they are not a bit more afraid of the smell of onions."

Clement Stirling burst out laughing at this wretched attempt at wit; and then he said,

"'Pon my soul, Clive, you are too hard upon the French officers. In the first place you know they don't *all* rise from the ranks; a good many of them enter the army direct from the Polytechnic Schools — which are pretty much like our Military College at Sandhurst, you know."

"Just as if I didn't know about the French Polytechnic Schools!" said Captain Clive. "Didn't I live four or five years in France before I went into the army?"

"Well then," ejaculated Stirling, "you must have seen that there are some fine elegant young men amongst the students at the military academies; and if you grant me this, you must also grant that a number of the same sort are necessarily to be found in the army."

"Well, we won't dispute on the point," rejoined Captain Clive. "But who is this fine specimen of a French officer that you have picked up?"

"You will see him presently," answered Stirling. "I met him a few days ago down at Balaklava: we got into conversation—and I soon found that he was a devilish nice sort of a fellow, and that I should like him very much. He is not older than I am; and he has got a couple of decorations."

"What?" exclaimed Captain Clive; "two decorations?—and he not more than three or four and twenty!"

"It is as I tell you," answered Stirling. "He was all through two campaigns against the Kabyles in Algeria. In one he led a sort of *forlorn hope*, which however fully succeeded; and in the other he had the good fortune to save the life of the Governor-General, Changarnier. So he obtained a medal for the first exploit, and the cross of the Legion of Honour for the second. Then, it appears, he distinguished himself very highly the other day at Alma——"

"I suppose he told you so?" said Captain Clive superciliously.

"Not he!" returned Clement Stirling: "I heard it from another quarter. The fact is, this new friend of mine invited me the day before yesterday to visit his tent and go over the French encampment. Well, I went; and what do you think? After we had gone over the camp, he took me to his tent—and there was as elegant a little luncheon as you could wish to see. Two or three other French officers were present; and it was afterwards, when in conversation with one of them, that I learnt how my new friend had distinguished himself at the Alma. He belongs to Bosquet's division; and he was therefore one of the first up the heights that day."

"But I am afraid," said Captain Clive, looking slowly round the tent, "that you won't be enabled to return your French friend's hospitality in anything like decent form. What the devil will you give him as a set-off against his elegant luncheon? A glass of grog and one of these villanous cheroots?"

"And a hearty welcome," added Clement Stirling. "But still, that's not quite all. I had made arrangements for a little amusement this evening, Ned—a sort of surprise, my boy——"

"How so?" asked the Captain.

"Well, there'll be supper here between nine and ten o'clock," rejoined Stirling: "that matter is all settled, I can tell you! Oysters—cold fowls—a ham——in short, enough for six."

"And who are to be the six?" asked Clive. "We shall be three men; and by rights there ought to be three women: but devil a chance is there in this place of seeing anything decent in the shape of a petticoat!"

"Now don't be too certain," said Clement Stirling, with a sly look: and then, as he beheld his companion's puzzled countenance, he burst out into a loud merry laugh.

"Well, I suppose there's another surprise," said the Captain, "greater still than your supper of oysters, fowls, and ham?"

"I tell you we shall be six," rejoined Stirling; "and the three who are to make up the party will be the prettiest—genteelest—nicest-looking girls——"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Clive. "You don't mean to say this?"

"I do mean to say it; for I saw them at Balaklava, where they arrived the very same day that I first fell in with my French friend. The fact is, I went down to clear a hamper of wine and spirits that had arrived from England; and I fell in with the three beauties who had come up from Constantinople in the same ship which brought my package. Two of the girls are English—the third French."

"And they are coming to sup with you?" demanded Clive.

"Positively. Wait and you will see. They have doubtless warlike tastes," continued Stirling, with a merry laugh; "and therefore they have followed the allied armies."

"Then, all things considered," observed Captain Clive, "you will return most handsomely the hospitality you experienced on the part of your French friend. A supper is an equivalent for a luncheon, to begin with: but *you* throw in the additional advantage of a delectable female society."

"And thus I have prepared a little surprise for my French friend," exclaimed Stirling. "We will have a bit of fun with him——we won't tell him a single syllable about the expected visit of these fair ones——he shall indeed be taken unawares!—and as I think he is the least thing inclined to be sentimental—though a devilish fine high-spirited fellow, mind you!——"

"Do you mean that he will either be making serious love to one of these girls, or that he will be somewhat shocked at finding himself in such company?" asked Clive, with a sneer.

"Well, if either of the two, it will be the latter: for I noticed that when we were down at Balaklava together, and I pointed out the girls to him on the quay, he seemed perfectly indifferent; and when I said that I should go and introduce myself to them, he bade me 'good day.' Then, when I was at lunch with him, I got talking of those girls, and told him how one was a fellow-countrywoman of his—a sweet pretty creature——What the devil is her Christian name? Oh, I remember!—Artemis!"

"How classical!" ejaculated Clive. "And pray what are the names of the other young ladies?"

"Oh, they are English. Well, I forget—— Oh, no! I remember! Laura and Caroline! But I was telling you that when at luncheon with my French friend, I spoke to him of Mademoiselle Artemis; and instead of entering into the spirit of the thing, he put on a serious look, saying something about *poor girl,* and *what a shocking thing it was she should come all the way from France for immoral purposes!*"

"Well, after that, Stirling," said Captain Clive, with a contemptuous laugh, "I begin to think that this young French officer of yours is nothing more or less than a precious milk-sop."

"I do think he's the least, *least* thing sentimental: but he is too fine a fellow to deserve to be called a milksop. We shall bring him out and have some fun with him. Come, Ned! don't go and be prejudiced against Vigors before you see him."

"Eh! what?" ejaculated Clive, with a sudden start. "What name did you say?"

"Vigors—Henri Vigors," responded Stirling. "But the name seemed to strike you?"

"No—not at all," returned the cavalry officer, who had immediately recovered his wonted cool self-possession. "It only occurred to me that the name was rather a curious one—nothing aristocratic in it:" and then as Clive proceeded to replenish his meerschaum pipe, he muttered to himself, "This is singular! the very person I wanted to get acquainted with! How exceedingly remarkable! But after all, let me make quite sure."

Clive drew forth a letter; and under pretence of tearing off a piece of the fly-sheet for

the purpose of lighting his pipe, he glanced at its contents, and read the words—"*a certain Henri Vigors, a lieutenant in the —th regiment of light infantry.*" There could no longer be a doubt; for Captain Clive knew very well that the regiment thus referred to belonged to General Bosquet's division.

"No—the name certainly is not a very aristocratic one," said Clement Stirling, in reply to the remark which his companion had just now made: "but still it is a good enough name, for all that."

"Do you mean that M. Vigors belongs to a good family?" inquired the cavalry officer.

"I know nothing about his family: we have never spoken on the point. But it must at least be a respectable one; or else he could not have got admitted into the Polytechnic School of Paris, where he was educated for the army."

"True!" observed Clive: "but a family may be respectable without being genteel, much less aristocratic. One's butcher and baker and grocer may be very *respectable*——"

"How you do run on in reference to my poor young friend Henri Vigors!" exclaimed Clement, laughing. "You are positively amusing, Ned!"

"Oh, you call him a *poor* friend, do you? Then I suppose he is not particularly well off? —perhaps nothing but his pay? In fact, there is scarcely one out of ten of these French officers who can boast of a shilling beyond their actual stipends."

"I am able to tell you," answered Stirling, "that Vigors has not a single franc beyond his pay; because the same French officer who whispered to me at the luncheon how splendidly Vigors had behaved on the heights the other morning—the Alma affair I mean—told me that he was considered a capital fellow in his regiment: he was never in debt, and always had a few francs to lend a friend; he kept himself respectable, and could occasionally afford such a spread as he gave us on the occasion in the shape of lunch. And now I think you know all about him—or at least as much as I can tell you. But it is eight o'clock!" added Stirling, looking at his watch, "and I expected him here by this time."

The young officer rose and went to the entrance of his tent: it was a beautiful light evening—the sky was cloudless—the stars were shining brilliantly. A form was advancing at a little distance amidst the mazes of the English encampment; and Stirling quickly recognised the individual whom he was expecting. Lieutenant Vigors approached—hearty shakings of the hands took place—and entering the tent together, Stirling introduced his friend to Captain Clive. The Captain greeted the young gentleman with all befitting courtesy; and he could not help admitting in his own mind that Clement Stirling's eulogies of Henri Vigors were by no means exaggerated. It required but a glance at the French officer to feel convinced that he was a perfect gentleman in his appearance and manners: remarkably handsome he assuredly was; his figure was faultlessly symmetrical; and he looked the accomplished young soldier. He wore upon his breast the decorations to which Clement Stirling had alluded. In order to complete the portraiture, we may add that he had dark hair and eyes, and his glossy black moustache threw out in most advantageous contrast the brilliancy of his teeth. He wore no whiskers: his complexion was embrowned with exposure to the sun—but this gave a manly air to the countenance.

The conversation that followed was carried on in French, which language Edward Clive spoke with perfect fluency; and Clement Stirling was tolerably well versed in it.

"Now, Vigors," said Clement, "you may either sit on this camp-stool—or on that bed—or on the corner of this box: for, as you may perceive, my domestic arrangements are somewhat limited."

"Do not put yourself to any inconvenience on my account," interrupted Henri. "I should prefer standing for the present: I have been sitting in my tent all the afternoon——"

"Drinking and smoking, I suppose—as we have been doing?" interjected Captain Clive.

"No;" responded Henri Vigors, with a smile. "I have been studying maps and plans of all this part of the Crimea; and I have also been writing several letters to France."

"Well, then," ejaculated Stirling, "now you can enjoy yourself. Here are cigars——"

"I took the liberty of bringing you some," said Vigors, "not knowing exactly how you might be supplied in this place, where one cannot step out and get what one wants, as in Paris or London. General Bosquet made me a present of a box of cigars this morning; and here are a few."

Thus speaking, Vigors placed about a couple of dozen cigars on the box serving as a table; and the entire proceeding in reference to this little present was conducted with the most gentlemanly tact—not with the air of a person studiously and officiously bestowing a favour—but with the ingenuous, off-hand, frank demeanour of a fellow-soldier ready to share with his comrades whatsoever *he* might possess and in which *they* might be deficient.

"Thank you, my dear Vigors," said Stirling: "these do indeed look like capital cigars—better than my own. And now brew for yourself. Here's wine, and brandy, and gin; and the kettle, as you see, is boiling away furiously."

The three officers continued to discourse on a variety of subjects; and Henri Vigors showed himself, without pedantry, to be a young man of intelligence—well read in all useful branches of education, and with a veritable scientific knowledge in respect to military matters. Clement Stirling—who usually indulged in a light frivolous style of conversation, spiced with a ribald anecdote, a loose jest, or an obscene song—seemed to forget his wonted predilection, and fell into the strain of more serious and rational discourse which now took its inspiration from the young Frenchman. As for Captain Clive, he in reality possessed far more understanding than his English comrade; and he presently found himself almost fascinated by the conversation of Henri Vigors. And yet Henri himself was totally unconscious that for the time-being he

was effecting this wholesome change in the tastes of Clement Stirling; or that he was producing so great an impression upon Edward Clive.

The time passed rapidly away: and Clement Stirling, on presently referring to his watch, found to his surprise that it was half-past nine o'clock, when he had scarcely thought that it could be as yet nine.

"By Jove!" he ejaculated, starting up from his seat: "it is time they came——I mean it is time that my servant showed himself to make some little arrangements for supper."

"Ah, to be sure!" said Captain Clive. "But what about a table?"

"Oh, that is all arranged," cried Stirling. "Two boxes placed upright, endways, with some boards laid across—there's the table! Then your tent can furnish four camp-stools, I know; and so we are provided for seats!"

"You expect company?" asked Vigors.

"Just two or three friends," responded Stirling, with an apparently careless air. "Ah, by heaven! here they are!" he ejaculated.

And sure enough, at the moment, three young women made their appearance at the entrance of the tent, where they stood timidly and hesitatingly for a few moments, until they caught this ejaculation from the lips of Clement Stirling; and then they immediately recognised him to be the English officer who had invited them thither. They were all three good-looking, young, and well dressed: the two English girls had light hair and blue eyes—the French girl, who might even be termed beautiful, had dark hair and brilliant black eyes.

The instant they entered the tent, a shade of displeasure fell upon the countenance of Henri Vigors: but he almost immediately muttered to himself, "Well, but at all events I must not appear like a fool or a saint in the presence of these English officers! I did not court this position: but I must yield to it! Rest assured, sweetest Julie, that now as ever shall I remain faithful to *your* image!"

Both Clive and Stirling had watched the sudden change of displeasure which came over the young Frenchman's countenance: but at the second glance which they flung towards him, they saw that the cloud had passed away and that his features beamed with as much good-nature as ever—so that they fancied they must have been deceived by their own eyesight.

"Ladies!" exclaimed Clement Stirling, "let me present you to my friends. This is Captain Clive—as brazen-faced a fellow as ever you could wish to meet! And this is M. Vigors—as modest and retiring as if he had never pressed the lips of a pretty girl in all his life!"

"Oh!" cried Caroline—a gay, giddy, laughing creature, "I will take your French friend under my own special guidance!"

"And I must do the same kind office in respect to you, Captain Clive," said Laura, who was about as sprightly as her English companion.

"Then you, my dear Artemis," exclaimed Clement Stirling, "must sit next to me at the supper-table."

The French girl burst into a merry musical laugh, as she ejaculated, "Table indeed! Where is your table? And where is this splendid supper you promised us?—oysters, chicken, champagne, and heaven knows what! I am sure the jolting which we have endured for five mortal miles in that dreadful sort of vehicle without springs——"

"The *araba*, my dear Artemis," interjected Caroline.

"Ah, well! the *araba*, or whatsoever the vehicle is called!" continued the French girl. "I am sure a five miles' jolting from Balaklava up to the camp, in such a wretched contrivance, is enough to give one a good appetite!"

"No doubt, my dear girl," interjected Clement Stirling: "and you shall not be disappointed."

"Oh, that is excellent!" ejaculated Artemis, clapping her hands with delight. "But really, unless you possess an enchanter's wand, I do not see how anything of all you have promised is to be forthcoming—unless it be the champagne?"

"Ah! now you will see!" exclaimed Stirling, as his man-servant entered at the moment.

Armstrong—for that was the name of the soldier acting in the capacity of Clement Stirling's domestic—quickly showed that he had an eye to the comforts of his master, even though it were within the canvass walls of a Crimean tent. He had borrowed a table-cloth here, and some extra glasses there; he had even got together a sufficiency of plates to allow a couple to each guest—which was a great achievement, even at the very commencement of the siege, and before casualties of all sorts had utterly denuded the unfortunate English army of every possible comfort. Armstrong had moreover already procured the camp-stools from Captain Clive's tent; and everything, in short, seemed to progress in the most promising manner. The provisions were under Armstrong's special care, in a tent which he shared with three or four other soldiers who likewise acted as domestics to some of the officers;—and he could rely upon his comrades in neither making an onslaught on the said provender on their own account, or suffering it to be made by any other hungry marauder.

In a very short time a table was constructed and spread in Clement Stirling's tent: the promised viands were produced—the guests took their seats—and the champagne-corks speedily began to fly.

Artemis sat next to Clement Stirling: Laura placed herself by the side of the cavalry captain; and Caroline, as a matter of course, was left to the attentions of Henri Vigors. The reader may have perceived that it was with a feeling of distaste the young Frenchman found himself dragged into this scene: but how was he possibly to retreat from it? No young man chooses to stamp himself as a puritan or a male prude (if the expression may be allowed us) in the estimation of his friends and acquaintances; much less could such self-degradation be inflicted in the army. Henri would not have willingly sought such a scene; and if previously warned of the company in which he

was to find himself, he assuredly would not have visited Clement Stirling's tent on the present occasion. But he was taken unawares—it was a complete surprise—it was just the same as if the ground had opened under his feet and let him down into a mine. He was *there*—and he must stay: but, as we have seen, he inwardly vowed that his conduct should prove as little faithless to the image of his beloved Julie Talmont as possible. He was by no means angry with the two English officers for having thus taken him by surprise and played him a sort of trick; his ideas were manly and enlarged—and he therefore knew that it would only be courting ridicule if he took umbrage at the proceeding. It was a practical joke which amongst men was only calculated to provoke laughter,—a fact of which Henri's good sense and experience at once made him aware.

The young French officer therefore seemed to enter fully into the spirit of the convivial scene: but at the same time there was something in his look and his manner which kept Miss Caroline at a certain distance, and prevented her from becoming quite so familiar with him as Laura and Artemis were rendering themselves with the other gentlemen respectively. Not that these two gentlemen could themselves perceive anything constrained in Henri's conduct, or that Caroline had the slightest reason to complain of any want of attention in respect to the amenities of the supper-table. It was a sort of tacit, secret, undefinable influence which rendered Caroline less bold than she otherwise would have been towards her companion, and made her comprehend that while he was treating her with the utmost politeness and courtesy, it was only because he found himself in that particular position, and not with a design of cultivating her acquaintance after the banquet should be over.

The champagne corks were flying—justice was being done to the supper—laughter and hilarity prevailed. At length after a brief pause in the discourse, which had hitherto been continued along with eating and drinking—Clement Stirling inquired, "But what on earth, after all, made you three fair ones think of coming to the Crimea?"

"Did we not tell you the other day?" asked Laura with a laugh.

"I remember very well you told me that you wanted to see something of the fighting: but that I did not believe—for although I am prepared to hear that female curiosity will go to any extent, yet it is rather too much to suppose it will reach to this extreme. Now, for my part, I should be more inclined to fancy that you had particular objects——"

"Particular objects?" ejaculated Artemis. "Ah! then," she continued, with a joyous silvery laugh, "you think that we have lovers in the Crimea!"

"You have them to-night within the canvass walls of this tent," responded Clement Stirling. "But still, after all, we are not the lovers that you come to seek on the theatre of war."

"I can assure you for my part," said Laura, —"and I know I can speak for my two friends likewise, that we are not induced to seek the Crimea by any such tender considerations. Ah, lovers indeed! I had for the last eighteen months been under the protection of an *agent-de-change*, or stockbroker, in Paris: he died suddenly——"

"And left you a fortune, doubtless?" said Captain Clive.

"He died insolvent, and left me nothing," rejoined Laura. "O! yes! I forgot!—he left me all my debts to pay: and as this was by no means convenient, I determined to take a trip somewhere."

"And you did not think of returning to your native England?" said Captain Clive, inquiringly.

"Oh, England indeed! or rather London we ought to say!" ejaculated Laura. "No, I thank you! There is no such thing as existing in London after having lived in Paris—especially," she added after a moment's pause, and with a slight blush upon her cheek, "for any one in my position. Ah! it grieved me to leave the neighbourhood of the Lorettes: but I shall go back to it in time!"

"You have not yet told us what made you travel to the Crimea," said Clement Stirling.

"But I was coming to that point," replied Laura. "When my stockbroker died and left me with nothing but debts, I was thinking of what I should do——I mean to say of which part of the world I should visit—when my friend Caroline came to call upon me."

"And did Caroline also live in the district of the Lorettes?" asked Clive.

"Yes, certainly," responded Laura; "and in the same street as myself. But let her tell her own tale."

"It is soon told," said Caroline: and then having glanced timidly for a moment at Henri Vigors, of whom she began to be a little afraid, for she saw that his morals were better than those of the other gentlemen present—she went on to observe, "I am not like Laura in her passionate adoration of Paris. I like change and variety, and want to see the world. I have lived in excellent style in London and Paris—I was also for a few weeks at Brussels—and once paid a flying visit to Berlin——"

"So that you have been a great traveller, Mademoiselle," said Henri Vigors, with that species of constrained politeness which he had from the first manifested towards his fair companion.

"Yes—I am fond of travelling," answered Caroline. "Therefore, one day, after having had a desperate quarrel with the Under-Secretary of State, beneath whose protection I was living at the time, I called upon my friend Laura: she was anxious to leave Paris on account of her debts—I wanted to get away for change of scene—excitement—or whatever you may choose to call it: and while we were still deliberating to what part of the world we should journey, Mademoiselle Artemis was announced."

"And her appearance settled the point," interjected Laura: "so we all three resolved to come to the seat of war. Ah! it was amusing to behold us taking stock of our possessions, so to speak!—agreeing to unite our finances and make a common purse! All my furniture

went for the rent: but the sale of some of my jewels produced seventy or eighty pounds: and to this extent was I a contributor to the joint-stock concern."

"As for me," said Caroline, "I had no debts —but on the other hand I had no ready money —for I don't know how it is, but I never could keep money in my life. I had very few jewels: for my Under-Secretary of State was the meanest fellow in existence; and I do not think that I should have kept on good terms with him so long as I did, if it had not been that the connexion itself was something to be proud of, and rendered me an object of great consideration amongst the Lorettes. But I was going to observe that having no ready money at command and no more jewellery than was absolutely necessary for a decent appearance, I was obliged to sell my furniture; and that realized a hundred pounds. It went at an immense sacrifice; but I was in a hurry to dispose of it — and so it was taken off my hands by the lessee of a theatre who wished to place a young actress in apartments of her own."

"And how was it that Mademoiselle Artemis decided the point in reference to the scene of your travels?" asked Captain Clive.

"Oh, it is no secret," said the beautiful French girl, with a peculiar look for a moment, and then with a sudden resumption of a gay careless air. "Laura has told you that she wanted to leave Paris on account of her debts —Caroline because she longed for change of scene——"

"And you, my dear Artemis?" asked Stirling.

"Oh, I?" responded the French girl: "why, in search of vengeance!"

"What?" ejaculated Stirling, who thought that his ears must have deceived him.

"You cannot mean what you say, Mademoiselle?" exclaimed Captain Clive.

Henri Vigors said nothing; but he contemplated Artemis with attention and interest, for his curiosity had been suddenly excited by the strange explanation she had given of her motive in visiting the Crimea.

"I can assure you I mean what I say," continued Artemis, sipping from the glass of champagne which she held in her hand. "Very likely you may smile to think that a Lorette should dream of vengeance?—and perhaps you will be all the more likely to treat the matter with ridicule when you learn that it is a tale of love, and treachery, and seduction."

"No, Mademoiselle," said Henri Vigors: "we shall not treat your narrative with ridicule."

"Ah, indeed," exclaimed Artemis, laughing gaily, "I am not going to inflict the story upon you."

"Pray tell us it," said Captain Clive, sipping his champagne. "I am sure it must be interesting."

"Yes—do tell us all about it!" exclaimed Lieutenant Stirling. "And yet of all the people in the world," he continued, "you seem to be the very last, my dear Artemis, who would step out of your way for any purpose besides that of pleasure, or take so much trouble to wreak a vengeance. Besides, one can scarcely believe that you have ever suffered any annoyance."

"Ah! I see that you are not acquainted with the character of Frenchwomen," responded Artemis. "We are too vivacious—too full of animation—too prone to seek diversion, to suffer a settled melancholy to steal upon us, to yield to despondency, or to abandon ourselves to despair. But think you that because we are so ready to smile upon all those who have never injured us, that we can forget the injuries sustained at the hands of a wrong-doer? No! no! We have our feelings—we are alike weak and strong in our passions! But I shall say no more!" she ejaculated, her whole countenance brightening up into absolute radiancy. "Come, let us drink and enjoy ourselves, and forget that the conversation was even for a single moment verging towards a serious topic."

"Ah! that is the way," exclaimed Laura, "you always break off in the middle when discoursing on that particular subject."

"To be sure!" ejaculated the French girl. "Let me be Artemis the Lorette so long as I am in blithe and gay society—and not Artemis the Avengeress!"

"But still," said Clement Stirling, "you have excited our curiosity to such a degree that I hope you will at least give us a few more particulars in reference to your visit to the Crimea. You see how candid Laura and Caroline have been——"

"Ah! and I will be candid on the same points," cried Artemis. "Well, I had been living in the same district as Laura and Caroline for a couple of years and upwards—my friend, or protector, or whatever you choose to call him, was a rich gentleman—very old—very eccentric—but very fond of me——indeed to the extent that he offered me marriage——"

"And is it possible that you refused?" ejaculated Stirling.

"I was scarcely so blind to my own interests," responded Artemis. "A gentleman with three hundred thousand francs a year——"

"Twelve thousand pounds in our money!" interjected Clive.

"Old enough to be my grandfather—with one foot in the grave," proceeded Artemis, "and therefore not very likely to trouble me long—but on the contrary, with every chance of leaving me a rich young widow in a year or two——"

"What advantages!" ejaculated Stirling. "But how the deuce came such an excellent match to be broken off? Or perhaps it is only postponed—or the old gentleman may be dead——"

"You will never guess," interrupted Artemis, "and therefore you had better let me tell you. The truth is, my old friend had some twenty nephews, nieces, and other kinsfolk; so they took counsel together, and on the very day when the first arrangements were to be made, and the wedding presents were to be bought, the intending bridegroom of seventy-

six years of age was suddenly pounced upon and locked up in a mad-house."

"What a tragedy!" ejaculated Clement Stirling.

"I could not help laughing at such an issue, as ludicrous as the whole proceeding itself," observed Artemis: "but to my annoyance I found that other people were laughing likewise."

"Who?" asked Stirling, "the old fellow's nephews and nieces?"

"Oh, I dare say they laughed, as all persons who win *may* chuckle," rejoined Artemis: "but that is nothing at all, for I did not see them in their moments of merriment, and their mirth did not reach my ears. But all the Lorettes of the district treated the affair as one that was supremely ridiculous. The fact is," continued Artemis, with a smile, "I had been foolish enough to say that when I was married I would become veritably and truly an honest woman, in conduct as well as in name. It was a great mistake on my part. The Lorettes, who cannot bear the idea of virtue in woman, took great offence at what they considered to be the slight thrown upon the whole sisterhood, and therefore they rejoiced at an opportunity of pointing at me the fingers of ridicule and scorn. Now this was conduct that I could not bear up against. I can laugh at every possible misfortune under the sun: but to be the object of ridicule—no, never! So, for the first week I cried my eyes out ——"

"Why the devil didn't you move into another part of Paris?" asked Clement Stirling.

"Nonsense, my dear fellow!" interjected Clive: "you don't know what you're talking about."

"What!" cried Artemis, "remove into another neighbourhood? leave the quarter of the Lorettes? But, my dear sir, that would have been a humiliation!—the first step in that pathway of descent which — which —— But no matter," she ejaculated, thus suddenly interrupting herself. "Well, as I was saying, for the first week I cried my eyes out ——"

"You have got a very beautiful pair of substitutes," said Stirling; and then he complacently caressed his chin, evidently fancying that he had paid a compliment most exquisitely happy and sweet.

"Well, well," cried Artemis, laughing,—for every Frenchwoman loves a compliment, no matter how wretched, insipid, or mawkish it may be; "you know I was only speaking figuratively. Let us say, then, that I cried for a whole week. Afterwards I wiped my eyes, and proceeded to take counsel of my friends, Laura and Caroline. Ah! I should observe that they, dear girls! had never treated me discourteously; but on the contrary they came and condoled with me, when my old septuagenarian was locked up in the mad-house."

"Well," said Clive; "and so I suppose you found these young ladies in the act of holding a council-of-war upon their own proceedings?"

"Precisely so," responded Artemis. "But at that moment I received an intimation which led me to believe that a certain person—the object of my cherished vengeance—was with the French army at the seat of war. The very thing that suited me! Anxious to leave Paris until the storm of ridicule should have blown over, what could I do better than prosecute that idea which for five years past had never been absent from my mind, but which had only lain dormant because of my ignorance of the whereabouts of him whom I hated. But here I am again!" she ejaculated,—"touching on the forbidden subject! Come, let us drink! You now know how it was that I joined with Laura and Caroline in this trip. Ah! I might have mentioned that having some little ready money by me, I was compelled neither to dispose of jewels or furniture; so I shut up my apartments in the Quarter of the Lorettes—gave the key to the porter—and set out with my two friends here for Marseilles. Thence we voyaged to Constantinople—and from Constantinople we came to Balaklava like three adventuresses as we are."

"You are the most incomprehensible being I ever met in my life!" said Clement Stirling. "So full of animation and spirits—and yet pursuing this vengeance so implacably——"

"Perhaps Mademoiselle was deeply, deeply wronged," said Henri Vigors, still surveying his fellow-countrywoman with interest and curiosity.

"Yes," said Artemis: "and it was not altogether the old story—or else I should not crave vengeance; no, nor should I have ever registered an oath within the depths of my own soul that this vengeance should be sooner or later wreaked! Come, I see that you are all bent in pressing me on this topic: therefore I will just say a few words—and then we will talk of something else. I am going to look back for about five or six years. At that time I was living with my parents — no matter where: it was in a beautiful little village a considerable distance from Paris. My father was a notary—a sort of lawyer, you know. He was not very well off—but he gave me a decent education. The house he lived in was his own: it was much larger than was required for family purposes; and a portion of it was let out in lodgings. One day a young gentleman came to look at the apartments: he was pleased with them, and he offered to take them. My father however did not exactly like the circumstances in which the young gentleman arrived at the village. He had no luggage and no passport: but he had plenty of money—and on taking up his temporary quarters at the inn, he sent out to buy necessaries of every description. It seemed as if he had run away from somewhere; but he was good-looking and agreeable in his manners—I, a mere girl of sixteen, was struck by him—and I therefore pleaded in his favour. My mother, who loved money, did the same: my father was therefore overruled—and when the young gentleman came back for his answer, he was told that the apartments were at his disposal. Well, I am not going to make my story a long one. I loved—and I was deceived. At the end of six months the young gentleman pretexted the necessity of a journey to Paris: but he never came back! Then it transpired —I scarcely know how, for I was overwhelmed with grief at the time—but my father by some means discovered that the young gentleman had been staying with us under a false name,

and that it was some circumstance of an infamous character which had compelled him to bury himself in that seclusion until his friends had contrived to hush up the transaction and enable him to reappear in the world."

"Ah, this becomes romantic," said Captain Clive, in a tone which slightly savoured of a sneer: but instantaneously assuming his most courteous aspect, he said, "Then I suppose, Mademoiselle Artemis, you found out his real name?"

The young Frenchwoman had flung her eyes angrily upon Captain Clive for a moment when he made that semi-sarcastic observation: but likewise recovering her good humour, with the utmost quickness, she responded, "No, I did not discover his real name. I have never known it. If I had, I should not now be in pursuit of him—but my vengeance would long ago have been wreaked!"

"And have you never seen him since?" asked Clive.

"Yes—once," returned Artemis; "and that was two years ago. I was riding in an open carriage in the neighbourhood of Versailles, when a horseman in an undress military uniform rode past. It was he. I recognised him at once—an ejaculation burst from my lips—but he was gone. That was how I learnt that he belonged to the military profession."

"And you have never since met him?" asked Clive, now sipping his champagne with a careless, listless air.

"I have never since seen him," answered the young Frenchwoman. "But the other day, in Paris, I met an elderly woman who used to live as a servant at my parents' abode. She had recently come from Marseilles; and she gave me a piece of intelligence. It was to the effect that some few weeks previous, she had witnessed the embarkation of troops at that port; and she had recognised in a handsome uniform that young man who was a lodger at our house years ago—by whom my ruin was accomplished—and who was the cause of my fleeing from that happy home of mine and becoming what I am."

The tone and look of Artemis had gradually assumed a serious impressiveness towards the end of this speech: but all in a moment regaining that vivaciousness which was her characteristic, and her countenance now sparkling with animation, she cried, "Let us think only of the happiness of the present moment! Drink, my friends!—drink to the success of the Allied Armies!"

Bumpers were accordingly filled, and the glasses were drained. But then a pause followed—a certain degree of pensiveness seemed to be stealing on all present—the narrative of Artemis had produced an effect which it was evidently difficult to shake off.

"I see that you must have as many details," she cried, "as I am able to afford! I was wrong to touch upon the subject—but since I have piqued your curiosity, I have no right to leave it half gratified. Let me see?—what was I telling you? Oh! that I met Madeleine—that was our old servant—the other day in Paris, just at the very time when I was going to consult with Laura and Caroline. Madeleine told me of having seen that officer at Marseilles: but in the hurry, bustle, and confusion that attended the embarkation of several regiments, she was unable to obtain an answer to any query that she put. Thus she failed to discover who he was, or to what regiment he belonged—in short, she could give me no details whatsoever."

"And it was upon this vague information, Mademoiselle," said Henri Vigors, "that you came all the way to the Crimea——"

"Yes—on no other information. But why not as well visit the Crimea as any other part of the world? Ah! perhaps you wonder that I have not returned to my home? That home ceases to exist—my parents are no more. Now, you see," continued Artemis, speaking with a rapidity that was assumed for the purpose of concealing or subduing the emotions that had been excited within her, "I am a very singular person—a trifle given to sentimentality: but then am I not a veritable daughter of France? You English people can scarcely comprehend the character and dispositions of French women. Now, if mine had been a common case of love and seduction, I should consider it to be the height of absurdity to harbour a spite against my undoer——I mean if there had been nothing more than the ordinary weakness on both sides. But this case is different, for I have not told you all. That man not merely won the affections of *my* heart, but he likewise ingratiated himself into my father's confidence. Yes!—my father, at first so mistrustful, ended by becoming the complete dupe of that young man; so that when the wretched impostor's own finances were exhausted, he had recourse to my sire's purse. Before he departed for Paris, he succeeded in obtaining a considerable sum from my father, on pretexts which I will not now pause to detail. My father could not afford thus to lose his little savings: he was plunged into difficulties in consequence——And thus," added Artemis, in a low voice, "it was not altogether my disgrace and flight from home which broke my father's heart. As for my poor mother, she died almost at the same time, of a disease of the spine with which she had been long afflicted. Now, to bring this doleful history to a conclusion, let me reiterate the observation that mine was no ordinary case—but it was associated with many circumstances which rendered it one of deepest villany on the part of the author of my ruin. Therefore is my vengeance implacable!"

"And have you yet made any inquiries," asked Clement Stirling, "in the French encampment, so as to ascertain whether there is any one resembling that person to whom you are alluding?"

"Yes—I have made inquiries," responded Artemis, "but as yet ineffectually."

"Well, here is an opportunity!" exclaimed Stirling. "Our friend Vigors, who is so popular in the French army, and knows everybody, may perhaps be enabled to satisfy your curiosity. Come, give him the description of the hitherto nameless one——"

"No—pray do not appeal to me!" interrupted Henri Vigors. "Great have evidently

been the wrongs which Mademoiselle Artemis has sustained: but still I cannot be a party to a deed of vengeance. I should feel myself bound to decline informing Mademoiselle where she might encounter the individual, even supposing that I was enabled to give such information;—and I do not wish to be forced into acting what may seem an unhandsome or churlish part."

"Quite right! quite right!" said Captain Clive: and for a moment Clement Stirling looked astonished, for he thought that this speech on the part of Henri Vigors was just the very one calculated to excite the sneers of the cavalry officer. It however seemed to be quite the reverse; and Clive went on to say, "Mademoiselle Artemis would do well to think deliberately over this project of vengeance of hers—so that if she ever should fall in with the individual who has so angered her, she might rather trust to his honour and good feeling——"

"What! for marriage?" ejaculated Artemis, with an air of surprise and disdain.

"No, not exactly marriage," responded Clive,—"but for the restitution of the money borrowed from your father, as well as for damages, or indemnification——"

"Enough, sir!" interrupted Artemis, with an air of dignity. "As a Lorette I sell my charms: there is no hesitation in confessing this truth! But as a Woman, I could never sell my feelings. All the gold in the world would not produce the slightest abatement of that implacable hatred which I feel towards the man of whom we have been speaking. But now enough!—we have already been too serious and too grave. Captain Clive, you no doubt meant well in what you said; so there is no ill-will between us. Come, let us *trinquer* together."

"Willingly, my dear girl!" responded the Captain.

The two champagne glasses were accordingly filled; and then the process took place, which was merely that of the Captain and Artemis approaching their glasses until the brims touched,—something resembling what in vulgar parlance amongst the English is called "to hob-and-nob together."

"And now, my charmer," said Clement Stirling, "since we are going to leave serious subjects, and talk upon all kinds of light and trivial nothings, let me tell you that I am very curious to ask two questions."

"Ask them, sir," replied the young Frenchwoman. "When I hear them I shall know whether I can give the answers."

"The first question is how you came to be called Artemis? It is a sweet pretty name, and becomes you admirably."

Here the young woman burst into a fit of the most joyous laughter; and Clement Stirling looked as if he suddenly suspected he had said something very ridiculous.

"As for the name becoming me," she said, "I think your desire to pay compliments is much greater than your knowledge of the classics. Now, I have been told that Artemisia was the chaste wife of some ancient king, and that all kinds of beautiful epithets used to be bestowed upon her. Do you know it was for this very reason that the name was given to me by the other Lorettes when I first went amongst them? They are fond of anything epigrammatic, or humorous, or witty, or that has to be interpreted by the rule of contraries. I have known the most licentious amongst them called Diana, and the most depraved has often been styled Vesta—which you will admit were misnomers amusing enough?"

"Then Artemis is not your proper name?" asked Stirling, with some degree of surprise.

"No," rejoined the young woman. "Whatever my proper names were—Christian or surname—they are renounced and abandoned——not because they are unworthy of *me*, but because I have become unworthy of *them!*" she added in a low tone and with a gradually drooping look.

"Upon my soul, my dear!" ejaculated Stirling, "there is an immense deal of true sentimentality in your disposition!—and what with the champagne and one thing and another, I think it is very pretty."

"Did you not know that Artemis is fond of poetry?" exclaimed Laura.

"Oh, yes! I can assure you she is," cried Caroline. "She is more accomplished than you fancy; and it was because she stood so high amongst the Lorettes, and was so superior to the generality of them, that they became jealous of her and treated her as she has told you."

"I can understand that," said Stirling; "for you are beautiful enough, my dear Artemis, to excite the hottest love and provoke the fiercest jealousy."

"Thanks again for your compliment, sir," she replied.

"And so Artemis is now your Christian name, just as if you had received it at your baptism?"

"Just as if my godfathers and godmothers had given it to me."

"Well," said Stirling, "so much for your Christian name. Now may I ask by what surname you are known?"

"Ah! I have not thought of that lately," replied Artemis, with a smile.

"What do you mean? I don't think of my name: but yet I know what it is—and when questioned, I am always ready to answer that it is Stirling."

"Oh! but that is very different," responded Artemis. "When I first went to Paris I was Mademoiselle Descroix—then I became Madame Renouard—then Madame Lagrange—then Madame Duchatel—lastly and latterly, indeed for upwards of two years, I was Madame Beaufort, because that was the name of my Under-Secretary of State."

"Ah! now I comprehend!" ejaculated Stirling; "and therefore you have kindly informed us how many lovers you have blest with your favours since you first went to Paris."

Artemis flung upon Clement Stirling a sly mischievous look, at the same time observing, "My memory is rather bad, and therefore I cannot tell whether I have enumerated quite all. But you said that you had a second question to ask? Pray put it."

No. 4.—The Empress Eugenie.

"It may be showing my ignorance—but still I have a great curiosity on the point," said Lieutenant Stirling. "Of course Clive knows all about it—for he was in Paris for some years——"

"Ask me," said Artemis, "what it is you desire to know; and if I can instruct you, I will."

"A thousand times this evening," replied Stirling, "have I heard the term *Lorette* mentioned; and I scarcely comprehend what it means—unless it is a genteel expression for—for——"

"Something of the sort," said Artemis, with a blush and a smile. "But I must tell you that a very pretty part of Paris, quite at the West End, bears the name of the Quarter of the Lorettes. In that district there is a handsome church dedicated to Our Lady of Loretta. I know not how it was, but certain it is that some twenty or thirty years ago all the most fashionable and beautiful of a certain class of ladies took up their abode in that quarter. As their number increased the other inhabitants made way for them, and were dislodged so to speak. The consequence was that all the streets in the immediate neighbourhood of the church of Our Lady of Loretta became occupied by ladies living under the protection of distinguished and wealthy persons. Thus they received the name of *Lorettes* from this circumstance——though, by the bye, whether they gave themselves the name, or were so christened from another source, I really cannot tell."

"Ah, then, I comprehend!" said Stirling. "It is a sort of aristocracy of gay ladies—the patrician order of frail beauties——"

"Speak it out frankly," said Artemis: "the Lorettes are the *élite* of a certain class. To abandon the quarter of the Lorettes and to take a lodging elsewhere, is to be sinking in that particular grade of the social sphere: it is considered to be a sign of going down in the world—therefore you understand that I entertained a repugnance at the idea of removal."

"Just so! I see it all now!" said Stirling. "But our two friends here—Laura and Caroline——"

"Ah! they have not removed from one quarter to another," responded Artemis: "they have merely given up housekeeping in Paris for the present, because they are on their travels. But come!—we have had enough wine. Have you no music? Let us have a waltz."

Artemis started up from her seat: Laura and Caroline imitated her example, both clapping their hands, and exclaiming, "A waltz or a polka!—and then back to Balaklava!"

"But this table—all these things here," said Stirling,—"the tent is full!"

"Call your man," exclaimed Artemis; "let everything be removed, and we will have a polka."

Stirling accordingly summoned Armstrong, who was at no great distance; and in a very few minutes the aspect of the tent's interior was completely metamorphosed again.

"It is close upon half-past twelve o'clock," said Artemis, consulting a very handsome watch which she possessed. "Come now! If we have no music, we must content ourselves with humming airs. You will dance, M. Vigors—will you not?"

"You must really excuse me, Mademoiselle," responded the young Frenchman: "but—but—I am so fatigued with duty—and moreover I must be up early in the morning——"

"Caroline," cried Artemis, "I am ashamed of you! You have not actually succeeded in making this young soldier reasonable or rational!"

"I will try!" ejaculated Caroline; and being now excited with champagne, she no longer felt the glacial influence of the French officer's cold reserve.

She bounded towards Vigors. A glance showed him that there was already a sneer upon the lips of Captain Clive, and that even the naturally good-natured countenance of Clement Stirling wore an incipient expression of contempt and scorn. He was smitten with the dread of ridicule,—that fear which is so galling to all young men in general, to all officers in particular, but more especially still to all Frenchmen. Therefore, as Caroline bounded towards him, he did not repulse her—he did not keep her off—he did not even retreat. No: he dared not! But he laughed, as if suddenly entering with blitheness into the spirit of the thing—he received the girl in his arms, and then began to whirl her round the tent in a polka. Clive, Stirling, Artemis, and Laura laughed heartily; and the next moment the three couples were all engaged in the dance,—Clement Stirling whistling a tune at the highest pitch, and performing the most fantastic tricks as well as cutting the most curious capers, to the infinite delight of Mademoiselle Artemis.

And now let our readers bear in mind that coincidence of date to which we have already alluded, and thereby comprehend the coincidence of circumstances which we are about to describe. For inasmuch as there is a difference of exactly three hours between the clocks in the Crimea and those in Paris, it was half-an-hour past midnight in the Crimea when it was as yet only half-past nine in the evening in the French metropolis;—and thus at the very moment when Henri Vigors, with a merry-sounding shout of laughter, was receiving the volatile and excited Caroline in his arms,—the beautiful Julie Talmont, hundreds of miles away, was consulting the *clairvoyant* Alexandre in reference to the well-being and proceedings of her far-off lover!

CHAPTER V.

THE BEAUTIFUL STRANGER.

It was about half-past one in the morning when Henri Vigors reached his own tent within the French encampment. He felt vexed and dissatisfied with himself: he was uneasy in his mind. High-spirited to that degree which made him dread the sneer of ridicule even for the performance of a moral

action under certain circumstances, he was peculiarly sensitive, and his feelings were of the most generous character. He could not therefore help thinking that he had more or less outraged the image of his beloved Julie Talmont by the orgie at which he had been present and the fact of having strained a loose girl in his arms. He was naturally too upright in his character, too noble in his principles, and too sensible of the dignity of the masculine mind itself, to be a very good hand at dealing in sophistry or conjuring up specious reasonings in order to serve as a salve for his conscience. He therefore felt all the more acutely the indelicacy of his conduct towards the image of Julie Talmont; and his natural sensitiveness becoming morbid on the point, made him regard it as even more outrageous that in reality it was.

It was thus in no very sprightly mood that Henry Vigors reached his tent. His servant was sitting up for him—or rather was supposed to be doing so; but the poor fellow, wearied out, had sunk down upon his master's camp-bed and was fast asleep. An English officer would most probably have given his servant a kick, levelled imprecations against his eyes, and asked him what the devil he meant by such impudence as that: but Henri Vigors only smiled good-naturedly and compassionately; and laying his hand upon his servant's shoulder, he said, "Pierre! Pierre!" in a voice merely calculated to awaken the man without causing him to start up in alarm.

"Eh? what? I beg you a thousand pardons, sir," said Pierre: "I forgot myself—sleep must have overtaken me——"

"But why did you wait for me at all, Pierre?" inquired the Lieutenant. "I told you when I set off that you might retire to rest—that I should not want you any more to-night——"

"I beg pardon, sir," interjected Pierre; "but I was entrusted with a particular message by General Bosquet——"

"Ah! a message?" ejaculated Henri. "Some duty to perform——"

"No, sir—this letter to deliver," rejoined Pierre. "It ought to have been in your hands two or three days back: but this and several other letters were accidentally detained up at head-quarters—they were sent down to General Bosquet's tent this evening at about ten o'clock —and the General's aide-de-camp, when he came to your tent, sir, charged me to sit up and deliver this explanation, accompanied by regrets at the delay which has occurred."

Henri Vigors had taken the letter: he saw that the address was written in a very beautiful female hand—but a second glance showed him that it was *not* that of his beloved Julie Talmont. He now perceived that the handwriting was evidently disguised: he hastened to open it—and on beholding the name of her who was uppermost in his thoughts, he turned away under the pretence of approaching the light, but really for the purpose of preventing Pierre from observing the emotion that was expressed upon his countenance. The reader has already conjectured that this was the letter which the Countess of Mauleon had anonymously penned immediately after her interview, a fortnight back, with Faustin Marmande.

"You can retire, Pierre," said Vigors: and the domestic withdrew accordingly.

"A friend acquainted with the secret engagement existing between myself and Mademoiselle Talmont?" murmured Vigors, in a musing strain: "who can this friend be? Julie has not told me in her letters that she has made a confidante of anybody! Faustin Marmande——I know him only by name——and to my knowledge I have never seen him. Ah! the writer expresses a conviction that this Marmande's addresses will be rejected. Oh, yes!—this is a tribute to the steadfast affection of my Julie! But these addresses may be changed into a veritable persecution! What!—would he dare——But no! The Empress will protect the otherwise defenceless Julie! Ah, if I might venture to implore leave-of-absence and speed to Paris, I would speedily teach this insolent Marmande a lesson that he would not in a hurry forget! But no. To leave the army now under any pretence, were to brand myself as a coward! Why need I be thus excited—thus alarmed? Julie is faithful —and she will remain so. As a man of honour I am to destroy this letter, and not to a soul must I hint that the information was conveyed from an anonymous female source in Paris! Well, those injunctions shall be obeyed."

Henri Vigors read the letter over again—weighing every word, estimating the meaning of every sentence, until it was completely impressed upon his memory. He then burnt the document by the flame of the lamp which lighted his tent.

"Yes—Julie is faithful to me!" he repeated to himself. "But I——Oh, my God!" and now he nearly wrung his hands in anguish—— "how have I been conducting myself towards her? Faithless in deportment though not in soul!—criminal in my actions, though guiltless in my intentions! Ah, Julie! would you forgive me if you knew what has taken place? —and can I forgive myself? Perhaps at the very moment when you, my beloved Julie, were in fondness thinking of *me*, the absent one, I was committing a fearful outrage against you! Ah, never shall it occur again! No!—ten thousand times rather let me dare the shafts of ridicule and the arrows of scorn than prove faithless, beloved Julie, to thine image! The date—the hour—yes, the very minute, shall become memorable in my life; because it shall prove the commencement of a new epoch. Henceforth let me arm myself with moral courage,—that courage which is even greater than physical courage! The brute may have the latter: it is only the sentient being which can possess the former;—and I, by the want of it, have reduced myself to a level with the brute!"

Henri Vigors paced to and fro in his tent in an agitated manner; and then suddenly stopping short, he drew forth his pocket-book, and with a pencil made the following memorandum:—"*Half-past twelve in the night between*

the 19th and 20th of October. To be the date of a new epoch! Moral courage!"

"There!" ejaculated Vigors, as he consigned the book to his pocket again, "I feel happier and more at ease! It is as if some one had given me a talisman which henceforth shall maintain me in the path of strictest rectitude and propriety!"

The young Frenchman then retired to rest; and he slept soundly, dreaming of Julie Talmont—but with no torturing nor terrifying visions arising from the anonymous letter which he had received.

Some days elapsed, during which Henri Vigors did not see anything more of either Clement Stirling or Captain Clive: for within the lines of both armies the utmost activity was prevailing. Neither did our young French officer encounter the three Lorettes; and he knew not whether Artemis was still prosecuting her inquiries throughout the French encampment for her faithless swain.

One morning Henri Vigors had occasion to visit Balaklava for some business purpose; and as he was proceeding along one of the cliffs overlooking the harbour, he was struck by beholding a female in a singular posture at a little distance. She seemed to be seated upon a part of an old ruined wall,—her elbows resting on a higher portion of the masonry than that which served as her seat—while her clasped hands sustained her head which was slightly inclined forward, though not actually drooping. The spot was a lonely one; and thus it occurred to Henri Vigors that the female, whoever she were, must fancy herself to be altogether unobserved and was yielding to a deep pensive reverie.

He drew nearer: she moved not—and again he stood to contemplate her. He could not yet obtain a view of her countenance; but he beheld the long flowing masses of her raven hair, and he could trace the outlines of her figure, the exquisite symmetry of which was not concealed by the loose apparel that she wore. Indeed, it seemed as if she were some beautifully sculptured statue, draped with a flowing robe, which was confined to the waist by a dark ribbon tied negligently round her form. Her arms were bare almost to the shoulders; admirably modelled were they—and the complexion of the skin was that of a clear brunette. That this female was young, Vigors had not the slightest doubt; for the figure had all the fresh, full, and swelling contours of youth,—and her hair, as we have said, was of raven blackness. It floated down her back,—it floated likewise on her bosom, between her two beautiful arms which rested on the masonry—the long heavy tresses depended below her waist and rested upon her lap.

Henri Vigors drew nearer still. And now was it a dream in which his imagination was cradled? or was there earthly reality in the vision which seemed to be breaking upon him? Motionless sat the female. But gradually as Vigors approached, a countenance of angelic loveliness was revealed to him. The Grecian profile—the large black eyes, soft and full of tender feeling, raised towards heaven—the brows well divided and nobly arched—the exquisite configuration of the mouth—the saint-like pensiveness of the look,—all constituted a picture which made Henri Vigors stop short in astonishment. The interesting stranger was not above the middle height; but her figure, as the drapery revealed all its outlines and contours, was of a symmetry that might have constituted a model for a Grecian statue. One foot had escaped from its slipper: it was stockingless—it peeped forth from beneath the skirt of her flowing garment—it was as exquisite in its proportions as the arms and the hands, which were naked—or as the bust which the folds of the drapery delineated. A large straw hat lay upon the ground near her, and a shawl which she had taken from her shoulders appeared upon the masonry against which she was supporting herself. As Vigors continued to gaze upon this beautiful being, her lips moved as if with the wavering of silently breathed prayer; and then a glimpse was caught of such a set of teeth as might have been expected to shine in pearl-like embellishment of so lovely a mouth. But all this while she seemed not to notice the young Frenchman: her looks were turned upward: the full orbs of her large black eyes were completely visible—for the long dark fringes of the lids pointed up towards the zenith. Who was she? What could she be? Her garments denoted not a high position: but a soft elegance pervaded her form—there was an undefinable gracefulness even in that posture which was so unstudied. Her looks, though pensive, were not unhappy, nor even melancholy:—they seemed full of a beatific feeling, as if they were those of a saint aspiring to heaven!

Without on *this* occasion meriting the slightest accusation of infidelity towards the beautiful Julie Talmont, Henri Vigors was assuredly filled with the utmost interest and admiration. Amidst that wild scenery the appearance of such a figure was not altogether inappropriate: for there was a preternatural beauty—a somewhat more than earthly air—which would have rendered her existence in the crowded cities of European civilization something incompatible, as if two inconsistent things were being associated. But to meet her there, seated amidst the rocks overlooking the sea,—there, in that wild Crimean clime—loosely dressed as if it were the statue of a female saint, and yet with the softest and sweetest animation of vitality upon her angelic face,—to find her in that posture, with eyes upturned to heaven,—there was a certain appropriateness for such a vision appearing in such a place, in the same way that we might expect to meet with a holy anchorite in the mountains of Lebanon or Ararat, or with the loveliest flowers upon the vast prairies of the Far-West.

Henri Vigors knew not whether to steal away, still unperceived by the beautiful stranger,—or whether he might venture to accost her with some remark, in the hope of leading her into discourse. He could not determine in his mind upon any specific conjecture in reference to the country to which she might belong. She had the pure Greek profile: but still Vigors did not exactly fancy that she was

of the Greek race—for her long raven hair was evidently as soft as silk and shining with a rich natural gloss; so that where it was parted smooth down upon the beautiful-shaped head ere it began breaking into heavy curls and tresses, it had a velvety appearance. Such is not the case with Greek women; for their hair is slightly inclined to be coarse, and it is of a dead black—that is to say absolutely jetty, without the shining gloss upon it. Neither did Henri Vigors believe that she was Italian, nor yet Spanish; for the delicate brunette of her complexion—a mere slight tinge of bistre—was utterly devoid of sallowness or of the tint of the olive. Then of what nation was she? True it was, thought Vigors, that France and England produced beauties of all styles and appearances, though each nation might have its own special type to serve as a general rule: but still he was at a loss to assign unto this mysterious personification of loveliness any particular country as a birth-place.

While he was still standing at a short distance, uncertain whether to advance nearer or retreat altogether, the beauteous being slowly turned her looks towards him—but without the least evidence of surprise on beholding a stranger there: she was no more startled at finding that Vigors was so near her than if she had from the first had some intuitive idea of his approach, though her outward vision, being lifted heavenward, perceived him not. Neither did any change come over her countenance: it remained pensively serene, with an expression of saint-like resignation upon it, just as at the moment when the young French lieutenant caught the first glimpse of that charming face. She appeared to be about eighteen years of age; and as she slowly removed her arms from the species of pulpit of masonry on which she had been leaning, and rose up from the seat which she had occupied, Vigors perceived that in nothing had he misjudged the exquisite symmetry of her form or the natural graces of her general appearance.

It was only for a few instants that she turned her looks upon him, without surprise and without curiosity—but yet with an air that more or less bewildered the young officer; for it did not encourage him to make the slightest overture towards conversation, while on the other hand there was nothing repelling or prudishly reserved in her manner. A calm self-possession supplied the place of a bashful modesty—and, in a word, it seemed as if the presence of Henri Vigors was a matter of the utmost indifference to the lovely stranger. Having for a few moments turned her beautiful large black eyes upon him, she stooped to pick up her straw hat: she then threw her shawl over her shoulders—she thrust her naked foot into the slipper that had temporarily come off—and she moved away from the spot.

Vigors was about to hasten after her, to say something—he knew not what,—to get into conversation with her—to learn who she was and where she dwelt,—when all in a moment it struck him that the very curiosity he thus experienced was *another* treachery to the image of his beloved Julie Talmont. And then he thought of the memorandum he had entered in his pocket-book, and of the solemn protestations which he had made at the same time. Moral courage was from that day forth to be the watchword of his conduct—the talisman of his life's tenour! Here, then—on this very occasion—was an opportunity of putting himself to the test; and though the lovely stranger was still scarcely fifty yards distant, he sped not forward to overtake her—but turning abruptly round, struck into a descending path which led towards the harbour of Balaklava. He did not even look behind him; and as he reached the foot of the cliffs, he felt that he had done his duty, and experienced the supreme satisfaction of a man who had remained faithful to a valuable maxim laid down as a rule of conduct.

As he was proceeding in the direction of the English station—for it was there that his business lay—he suddenly heard some one shouting out his name in a cordial and enthusiastic manner; and he was almost immediately joined by Clement Stirling.

"Why, my dear fellow," exclaimed the English officer, "it is an age since we met!"

"You are very kind," replied Vigors, "to intimate that a week is an age in the estimation of friendship;—and perhaps you may think me remiss in not having called upon you since the entertainment you gave me? But I have not had a single half-hour that I could call my own——"

"Pray don't offer any excuses," returned Clement Stirling; "for I have been just as much occupied as you have. Only perhaps you have been doing something, whereas I have been doing nothing."

Vigors laughed, and said, "Come, come, my dear Stirling, that will not do!—for I know that the greatest activity has been prevailing within the British lines as well as within our own."

"Oh, yes—the greatest activity," said Stirling, quietly taking out his cigar-case and lighting one of the cigars,—having proffered the first choice to Vigors, who however declined: "the greatest activity indeed," repeated Stirling.

"Well, I thought so," said his French friend. "And you therefore have been busy along with the rest?"

"As busy as the devil," replied Stirling. "I have to turn out every morning at seven o'clock to come down to Balaklava, to superintend the transport of all these stores up to the camp."

"That must be an agreeable duty enough," observed Vigors.

"Oh, uncommon agreeable! I have nothing to do but to come down to Balaklava, smoke and chat all day long—go back to the camp at night, and report that the stores can't be removed till the morrow. Then, you see, as the old proverb says to-morrow never comes, so the stores are never removed."

Henri Vigors stared in amazement for a few moments, while Clement Stirling leant loungingly against a bale of goods, quietly puffing his cigar. At length the young Frenchman exclaimed, "And you therefore come into Balaklava every day for nothing?"

Stirling nodded his head in a listless, careless way; and then with a yawn, he said, "So you see, my dear fellow, I am constantly occupied in doing nothing."

"But how is this?" inquired his French friend.

"Ah! how the devil is it?" ejaculated Stirling. "Suppose you were in my place and you found that you had to deal with people who knew nothing and could do nothing, to what conclusion would you come? Why, you would be so bewildered that you would give up thinking on the matter. Yes—you would give up *thought* itself as a bad job!"

"I really do not understand you, my dear Stirling," said Vigors.

"Well, listen a bit," resumed Clement. "I come down to Balaklava at about nine to superintend the transport of these stores to the camp. I go to First Authority and report my object. 'Very well, sir,' is the reply; 'remove the stores by all means.'—'But where am I to get vehicles?' I ask.—'Ah, sir, that is not my department,' says First Authority.—So I go to Second Authority and say, 'I want vehicles to transport the stores.'—'Where is your written order for the removal of the stores?'—'I have not got one.'—'Then you must procure it, sir,' says Second Authority.—So back I go to First Authority, who tells me Second Authority knows nothing of his business and is bound to supply the vehicles on demand. So back I go to Second Authority, who while absolutely refusing to waive the particular point of official etiquette, tells me at the same time that it would be all the same if he did waive it, as he has no vehicles to supply. Then I think to myself that while First Authority is making up his mind about sending the written order, and Second Authority is looking out for the vehicles, I may as well be looking out for the horses, so as to lose no time. I therefore go to Third Authority. He receives me most kindly—would do anything to serve me—anything to advance the interests of the army—but he really cannot act until he has seen the order for removal, signed by First Authority and countersigned by Second Authority: and even then he does not think that he shall see his way very clear about the furnishing of the horses, for the simple reason that he has got no horses to furnish. Now this was the occupation of my first day," continued Clement Stirling; "and ever since—that is to say, for about six consecutive days—I have done nothing but lounge about on the port—smoking, chatting, and yawning—waiting for the order which seems destined never to be written, the vehicles which are not to be got, and the horses which cannot possibly be furnished."

The young French lieutenant's countenance grew serious, and even mournful, as he listened to this narrative in which the graphic and the flippant styles were so singularly blended. He had already heard several floating whispers of the ignorance, the incompetency, and the tedious delays of routine which characterised every department of the British service: but he could scarcely believe in the existence of such monstrous anomalies and downright iniquities until he received the present practical proof as it was displayed to him in the peculiar manner of Clement Stirling.

"So I suppose," added the latter, now completely relapsing into his careless, listless way, "I shall have to come down to Balaklava every day for another week—mightily busy in doing nothing. But how do you get on up in your part of the country?"

"No sooner are our stores landed at Kamiesch," responded Vigors, "than they are at once transported to the camp."

"Well, I suppose you have got a different system," remarked Stirling, with another long yawn. "But don't let us bother about these things any longer. Have you seen those girls since the other night in the tent?"

"No," replied Vigors.

"Well, I have," resumed Stirling,—"that is to say, Laura and Caroline have been two or three times to see Clive and me—but their French friend, Mademoiselle Artemis, did not come with them on either occasion. I rather thought she was taking a fancy to me—for you may remember we were very sweet together on that night of the supper: but I was disappointed. I have not seen her since; and the fair Caroline—the one, by the bye, that you polked with in so splendid a style—has come to console me for the loss of the more brilliant Artemis."

"Then you do not know," said Vigors, "whether Mademoiselle Artemis has yet discovered the object of her vindictive search?"

"I positively know nothing on the point," replied Stirling: "for Laura and Caroline themselves have been unable to give me any information. And now, what are you going to do? You won't smoke: but perhaps you will come and drink a bottle of wine—for I know where we can get one close by. It is about lunch-time," added Clement, looking at his watch. "Just two o'clock."

"You must really excuse me," responded Vigors: "I have little or no leisure upon my hands. I seldom smoke at this hour—and I never drink till dinner-time. So farewell for the present. I hope we shall meet again soon."

"I think it will be at Balaklava still," said Stirling, glancing round upon the heaps of stores; "for I have no doubt that I shall be upon this duty for the next week or fortnight."

The two young men shook hands and separated,—Clement Stirling pulling out his cigar case to light another "weed"—and Henri Vigors proceeding to the English department where he had some little business to transact on behalf of General Bosquet. The affair (which might have have been concluded in five minutes) occupied an hour; and when it was terminated Henri Vigors began to retrace his way towards the French encampment. He did not pass by the piles of British stores, lying exposed to all weathers upon the port—because he did not wish to be detained in renewed conversation with Clement Stirling: neither did he take that pathway amidst the rocks to which we have previously alluded, because he was resolved to prove faithful to

the image of Julie Talmont, and therefore he avoided the chance of being again inspired by admiration or interest on account of the beautiful stranger.

Henri Vigors had proceeded about a mile from Balaklava when he beheld an elegantly dressed female walking slowly along in the same direction which he himself was pursuing. Indeed, so slow was her pace that he fancied she must either be absorbed in a deep reverie, or else that she must be ill and only able to drag herself painfully along. In a few moments he overtook her: she did not hear his footsteps until he was almost close to her; and then it was with a sudden start and an ejaculation of recognition that she flung her looks upon him.

This was Mademoiselle Artemis—differently dressed from the manner in which she was apparelled on the night of the supper; for she had evidently thought it worth her while to bring a well-stocked wardrobe to the Crimea,—thus proving that vanity and a love of admiration occupied as large a portion of her thoughts as the desire of discovering her betrayer and wreaking a fierce vengeance upon him.

"Ah, Monsieur Vigors!" she exclaimed, her countenance instantaneously losing its pensiveness and brightening up with animation; "this is an unexpected pleasure!"

The lieutenant bowed with that courtesy which a Frenchman always shows towards a female, no matter how equivocal her character may be: but there was no shaking of hands, for this is a ceremony which amongst the French only takes place where there is a very great intimacy.

"The truth is, Monsieur Vigors," proceeded Artemis, "I was buried in my reflections at the moment when you overtook me. Indeed, so absorbed was I in my thoughts that you quite startled me."

"I am sorry, Mademoiselle," responded Henri, "that I should have been so indiscreet as to advance too rapidly——"

"Oh, indeed there is no necessity for apologizing," interrupted Artemis, whose fine dark eyes were now beaming with animation, and who certainly looked exceedingly handsome in the plain yet elegant dress which she wore, and which seemed most appropriately adapted for the climate and the season. "But if you knew what has happened," she continued somewhat more seriously, "you would not be surprised that I was plunged in such deep abstraction!"

"I am sure you will excuse me, Mademoiselle," said Vigors; "but I am in haste to join the encampment—my duties demand my presence there——"

"I will not detain you, Monsieur," said Artemis; "and yet you will suffer me to be your companion for a short distance. I can walk as fast as you; and I really do wish to speak to you—for I am bewildered how to act—— In fact, I am almost frightened when I think of something that has occurred: for on the other hand I dare not treat it as an imposture on the part of that young female—and I am very sure that it is no delusion of my own brain."

Vigors could not prevent Mademoiselle Artemis from walking with him: it would have been the height of brutality to do so: besides, he was really armed with all his moral courage; and moreover it did not seem that she was endeavouring to play off the artillery of her wiles upon him, but that on the contrary she was disposed to address him on some serious subject.

"Yes—I do indeed feel the want of consulting some one," resumed Artemis: "and it is assuredly a subject on which you, Monsieur, may freely give me your advice without deviating from the strictest path of morality. I fathomed your character the other night," she added significantly; "and as I am not one of those Lorettes who laugh at all ideas of virtue either in man or woman, I can respect your feelings. Now, sir, after this little preface," added Artemis, with an amiable yet modest smile, "will you give me your attention?"

"I will," responded Vigors. "Proceed."

"You will scarcely believe me in what I am going to tell you," resumed the Lorette: "but it is as true as that there is an earth beneath or a heaven above us! You heard all that I said the other night—you are in consequence aware that I was in search of some one whom I only knew by a false name——of whose *real* name, in fact, I was therefore ignorant, and am in ignorance still."

"Well, Mademoiselle, have you discovered this person?" inquired Vigors.

"Yes:—that is to say I know where he is: but nothing more than this do I know—— Unless indeed," she added, in a musing strain, "it be all an imposture—and then I know nothing!"

"And where is he?" inquired Vigors. "But how foolish of me to ask! He is here with the army doubtless: for it is here that you expected to find him! Now, since you have found him, Mademoiselle, let me appeal to your merciful feelings—for I see you are far from being deficient in all good qualities——"

"You may save yourself the trouble of appealing, Monsieur," interrupted the Lorette: "for the individual to whom we are alluding is not within my reach."

"Ah! then he is a man of rank—very highly placed?" ejaculated Vigors, misunderstanding what Artemis meant.

"No—this is not the reason," she said: "but the truth is, in one word—he is not here at all! He is far, far away——he is in Paris."

"In Paris?" ejaculated Vigors. "Well then, I suppose you have received a letter——"

"No," interrupted the Lorette: "I have received no letter. I have entrusted no one with the task of writing to me on the subject; and therefore no correspondence is either expected or can pass thereon."

"And yet you have found out the whereabouts of this individual?"

"Yes: and I repeat, he is in Paris. Nay more, I can even tell you his address—the very number of the house in which he lives! It is Number 10, Rue Monthabor."

"You are bewildering me, Mademoiselle!" cried Henri, in amazement. "Pray explain

yourself. You have had no letter—and yet you have made this discovery?"

"Yes; and *that* is the most wonderful part of it. I could give no name—I could furnish no clue——in short, I could do nothing but describe the exact personal appearance of the individual—his height—the colour of his hair and eyes—his profile and general features—his age——"

"On my soul, Mademoiselle!" exclaimed Vigors, "I do not comprehend you. You seem as if you were favouring me with chapters out of the middle of a book, under the impression that I had read the opening ones—whereas I have done nothing of the sort. Pray be more explicit."

"Ah, it seems to me," said the Lorette, "as if I was speaking connectedly and intelligibly because I am following the thread of my own thoughts. But I am really at a loss where to begin——"

"You gave a description, you say," interposed Vigors. "Let us proceed logically. To whom did you give this description?"

"To the singular young female whom I met amongst the mountains," replied Artemis.

"Ah!" ejaculated Henri: "a beautiful creature clad in some light drapery—her raven hair flowing in most graceful negligence over her shoulders?"

"The same! the same!" said the Lorette. "You have seen her, then? But have you spoken to her?"

"No—not a syllable," responded Vigors.

"Scarcely three hours have elapsed since I beheld her seated upon the fragment of a ruined wall——"

"Yes—with her eyes upraised to heaven!" interjected Artemis.

"And the sunbeams playing with a Rembrandt effect upon her beautiful face," continued Vigors,—"delineating the purity and perfection of the Grecian profile."

"O yes! she is eminently beautiful!" exclaimed Artemis, with enthusiasm: "but how different her beauty from any woman that I ever saw before! All other beauty now seems to be of earthly grossness—the beauty of frail and fallen humanity!—whereas *her's* is the beauty of an angel—the loveliness of a celestial being that has not fallen and never *can* fall!"

There was something absolutely awe-inspiring as well as touching to hear such sentiments as these emanate from the lips of a Lorette,—an avowed woman of pleasure, who only a few days back had unblushingly enumerated her list of lovers. But then Artemis possessed a certain sentimentality: she was not utterly depraved in heart; and she could appreciate goodness and virtue in others, just as the savage might instinctively comprehend all the beauty of a statue.

"Yes—it is the same whom I have this day seen," said Henri Vigors. "She did not speak to me—she put on her hat and shawl, and took her departure from the spot. But what would you have me understand?"

"That it was she to whom I gave the description of my betrayer——"

"Yes, yes—you have told me that!" cried the lieutenant. "And therefore I suppose that the young female happened to know him, and was likewise enabled to give you the information you sought in reference to his whereabouts?"

"She never knew him—at least such was her positive assurance! She has never in her life seen him! She has never even been in Paris at all."

"What is all this, Mademoiselle?" demanded Vigors, with renewed amazement. "Would you have me suppose that this young female is a witch?"

"Ah! it is upon all this that I wish to consult some one who would advise me candidly and kindly," said the Lorette. "Most true it is when I met that young female amongst the hills, and she saw that I was pensive and melancholy, she gazed upon me with the utmost sweetness of look—and we got into conversation."

"What language does she speak?" asked Vigors hastily.

"She first addressed me in a language which I did not understand: but I am almost sure that it was Italian—so soft, so flowing, so harmonious! And Oh, sir! if you only heard her voice!"

"Is it so very beautiful?" asked Vigors.

"Yes! it must be, when flowing from such a beauteous mouth!"

"Touch a silver bell, and it would not send forth such a sweet pure music! Touch a golden chalice," continued Artemis, "and the air would not vibrate with so delightful a harmony! But I cannot describe her voice! I grow bewildered when I think of everything which concerns her!"

"Continue your narrative. She saw that you were pensive and melancholy——"

"She inquired the reasons," resumed the Lorette; "and I told her some little portion of my history. She bade me follow her. She led me to a cottage at a little distance. There, it appears, she dwells with an old man of most venerable demeanour. She called him *Grandsire*——at least I am almost sure that it was thus she addressed him; for when they spoke it was in the language which I did not comprehend, but which I believed to be Italian. The cottage is furnished with the utmost plainness and simplicity—but yet there is no indication of absolute penury. Refreshments were offered me. I declined them—I was too anxious to learn for what purpose I had been brought thither——"

"Yes, yes!" said Vigors, whose curiosity was now greatly excited.

"The young female retired to a small inner chamber," proceeded Artemis; "and I remained in the outer room with the old man. He conversed in the French tongue;—and Ah! I forgot to tell you that the young female speaks French with the utmost fluency—not with a Parisian accent, but still with a purity which would lead one to suppose that she must be a native of France, were it indeed possible to conjecture anything concerning her. It was entirely on indifferent subjects that the old man conversed with me; and when once I alluded to the beautiful girl, asking whether I was right in surmising that she was his granddaughter,—he raised his finger to his lips, saying, 'Hush! hush!'—and then immediately changed the discourse. At the expiration of about a quarter of an hour he peeped into the adjoining room, but returned to his seat shaking his head. Another quarter of an hour of desultory conversation elapsed: then again he peeped into the little chamber adjoining; and this time he nodded his head complacently, as if he were satisfied with something that was in progress. He now beckoned me to follow him into that inner room. I did so: but scarcely had I crossed the threshold when a shriek was on the very point of bursting from my lips—for methought that I beheld the lifeless form of the beautiful girl stretched upon the humble bed!"

"Good heavens!" said Vigors. "Proceed! proceed!"

"It was indeed *her* form: but the old man, as if foreseeing what my first impression would be, laid his hand upon my arm, smiled encouragingly, and whispered, 'She is not dead; she sleeps.'"

"What! is it possible," ejaculated Vigors, as a light now suddenly flashed in unto his mind, "that I am about to hear a tale of *clairvoyance*—mesmerism—coma—or whatever it is called?"

"You are incredulous, therefore?" said Artemis, surveying him with anxiety.

"Incredulous indeed! Until this moment I never gave the subject a serious thought—I have always treated it as something utterly unworthy of sober reflection!"

"Ah!" said the Lorette: "and I was like you—a thorough sceptic in such matters. I looked upon them all as vile impostures——"

"Good heavens!" cried the generous-hearted young Frenchman, "is it possible that a being so beautiful should be a vile impostress after all?—that her angelic looks should be all assumed?"

"Those are the very questions which I have put to myself!" exclaimed Artemis: "and I knew not what answers to give. This is why I wished to consult some one——"

"And yet—and yet," said Vigors, pursuing the train of his own altering thoughts, "it may be possible——Who knows? who shall dare fathom all the mysteries of nature?"

"Ah! I see that you are not altogether a sceptic!" cried Artemis. "No, no!—it is impossible to be! If you had seen what I saw——"

"Continue," said Vigors; "and let me judge for myself."

"You will deal impartially with the question?"

"As I have a soul to be saved!"

"Thanks, sir, for that assurance," rejoined the Lorette.

"Ah, Mademoiselle! this is far too serious a matter to be treated with levity or to be judged superficially! Indeed, the more I think of that beauteous creature, with her angelic looks—her eyes upturned to heaven——"

"Oh, indeed, it is impossible it can be a cheat and a fraud!" said Artemis fervently: "impossible that she could find pleasure in perpetrating such an iniquitous delusion—so useless and unprofitable likewise to herself."

"Did she receive money from you?—did the old man receive money?" demanded Vigors hastily.

"They were both offended when I offered it," replied Artemis. "And yet I made my proffer with as much delicacy as possible: I shaped it in the kindliest words and most friendly terms. I said that perhaps they might be acquainted with poor persons deserving of charity. But no! my artifice was seen through—it was acknowledged to be well meant—and the offer was rejected. In short, M. Vigors, one thing is very certain," added the Lorette with emphasis, "they are *not* interested persons!"

"All this is very, very strange!" said Henri, in the half hushed tone of one who was unconsciously giving verbal expression to his musings. "But proceed, Mademoiselle," he cried, now suddenly turning his looks upon Artemis.

"I think I have already told you everything," responded the young female.

"No: you suddenly broke off your description at the point where you said you beheld the lifeless form of the beautiful girl stretched upon the bed in the humble cottage."

"Yes.—And when the old man told me that she was not dead but only sleeping," continued Artemis, "I experienced an infinite sense of relief. After a little while the entranced girl murmured some few words in a low tone, and in that language which I could not understand. The old man answered her in the same tongue; and then turning to me he whispered, 'You may now question her if you think fit. Your purpose, as I think you have already informed her, is a good one, or at least a harmless one: you are desirous to learn some tidings of a lover by whom you think yourself neglected. It is therefore for the generous object of satisfying your curiosity and gratifying your ardent inclination, that *she* who lies there will suffer herself to be questioned by you. But if you have deceived her, and if your purpose be in any sense an evil one, may the consequences be upon your own head!'"

"Ah! the old man spoke thus—did he?" asked Vigors. "And you, Mademoiselle,—how did you reply?"

"I must confess," returned Artemis, "that those solemnly spoken words caused a cold shudder to pass over my frame: and for a moment I was on the point of confessing that my purpose was not a good one. But the next instant that sensation of awe passed away, and other feelings resumed their empire over me: I was again craving for the means of wreaking my revenge — and I was likewise inspired by the most fervid curiosity to see whether that beautiful girl, while wrapped in a trance-like sleep, could in any way forward my designs—and if so, to what extent. I therefore assured the old man that my purpose was an innocent one; and he bade me proceed to question the sleeping girl. He suggested that at first I must put a few ordinary queries to her—for the purpose, as he said, of establishing a sympathy between us—a blending or transfusion as it were of the two spirits, fitting us for the mysterious intercourse that was about to take place. But I will not weary you, M. Vigors, with all the details. Suffice it to say that after the interchange of some little discourse betwixt myself and the sleeping girl, —a discourse in which she chiefly replied in monosyllables—I proceeded to the point. I gave her a personal description of the false one who so vilely betrayed me; and I asked her where he was. She was a long while before she answered; and the old man whispered in my ear, 'Her mental regards are travelling all over the world!'—At length she spoke; and it seemed to me that this breaking of the protracted silence was accompanied by a slight convulsive start which quivered like an electric shook through her outstretched form. 'Yes,' she said: 'I see him.'—'How is he dressed?' I inquired.—'In a blue frock coat with epaulettes,' she replied,—'Where is he?' was my next question.—'He is seated at a table in a handsome apartment.' — 'But where? where?' I anxiously demanded; for I had expected to learn that he was in a tent belonging to the French encampment on this Crimean soil. —'I do not know where,' responded the sleeping girl: 'it is in the midst of a very large city, and at a great distance.'—'Can you tell the name of the street in which the house is situated?' I inquired.—'Yes,' rejoined the sleeper after a brief pause; 'I can read the name painted on the corner of the street. It is *Rue Monthabor*.'—'Ah!' I ejaculated: 'that must be in Paris! I know it well! But tell

me, do you see any remarkable structure in the immediate neighbourhood?'—'I see a large open space surrounded by handsome buildings,' replied the young female; 'and in the middle a tall column with the statue of Napoleon Bonaparte upon the summit.'—'True!' I said; for I knew that this was the Place Vendome, and that therefore the Rue Monthabor of which she had spoken was the street in Paris bearing that name. 'Can you tell me whether there be any number over the gateway of the house in which you see the individual in the military uniform?'—'Yes, it is number 10,' was the answer. She then gave a long gasp, as if a heavy sigh which had hitherto remained pent up in her bosom was forcing for itself a vent; when the old man hurried me out of the room, with the intimation that she was about to awake. I sat down in the little parlour, overwhelmed with mingled awe and astonishment. The old man did not speak another syllable, but left me to the contemplation of my own thoughts. In about a quarter of an hour the beautiful creature appeared from the inner room; and taking my hand, she said, in a low gentle voice, 'Have you obtained the information you sought?'—I gazed upon her in wonderment: but with a soft angelic smile she went on to say, 'Do not be surprised at the question. I never recollect when awake, anything which has appeared to me in my spiritual visions.'—'Permit me to ask one question,' I said. 'Were you ever in Paris?'—'Never,' she replied: and the old man added, 'No, never.'—'You have given me the information that I sought,' I proceeded to observe; 'and I find that *he* for whom I have been searching is in the French capital instead of with the French army, as I imagined.'—It was then I endeavoured to force a pecuniary recompense upon that singular creature and the old man: but both refused."

Artemis ceased speaking: and Henri Vigors reflected profoundly for some minutes in silence. At length he said, "And what advice, mademoiselle, do you now need in this matter?"

"Ah, monsieur! you see how I am bewildered! I was anxious to appeal to some intelligent mind, to obtain a serious and deliberate opinion upon this case——"

"It is impossible, mademoiselle," interrupted Vigors, "that I can give you such an opinion. Suppose, for argument's sake, that I was firmly convinced of the wondrous spiritual powers of vision possessed by this young female,—I should hesitate to tell you so, because it would be as much as to say, 'Go, mademoiselle, to Paris—seek your betrayer in the Rue Monthabor, and be revenged upon him!'—But this is advice that I cannot give. On the other hand, I cannot display so much sceptical levity or flippant presumptuousness as to denounce the whole proceeding on the part of the young girl and the old man as a vile and contemptible imposture. I am sorry, mademoiselle," added Vigors, "that I can say nothing more decisive nor positive to you on the point, since you have thought fit to consult me and have taken so much trouble to put me in possession of the facts."

"Ah, monsieur!" exclaimed the Lorette, "I see that you are more inclined to believe than to doubt in respect to that scene at the cottage—and I shall act accordingly. Farewell, monsieur!"

"No, no, mademoiselle!" exclaimed Vigors: "I would not for the world have you draw any such inference from what I have just said!"

But Artemis was already speeding away—she was beyond earshot—and Vigors murmured to himself, "Well then, she must pursue her own course: all interference on my part would be in vain!"

CHAPTER VI.

FAUSTIN MARMANDE.

The scene now changes to Paris; and we are again about to introduce our readers to the palace of the Tuileries. But on this occasion it is not the imperial boudoir which we are about to enter: but it is one of the sitting-rooms appropriated for the general use of those personages, male or female, respectively attached to the household of the Emperor and Empress.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon—some four or five days after the incidents related in the preceding chapter—that Captain Faustin Marmande entered the apartment to which we have just alluded. He there found the Countess de Mauleon, Mademoiselle Villefranche, and Mademoiselle Talmont. He had fancied that the two latter young ladies were there alone together; and under this impression he purposely sought them at that moment. He was therefore somewhat surprised and vexed on beholding the Countess there also: but instantaneously recovering his self-possession, he advanced into the room with the gentlemanly ease of one who had sustained no cause for embarrassment or feeling of awkwardness. The Countess de Mauleon received him with the ordinary affability of simple acquaintanceship: Georgette Villefranche bowed distantly; while Julie acknowledged his salutation with a very slight inclination of the head.

Julie was looking pale—but all the more interesting in her beauty on that account. A fortnight had now elapsed since that memorable visit which was paid to the *clairvoyant* Alexandre; and the young lady had not once again alluded to the subject—nor had the Countess or Georgette ventured to question her on the point. As she was never very lively, much less volatile or giddy in her disposition, but rather of a quiet and pensive cast of mind,—her demeanour appeared in the eyes of general observers to have undergone no change during the last fortnight; and therefore it was only the Countess and Georgette who noticed that there was an under-current of painful thoughts—a species of agony agitating the soul beneath the calmly beautiful surface of the countenance. They had no difficulty in tracing the source of the change from the memorable night

of the 19th of October: but they were still in ignorance of the actual cause of this blight which seemed to have fallen so secretly and silently upon the heart of Julie Talmont. That it was something connected with Henri Vigors, they knew from what Julie herself had said: but what that *something* was, they were utterly at a loss to conceive—and they had not ventured to touch again upon the painful topic.

But let us resume the thread of our narrative. Faustin Marmande, on entering that sitting-room in the Tuileries, took a seat at a little distance from the sofa on which the three ladies were placed; and he first began to speak on those trivial conversational topics which seem especially to belong to the gilded saloons of fashionable life. At length he said to the Countess of Mauleon, "You have doubtless read this morning's papers, madame? They are filled with despatches from the seat of war."

"Oh, yes," replied the Countess; "we have all been greedily devouring them, as you may naturally suppose. It must have been a tremendous affair at Balaklava on the 25th. The charge of the English Light Cavalry was magnificent!"

"Magnificent as a spectacle," responded Marmande, "but a terrible error as a detail of warfare. Nevertheless, our British Allies are endowed with a truly Roman courage; and the Russian enemy must admire and respect them, if those barbarians are capable of admiring and respecting anything."

"I believe, Captain Marmande," said the Countess of Mauleon, by way of saying something, "that you have friends amongst the English officers?"

"I have one very stanch friend amongst them," replied Faustin; "and he was in the affair the other day at Balaklava. He is a captain in the cavalry, and his regiment was in the hottest of the fray. His name is Clive. Some years ago he was staying in Paris for awhile: and then we were very intimate."

"I suppose he has written you a long account of the battle of Balaklava?" said Madame de Mauleon.

"Doubtless he has written an account," responded Faustin; "but the letter has not yet reached me. I have however received a very interesting epistle from him, dated a few days previous to the Balaklava affair; and this letter was only delivered this morning. It is dated the 20th of October; and therefore it has been exactly one fortnight in coming to hand. This is really too bad!"

"I heard the Emperor observe yesterday," said Mademoiselle Villefranche, "that greater celerity is to be introduced into the post-office department so far as it relates to communicating with the seat of war."

"Ah, there have been great complaints," said Marmande. "But in reference to that letter which I received from my English friend, Captain Clive, it seems that in spite of battles and alarms they are not altogether devoid of the means of gaiety and recreation at the seat of war. For instance, Clive tells me in his letter that he had spent the previous night in the tent of a friend named Stirling: they had a fine supper—and there were three uncommon handsome girls——but, saving your presence, ladies, they were of a class which must not be more particularly alluded to."

"Unfortunate creatures of that description," said the Countess of Mauleon, "are doubtless to be found all over the world."

"Oh, but these whom Clive speaks of," rejoined Faustin Marmande, "did not belong to the native Crimean population at all—one was French—the other two were English. Ah! by the bye, and Clive tells me that he was introduced on the occasion to a fellow-countryman of ours, of whom in his letter he speaks highly."

"There is evidently a great friendship," said Mademoiselle Villefranche, "springing up between the French and English officers; for all the accounts from the seat of war prove this fact."

"Most assuredly!" ejaculated Marmande; "and as a proof of it I can tell you that both Captain Clive and Mr. Stirling have conceived the greatest friendship for M. Vigors."

All the three ladies started at the mention of this name. Julie Talmont, already pale, became white as a sheet; and for an instant she thought of rushing from the room—but the next moment she resolved to remain, for fear lest her conduct should seem strange to Captain Marmande if he were unacquainted with her secret:—and she could not conceive that it was possible it had become known to him. As for Georgette Villefranche, she hastily whispered in Mademoiselle Talmont's ear, "I take heaven to witness, my dear friend, that it is not from *my* lips Captain Marmande has learnt your secret! You know that I detest him!"

The Countess of Mauleon rose from the sofa as if to fetch her kerchief which lay upon a table at a little distance; and as she passed Julie Talmont, she rapidly whispered something to the same effect as that which had just been breathed from the lips of Georgette Villefranche. But, as the reader is aware, Georgette really spoke the truth; while the Countess of Mauleon was giving utterance to a falsehood.

Captain Marmande perceived all these little manœuvrings,—but he affected not to notice them: indeed he took out his pocket-book and began to turn over the contents as if in search of some particular document.

"I was looking to see whether I happen to have Captain Clive's letter here," he said; "for, if so, I would have read parts of it to you, ladies—and you could see what high eulogies he passes on this young Vigors. But I have not got the letter in my pocket-book."

The Countess of Mauleon, who had now resumed her seat upon the sofa, bent a look half severe, half entreating, upon Marmande: but he pretended not to observe it.

"Henri Vigors," he continued, as if quite in a conversational chatty way and without the slightest sinister intent, "is a fine dashing fellow. He behaved admirably at the battle of the Alma, and is considered a rising young officer."

The Countess of Mauleon now flung a look

of gratitude upon Faustin Marmande as she thought within herself, "This is indeed most generous of him! I could scarcely have given him credit for so much magnanimity! But what on earth can his purpose be?"

"Assuredly, my dear Julie," hastily whispered Georgette Villefranche to her friend, "Captain Marmande has not the slightest suspicion that you are acquainted with M. Vigors. It is a mere coincidence!"

"Yes—a mere coincidence," responded Mademoiselle Talmont, who now entertained the same belief.

"But if our gallant young fellow-countryman Henri Vigors," continued Marmande, in the same careless, conversational way as before, "has won golden opinions by his behaviour as a soldier, he also seems to have pleased them quite as highly by his frankness, hilarity, and good spirits as a boon companion. He was present in Mr. Stirling's tent that night——"

"Oh, Captain Marmande!" exclaimed the Countess of Mauleon, "if you are going to refer to that scene, I am sure I think we had better talk of something else!"

"Decidedly!" said Mademoiselle Villefranche.

"With the utmost pleasure," rejoined Marmande, with a courteous bow. "I will therefore, with your permission, proceed to express my opinion that the English and the French only require to know each other for a few weeks or a few months, in order to get rid of the animosities, the antipathies, and the prejudices of half a century. As for my friend Captain Clive, he declares that it is only necessary for the French and English officers to know each other for a few hours. But Clive is a jovial fellow; and when he sees a companion drinking his glass freely—entering with spirit into that sort of conversation in which men like to indulge—and seizing a pretty girl in his arms to polka with her round the tent half-an-hour after midnight——"

"Captain Marmande!" ejaculated the Countess of Mauleon, springing up from her seat with angry looks; "this discourse, sir, is most unbecoming!"

"Good heavens, madame! pardon me!" cried Faustin, as if with the most contrite air in the world; "for I positively forgot that I had promised not to allude any more to that scene in the Crimean tent and our young countryman Henri Vigors!"

Julie Talmont—once more pale as a corpse—had risen from her seat for the purpose of quitting the apartment, when she suddenly staggered, reeled, and appeared on the very point of sinking upon the floor. The Countess and Georgette started up with cries of terror: the former was foremost and was about to extend her arms to the support of Julie, when in the twinkling of an eye Faustin Marmande darted from his chair and caught her just at the very instant that she was sinking backward.

At the same moment the time-piece on the mantel proclaimed the hour of three in the afternoon.

Julie Talmont had fainted in the arms of Faustin Marmande,—ignorant in whose embrace she had been thus caught—unconscious on whose breast she was sustained. But not for many moments did the young maiden remain supported in those arms; for the Countess of Mauleon and Georgette Villefranche literally tore her away from the grasp of the officer; and it was a look of concentrated fury which the Countess darted upon him. He only replied by means of a smile of mingled triumph and defiance; but in the confusion of the moment neither that look on the part of the lady nor that smile on the part of the gentleman were observed by Georgette Villefranche.

Julie Talmont was borne in an unconscious state from the apartment and conveyed to her own bed-chamber; but as soon as the Countess of Mauleon had seen Julie consigned to the proper ministrations for her recovery, she hastily returned to the sitting-room where Faustin Marmande had remained. Still with fiery anger in her regards, the Countess walked straight up to the Captain, saying, "Your conduct, Monsieur, is as infamous as it is cowardly!"

"When I ask you, madame, for your opinion on my conduct," replied Faustin, with cold contempt, "it will be time enough for you to give it."

"But I give it now, sir!—and I give it unasked!" ejaculated the Countess. "You are a coward! you are unworthy to wear the uniform or the sword of a French officer!"

"And pray, madame," asked Marmande, "wherein lies the greatness of my offence?"

"Oh, this is too absurd!" exclaimed the Countess, literally stamping her foot with rage. "It was from my lips that you learnt the secret of Julie Talmont's attachment for Henri Vigors! I told you at the time that it was a secret—I besought you to be careful in keeping it entirely to yourself, for I was violating the trust and confidence that had been reposed in me when I revealed this secret to your knowledge!"

"Well then, madame," retorted Faustin, "how dare *you*, the violator of a secret, accuse me——"

"I almost pity you," interrupted the Countess, with a look of disdain; "for you are so thoroughly contemptible! Yes, I am half inclined to pity a man who is so utterly deficient in the dignity of his sex!"

"Ah, madame," said Marmande, "I can do without your pity—and I care very little for your contempt. Do you think I did not penetrate your motive when you revealed to me the secret of Julie's love for Henri Vigors? You hurled that secret at me as an evidence of your spite! you darted the weapon for the purpose of wounding me! Well, you see, I picked that weapon up that it might serve my turn. I told you at the time that we should see whether Julie Talmont really loved Henri Vigors or not——"

"Well, and now you have received a proof of it?" exclaimed the Countess; "and that proof you have elicited in the most dastardly manner?"

"You think so?" said Marmande. "I think otherwise. I have played a skilful game. By

the same stroke I have discovered that what you told me was indeed true, and that Julie loves the young lieutenant: but at the same instant that I made this discovery I also annihilated every hope for Henri Vigors himself."

"And you think that you will thereby succeed in winning the love of Julie Talmont?" demanded the Countess.

"If I destroy her love for another, it is a great point gained to begin with—is it not?" and Faustin Marmande surveyed the Countess with an air of insolent self-complacency.

"Miserable coxcomb!" ejaculated the lady within herself: "how is it possible that I ever could have liked you?"

"You do not answer me," said the Captain.

"I was thinking," responded the Countess.

"You were thinking perhaps," resumed Faustin, "that you would endeavour to prejudice Julie Talmont against me? But beware how you do this! — for remember, madame, that I can tell a tale how for two years you were my mistress; and of this connexion I have the proofs in at least fifty little billets, which are significant enough, even though perhaps they were never couched in a strain of any extraordinary tenderness."

The Countess of Mauleon became crimson: then all the colour vanished completely from her cheeks—and she said in a low hoarse voice, "You are a villain, Faustin!—too great a villain indeed for me to enter upon a warfare with you!"

"Well," said Marmande coolly, "I can brook hard names, when at the same time I receive the comfortable assurance that I am not to have *you* as my enemy. Ah, my dear Countess, if you had not felt that you were in my power, you would have left no stone unturned to ruin me in the opinion of Julie Talmont. I have watched you—and I shall continue to watch you. If I succeed in marrying her, I will give you back all your letters: I swear that I will do so as a reward for——what shall we call it?—Well, your forbearance, if you like! And that I *shall* marry her, rest assured! Oh, I well know how to conquer all her indifference, now that the image of Henri Vigors is once crushed or covered with opprobrium in her heart! It is astonishing how soon a young girl, when she is disgusted with one lover, takes to another!"

"And under no circumstances, Captain Marmande," said the Countess, "will you betray the fact that it was I who breathed in your ear the secret of Julie's love for Henri Vigors?"

"Why, my dear madame," ejaculated Marmande, "it is not my intention to seem to know the secret at all. I did not just now show that I did. On the contrary, I gave to the whole affair such a complexion that it seemed just as if it was by the merest coincidence in the world I was mentioning the name of Henri Vigors, and for no other reason than because it occurred in a letter which I received from a friend."

"But why plant such a dagger," asked the Countess, "in the heart of an innocent young girl whom you pretend to love?"

"Pretend to love?" ejaculated Marmande. "I adore her! But is not the physician compelled to administer the most unpalatable medicine even to his dearest friend—or to his own wife, mother, sister, or daughter, in order to extirpate disease? Well then, I have been playing a part not a whit more cruel than that of the physician. Or to speak more plainly still, my dear Countess, I love Julie Talmont —I have determined that she shall become my wife—and in order that I may accomplish my end, it was absolutely necessary in the first place to destroy the fantasy which she had conceived on behalf of a rival. The destruction of that fantasy could not be effected without some degree of rudeness and violence; but let us hope that henceforth all will be plain-sailing on smooth water. As for the circumstance of my hearing from your lips the secret of this love betwixt Henri Vigors and Julie Talmont, I shall not mention it: I can have no possible need to allude to it. And now," added the unprincipled soldier, glancing at the time-piece on the mantel, "it is half-past three, and I must hasten to attend upon the Emperor."

He quitted the room by one door, while the Countess de Mauleon issued from it by another. She bent her way to Julie Talmont's chamber; and she now found the young lady seated on the sofa in company with Georgette Villefranche, who had remained with her from the instant that she was conveyed thither.

"Ah, my sweet friend, how do you feel now?" inquired the Countess, taking Julie's hand and pressing it between both her own.

"I am much better—indeed I am quite well now," answered Julie. "Perhaps you may have thought me very foolish——"

"No!" interrupted the Countess; "but the coincidence was a most unfortunate one——I mean that Captain Marmande should have taken it into his head to tell the contents of his friend Captain Clive's letter."

"And do you really think it was a mere coincidence?" asked Julie: "or had he a fixed purpose? I think I have already told you both that on several occasions he has sought to be rather pointed with his attentions: indeed I shall not incur the imputation of vanity if I declare that his words and looks have been unmistakable in their meaning. But Oh! his appearance is odious to me!"

"Whatsoever your feelings may be, my dear Julie, on this point," answered the Countess de Mauleon,—"and I do not wonder at them,—yet I am sure that he had no sinister purpose. Because you have only confided your secret to Georgette and myself; and therefore to suppose that Captain Marmande was acquainted with it, would be to infer that either Georgette or myself had betrayed your confidence."

"Ah, I am sure, my dear friends," exclaimed Julie, "that neither of you would do this! Well then, I must believe that the scene which has just now occurred was the result of a mere coincidence, and that when Captain Marmande spoke of Henri Vigors, he was

unconsciously mentioning a name which once ——yes, *once* had an influence upon my heart."

There was a brief pause; and then Julie resumed in the following manner:—

"Since the name of Henri Vigors has again been pronounced from my lips,—and after the occurrences of this day,—I think that I ought no longer to keep silence in reference to the circumstances which happened on a certain evening. Ah! you know to which occasion I allude? I mean to the evening of the 19th of October."

"Ah! an idea has struck me!" ejaculated the Countess. "Did not Captain Marmande fix the date of that festival which was given in the Crimean tent?"

"Yes, yes!" responded Julie Talmont. "Captain Clive's letter was written on the 20th of October; and he says that on the previous evening the loose revel had taken place! And that evening was the one, my dear friends, on which we visited the house of the *clairvoyant* Alexandre!—that same evening on which I consulted him! Ah! his mother warned me that the replies which I should receive to the questions I purposed to put would be most strictly correct; and she furthermore bade me beware lest by the course I was taking I should be actually courting evil intelligence! But I know not how it was, the spell of an infatuation was upon me—and I persisted! Ah, and was I not terribly punished for my fatal curiosity? For what was the answer of the *clairvoyant?* I spare you all the details, my friends —I will not render myself tedious with an explanation of the preliminary questions and answers which prepared the way for the grand climax——"

"No, no—do not enter into needless particulars," said Georgette hastily; "but tell us, my dear friend—tell us what was the *clairvoyant's* final and fatal representation?"

Julie Talmont shuddered at the recollection; and then she said, "I will tell you his exact words. It was thus he spoke:—'*At this very instant I see the young officer whom you have described; he is inside a tent in the midst of an immense encampment before a large city. Other persons are in the tent. And now he receives in his arms a beautiful girl who bounds towards him; and now he whirls her round the tent in a rapid dance, whilst the others present are preparing to follow. It is a wild loose revel!*'—Such were the words spoken to me," added Julie Talmont, "by the lips of Alexandre the *clairvoyant*, at precisely half-past nine o'clock on the memorable evening of the 19th of October. Do you not remember that when we were seated in the carriage I looked at my watch; and it was then twenty-five minutes to ten; but in my own mind I reckoned that five minutes had elapsed since the moment when those fatal words were spoken in my ear. And now, alas! if any uncertainty had remained in my mind—if any doubt had hovered there with regard to the veritable existence of Alexandre's powers of *clairvoyance*, and the scene in the Crimean tent which those powers enabled him to depict,—all that uncertainty and all that doubt would have only been too fatally dissipated, or rather converted into certainty and conviction, by the insight afforded us into the contents of Captain Clive's letter of the 20th of October."

"No!" suddenly ejaculated Georgette Villefranche; "there is a discrepancy which is fatal to the supposition that the representations of the *clairvoyant* are exactly corroborated by that letter of Captain Clive!"

"How? how?" demanded Julie quickly. "Speak, speak, my dear friend!"

"You say—and you say truly too," resumed Mademoiselle Villefranche, "that it was half-past nine o'clock when M. Alexandre pretended to behold that scene in the Crimea?"

"Well? well?" ejaculated the Countess of Mauleon: "what then, Georgette?"

"Why, if I understood Marmande's representation of Captain Clive's letter, it was half-an-hour after midnight that the scene took place. There is a discrepancy!—there is a falsehood on one side or the other!—there is still room for doubt!"

"Alas, not so!" interrupted Julie Talmont, with a voice and look profoundly mournful? "Know you not, my dear Georgette, that there is a difference of three hours between the time in the Crimea and that in Paris,—so that when the hands of the clock point to half-past twelve in front of Sebastopol, the clocks in Paris will tell only half-past nine!"

The countenance of Georgette Villefranche fell as she found that she had nothing more to urge for the consolation of her afflicted friend: the Countess of Mauleon said nothing, but looked sad; while Julie murmured, "Alas! I spoke only with too much reason and justice when I implored that the name of Henri Vigors should never again issue from your lips!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE COTTAGE ON THE CLIFFS.

The circumstances of our story again render it necessary that we should transport the attention of the reader to the Crimea; and we are about to speak of something which occurred on the same day which marked the incident of the preceding chapter;—or, to be still more particular as to dates, we will at once specify that it was the 3rd of November.

Four or five days had thus elapsed since Henri Vigors had encountered Artemis: he had not since seen her—but having fallen in with Clement Stirling, he learnt from this English officer that the handsome French Lorette had suddenly quitted the Crimea without more than a few minutes' warning to her English friends Laura and Caroline. They supposed that she had obtained some clue to the object of which she had been so long in search; but she would not give them any particulars at the time—and they had no inclination to start off with so brief a notice on a voyage to Western Europe.

Henri Vigors did not let fall from his lips a single syllable of what had passed between himself and Artemis a few days back; but he

JULIE TALMONT.

had no longer any doubt that she had set off on her return to Paris in consequence of the intelligence she had received from the lips of the beautiful *clairvoyante.* Vigors thus saw that this intelligence must have produced the strongest possible impression upon the mind of Artemis. Indeed, he himself had, in mingled wonder and doubt—in half-belief and half-scepticism—pondered over and over again all she had told him, until he felt that he was seized with a most ardent curiosity to clear up the mysterious point. Like ninety-nine persons out of every hundred, Henri Vigors had hitherto treated *clairvoyance* as either an hallucination or an imposture,—a cheat on the part of some—a dreamy illusion on the part of others; but now he found himself reflecting most seriously upon the whole subject. And that which chiefly bewildered him was the fact that the young creature from whose lips Artemis had heard such strange intelligence, was one who by her appearance could not possibly be stamped as a wilful impostress; while on the other hand she seemed to be equally remote from madness in her enthusiasm. If she had received money from Artemis—or if she had bidden the Lorette go and publish whatsoever had taken place at the cottage, *then* Henri Vigors would have suspected her. But it was all the very reverse: and there was in justice no ground for doubting the good faith and sincerity of the young woman and her grandsire (if such he were).

The longer Henri Vigors reflected upon all these matters, the greater became his curiosity. And this was no vulgar curiosity; but it had several phases. It was philosophical and researchful: it was the yearning of an intelligent mind to pursue its investigation into a subject

where truth had to be separated from falsehood and the light evoked from the depths of obscurity. His curiosity was likewise associated with his love; for if any one had said to him, "Behold! here is a magic mirror wherein, by merely expressing the wish, you may at any moment view the beloved of your heart;" would he not have availed himself of the opportunity? would he not have regarded that mirror as the most precious of gifts? Yes, assuredly! If, therefore, there were really any truth in the supposed *clairvoyant* power of the young female of the mountains, would not the exercise thereof, if invoked by Henri, be precisely the same thing as if he were to consult the magic mirror to which we have alluded? And here we may confidently add that not for a single moment was the imagination of Henri Vigors lured by the idea of the exceeding beauty of the young female:—his allegiance was wholly and firmly devoted to Julie Talmont.

Now, after all that we have just been saying, will the reader feel astonished to learn that Henri Vigors at length made up his mind to visit the supposed *clairvoyante?* He did not forget to ask himself whether in yielding to this impulse he were violating the vow of moral courage which he had made and which he had duly recorded in his pocket-book—but he soon came to the conclusion that in the present instance he was violating not his pledge. It was to no weak infatuation that he was yielding; no evil thought was in his mind: on the contrary, he was chiefly inspired by the image of his beloved Julie Talmont—it was mainly with the fervid hope of hearing good and cheerful tidings of the beloved one that he was now bending his way towards the heights in the neighbourhood of Balaklava.

This, as we have said, was on the 3rd of November; and it was not until late in the day that he was enabled to absent himself from the camp. He had about five miles to walk; for he did not choose to borrow a horse for the purpose of the journey, lest it should seem to the inhabitants of the cottage as if his visit were an intentional one, whereas he proposed to give it the semblance of being accidental. It was verging towards five o'clock in the evening when Henri Vigors reached that fragment of a ruined wall on which he had seen the beautiful female seated a few days previously. She was not now there; and he was unacquainted with the precise situation of the cottage where she dwelt. He however recollected that Artemis had informed him the habitation was only at a little distance from the ruin; and as it was still light in that Crimean clime, the young Frenchman began searching over the heights in the vicinity. In a few minutes he came upon a little cottage almost completely concealed amidst masses of surrounding crag: and as it was remote from any beaten pathway, he did not wonder that its existence had hitherto remained generally unknown to the army—as he knew that it was, from the fact of never once having heard any of his comrades allude to it. Indeed, if it had not been for a light which was glimmering through the window, Vigors would have most probably passed it by, so strangely was it hidden amongst the rocks that it seemed to be part and parcel of the crags themselves.

Vigors approached the door and tapped gently, but no attention was paid to his summons. He knocked again—and still without effect. He endeavoured to open the door; but it was fastened inside. That some person was within, he felt convinced, inasmuch as there was a light burning in one of the rooms. He knocked a third time; and still no heed was taken of the summons. The window whence the light was glimmering forth, had a dark curtain—or rather blind—which did not come quite up to the top; and Vigors murmured to himself, "Surely there will be no indiscretion in peeping into the room under such circumstances? It were hard if I have come all this way for nothing!"

Henri accordingly looked over the blind; and he beheld the interesting young female lying stretched upon the couch—pale, and utterly motionless, just as if she were dead: but Vigors recollected what Artemis had told him, and he was not therefore affrighted on the beautiful stranger's account. The old man was in the same room: he was on his knees—his back was turned towards the window—and he seemed to be bending over a chest or box: but Vigors could not immediately discern what his occupation really was. In the course of a minute or two the patriarchal-looking personage rose from his knees—approached the couch—and gazing with a look of unutterable affection upon the entranced girl, he exclaimed in the Italian language, "O Mira! Mira! beautiful likeness of your sainted mother!—charming perpetuation of the image of my beloved daughter!—may happiness ever attend upon thee? Oh, my sweet grandchild! may all good angels continue to be thy guardians and protectors!"

Having thus spoken, the old man extended his hands over the couch; and he produced upon the mind of Henri Vigors the impression of a prophet of the olden time bestowing a blessing upon one of the elect. Vigors was a good linguist: he spoke Italian fluently—he was acquainted with German and Spanish; and thus in this proficiency he at once perceived that Artemis was right in the two conjectures she had made—that the tenants of the cottage spoke Italian, and the old man was the girl's grandsire. But he had made a still farther discovery: he had found out that the name of the sleeping female was Mira. He almost felt as if he were guilty of an unwarrantable intrusion—the violation of something that was sacred—in peering into that chamber; and he was just on the point of leaving the window and making another summons at the door, when he caught sight of an object which riveted his attention.

This was something that brilliantly reflected the beams of the candle which burnt on the table; it looked like a star set with diamonds:—but diamonds in that humble cottage—was it likely? was it possible? And yet pieces of glass never threw forth such jets of light; and the young Frenchman now perceived that the brilliant star was set

upon the front of a high turban, and that it marked the place where a tall feather was fixed. What could this mean? It was a turban somewhat in the shape of that which the Sultans used to wear before the introduction of the fez?—and how could such an object come into the possession of this old man? or who was he that he should have it in his keeping? He turned away from the couch; and he again knelt at the box in which this turban appeared. He took it forth and looked at it: and now, as he moved it about, the light flashed brightly from the diamonds —as Henri Vigors had scarcely any longer a doubt that they really were. The old man replaced the turban in the box, whence he now drew out a large bag: he emptied the contents upon the floor—and it was a pile of gold pieces which Vigors now beheld. The old man counted them back into the bag, which he secured about his person: he then closed the box—locked it—and proceeded to fasten a cord round it. When this was done, he again bent over the couch—again extended his hands evidently to bless the sleeping Mira; and then taking up the light, he passed into the next room.

It was with this next room that the front door of the cottage communicated; and now Henri Vigors knocked once more. The door was at once opened; and the old man looked somewhat surprised, though not alarmed, on beholding a visitor in a foreign uniform.

"May I crave permission to rest myself for a brief space?" asked Vigors: "and pardon me, venerable sir, if I am guilty of any indiscretion in making this request."

"You are guilty of none, provided the request itself be the strict truth," responded the venerable-looking individual, with a mild benignant air.

Henri Vigors coloured deeply as he saw that the old man had fathomed his pretext for entering the cottage; and he said, "I will tell you frankly, I am not wearied! I do not need rest! But——"

"You came expressly," said the old man, "to see my grand-daughter. Are not you the same young French officer who surprised her the other day when she was seated amidst the ruins of one of the ancient castles of the Crimea?"

"Yes," responded Henri: "I beheld that angel-looking being there."

"And perhaps you may have heard by some means or another," continued the old man, "that she possesses marvellous powers—that heaven's own blessed inspirations themselves are frequently infused into her soul——"

"Yes," rejoined Vigors; "this also I have heard. Oh! I beseech you, attribute not my visit here to an unworthy motive——"

"No—I do not suspect you," murmured the old man: "there is frankness in your looks. Besides, heaven always protects and shields its elect; and she"—here he pointed towards the door of the inner-room—"is one of the sainted chosen!"

Vigors studied the old man's features very hard to ascertain whether there were anything savouring of cant and imposture in the language which thus flowed from his lips: but that countenance expressed only a patriarchal benevolence and an equally primitive simplicity.

"My love is devoted to one whom I look upon as an angel in human shape," said Vigors; "and therefore believe me, I am incapable of harbouring any other idea than that of the profoundest respect towards her whom I understand to be your grand-daughter."

"Walk in," said the old man; for hitherto Henri had been standing just outside the threshold. "You are a soldier of France," continued the patriarch, now surveying our hero with the utmost attention; "and you are come to fight the battles of Turkey against the barbarian Russ! May you be victorious!—— although," added the old man, with a sigh, "the triumphs of the allied armies will not give to me nor to that beloved being yonder" ——and he again pointed towards the inner room——"the rights that should be ours!"

Henri gazed upon the old man with astonishment; and as he suddenly recollected the diamond star upon the turban, and the immense bag of gold, he thought to himself that this venerable patriarch and the beautiful Mira must veritably be personages whose real consideration was concealed by the assumed humbleness of their present position. But who could they possibly be? Henri knew not even how to frame the slightest conjecture towards the solution of the mystery.

"You have spoken strange words, venerable sir," he said, hesitatingly and deferentially: "you seem to have some very great interest at stake in the pending struggle——"

"Ah, forget, young man," ejaculated the patriarch, "that anything inadvertent should have fallen from my lips! But let us speak of yourself! Have you come hither for the purpose of consulting my beautiful Mira? Yes! yes! I am convinced that it is so!—and you need not hesitate to confess the truth! Ah, I recollect you just now said that your heart cherished the image of some being whom you tenderly love; and doubtless it is in reference to this adored one that you would seek information?"

Henri Vigors bowed respectfully to the old man—and said, "Such is indeed my wish."

"It shall be gratified," was the response of that venerable-looking personage. "But in the first instance you can render me a service —and I have no doubt that you will cheerfully prove your good-will in this respect?"

"Oh, cheerfully!" exclaimed Vigors. "What can I do, venerable sir?"

"I simply require you," rejoined the old man, "to give me a little information whereof I stand in need. In short, I am about to set off with the least possible delay on a voyage to Western Europe—it is to France that I am proceeding—and Paris is my destination."

This intended journey explained to Vigors the circumstance of the cording of the trunk and the securing of the large bag of gold about the person of the old man.

"Now," continued this personage, "I have never been in Paris—I am consequently an

utter stranger in that city; and though Mira in her dreams can spiritually wander through its sumptuous squares and splendid streets, yet in her waking hours she loses all recollection of everything which in her visions she thus beholds. Paris therefore is as strange to her as it is to me."

This assurance on the part of the old man served to Henri Vigors as a corroboration of something which had occurred in the details given him a few days back by Artemis; namely, that the patriarch and his grand-daughter had never been in Paris. The young French lieutenant was now therefore all the more interested in the proceedings on which he had entered, and all the less inclined to be sceptical in reference to the *clairvoyant* powers of the beautiful Mira.

"Yes," continued the old man, "we shall be complete strangers in Paris; and the information which I seek at your hands is simply a friendly hint for our guidance on arriving at that capital. I should desire to establish our quarters at a hotel of the highest respectability —but quiet and secluded—and where we may shield ourselves from the gaze of impertinent curiosity."

"Oh! this information I will cheerfully give you," responded Vigors: and he at once wrote down the address of a Parisian hotel which he thought would suit the views of his venerable questioner.

The old man put several other queries to him in reference to the best itinerary that ought to be pursued in order to reach the French capital with the least possible delay, and yet in a manner consistent with comfort and convenience. Vigors gladly satisfied him on all these points; and the old man took notes of the various details that were given him.

"Pardon me for asking a question," said Vigors; "but how is it that you speak French so fluently, if you have never been in Paris? —and I judge from your conversation that you are not a Frenchman."

"In my earlier years," responded the old man, "I passed a considerable time in Savoy, which is now called Piedmont: I also studied under professors at Nice and Turin; and therefore you need be no longer astonished if I speak the French tongue with facility. I am also as well acquainted with the Italian language as if I were a native of Italy. And Mira—she is a finished linguist; for I may tell you that I espoused an Italian lady of no ordinary accomplishments—and the only issue of our marriage was a daughter who inherited all her mother's intelligence, and who in due time became graced with all the same accomplishments. She married an Italian nobleman——and the offspring of that alliance is there!"

Again the old man pointed towards the inner chamber; and Henri Vigors was more and more astonished at all he heard, and more and more bewildered as he asked himself who this old man could be.

"Wife — daughter — son-in-law — all are gone!" continued the patriarch in a mournful voice; "and I am left alone with my darling grandchild, the beautiful and gifted Mira! Ah! you wonder why I should be thus communicative? I know not—unless it be that frankness and honesty are in your looks. But this is the first time for a long period that I have held familiar intercourse with any stranger, or have thus spoken of the past so far as regards my family and myself. However," cried the old man, abruptly rising from his seat, "I must not keep you listening to my idle gossip, while I ought to remember that you must be dying with curiosity to learn from my Mira's lips the information which you seek. But, Ah! I should bid you beware, young man," added the patriarch, with a solemn expression of countenance, "how you proceed to consult an oracle whose responses will be as strictly consistent with the truth as if the facts themselves were passing before you; and therefore whatsoever is evil or unpleasant will be communicated unto you with the same unerring precision as whatsoever is cheering and hopeful."

"I have well weighed all this in my mind," returned Vigors; "and I am prepared to incur the risk, if a risk it be."

The old man now gently opened the door leading into the inner chamber; and he beckoned Vigors to follow him. The instant the young Frenchman reached the threshold, he again beheld the form of Mira stretched upon the humble pallet and still seeming as if she were dead, just as she was when he had ere now peeped in upon her over the blind of the window. Her eyelids were completely closed: the long ebon fringes rested upon her cheeks. Her lips were slightly apart, and afforded a glimpse of the ivory teeth. The light of the candle which the old man carried fell upon her countenance with a sort of Rembrandt effect, and defined the pure Grecian outline of the profile.

The old man motioned to Vigors to place himself on a seat by the side of the couch, and then to ask a few questions on indifferent topics, so as to establish a *rapport* between himself and the sleeping *clairvoyante*.

"All is now quiet in Sebastopol," said Vigors.

"The cannon are not firing from the ramparts," responded Mira, in a soft silvery voice; "but activity prevails within the walls."

"But there is now silence throughout the encampments in front of the city," said Vigors.

"Yes, silence in the encampments," responded Mira.

"Do I trouble your sleep by thus conversing with you?" asked Henri, in obedience to the whispered suggestion of the old man.

"No—I am not troubled in my sleep," was Mira's answer.

"May I ask you a question which deeply interests me?"

"You may," was the reply.

"I wish to know how it fares with a certain beautiful young lady to whom my heart is devoted, and who loves me in return? I would fain know whether her countenance denotes happiness at this moment, and whether I may indulge in the hope that she is bestowing a thought upon me?"

"Describe her," said Mira.

Henri Vigors at once proceeded to depict the portraiture of his beloved Julie. It was with all a lover's enthusiasm that he spoke of her magnificent dark brown hair—her large blue eyes, with their finely arching brows—her high forehead, looking like the ivory throne of innocence itself—the small well-formed mouth—and the perfect oval of the countenance. He also described her height as that of the medium stature: he dwelt upon the faultless symmetry of her shape—the mingled dignity and modesty of her carriage—the elegance and grace which pervaded all her movements. In a word, the portraiture was complete.

Then followed a long silence, during which the heart of Henri Vigors palpitated violently; and he wondered what he should hear when the *clairvoyante* next opened her lips.

"Yes—I see her," at length said Mira, in the soft flowing harmony of her beautiful voice. "Yes—I see her. 'Tis a gorgeously furnished apartment, in a vast and sumptuous building looking like a palace! A flag waves over the central pavilion. There is a beautiful garden in front—in the rear a wide open space, with an arch in the centre, and soldiers mounting guard."

"Yes," ejaculated Vigors: "it is indeed there that my Julie is to be found!"—for he at once comprehended that the *clairvoyante* was giving him a most accurate description of the palace of the Tuileries.

"Hush!" said the old man, in a hasty whisper: "let her proceed in her own way! do not interrupt her!"

"Yes—I see her—that beautiful young lady!" continued Mira. "There are two other ladies present. Yes—and there is a gentleman. He is an officer in his uniform. But Ah! the scene appears to be fading away from my eyes——it is departing——"

"Look once again, I beseech you!" interjected Vigors, obedient to a suggestion conveyed to him by a rapid sign on the part of the old man: "look once again—and tell me whether that beautiful young lady wears a happy and smiling countenance; or whether——"

"Hush!"—and the old man abruptly placed his finger on his lip; for he knew by the expression of his grand-daughter's countenance at the moment that she was about to speak.

"Ah!" exclaimed the *clairvoyante*, now in a somewhat excited tone: "I behold the entire scene once more! Yes—vividly! vividly! And Ah! the beautiful young lady is now embraced in the arms of that officer! The hands of the time-piece in that apartment denote the hour of three precisely!"

Henri Vigors started up from his seat on hearing a piece of intelligence which was sufficient to galvanize him into a wild excitement or to goad him into veritable madness.

"No! no!" he ejaculated: "look again, I beseech you!"

But Mira had begun to show symptoms of awakening; and the old man hurried Vigors from the chamber.

"Be courageous! be self-possessed, I conjure you!" he said, the instant they were in the adjoining apartment together. "You have evidently received information which you little expected to learn! You are pained and afflicted—and it is natural—for here is most probably another illustration of the deceitfulness of women, as well as of the vanity of human hopes and the insubstantiality of love's fond dream! Alas, young man! I pity you——but Oh! I warned you!"

"Venerable sir," responded Vigors, in a low deep voice, "it is entirely my own fault; and you are not to blame. No!—nor your beautiful Mira! I am now plunged into the vortex of unhappiness; but I pray for all possible happiness for yourself and your grand-daughter, whoever ye may be! Farewell, sir—farewell!"—and Henri Vigors rushed forth from the cottage.

It was in a state of mind bordering almost upon distraction that he rushed along his route, and at length reached his tent in the French encampment. Dismissing his servant with an impatient gesture, he threw himself upon his pallet, murmuring, "O Julie! Julie! is it possible that you can have proved faithless? Ah! no doubt that Faustin Marmande, against whom I was warned by the anonymous letter, has succeeded in rendering you thus inconstant to the vows which your lips pledged to me! Oh, that I were there!—not to upbraid thee, Julie! for I love thee too much to give vent to reproaches!—but to punish him who has thus dared to constitute himself my rival!"

Then the unhappy young man sprang up from his camp-bedstead, and paced to and fro in the tent with agitated steps and a wild expression of countenance. Suddenly a thought struck him.

"Ah! what was it that she said?" he ejaculated, stopping short. "The time-piece in that apartment of the Tuileries indicated the hour of three! And it must have been about six——Yes! I remember I looked at my watch just before the old man led me into the chamber where his grand-daughter lay; and it was then ten minutes to six! Let me test the accuracy of this!"

Vigors flew to a chest which contained a quantity of books: he quickly selected the particular one which he required—he consulted it for a few moments—and then he suddenly dashed it upon the ground, exclaiming with passionate vehemence, "Yes, yes! everything proves only too fully the fatal accuracy of Mira's words!"

For the book had shown him that there were three hours' difference between the time in the Crimea and the time in Paris,—three hours of which the sun was thus in advance in its passage from east to west: and that consequently when it was three o'clock in the afternoon in Paris, it was precisely six o'clock in the Crimea.

Henri Vigors dared not doubt the accuracy of Mira's representation. It was something wonderful—but still its truthfulness could not be questioned. The power itself seemed incredible; but the fact was not to be repudiated. He had merely described Julie Talmont, but he had not thrown out the slightest intimation to show whether she would be found in a cot-

tage or a palace. The mental vision of the sleeping Mira had discerned her beneath the roof of a palace; and this palace she had unmistakably depicted as the Tuileries. How, then, could Henri Vigors doubt the *clairvoyante's* representation? No, no! it was impossible!

"Julie is faithless to me!" he said, when on the following day calmly and deliberately reviewing the incidents of the preceding evening; "and it is doubtless the imperial aide-de-camp Faustin Marmande who has won her from her allegiance to me! But I am a soldier—and I must not abandon myself to puerile grief! No!—I must be a man! But, Ah! happiness has fled from me for ever—and despair is now my lot! Well, then, I may court a soldier's fate, and end my sorrow in the performance of my duty to the banner under which I serve! When next the French and the Russians shall be face to face—*there*, in the thickest of the fight, will Henri Vigors be!—and then welcome—Oh! welcome, death!"

It was not very long after these despairing ejaculations went up from the soul of Henri Vigors, that he did indeed find an opportunity of plunging into the thickest of one of the most tremendous fights that ever occurred. Be it recollected that it was in the evening of the 3rd of November he had sought the cottage on the cliffs: it was on the morning of the 4th that those passionate exclamations went up from amidst the dark despair of his soul; and it was during the ensuing night that the Russians marshalled their tremendous hosts for the attack of the heights of Inkerman.

We have already said in a previous chapter that it is not our intention to deal more than is necessary with the events of the late war. Suffice it, therefore, now to remind the reader that the Russians first of all attacked the English position on the heights of Inkerman, and that a body of the French troops shortly moved on to the succour of their gallant allies. It was a stupendous conflict,—a struggle of awful desperation—crowned by immortal glory for the allies on the one hand, with signal defeat and fearful carnage for the Russians on the other. And amongst the French combatants there was one who even on a scene where all his comrades were heroes, signalized himself in a manner so conspicuous that it showed how amidst the sublimest deeds there may be a sublimer still. The hero to whom we allude, was Henri Vigors; and it is no hyperbolic extravagance—no plagiarism from the wonders of ancient romance, to declare that he performed prodigies of valour. He plunged into the thickest of the fight; and none but himself knew that he was seeking death. But death had that day no weapon wherewith to smite the young hero!—no missile to conduct in a straight line unto his heart! Indeed, after having apparently passed through the ordeal of a thousand deaths, and incurred a myriad mortal perils, Henri Vigors came out of the conflict so nearly scatheless that a few trivial scratches were all the injury he had sustained.

When General Canrobert, the French Commander-in-Chief, had prepared his despatches descriptive of the tremendous conflict which had been sustained and won by the allied armies on the heights of Inkerman, to whom could he more appropriately entrust the honourable duty of conveying those documents to Paris, than to the youthful hero who had earned a deathless renown on that memorable occasion? Promotion and decorations were the rewards that were sure to be conferred on Henri Vigors upon reaching Paris; and for this reason was it that General Canrobert confided the task to him. Accordingly, on the morning of the 6th of November Henri Vigors embarked on board a French steamer at Balaklava.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARTEMIS.

It was some days after the occurrences which we have been relating, and at about seven o'clock in the evening, that Captain Faustin Marmande was seated over his dessert, at the lodgings which he occupied in a street at no very great distance from the palace of the Tuileries. He was surrounded by every comfort, and indeed with every luxury: he was sipping his wine, which belonged to a generous vintage—a cheerful wood-fire was blazing in the grate—and he was reclining upon a luxurious sofa drawn near the table; so that from this description the reader will most probably imagine that the imperial aide-de-camp felt completely happy and at his ease. This was not however the case: on the contrary, his mind was perturbed—uneasy misgivings were floating through his brain—he was a prey to an increasing anxiety: he felt that there was something which ought to be done, but he could not make up his mind as to what this something should be.

Presently Captain Marmande fetched a writing-desk from an adjoining room; and opening it upon the dinner-table, he took out two letters. The first of these letters was couched in the following terms:—

"English Encampment before Sebastopol.
"October 20th, 1854.

"My dear Marmande,

"I received your letter of the 5th instant; and as accident would have it, I last night fell in with the very person to whom it specially refers: I mean Henri Vigors. I have not time to write much on the present occasion; but still I will endeavour to answer your questions in all their details. Vigors is a very handsome fellow; he is reputed to be as brave as a lion; and he has two decorations. He distinguished himself wonderfully at the Alma. He is intelligent, well-mannered, highly educated, and a most agreeable companion. There is no possibility of denying all these points. As for his pecuniary means I believe that he has got nothing but his pay—yet he keeps himself out of debt. In respect to his family I have been enabled to learn nothing;

but should be induced to think it is a tolerably good one, inasmuch as the young man was educated at the Polytechnic School. It was in my friend Clement Stirling's tent that I met Henri Vigors last night. We had excellent amusement. Stirling had somehow or another picked up three dashing Lorettes newly arrived from Paris (one French and two English); and we had a capital supper. I thought that Vigors was a little of a milksop in respect to the girls: but my opinion subsequently changed, when lo and behold! I presently found him clasping one of them in his arms and whirling her in a polka round the tent. Now, as this happened half-an-hour after midnight, you may suppose that we had excellent fun and kept it up tolerably late.

"I had other things to write of, but must postpone them until a better opportunity.

"Ever your sincere friend,

"EDWARD CLIVE."

The reader will have comprehended that this was the letter which furnished Faustin Marmande the information whereby he was enabled to play so insidious and dastard a part in the presence of Julia Talmont, Georgette Villefranche, and the Countess of Mauleon, as already related. But let us now see what were the contents of the second letter which Captain Marmande took from his writing-desk, and which he read with a species of sombre attention, though he had already perused it some half-dozen times; for it reached him three or four days previous to the date of which we are now writing:—

"English Camp before Sebastopol.

"October 26th.

"My dear Marmande,

"By the time this reaches you, you will have heard from other sources of the tremendous affair which took place yesterday near Balaklava. My regiment was in it: we have lost upwards of one-third of our number; and how the devil I escaped without a scratch I cannot tell—for you may be assured that I did my duty without flinching. But I am not going to say any more on that business: I told you in my last letter that I had something of importance to touch upon—and I feel that I cannot delay it any longer.

"I mentioned that there were three Lorettes in Stirling's tent the other night. One of them was a French girl; and she calls her name Artemis. What her real name is, I do not know: but one thing is very certain, my dear friend Faustin—and that is, she is on the look out for *you*. She is a tall handsome girl, with dark hair and brilliant black eyes, and about two-and-twenty years of age. She says her father was a notary, who lived in a beautiful little village a considerable distance from Paris. Five or six years ago a young gentleman arrived in that village, under a feigned name, with no luggage or passport, but with plenty of money. He took lodgings at the notary's house—seduced the girl, and borrowed a large sum of money from the father. At the end of six months he disappeared. Now, my dear Marmande, though you never mentioned to me the adventure about the young lady, there is a sufficiency in the other circumstances, dates, and so forth, to render me convinced that *you* were the hero of that affair. Ah! I forgot to mention that Artemis learnt from her father that it was some circumstance of an infamous character which had compelled her betrayer to bury himself in that seclusion until his friends had hushed up the transaction and enabled him to re-appear in the world. Now, my dear fellow, this evidently points to that cursed affair in which you and I became embroiled with Legrand—who, by the bye, I see by the newspapers has got himself into a terrible scrape by stealing the box of gold bullion at Lyons a few weeks ago. I feel convinced it must be the same Legrand, because the culprit of the bullion robbery is represented as having a deep scar upon the left temple. Now heaven grant that he may not be led into any confessions extending backward for a period of five or six years!

"But, after all, the chief point in my present letter is to warn you in respect to this girl who calls herself Artemis. She has come to the Crimea, thinking that you are with the French army. Fortunately, she does not know your name: nor does she know that you are an aide-de-camp to the Emperor. She heard that some weeks ago you were witnessing the embarkation of troops at Marseilles; and so she came to the conclusion that you were to embark with them—little suspecting that your duty was merely one of inspection at that port. However, here she is—and she shows herself bitterly vindictive. I cannot recollect all the dreadful things she said; but it is very certain that if she found you out, she would inflict some mischief. I do not know whether she would stab you outright, or whether she would take some other means for wreaking her vengeance. I shall keep an eye upon her as much as possible, and will let you know if she leaves the Crimea: but it is by no means an easy matter to attend to one's duties and to think of all these things into the bargain.

"Your sincere friend,

"EDWARD CLIVE."

Such was the letter which had excited so deep an uneasiness in the mind of Faustin Marmande; and it was no wonder that he read it over and over again with a sombre expression of countenance. Scarcely had he perused it on this particular occasion of which we are writing, when there was a violent ringing at the outer door of his suite of apartments. The reader will not have forgotten the description which we gave in an earlier chapter, how the houses in Paris are divided into suites, each one having as it were an outer door of its own opening upon a landing, just like the sets of chambers at the Inns of Court in the British metropolis. Now, as Marmande was a bachelor, he kept but one servant—and this was a valet. He had no cook, because his meals were sent from an adjoining *restaurant;* and the porter's wife took care of his apartments in the capacity which a housemaid would have otherwise filled. On the present occasion, Marmande had sent out

his valet on some message: therefore, upon hearing that loud ringing at the bell, he hastily thrust the two letters into his writing-desk, and sped to answer the summons.

Faustin Marmande opened the outer door of his suite of apartments; and a tall individual, enveloped in a cloak, and with a broad-brimmed hat pulled far down over his countenance, hastily crossed the threshold.

"Thank God!" he ejaculated, at the same time shutting the door without ceremony, just as if it were his own abode that he had entered: and then turning towards the officer, he said, "My dear Marmande, how are you?"

"Good heavens, is it you?" faltered the aide-de-camp, turning deadly pale and staggering back a pace or two, as he recognised that countenance the moment the individual took off his hat and bowed with an easy familiarity; for there was a deep scar on his left temple!

"Yes—it is I," responded Legrand. "Are you alone?"

"Alone? That is to say," responded Marmande, still speaking in a faltering tone, "I expect my servant to return every moment."

"Oh well, then, you are to all intents and purposes alone," rejoined Legrand. "Come, give me some refreshment."

"But, my God! what does this mean, Legrand?" asked the Captain, who was still pale with terror, and was quivering visibly. "I thought—I thought you were in prison——"

"Ah! in sooth, and so I was up till half-an-hour back," was the answer.

"Then—then—you are acquitted?—and yet I did not hear that the trial was to come on so soon?"

"Oh! if I had waited for the trial," interrupted Legrand, with a sort of mocking laugh, "I should have lingered in gaol for the next fortnight, and should then only have changed my quarters from the prison of La Force to the hulks of Toulon."

"Then, in the name of heaven," asked Faustin, trembling visibly from head to foot, "what has happened? what have you done?"

"Simply murdered a turnkey—stunned a sentinel—and escaped from prison," replied Legrand. "I happened to know that my dear friend Marmande was aide-de-camp to the Emperor—though, by the bye, you and I have not met for a long time past. At the risk of being detected I stepped into a wine-shop at no great distance hence—I obtained the Court Guide—and so I have found you."

Marmande kept trembling and recoiling, staggering and quailing, as if smitten with a perfect succession of blows; while it was with ghastly looks that he contemplated this fearfully unwelcome visitor.

"My God, Legrand!" he at length exclaimed, "do you not reflect that you are compromising me terribly by coming hither?"

"But, my dear fellow," said the other, very coolly, "do you not on your part perceive that I should be compromising myself very seriously also if I were to leave so pleasant a place of security?"

"Good heavens! it would be ruin for me!" cried Marmande passionately.

"It would be the hulks for me," returned Legrand quietly.

The greater portion of this colloquy had taken place in a little ante-room separating the vestibule, or hall, from the dining-room; and now Legrand, after a few moments' silence, during which he fixed a cool determined look upon the aide-de-camp, said, "Come, my dear fellow, I am thirsty. One does not kill a turnkey, knock down a sentinel, break through half a dozen doors, and climb a couple of walls, without feeling anxious for something to drink. Though I visited a wine-shop just now, I was enabled to call for nothing, being totally deficient in the current coin of this realm."

"But what do you expect to do here?" asked Marmande.

"Eat, drink, sleep, and amuse myself," replied Legrand, "until you can devise some means for getting me safe out of Paris."

Marmande felt that his position was almost as perilous and desperate as that of the cold-blooded villain with whom he had to deal; and suddenly calling up all his energy to his aid, he said, "And what if I refuse to submit to this insolent despotism on your part?"

"Why, my dear friend," rejoined Legrand, "all I can say is that if I happen to be arrested through any want of friendship or neglect on your side, I should most unhesitatingly revenge myself by proclaiming to the world that there were once three persons—named Clive, Legrand, and Marmande — who committed upon Laffitte the banker a certain pleasant little forgery some five or six years ago, which was comfortably hushed up; and that a certain Faustin Marmande, now aide-de-camp to his Imperial Majesty, was one of that trio."

Again was the wretched officer as white as a sheet; and it was in a hollow voice that he said, "Come, Legrand — come, and refresh yourself."

The escaped felon followed Marmande into the dining-room; and throwing off his cloak, he filled a glass with wine which he drank off at a draft. We should observe that when he was arrested for the theft of the box of bullion, he wore a beard and moustache; but he had just now shaven them off (having by some means or another procured a razor in the gaol), so that his appearance was very much altered, though upon the left temple there was that tell-tale scar which was indelible. He was of very dark complexion; his appearance was gentlemanly—he was about forty years of age—and apart from the scar, he might be termed good-looking.

"It is impossible that you can remain here, Legrand!" ejaculated Marmande, after having reflected deeply for upwards of a minute. "I could not conceal you! I beseech you therefore to devise immediate means for your departure!"

"And those means?" said Legrand, throwing himself at full length upon the sofa, refilling his glass, and drawing a plate of cakes towards him.

"I have a couple of thousand francs at your disposal," resumed Marmande.

"Well, that is something," remarked Legrand coolly.

THE COUNTESS DE MAULEON.

"And I happen to have a passport that will exactly suit you, excepting the scar—but you can keep your hat over your forehead. This passport was taken out for a cousin of mine, named Guinard——"

"No matter, my dear friend," interjected Legrand, steeping biscuit after biscuit in the wine. "You have got the passport. Good."

"And what is more," continued Faustin, "I have got a trunk full of clothes belonging to that self-same cousin of mine; for, to tell you the truth, he is in pecuniary difficulties—in the debtors' prison, in short——"

"No matter! You have got the clothes, you say. Good again."

"Yes—and you can dress yourself in a suit: they will exactly fit you."

"Better still," rejoined Legrand, "I can take away the whole trunk with me; because then I shall have a change. You will order a cab to be brought into the court-yard of the house——"

"Yes—anything, anything you like!" ejaculated Marmande; "only for heaven's sake use all possible despatch!"

"Are you sure that the two thousand francs are forthcoming?" inquired Legrand.

"Yes. Here!"—and Faustin, with trembling hands, drew forth a pocket-book, whence he took a couple of bank notes which he flung upon the table.

"In this case," said Legrand, filling another bumper, and sipping it in a leisurely manner, as he spoke, "I think the best thing that I can do is to place myself in your hands and follow your kind suggestions."

"Yes—come! come!" said Marmande: and snatching up one of the wax-lights, he almost

dragged Legrand out of the room into his bed-chamber, which lay beyond an apartment that served as a drawing-room.

Just at that very same moment, a well-dressed female, deeply veiled, entered the gateway of the house where these things were taking place; and addressing herself to the porter, she inquired, "Is Captain Marmande within?"

"I really do not know, madame," responded the porter; "but his suite of apartments are up the second staircase — right hand side, third floor. But here is his servant!"

At the same moment a respectable-looking valet was passing by the porter's lodge, he having just entered the gateway, — when hearing himself thus alluded to, he stopped short.

"Here is a lady, Jasmin," said the porter, "who is inquiring for your master."

"I believe my master is at home, madame," replied the valet. "Have the kindness to accompany me."

He accordingly led the way up the staircase; and opened the outer door of his master's apartments by means of a latch-key which he had for the purpose. He conducted the lady into the ante-room adjoining the vestibule; and he then passed into the dining-room—but somewhat to his surprise, the visitress was almost immediately behind him.

"My master is not here, madame, he said.

"Never mind. I am in no hurry," was the response of the visitress. "I will sit down here and wait."

She accordingly sat down in the dining-room, which she entered without ceremony; and Jasmin passed on into the drawing-room, thinking that his master might possibly be there. But not finding him, he proceeded to knock at the door of the bedchamber. That sound startled Captain Marmande, who was in a state of feverish excitement: but Legrand took it very coolly, saying in a whisper, "Devise some excuse to dismiss your man for an hour or so; and then you will be under no embarrassment."

Marmande caught at the idea; and hastening to the door of the chamber, he opened it a little way, saying, "I do not want you now, Jasmin. Go out for a couple of hours. If you are home by ten o'clock, it will do."

"Very good, monsieur," replied the discreet valet, who naturally thought that his master had made an appointment of a tender nature—that the object of it was the lady who had so unceremoniously entered the dining-room—and that the Captain had most likely overheard her arrival. So Jasmin retreated without another word from the chamber door; and returning to the dining-room, he said, "My master is aware of your presence, madame; and will be with you immediately."

"I repeat, I am in no hurry," replied the lady, settling herself comfortably upon the sofa.

Jasmin bowed and retired. The instant the door closed behind him, the visitress, starting from the apparently lounging position which she had assumed in his presence, hastily opened the writing-desk which Faustin Marmande had left upon the table.

"Who knows," she ejaculated within herself, "but that there may be secrets here? Not a stone must be left unturned towards discovering the most complete and signal method of wreaking my vengeance upon him! Ah, ha! the Court Guide soon told me that a Captain Faustin Marmande dwelt at this house; and it was *then* by no means difficult to learn by inquiry that the said Faustin Marmande corresponded precisely in personal appearance with him of whom I was in search! And thus, by a variety of singular circumstances, I have reached at last the point at which I may hope for vengeance! But that beautiful girl!—Oh, good heavens! what a mysterious power! And does it not now seem to me to be a dream that I should be seated here, at Number 10, Rue Monthabor?"

Our readers will have had no difficulty in recognising Mademoiselle Artemis in the well-dressed female who had thus forced her way into the apartments of Faustin Marmande. But while she was thus musing, she was also quickly turning over the contents of the writing-desk; and the name of Edward Clive at the bottom of two of the letters attracted her attention. She hastily ran her eyes over the one which came first, and which happened to be that which we have quoted second. She could scarcely believe her own vision; an expression of fierce malignant triumph settled upon her features; and having flung a quick glance over the other letter, she secured them both about her person.

Ten minutes elapsed; for Faustin Marmande little dreamt that any one was in his dining-room—or that the very female against whom Clive's letter had been written to warn him, was already close at hand. At the expiration of that interval, Artemis heard voices speaking in the adjoining apartment: for Marmande and Legrand—having issued from the bed-chamber, where the latter had changed his apparel—were now stopping short in the drawing-room.

"I tell you I will take the trunk," said one voice which now reached the ears of Artemis.

"It is ridiculous, Legrand!" exclaimed another voice, which Artemis recognised to be that of Marmande, although five years had elapsed since she had last heard it. "You know that I sent Jasmin away——"

"Well, I will carry the trunk myself," returned Legrand; "or else we will send up the cabman or the porter to fetch it. What the devil! do you think that I am going out again upon the world, utterly denuded of a change of apparel—to excite suspicion at the very first hotel I stop at—get myself recaptured——"

"You have got plenty of money, Legrand—and you have got a passport," rejoined Faustin. "What more can you require?"

"What more? why, this trunk! Now hold your tongue, my dear friend; because I am resolved, and all counter-argument is useless. We will carry the trunk out as far as the landing; and then send up the porter to fetch it, while his wife runs out for a cab, which can be got a dozen or twenty paces off."

Artemis heard every syllable of this colloquy. Legrand? Good heavens! it was the

very individual who was mentioned in Clive's letter!—the person who, as also shown by that letter, had been implicated with Clive and Marmande in some serious matter at the very time when that same Marmande had been compelled to take refuge in the village where she had dwelt! And now from that hasty discourse which had just taken place between the two in the drawing-room, the Lorette had no difficulty in conjecturing either that Legrand had escaped from prison, or that there were at least very cogent reasons for him to make a stealthy departure from the capital. And of all this Marmande was an accomplice! Oh, the means of the most crowning vengeance were now with her reach! But Ah! an idea struck her,—aye, and struck her likewise with affright! She was alone with those two men in that suite of apartments; for she heard Jasmin leave by the outer door. Alone with those two men!—and they rendered desperate by their position! They might murder her! The next instant she was concealed behind the draperies of the window.

Almost immediately afterwards, Faustin Marmande and Legrand came forth from the drawing-room—the latter carrying a tolerable sized trunk upon his shoulder, for Marmande was sullen and would not assist him. Artemis peeped between the curtains: Legrand had his hat off at the moment, and she beheld the scar upon the left temple. As for Faustin, he was not altered since she had seen him two years back, as they flitted past each other, she in a carriage and he on a splendid steed, in the neighbourhood of Versailles. The two men passed through the dining-room, and thence onward until they issued forth from the suite of apartments. Artemis waited about a minute; and she then departed likewise. The trunk was on the landing; and she muttered to herself, "That will cause a good five minutes' delay!"

She glided down the staircase; and she drew her veil closely over her countenance as she traversed the court-yard and issued forth from the gateway. A glance thrown into the porter's lodge, showed her that Legrand and the aide-de-camp were waiting there. In less than a minute Artemis was at the end of the street: she tripped across the Rue de Castiglione—another moment and she was in the guard-house at the Ministry of Finance. Five words spoken in the ear of the sergeant on duty were sufficient.

But let us return to No. 10, Rue Monthabor. When Marmande and Legrand descended to the porter's lodge, they found that the porter himself had stepped out for a few minutes; but his wife hastened to fetch a cab, and the vehicle almost immediately arrived. The cabman was sent up-stairs to fetch down the trunk, and Marmande, most desperately nervous, besought Legrand to take his seat in the vehicle at once, so as to save time.

"The very thing, my dear fellow," responded that individual in a whisper, "that would look suspicious. But here is the cabman with the trunk!—and now it is all right."

He accordingly entered the vehicle.

"Good night, my dear Guinard," said Faustin Armande, thus giving the escaped felon the name which was inscribed in the passport he had furnished him.

"Good night, my dear fellow," answered the villain from within the cab.

But at that very instant the light of the lamp flashed upon the points of bayonets—half-a-dozen soldiers surrounded the cab—and the felon Legrand was quickly torn out of it.

"And here is the accomplice of his intended escape!" cried a female voice; and at the same time the hand of the speaker was laid upon the shoulder of Marmande,—who, aghast with terror, had sunk against the wall under the gateway where this scene took place.

"Yes, Captain," exclaimed the sergeant who commanded the guard; "very sorry indeed—but this is serious—and you are my prisoner!"

"And I, perfidious one! am avenged!" said the voice of Artemis hissing in the ears of the miserable wretch.

"Ah, Constance!" he responded in a hollow voice; "you are indeed bitterly revenged!"

Marmande, overwhelmed with feelings that it would be impossible to describe, was hurried away in company with Legrand, to the adjacent guard-house; while Artemis—as we shall continue to call her, though the reader now knows that her proper Christian name was Constance—followed at a little distance, to gloat her eyes as long as possible upon the spectacle of her discomfited betrayer. But just at the corner of the Rue de Castiglione, she ran against an officer, who instantaneously began making apologies—when the Lorette ejaculated, "Good heavens! M. Vigors!"

"Ah, Mademoiselle Artemis!" cried the officer, now with an equal degree of amazement at the meeting.

CHAPTER IX.

HENRI AT PARIS.

Neither Artemis nor Henri Vigors wished to stop at the moment: for the former was desirous to see the fallen Marmande cross the threshold of the adjacent guard-house—and Henri was intent on some business which he had in hand. Yet both he and the Lorette did stop after those ejaculations of recognition had burst from their lips.

"Ah, M. Vigors!" cried Artemis, "who would have thought of seeing you in Paris? When did you arrive?"

"Only an hour ago," responded the young officer. "I brought despatches for the Emperor—I have just delivered them at the War Office—and now I am losing no time in entering on the transaction of some little business for myself. But tell me, Mademoiselle—tell me, how has it fared with you? Was everything true which came from the lips of that beautiful creature?"

"So true, M. Vigors," rejoined Artemis, "that it has led to the consummation of my vengeance!"

"Ah! you are avenged?" ejaculated Vigors. "But surely—surely——"

"Oh, no!" cried the Lorette, at once fathoming his thoughts: "it was not a vengeance to be inflicted by aid of pistol or dagger: but it has been achieved by another means! My betrayer has just passed as a prisoner into the guard-house of the Ministry of Finance!"

"Ah! there was a time when I could not understand," said Vigors, "how it was that you cherished such terrible ideas of vengeance: but Oh! *now* I comprehend them! And what is singular, Mademoiselle, I am now about to institute inquiries for a certain person in this very same street where your betrayer also lived."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Artemis. "*You*, then. M. Vigors, have a vengeance to wreak?"

"Yes—or at all events explanations to demand first of all; and if they be not satisfactory—as indeed how *can* they be?—then a duel to the very death! I inquired at the War Office where dwells the individual of whom I am in search: it is somewhere in the Rue Monthabor—but the exact number could not be remembered——"

"Look in the Court Guide, M. Vigors," said Artemis; "and you may spare yourself a world of trouble. And if you have been ill-treated, I heartily wish that you may wreak as signal a revenge upon your enemy as I have just wreaked upon mine! Ah! and by the bye——"

"I cannot wait another minute, Mademoiselle Artemis!" interrupted Vigors. "My blood is all in a fever-heat——"

"But an idea has struck me!" cried the Lorette. "Good heavens! what a singular coincidence it would be. One word, monsieur! Do you happen to know anything of a certain Faustin Marmande?"

Vigors almost bounded on the pavement at the mention of the name; and he ejaculated, "It is he of whom I am in search! But why do you ask? Is it possible that——"

"If you want Faustin Marmande," replied the Lorette, "you must seek him in that guard-house: for he is a prisoner as the accomplice of a felon's escape!"

Henri Vigors was confounded with amazement; for it was now fully evident that the betrayer of Artemis was none other than his own rival aspirant to the love of the beautiful Julie Talmont.

"Good heaven!" he ejaculated; "this is indeed the most wonderful of all coincidences! But what made you ask whether I was on the search for Faustin Marmande?"

"Because here is a letter," rejoined the Lorette, "which I have in my possession, and which proves that Marmande had been making inquiries concerning you. It is from that very same Captain Clive—who, by the bye, seems to be no very honourable character——"

"What does all this mean, mademoiselle?" exclaimed Henri. "You are speaking in enigmas!"

"Here!" said Artemis; "step under this gateway—and you shall read two letters which I have in my possession!"

They stepped aside accordingly; and in less than two minutes Henri Vigors had perused the letters which we so recently laid before our readers. One showed him that Marmande must have been making minute inquiries concerning him: the other afforded him a deep insight into Marmande's character, by proving him to have been a villain and the accomplice of villains. But it was the letter wherein his own name was mentioned, which now especially riveted his attention. He reflected for a few moments; and he mentally ejaculated, "Yes, it is only too clear! The villain Marmande has doubtless prejudiced me in the estimation of Julie! With the information contained in this letter respecting the orgie in Stirling's tent, he was indeed furnished with a powerful weapon to aid him in conducting the warfare of rivalry! Ah, and no wonder that the feelings of a delicate-minded young lady like Julie, should be shocked on learning that the object of her heart's tenderest and purest affections was revelling with loose girls until late hours in the night! I see what I am now to do! Instead of seeking any explanation from the lips of Faustin Marmande, I will proceed with manly frankness *elsewhere!*"

He now learnt from Artemis the full particulars of her visit to Marmande's apartments—her discovery that the escaped felon Legrand was harboured there—and the mode by which she had accomplished the arrest of both.

"And to-morrow," added the Lorette, "I shall place these two letters in magisterial hands, to show how Marmande has been in former times connected with Legrand in schemes of villany; so that it shall not be a partial but a total and absolute ruin that must involve Faustin in its vortex!"

"But if you thus deal with those letters," said Vigors, "you will compromise——"

"Oh, I understand you!" ejaculated the Lorette, laughing. "I shall compromise *you*, because one of those letters will show that you were dancing the polka with a young lady in Mr. Stirling's tent at half-past twelve o'clock at night! Well, now I bethink me, M. Vigors, that particular letter is really useless in respect to the case which I have in hand; and I beseech you therefore to take it. It is the other letter, which speaks of myself, and Legrand, and so forth, that is so damnatory to Faustin Marmande."

"I will take this letter, mademoiselle, since you offer it," responded Vigors, "and inasmuch as it does really regard myself. But on my honour as an officer and as a gentleman, I was swayed by no selfish consideration in what I was ere now about to say. It was not of myself I was thinking when I observed that some one would be compromised: but it was of that Englishman—Captain Clive——"

"Ah, well," interrupted Artemis carelessly; "I cannot suffer any compassionate consideration for him to interfere with my own proceedings in this case. Farewell, M. Vigors. Ah! if you should happen to wish to communicate with me——it is just possible, you know, considering everything that has transpired——and if it should be so, a letter will find me in the Quarter of Notre Dame de Lorette; for I have returned to my old apart-

ments there. And now permit me to ask you one question. Did you happen to see any more of that beautiful girl——"

"Yes, I saw her," replied Henri. "She is indeed no impostress, mademoiselle! But it is now too long a tale to narrate: suffice it to say that I, as well as you, have received unquestionable proofs of the marvellous power of that beautiful creature! Yet one thing I must linger to tell you; and this is that she and her grandsire have left the Crimea in order to visit Paris."

Henri Vigors did not wait to hear the volley of questions which the wondering Artemis was preparing to pour forth; but ejaculating the word, "Farewell,"—he hurried away.

And now he bent his steps direct to the palace of the Tuileries, and inquired for Mademoiselle Talmont. After being kept waiting for some little time, he was informed that Mademoiselle Talmont had gone to pass the evening with the Countess de Mauleon. Henri Vigors ascertained where the Countess resided; and he lost no time in repairing to her private residence.

The Countess had no brilliant assemblage on this particular evening—she was giving no grand entertainment: she was merely receiving Julie Talmont and Georgette Villefranche in a friendly manner, without ceremony. The three ladies were seated together, when a domestic entered; and addressing his mistress, said, "If you please, madame, an officer requests a few moments' conversation. He says that it is useless for him to send in his name, as you are most probably unacquainted with it: but he comes from a distance."

"I will see him at once," said the Countess: and begging her two friends to excuse her, she hastened to the apartment to which the visitor had been shown.

On entering that room, she beheld a young, handsome, very genteel-looking man, who was indeed a perfect stranger to her: and she had not the slightest suspicion who it was that thus stood in her presence. The young officer bowed, and said, "I have a thousand apologies to offer, madame, for the liberty which I have taken: but I come from the Crimea, the bearer of despatches to his Imperial Majesty. Scarcely two hours have elapsed since I alighted in Paris—I was anxious to pay my respects to a lady whom I expected to find at the Tuileries—but I learnt that she is here. I therefore came hither—I considered that it would be indiscreet to inquire at once for Mademoiselle Talmont—I therefore asked for you, madame——"

"Good heavens! is it possible!" ejaculated the Countess. "You are M. Vigors?"

The young Frenchman started. Why should the Countess at once discover his name from the fact that he was inquiring for Julie Talmont? Julie must have taken the Countess into her confidence!

"Yes—that is my name, madame," responded Vigors: "and if you are Mademoiselle Talmont's friend—if to you she has confided her secrets—I beseech you to tell me——"

"Ah, M. Vigors!" interrupted the Countess, surveying the young officer with the deepest interest; "the telegraphic messages have already excited the admiration of all France for your name; and I am proud to form your acquaintance. But alas! in a certain quarter I fear you are in sad disgrace——"

"I thought so! I feared it!" ejaculated Henri. "That villain Marmande——"

"Pray sit down, M. Vigors," said the Countess; "and let you and me talk over this matter quietly together."

"But one word, madame! one word!" ejaculated Henri, in a state of feverish excitement. "Are the affections of my Julie completely weaned away from me? has that villain Marmande succeeded in gaining her heart?"

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated the Countess. "Julie detests him!"

"What do I hear, madame? No! no! she does not detest him! Alas, I fear that you are not altogether in her confidence!" exclaimed Henri bitterly.

"I swear to you, M. Vigors," responded the Countess, "that Julie Talmont loathes the very sight of Faustin Marmande!"

"And yet," rejoined Henri, perplexed, dubious, and incredulous,—"and yet she was folded lovingly in his arms——"

"Monsieur!" ejaculated the Countess: "you are outraging Mademoiselle Talmont! —or you know not what you say!"

"Alas, madame, I know too well what I say!" cried the young officer, with passionate vehemence. "Behold!"—and with the same spirit of feverish rapidity, he drew forth his pocket-book. "Here is the entry! Fatal words, that sear my very eye-balls to gaze upon them! But here they are! See! November the 3rd, at precisely six o'clock in the evening——Ah, by the bye, that would be at three o'clock in Paris!—Julie Talmont was embraced in the arms of Faustin Marmande, and two other ladies were present! Those two ladies must necessarily be the confidantes of their love! Now, madame, will you tell me, are you one of those confidantes? were you present at that scene which I am describing?"

"Just heaven! I recollect it all!" exclaimed the Countess. "Yes, yes,—I was present! But as I have a soul to be saved, M. Vigors, you are labouring under the most fatal error!"

"Error?" cried the young man, catching at the word. "Oh, my God! is it possible?"

"Yes—an error the most stupendous that ever you laboured under in your life!" rejoined the Countess, emphatically. "Julie Talmont sank not in a moment of endearment into the arms of Faustin Marmande; but she fainted because that villain had been calumniating *you!*"

A cry of mingled joy and anguish burst from Henri's lips,—joy to think that all the superstructure of jealous suspicion which he had raised upon the information of the *clairvoyante*, was suddenly shattered to the ground, —and anguish at the bare idea of the injustice of that suspicion, and at the recollection of all the misery and despair it had caused him.

"Oh, madame!" he said, actually throwing

himself upon his knees at the feet of the Countess, and pressing her hand between both his own; "you are to me like a good angel! you have given me both life and hope!—and in this posture do I thank you!"

"Ah, M. Vigors," said the Countess, forcing him to rise, "it is not to me that you must kneel! It is to Julie!"

"Oh! I know that the villain Marmande must have been calumniating me!" exclaimed Vigors; "and doubtless he has made much of an incident which certainly is not altogether without blame for myself, but which is nevertheless comparatively venial when the position of a soldier is taken into account,—thrown as he necessarily is, amongst those who would laugh at him if he dared play the saint!"

"Well, well, M. Vigors," interrupted the Countess, "we will see what can be done to set you right with Julie. But how came you to know anything about that scene in the Tuileries of which you have recorded so accurate a date — day for day — hour for hour——"

"Ah, madame! if I were to tell you the tale, you would not believe me!" interjected Vigors: "you would deem me a visionary or a madman to put faith in such things!"

"Good heaven! what is he speaking of?" replied the Countess. "Surely *you* also—— But no! it is impossible!"

A point was now reached at which explanations soon took place. Henri Vigors related to the Countess de Mauleon all that had occurred at the cottage on the cliffs overlooking Balaklava, in the evening of the 3rd of November. Then in her turn the Countess described to the equally wondering Vigors the particulars of Julie Talmont's consultation of the *clairvoyant* Alexandre, in the evening of the 19th of October. It were idle to attempt to convey an idea of the feelings of wonderment with which these narratives were respectively received on the part of Vigors and the Countess. Further explanations followed. Henri told the Countess everything which related to Artemis, and how she had just now been so fearfully avenged on Faustin Marmande. The Countess could scarcely conceal the joy with which she listened to the announcement that Marmande was a prisoner on a charge which would effectually ruin his character for ever, and cause him to be cashiered from the army. Vigors failed not to describe in the minutest details the evening passed in Clement Stirling's tent; and he wound up by saying, "it is evident, madame, that those who seek the intervention of *clairvoyance*, incur a great risk of having their happiness destroyed for ever. *Clairvoyance* represents the fact which is taking place at the instant—but assigns no motives, and thus leaves the fact itself to the possibility of being cruelly misconstrued. It was with no libertine willingness that I received a loose girl in my arms in Clement Stirling's tent. She bounded towards me; no look nor gesture of mine had invited her! Neither, in the other case, did Julie sink in love's tenderness in the arms of Marmande: she fainted through affliction! Yet in the former instance *clairvoyance* left it to be inferred that I was entering with all the spirit of a wild libertinage into the revels of that night; and in the latter instance the same distorting medium led me to believe in the inconstancy of Julie."

"And now, M. Vigors," said the Countess, "I must go and play the part of an intermediary; and I think that I shall not have very much trouble in convincing Julie Talmont that you were not, after all, so reprehensible as she fancies in the affair of the Crimean tent—and that at all events you have been sufficiently punished by the tortures of jealousy so strangely excited in your breast. Ah, one word, M. Vigors!"—and the Countess, retracing her way from the door, placed her finger archly upon her lip, as she said, "You are sure that you faithfully fulfilled the injunction given you by a certain anonymous correspondent of your's——"

"Ah, madame! I understand!" ejaculated Vigors. "You mean in destroying the billet which conveyed to me the first intimation that in Marmande I had a rival? Oh, yes, madame! I destroyed that billet!—and never shall my lips let fall a syllable——"

"Enough!" said the Countess: and she then glided from the room.

Scarcely five minutes elapsed,—and yet five minutes of such acute suspense for Henri Vigors that it seemed to him as if he were passing through as many centuries,—when the door opened. It was not the Countess de Mauleon who reappeared; but it was Julie Talmont,—the beautiful and now happy Julie who glided into the room, and who was instantaneously clasped in the arms of her lover.

We must leave it to the imagination of the reader to conceive the joy of this meeting—the luxury of those feelings that were experienced by the young couple after having passed through the ordeal of so much mental torture. Yes! it is a scene that we need not dwell upon. Suffice it to say that it was fraught with a degree of happiness which amply compensated the lovers for all that they had endured.

At eleven o'clock that night, the Empress Eugenie was seated in her boudoir, attended by her favourite ladies, whose names are already so well known to the reader. The Empress happened to mention the name of the young hero Henri Vigors; and then the Countess of Mauleon said, "Ah, my dear Julie! you must permit me to tell everything to her Imperial Majesty: for if her Majesty's interests be enlisted on your behalf, you need not fear that your father will refuse his assent to your engagement with M. Vigors."

Julie was covered with blushes and plunged into the deepest confusion: but the Empress took her hand, smiled kindly upon her, and said with her characteristic amiability, "Tell me, my dear young friend—what can I do in your behalf?"

But as Julie was still too much confused to give the required explanations, the Countess of Mauleon undertook to narrate the entire history. The astounding intelligence that Faustin Marmande had been arrested on some grave charge connected with the escaped criminal Legrand, had already reached the Tuileries; and now Madame de Mauleon's

narrative afforded the fullest particulars on the point. We need scarcely add that the circumstances connected with the two separate and distinct tests to which *clairvoyance* had been put, excited the wonder of the Empress as well as of those ladies who were previously unacquainted with the incidents.

"And now," said the Baroness de Cardillac, "no one need for a moment doubt the story of the recovery of the box of bullion through the agency of the *clairvoyant* Alexandre."

The discourse naturally dwelt upon the same topic for some time; and at length the Empress Eugenie said, "Perhaps all of you have heard of Mademoiselle Lenormand, who for so many years was celebrated as a prophetess, a fortune-teller, and a worker of marvels?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed the Countess of Mauleon; "we have all heard of her!—and I remember your Majesty once hinted that there was a very remarkable story connected with Mademoiselle Lenormand and the Empress Josephine."

"Yes — a most extraordinary story," answered Eugenie: then, after a brief pause, she went on to say, "The facts have been committed to paper, and the narrative is in my writing-desk. I received it from my august husband some few months ago. Mademoiselle Villefranche, you will perform the part of *lectrice* on the occasion. We will excuse Mademoiselle Talmont," added the Empress with a smile, "under existing circumstances."

Georgette hastened to procure the manuscript from the Empress Eugenie's writing-desk; and while the deepest attention now prevailed in the imperial boudoir, the young lady commenced reading the history which will be found in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIRST TALE OF THE BOUDOIR.

Of a serious and even somewhat mournful character were the reflections of the venerable Pierre Michel—or "Father Michel," as the neighbours called him—as one evening, in the month of April, 1776, he sat upon the bench at the door of his cottage, which was situate midway between the Basse-Ville of Calais and the sea-shore on the northern side of the town. The boughs of the trees which waved over his head were putting forth their verdure; and the notes of the warbling birds had begun to announce the presence of Spring. It was at that delicious twilight hour, when the soul is akin in feelings to the tranquillity of surrounding nature, and yet susceptible of that same soft melancholy influence which resembles the gloom of the evening growing over the last reflections of an effulgent sun.

Father Michel was a man of sixty-two years of age at the period when this tale commences; and the excellence of his character—the patriarchal hospitality which he was ever ready to afford to the wayfarer—and his universal kindness to the little children of the neighbourhood, obtained for him the appellation of "Father." His little dwelling, which was about a mile from the Basse-Ville, was the abode of comfort and peace. He was a widower: but one son and one daughter were left to cheer him in his way through this world. Albert was a fine tall youth, of nineteen, with dark eyes and hair, and that facial outline which reminds the beholder of the characteristic features of the warm and sunny clime of Greece. Pauline was one year younger than her brother, but modelled after the same style of beauty, and graced with attractions which would rather have seemed to denote the high-born lady than the lowly and unassuming country maiden. Both she and her brother were well educated: for their mother, who had died only two years previously to the opening of our tale, was a lady of great accomplishments and considerable knowledge: and she had devoted unwearied care to the instruction of her well-beloved offspring.

Pierre Michel himself had been a soldier in early life; and the knowledge which he possessed was rather the result of experience than of inculcation. He had espoused the scion of a noble family; and the lady who had sacrificed brilliant prospects to her affection for him, was immediately disowned by all her relations. Her father, however, settled an annual income of eighty pounds upon her husband, to preserve them from want; and immediately after their marriage they retired to the white cottage near Calais, afar from the scenes of fashion and splendour in which her proud relatives moved. The union was blessed by two children; and not a cloud passed over the existence of the contented Pierre, until his faithful and fond partner was summoned to the tomb. We need not say how deeply she was deplored—how severely lamented: suffice it to observe that a sense of religion, and a firm hope of being reunited in a happier sphere, enabled him to support his loss with resignation, and to enjoy that inward tranquillity which a strong reliance upon Providence can alone produce.

We said that Pierre Michel was sitting, in the twilight of an April eve, in the year 1776, upon the bench before the cottage door, pondering upon those serious matters which were congenial with his years, and which seemed chiefly to bear relation to the reminiscences of her whom he had lost. Albert had gone out in the afternoon in his little boat—for he was passionately addicted to the sea—and his father knew that, though young, he was both skilful and cautious; while Pauline had proceeded to pass a few hours with some acquaintances in the Basse-Ville. These friends consisted of a notary, his wife, and son: and although the gloom of evening was rapidly increasing, Pierre did not feel uneasy, for he well knew that young Henri Alvimar would escort her home. M. Alvimar, senior, was reputed to be wealthy; Henri was his only son; and it was not with feelings of dissatisfaction that Father Pierre had beheld evident signs of attachment on the part of the young people.

But as the shades of night rapidly descended, dark clouds gathered above—the wind began to whistle through the trees—and the whole

aspect of the heavens announced the proximity of a fearful storm. Pauline reached home, escorted by the son of the notary, just as the heavy drops of rain had chased her father into the cottage: but still Albert returned not. An hour passed away; and the storm broke with appalling violence. The roar of the sea commingled with the crash of the thunder, and the moaning of the wind; and from time to time the whole sphere was illuminated for a few moments with the brilliancy of the lightning.

It was eleven o'clock on that fearful night, when Pierre Michel and Henri Alvimar proceeded together to the coast, as Albert had not returned, and the fears of the father and sister had arisen to a pitch bordering upon frenzy. Pauline wished to throw her cloak around her, and accompany her father and Henri to the sea-shore; but the storm raged with a fury which would have rendered it highly imprudent and dangerous for a young female, tenderly nurtured, to expose herself to the cold wind and heavy rains. She accordingly consented to await their return; and towards the coast did the old man and his young companion proceed.

As they drew near the sand-hills which bound in that part the mighty bed, wherein the ocean, lately so calm, was now raging, the sounds of many voices fell upon their ears—men calling out and giving orders, women screaming, and sailors vociferating words of encouragement and hope in their own peculiar technical phraseology. Then the flapping of sails and the rattling of cordage was heard; and when Father Michel and Henri reached the shore, they found, as they had anticipated, that a ship had run aground, and that all human efforts were being made to save the crew. But how powerfully excited were Pierre's feelings, how great his admiration, and how dread his alarm,—when he was told, in answer to a few hurried inquiries, that three or four gallant young men had put off in a small boat to carra a rope to the ship, and that his own son was of the party. Indeed it was in compliance with Albert's representations, and in his own boat, that this daring achievement was attempted.

"Oh! why was I not here in time to join him?" ejaculated Henri Alvimar, who entertained a strong friendship for the brother of his beautiful Pauline.

"No!" cried Father Michel impressively; "it would be too severe a blow, were those dreaded waves to engulf all our hopes at the same instant!"

Pierre scarcely knew what he said: but Henri immediately fancied that an allusion to his attachment for Pauline was implied—although that attachment had not as yet been formally revealed:—and, feeling grateful for the sort of acquiescence in his suit thus conveyed, he pressed the old man's hand warmly.

At that moment a shout of welcome arose from the crowds that stood along the shore; and, that multitude suddenly giving way, Albert hastened forward bearing a female form in his arms. His father was instantly by his side.

"Father," said Albert in a hurried tone, "an elderly gentleman—her father, perhaps—implored me to save the poor girl: she is insensible—she has fainted;—take charge of her—convey her home—you and Henri can carry her between you—while I return and superintend the measures necessary to save the crew of yonder vessel."

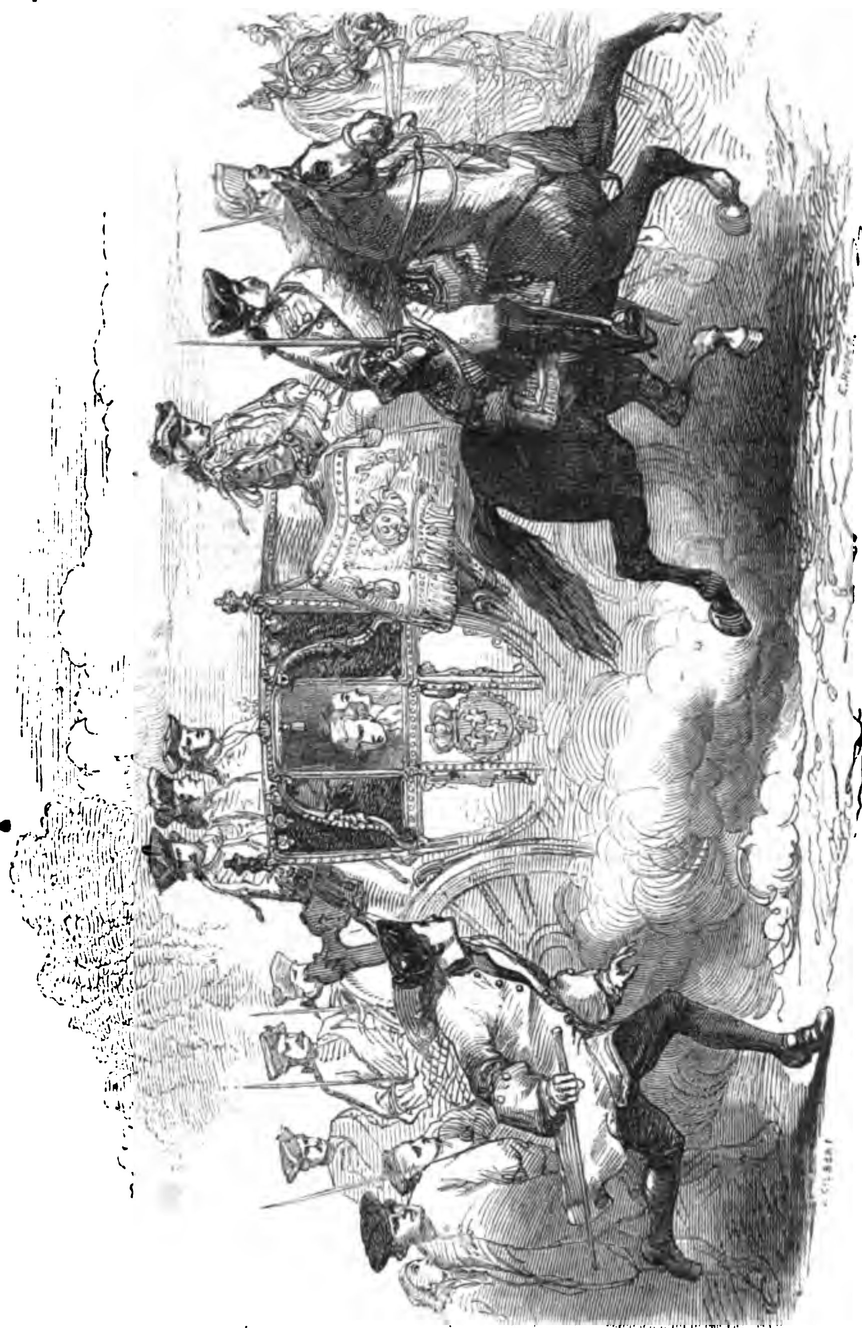
With these words he yielded his burden to those whom he addressed, and hurried back again to the strand.

No longer consulting those selfish fears for his child which had led him to the coast, Pierre immediately returned home with Henri, bearing between them the lifeless form of the young female whom Albert had brought from the distressed vessel in his boat. On their arrival at the cottage, the stranger was consigned to the care of Pauline, who placed her in bed, and administered the proper restoratives to call her back to life. In a short time the young lady—for such she evidently was—opened her eyes, and gazed in astonishment around her. A few words made her comprehend her safety; and she then inquired, in a hurried and anxious tone, after her father. Pauline was about to reply in the words of promise and hope, when the door opened, and an elderly gentleman rushed in, exclaiming, "My child! Josephine—my dearest child!"

We shall not dwell upon the affecting details of this meeting after the dread perils which they had just escaped: but after observing that through the gallantry of Albert Michel and his comrades in the dangerous enterprise, the whole of the vessel's crew was saved, we shall proceed to put the reader in possession of those few facts concerning the two strangers, which they themselves communicated to the inmates of the cottage.

It appeared that the gentleman (whose name was Tascher) and his daughter—a beautiful girl of only thirteen years of age—had sailed from Martinique, a French island in the West Indies, some weeks previously, and that stress of weather had compelled the captain of the vessel to run for Liverpool. There she was detained for repairs; and M. Tascher, with his daughter, being anxious to proceed to France as quickly as possible, hastened to Dover, where they embarked on board the hoy bound for Calais. The storm overtook the vessel at a distance of about five miles from Calais: the captain endeavoured to run for the harbour, but, overshooting the mark, got aground on the sands to the north of the pier. Albert, who had landed from his own excursion before the storm commenced, had observed the distress of the vessel in the distance, and remained on shore to watch its manœuvres. He stayed until its dangerous predicament aroused his energies to action; and through the instrumentality of himself and a few other young men whom he persuaded to embark with him in his frail boat, the whole crew was saved.

M. Tascher, his daughter, and servants remained that night at the cottage: but in order to allow the young lady as much time to repose as possible, after the alarms and fatigues she had experienced, he determined not to commence his journey to Paris until the after-



No. 8.—The Empress Eugenie.

noon of the ensuing day. While he proceeded into the town of Calais to make the necessary arrangements for a vehicle and horses to be ready at the time proposed, Pauline passed a few agreeable hours with her new friend.

The young lady possessed a most beautiful person, and an amiable disposition. She played on the harp, and sang with exquisite taste and feeling;—as she walked, her light form, modelled with the most exquisite symmetry, was the very personation of grace;—and the tones of her voice were the most melodious ever heard. She was passionately fond of flowers, and gladly assented to a proposal made by Pauline to visit the little garden adjoining the cottage. After having examined, with true botanic taste, the various products of the little enclosure, Mademoiselle Tascher was about to enter the house once more, when a gipsy woman approached the railings to demand charity.

"I will have my fortune told!" ejaculated the sprightly girl; and before Pauline could utter a word by way of remonstrance, she had already yielded her hand to the old sybil over the railings, saying at the same time, "Do you discover anything extraordinary in my destiny?"

"Yes—much of happiness, and some misery," was the reply, accompanied by a solemn shake of the head.

"You take care not to commit yourself, my good woman," said the young lady. "I could utter the same prediction relative to any one, without much dread of its being falsified by the issue of events."

"You will pass through much misery, and will then be happy for a period," continued the gipsy, not heeding these remarks; "your life will then once more verge into gloom and melancholy."

"Again I cannot say that your prophecies are very sapient," observed Josephine.

"Stay, then—upon your own head be it!" said the sybil solemnly. "You will be married soon—that union will not be happy—you will become a widow—you will marry again—and—and——"

"And what?" demanded the young lady.

"And you will become Queen of France?" added the old woman.

The young lady withdrew her hand hastily from the gipsy's grasp, and, uttering an exclamation of mingled joy, alarm, and surprise, turned towards Pauline to ascertain what impression this declaration had made upon her. Mademoiselle Michel smiled faintly—for she did not altogether approve of the freak; and her young companion, having presented a silver coin to the old prophetess, retired, with her kind hostess, into the cottage.

At three o'clock that afternoon M. Tascher and his daughter took leave of the family of Pierre Michel. But before they departed they manifested their gratitude towards the inmates of the cottage to the utmost of their power.

"To you, gallant youth," said M. Tascher, addressing himself to Albert, "are my daughter and myself indebted for our lives. Accept this ring as a token of my esteem—my friendship—my gratitude. Nay—reject not my offer: it is not intended as a reward—for nothing could adequately remunerate valour like yours: it is only a pledge of permanent regard."

"On those conditions I accept the gift," said Albert; and he pressed with warmth the hand that placed a ring of immense value upon his finger.

"Mademoiselle," said M. Tascher's daughter to Pauline, on her side, "allow me to leave some token of my gratitude and esteem with you also. You know," she added laughing, and in a whisper, "that I am to be Queen of France; and then you shall not be forgotten. In the meantime this chain," and she loosened one from her neck as she spoke—"must express my attachment towards you, and link our hearts for ever in the bonds of friendship."

"You also, then, must keep a token to remind you of me," said Pauline; and having left the room for a few moments, she returned with a bracelet which she clasped upon her new friend's wrist, receiving the chain around her own neck at the same time.

The word "farewell" was then uttered on both sides; and M. Tascher departed with his daughter, leaving behind them at the humble cottage the most favourable impression upon all its inmates.

But these impressions varied considerably in their nature. Pierre Michel was pleased with the open-hearted disposition and honest frankness of M. Tascher; while Pauline felt herself deeply interested in the beautiful daughter of that gentleman. But on his part, Albert experienced an undefinable admiration of the young lady who had just taken her departure, which appeared to grow the more impassioned as he pondered upon her attractions. Every word she had uttered in his hearing during her short stay at the cottage—the softness of her hazel eye—the luxuriance of her dark brown hair—her sweet smile—and the graces of her sylph-like form, were all treasured in his memory. In a word, he was deeply enamoured of Mademoiselle Tascher: it was a love assuredly formed at first sight—but not the less sincere nor the less profound on that account; and from the moment she quitted the humble cottage with her father, to enter the vehicle that was to convey her to Paris, Albert grew daily more and more melancholy.

And what was M. Tascher? This question frequently intruded itself upon Albert's mind — for he often reflected, in his visionary musings, upon the claims he might assert in aspiring to the hand of her whom he loved, at some future period. M. Tascher had been but little communicative relative to himself or his circumstances. The few particulars before recorded, and a word which had dropped from his lips intimating that he was a widower, were all that Albert knew concerning his history.

"Still," thought the young man, "he is a gentleman—his manner and demeanour prove that: he is well educated—a fact evidenced by his conversation; and he is wealthy—for he travels with the circumstance and appendages, and in the style of a man of property. No—I may never hope for an alliance with his family—'twere presumption to indulge longer in the chimera!"

But the unhappy youth *did* indulge in the chimera, and pursued it and cherished it, and nursed it, and allowed his imagination to feed upon it, until there were moments when the bright vision seemed to be realized,—when the object of his affection, grown to womanhood, accompanied him with smiles to the altar,—and when the fond aspirations of his youth were crowned with felicity and success. Alas! it was indeed but a vision: weeks and months —and even years rolled by—and no tidings were heard of M. Tascher or his daughter. Albert's cheek grew deadly pale,—and his eyes unnaturally bright;—but although frequent and urgent were the tender inquiries made by his father and sister relative to the cause of his altered appearance, he retained the secret in his own bosom.

Three years passed away—and Albert was now twenty-two. It was at this period that M. Alvimar, the old notary, died, leaving behind him considerable property, to which Henri, who was formally engaged to be married to Pauline, was the sole heir. As soon, however, as the funeral obsequies were performed, Henri was compelled to visit Paris, to receive certain sums of money which were due to him by virtue of his late father's will. Pierre Michel, who had for a long time observed with pain and grief the deep melancholy which had taken possession of his son, and who vainly endeavoured to ascertain the cause, imagined that change of scene might produce some beneficial effect; and he accordingly proposed that the two young men should proceed to Paris in each other's society. Henri gladly accepted his young friend as a companion; and in the month of June, 1779, Albert Michel and Henri Alvimar set foot in Paris for the first time.

France at that time was a volcano, prepared to burst forth and startle the world with its convulsion. The extravagance, the dissipation, and the luxury of the French Court were at its height. There, amidst the crowds of gallantry and beauty that thronged the gilded saloons of the Petit Trianon or Versailles,—moved Marie Antoinette, the most charming and profligate Queen in the world:—there were the voluptuary Maurepas, the profound and philosophic Turgot, the subtle Malesherbes, and the elegant De Vergennes. There also was the Duchess of Bourbon Penthievre, better know as the Princess de Lamballe, who was subsequently put to death by the outraged populace in that Revolution on the brink of which the splendid Court was hovering. All that was most refined of the chivalry, the talent, and the beauty of France, was concentrated around the throne of Louis XVI and his beauteous wife. It was the most brilliant epoch of the reign of the old *regime*, and probably pleasure was more sought after, and high birth and elegance of manners the more valued, because were already heard the distant murmurs of that dread explosion of popular fury which was so righteously and so gloriously to sweep away throne and altar—rank and riches!

Albert had undertaken the journey to Paris under the impression, and with the earnest hope that he should encounter Mademoiselle Tascher. Thus, wherever he went—whatever public sights or exhibitions he visited, his mind constantly dwelt upon the one unforgotten idea —that of again beholding her whose image dwelt in his bosom. Henri Alvimar had particular business to attend to, and was usually occupied throughout the day with the matters which had called him to Paris; and thus Albert was left to wander about by himself, examining the countenance of every well-dressed female he saw either on foot or in her carriage, in the hope of meeting the one that he most wished to see.

One afternoon Albert was sauntering in the vicinity of the Palais Royal, when he was suddenly aroused from a deep reverie into which he had fallen, by the rapid tramp of cavalry; and in another moment a detachment of the royal guards passed by. In the midst was the Queen's carriage; and her Majesty waved her handkerchief from the window to the few worthless sycophants who welcomed her with their acclamations. The gorgeous vehicle passed on; and three or four others containing the nobles and ladies of her Majesty's suite followed immediately behind. Albert watched the glittering cavalcade with mournful pleasure; for the charms of the young Queen excited the generous compassion of his chivalrous soul, although his heart had been bestowed upon another. Just as the last carriage in the Royal train whirled past him one of its occupants—a lady elegantly attired —leant forward for a moment; and Albert instantly recognised that countenance which was ever present in his memory.

He uttered an exclamation of surprise and joy; and without reflecting for a moment upon the indiscretion of which he was guilty, darted through the crowd after the carriage with the speed of a hunted deer. In a few moments—such was the haste with which he rushed onwards—he was alongside the vehicle; when a gentleman in a brilliant military uniform, and with a star upon his breast, who was sitting next to the idol of Albert's heart, suddenly thrust his head from the window, and exclaimed in an abrupt manner, "Move off, fellow!"

Albert stood paralysed in the midst of the street: the cavalcade whirled out of sight; and he was exposed to the rude jesting of the crowd that had witnessed his singular behaviour. But *she*, to gain a glimpse of whose countenance he had thus exposed himself to insult, had not seen him. He returned more melancholy than ever to the hotel where he and Henri were staying.

He felt convinced that it was not M. Tascher who had spoken to him so abruptly from the window of the carriage. Could Mademoiselle Tascher have married? and was he her husband who had ordered him to move off, and called him *fellow*? At all events she was in the royal train and, even if still unwedded, was far above the reach of his presumptuous hopes.

Urged by that infatuation which invariably prompts the lover to seek to throw himself in the way of the object of his affection, even

when an impassable gulf appears to exist between him and the chance of happiness, Albert wandered all day, and throughout a considerable portion of the night, about the precincts of the Tuileries, at which palace the Royal Family was then staying. Again he obtained a glimpse of the beloved one—just as, lounging back in an open barouche, she was whirled beneath the archways leading into the Place de Carrousel, on her way to the royal presence. There was a gentleman by her side—the same who had called him *fellow;* and this gentleman again beheld Albert gazing earnestly upon the lady seated by his side: but the lady saw not her admirer. The gentleman fixed a scowling glance upon the young man, from whose view the coach almost immediately afterwards disappeared.

"This is a visit of ceremony, and will be brief," thought Albert: "I will wait here until they leave the palace."

An hour and a half passed away, and Albert remained at his post. Presently the well-known barouche made its appearance; and this time its female occupant cast her eyes by accident upon our young hero. He instantly raised his hat: she recognised him, and uttered a cry of joy, while her cheeks were suddenly flushed with the glow of pleasure. Albert was about to advance nearer, when her companion,—the cross gentleman before noticed—ejaculated in a voice rendered tremulous with rage, "Back—back—fellow! We do not know you—back!"

The lady cast a glance of mingled surprise and indignation at her companion, while Albert, embarrassed and discomfited, knew not in which way to take this strange conduct. But ere he had half made up his mind how to act, the barouche drove rapidly away; and the guard at the gates of the palace, who had witnessed the whole proceeding, commanded the young lover to retire. Abashed and confused, Albert did not even think of inquiring of the bystanders the name of the gentleman who accompanied the lady in the elegant barouche: but he returned to his hotel more wretched than before.

On three or four different occasions, subsequent to the last-mentioned one, did Albert encounter her whom he had known as Mademoiselle Tascher. Each time was she accompanied by her rude male companion; and each time was he unable to obtain one moment's converstion with her. She always bowed to him with a kindness—it might almost be said with a sisterly warmth of manner; and her companion as invariably appeared to be as indignant with her for bestowing that courtesy, as with Albert for receiving it. Neither on any of those occasions did Albert think of making such inquiries of the bystanders as should relieve him from his suspense relative to the condition of her whom he loved, and the nature of her connexion with the rude gentleman by whom he was invariably insulted.

Six weeks had thus passed away since the arrival of Alvimar and Albert Michel in Paris; and at the expiration of that time the former had terminated the business which led him thither. A day was accordingly fixed upon for their return—in spite of Albert's anxiety to procrastinate the moment when he must quit Paris—perhaps for ever: for Henri on his part was anxious to seek once more the spot inhabited by his much-beloved Pauline. The day of departure dawned, and the hour arrived—but Albert was not true to his appointment. Henri proceeded to his friend's chamber, where he found that Albert's clothes were duly packed up, ready for the journey. An inquiry of the porter at the entrance of the hotel made him acquainted with fact that Albert had sauntered out only half-an-hour previously, but not with the air of a person who was bent upon any particular business. Henri waited, and waited—and his friend did not return. The entire day passed—the morrow dawned, but with it came not young Michel. Henri now grew alarmed, and feared that some accident might have overtaken the absent one. He visited the Morgue—or receptable for dead bodies found in the river or elsewhere: he proceeded to the various hospitals: he called upon the magistrates; he made inquiries of the police—but no where could he obtain the slightest trace, nor hear the most remote tidings of him whom he sought. He passed a week in these fruitless researches; and then with a heavy heart he took his departure from Paris.

It were vain to attempt to describe the grief of Pierre Michel, or the anguish of Pauline, when Henri arrived at the cottage in the Basse-Ville, and communicated the extraordinary disappearance of Albert. For some time the old man was determined to proceed to Paris, and make personal inquiries after his dear son: but Henri overruled this desire, assuring him that no means which prudence or ingenuity could suggest, with a view to discover some trace of him or his fate, had been left unessayed. Conjecture as to the cause of that strange disappearance was vain: never was mystery more unfathomable. The grief of the bereaved ones was therefore the more acute; for they declared "that they could bear their loss with fortitude and resignation were they acquainted with the details; but that the horrible uncertainty which surrounded the circumstance only increased the sorrow it occasioned, by allowing free scope for the most dismal apprehensions." Sometimes imagination would picture to itself that the lost one had been foully murdered;—at another time, the idea would occur that he had committed suicide, either in a moment of metal aberration, or through the same cause which produced the melancholy that was unaccounted for to a fond father, an adoring sister, and a faithful friend.

But all conjecture was vain: two years passed away, and no tidings were received of the lost youth. Pauline then allowed herself to be persuaded to reward Henri for his constancy and long-tried affection, by bestowing her hand upon him: but the bridal was darkened by the thought that he who should have also been there, and whose presence would have completed the felicity of the day, was not in his place by his sister's side;—and the old man wept,—and Pauline's tears fell freely,—

and Henri's countenance was also moistened with the crystal drops of sorrow—as the priest pronounced that blessing which gave Pauline a fond husband, and Henri a loving and tender wife.

And what a valuable helpmate was Pauline! Untutored in the various arts of polished life that so often disguise the true aspect of the heart, she cultivated a thousand of those nameless domestic graces which throw a halo of light and love wherever they are seen. Neat, simple, and beautiful was her ordinary attire: and on Sundays and holidays she was decorated with a simple ornament of jet and gold—a mimic dove, suspended from her neck, and dallying with every throb of her heart—an emblem of the purity and innocence that reigned within. The present given to her by her friend of the moment, Mademoiselle Tascher, was kept in her little work-box, and regarded only as a memento of promised and unrealized fellowship.

Months again passed away after the union of Henri and Pauline; and still there were no news of Albert. One evening Father Pierre was seated at his cottage door thinking of his lost son and looking listlessly upwards to the beautiful serene sky. But the mind of the old man was not tranquil, nor at peace. Something within told him that his son still lived, and urged him to seek after the lost but still dearly beloved youth. He then suddenly—and for the first time—blamed himself for his apathy in not seeking him whose strange disappearance he deplored. He was still at Calais—and his son had been lost in Paris—a distance of a hundred and sixty miles! Was it right that he—the father—should linger there?

Urged by these reasonings the old man started up, hastened to the dwelling of his son-in-law and daughter, and said, "My children, to-morrow morning I depart for Paris. I shall not know peace—nor tranquillity—nor rest, until I seek my lost Albert. Do not attempt to dissuade me from my purpose—I am resolved."

Neither Pauline nor Henri attempted to reason with the old man; and on the following morning he took his departure for the capital of France. On his arrival there, his first care was to institute all the inquiries which prudence could suggest: but the result was completely unsatisfactory. From the moment Albert had left his hotel, as before related, a few minutes previous to his contemplated departure with Henri, no trace of him remained. The old man, though weighed down by grief, still felt that he had performed his duty—that he had done all that human nature, in such circumstances, could devise or accomplish. Thus, after a fortnight's search, he was almost inclined to renounce his fruitless errand, when a circumstance occurred to prevent his meditated return to his peaceful abode in the vicinity of Calais.

The evening before his intended departure he endeavoured to divert his mind from the contemplation of the dreadful bereavement he had sustained, by a walk in the delightful gardens of the Tuileries. Fatigued at length with his ramble, he threw himself upon a seat shaded by the grateful foliage of the trees which overshadowed it, and sank into a deep reverie. Suddenly a voice fell upon his ears—a voice so sweet and melodious, that he could not mistake it; for he knew it to be that of the young lady whom, with her father, his lost son Albert had rescued from shipwreck on the coast of Calais.

He started up and beheld a lady and gentleman walking past the place where he had been seated. She was young and beautiful—and he was some years older, with a fine military air and commanding demeanour. At that moment the expiring rays of the setting sun fell upon their countenance; and Father Pierre immediately recognised the features of her who was indebted to his son for her life. But the gentleman with whom she was walking was not her father; and yet she leant upon his arm with all the ease and familiar reliance—if we may use such a phrase—of at least a near and dear relative. Perhaps he was her husband? thought Father Pierre: at all events she would doubtless be pleased to meet with him who had accorded her and her sire the rites of hospitality in the midst of that memorable night of storm and shipwreck. He accosted her, made a low bow, and was about to address her, when she instantly recognised him, grasped his hand with warmth, and saluted him by his name. She then made kind and anxious inquiries after his family—adding, "I am sadly to blame, M. Michel, for my neglect—my unpardonable ingratitude, in not writing, if it were only one word, to my dear friend Pauline; but since my arrival in Paris, I have not had a moment to call my own."

She sighed as she uttered these words, as if the real reason of her silence were of a more grave nature than the apology stated.

"Madam," said Father Pierre, "I thank you for your kindness and condescension; but I was foolish to suppose that either myself or family could dwell in your memory, or that of your father. I have seen enough of your gay city of Paris to be fully aware that its pleasures and enjoyments are of no common order, and that the fashionable world is not the sphere in which sweet sympathies can be supposed to dwell for any length of time. Relating to my family, madam, my answers are soon given. My daughter is married to the young man whom you saw at our humble abode, and is happy in that union. My son——"

He stopped short, and the tears poured in a torrent from his eyes.

"Your son!" echoed the lady: "can any evil have happened to your son?"

"He has disappeared, madam—most mysteriously disappeared," answered the father, sobbing as he spoke.

"Disapeared—impossible!" cried the fair querist.

"He visited Paris, madam," continued the old man, "two years and a half ago—and he never returned home. It is to seek him that I am now in this city, from which I intend to depart to-morrow morning, my researches having all proved unavailing."

"Disappeared!" again ejaculated the lady, who had received this announcement with the most unfeigned surprise: "disappeared, do you say—and about that time—about two years and a half ago? Speak—M. Michel—speak!"

"It is as you say, madam," returned the old man.

"Ah! now I comprehend it all!" cried the lady, a flush of crimson suddenly overspreading her countenance: then turning towards her companion, she said in a tone of bitter irony, but still of deep emotion, "Viscount, you can probably acquaint this old man—this unhappy father—with the place in which he may find his son!"

She disengaged her arm from that of her companion as she spoke, and cast upon him a glance which seemed to penetrate his soul—for he quailed beneath it.

"My son—my son!" cried the old man, joining his hands together in an appealing manner: "what know you, sir, of my son? Oh! tell me,—keep me not in suspense—what do know you of my son?"

"Your son—your son——" stammered the Viscount; for of this rank the individual really was.

"My son—my dear, my only son, Albert Michel!" added the old man, wild with mingled grief, suspense, and hope.

"Albert Michel!" muttered the Viscount between his teeth, while he compressed his lips together with rage: "do you ask me about Albert Michel?"—then, after a moment's pause, he added, "Old man, where do you reside?"

Father Michel named the inn at which he was staying.

"To-morrow, by mid-day, you shall hear from me!" cried the Viscount in a low but decided tone; and taking the lady's hand, he led her hastily away from the spot where this conversation had taken place.

Father Michel fell upon the seat, exclaiming, "Thank God! I shall again behold my son! He is not dead—he will be restored to me!"

He sank into a rêverie as delicious as that from which he had originally been awakened was painful; and it was not until a sentinel warned him that the gardens were about to close that he recollected where he was, or thought of the necessity of retiring.

That night he scarcely slept a wink: and on the following morning he was up at an early hour. How heavily hung the time upon his hands until the clock struck twelve; he thought the sun would never gain its meridian point. At length the wished-for moment came; and now his heart beat with all the varied emotions produced by hope and suspense. Five minutes elapsed—and a footstep ascended towards the steps leading towards his room. Father Pierre hurried to the door; and an elderly man, dressed in deep black, entered the apartment.

"Your name is——" began the stranger in a mild and pleasant tone.

"Pierre Michel," immediately answered the anxious father.

"I thought I was not mistaken," said the other. "I presume you are acquainted with the object of my visit?"

"To lead me to my son—to tell me news of him whom I have sought with so much perseverance?" exclaimed Michel.

"Then follow me," said the stranger; and he led the way into the street, where a chaise was waiting.

Pierre Michel and his guide entered the vehicle, which immediately drove away at a rapid rate through the streets leading towards the eastern extremity of Paris.

In order to pursue the thread of this narrative properly, it will now be necessary to return to Henri Alvimar, and his beautiful wife Pauline. During the absence of the old man in Paris, they looked anxiously each day for the arrival of the mail with the letters from Paris; and on two or three occasions their anxiety was relieved by the receipt of news from him in whose safety they felt so deep an interest. At length all tidings ceased—and he returned not home. Day after day passed—weeks flew away—and he neither came nor wrote. Henri could not help associating the mysterious disappearance of the son with that of the father; and he resolved to devote himself to penetrate the mystery which, by snatching away two members of a family, had left the others in a state of such dreadful suspense. Pauline, whose grief knew no bounds, implored her husband to allow her to accompany him in the meditated search after those whom she so tenderly loved; and this desire was complied with. They repaired to Paris; and, having installed themselves in a comfortable, but secluded lodging, entered in their turn upon those inquiries and researches in the success of which they seemed to have embarked all their hopes of happiness for the remainder of their years.

Were we to dwell upon the numerous measures adopted by Henri Alvimar to obtain some clue to the brother or father of his beloved wife, we should far exceed our limits in this episode. We must therefore sum up in one word the result of several years of unwearied research and persevering inquiry: we must in one sentence dispose of the incidents of a considerable section of human life;—and in the most concise manner possible, we must record the simple fact, that seven years passed away since the moment when Henri and Pauline arrived in Paris, and that at the expiration of this interval they appeared to be no nearer to their object than on the day when they first set foot in Paris together.

During all this long sojourn in the metropolis of France, Pauline had led a most retired and secluded life—seldom quitting her own domestic hearth, and though not surrendering herself up to a wild and frantic grief, still imbued with a profound melancholy, which her devoted husband's tenderness alone softened down, and at times arrested. Henri had at first been much away from home, prosecuting his inquiries with a perseverance and energy which deserved success: but he gradually relaxed from this ardent application to the one grand object:—not that he grew cold or callous; but because he was compelled at length

to admit the utter inefficiency of his means to penetrate a mystery which seemed as insurmountable as that of futurity itself. He also saw the necessity of devoting more of his time to Pauline; and thus this fond couple knew no wish for society, but seemed happiest when compelled to trust only to each other for consolation or pastime. They formed no acquaintances, frequented no places of amusement, and abstained from appearing in public as much as possible. The mysterious event into the secret of which they could not penetrate, had imbued their minds with a certain superstitious dread of evil when they were separated; and this sentiment was also a bond tending to link them almost inseparably together.

It was probably this species of superstitious feeling—a sentiment for which they often blamed themselves, but of which they could not divest their minds—that induced Henri to propose a new plan for the solution of the mystery which enveloped the fates of Pierre and Albert Michel. At the epoch of which we are now writing—and which, the reader will remember, was that when France stood upon the eve of her first revolution—the name of Mademoiselle Lenormand began to be famous in Paris. This remarkable female—who was at that period only seventeen or eighteen years of age—had just commenced that profession of soothsaying which she since prosecuted with such unrivalled success. During her youth, several remarkable prophecies which met with an exact fulfilment attracted the attention of the Parisians towards her; and the moment she publicly announced her determination to devote to the general benefit a gift which she deemed to have been conferred upon her by heaven, her residence was crowded with the fashion, the nobility, the wealth, and the learning of Paris. Implicit faith was placed in her predictions; and as she was a woman of remarkable penetration, she was often enabled to deduce correct opinions from the combination of certain antecedent circumstances. Thus, by making herself previously acquainted with the characters and deeds of those who consulted her, she was emboldened to predict of the future according to the past; and as men, as well as nations, prepare their own destinies by their own conduct and passions, it was not very difficult for a woman of profound observation, infinite tact, and acute judgment, to foresee the paths into which the natures of peculiar individuals were certain to conduct their footsteps. She was, moreover, an excellent politician, well versed in the history of all nations, and skilled in reading the depths of the human mind beneath the outward polish, hypocritical gloss, or conventional bearing which those who visited her were accustomed to assume. Then, again, she had another circumstance in her favour: the mind of the individual upon whom her predictions made an impression like that of a religious awe, subsequently viewed everything through the mirror of a new light opened to it, and shaped its thoughts according to the destiny to which it believed itself to be tending. These thoughts modelled the actions of the individuals in their turn; and thus the very presages which issued from the lips of the sorceress, became in numerous instances the very springs of action that conducted men or women onwards to the goal to which it was predicted that they should arrive.

The more gloomy became the face of political affairs, the more confidently did Mademoiselle Lenormand utter her prophecies concerning the coming revolution—the destruction of the existing organization of society—the ruin of altars, and the horrors of the guillotine. She knew that the day of popular supremacy would be that of retribution; and that the proud oligarchy which had so long trampled upon the most sacred rights and holy privileges of the people, would be at once the objects of vengeance and fury. She accordingly prophesied of streams of blood—and crowded prisons—and exiled nobles—and slaughtered priests,—ruined thrones, and dismantled churches,—and the levelling of all ancient superstitions along with all ancient abuses. In a short time she was looked upon as a Pythoness, on whose tongue truth alone might dwell; and wealth poured in upon her from all sides.

Such was the person whom Henri felt inclined to consult; and Pauline immediately assented to the proposition. It will be recollected that in her childhood, at the little cottage near Calais, she had not approved of the freak of the volatile Josephine Tascher, who allowed her fortune to be told to her by an old gipsy: but she was now so far altered by the superstitious influence exercised upon her mind by the mysterious presentiment of a family danger which she constantly entertained, that she felt something akin to her own feelings in the religious awe which accompanied the consultation of Mademoiselle Lenormand. The proposal was therefore no sooner made by her husband than she conjured him to carry it into execution; and that same evening did they proceed to the dwelling of the sorceress.

They were admitted into an ante-room by an old woman, whose back was so bent with the weight of years, that they could scarcely obtain a glimpse of her countenance. She did not, however, fail to scrutinise the visitors from beneath her shaggy eye-brows; and to the features of Pauline her glances were upraised for some moments. The ante-room was only dimly lighted; and upon shelves around were placed skulls, stuffed alligators, lizards, snakes, and glass jars containing reptiles of all kinds preserved in spirits of wine. The walls were hung with black; and a coffin stood upon a table in the middle. The faint lustre of a silver lamp did little more than render this horrible spectacle just dimly visible to the eyes: and the old hag with her crooked back and her sable garments, seemed the presiding genius of one of the chambers of the Palace of Death. Pauline felt alarmed, and clung to her husband's arm for support: but he implored her in a whisper to take courage, and nerve herself to arrive at the issue of the adventure.

Meantime the old hag left the visitors in the

ante-chamber of horrors, and glided into an adjoining apartment, the door of which, also covered with black cloth, moved noiselessly upon its hinges. The very silence of that place seemed to be that of the tomb: and Pauline and Henri, apparently under the influence of some deep but undefinable awe, spoke to each other in the lowest whispers. At length the old woman returned with a message that Mademoiselle Lenormand was at present engaged with the Viscountess of Beauharnais, but that she would receive the new visitors in a few minutes. This interval was passed in silence; and at length a silver bell tinkled behind the black drapery. The old hag now beckoned Henri and Pauline to follow her into the next apartment; and in another moment they found themselves in the presence of the sorceress.

This second chamber was hung around with sable drapery, like the first. At the further end stood a table, covered with a cloth of the same sombre hue, and upon which, globes, old black-letter volumes, a small orrery, an hour-glass, a large sheet of parchment covered with hieroglyphics, a basin full of eggs, and a small coffee-pot boiling over a spirit-lamp, were placed. The room was as dimly lighted as the other: but there were no symbols of death piled around. Upon a stage behind the table stood Mademoiselle Lenormand, dressed in deep black, wearing a huge sable turban upon her head, and with her long, jetty, luxuriant hair flowing wildly over her naked shoulders. Her commanding figure was drawn up to its full height; and her large dark eyes beamed with unnatural lustre. In her right hand she waved a long black wand; and her left held a small volume open, to which she from time to time referred.

Two chairs were placed by the old hag, who served as attendant, near the table: and she then withdrew. Henri and Pauline seated themselves, upon a sign from the sorceress: and ten minutes then passed without a word being spoken, — Mademoiselle Lenormand continuing to wave her hand and refer to her book, upon the raised *dais*. At length she looked earnestly towards the visitors, and exclaimed—"Henri Alvimar, what would'st thou with me? Pauline, speak—fear not!"

The two visitors were rendered speechless by hearing themselves thus addressed by a person whom they had never seen before: and they made no reply.

"Wherefore are ye silent?" continued the sorceress. "Are ye surprised that I should name ye by your names? What faith would ye accord to my predictions, were I not enabled to penetrate into all your family secrets—to tell ye all that has already happened to you—and thus the more appropriately connect the chain of the past with that of the future? And first let me speak of the pledges of friendship, given to ratify vows never redeemed—a chain to the neck of Pauline Michel—a bracelet to the arm of Josephine Tascher—a ring on the finger of the lost Albert?"

"True—O God! it is all true!" murmured Pauline. "But, Albert—oh! what of Albert? and my father—what of my father?"

"They are alive!" solemnly answered the sorceress.

"Alive! then heaven be thanked?" ejaculated Pauline. "But tell me more — say, shall I ever see them again?—will they ever be restored to me?—are they in health, in happiness? — and why, oh! why, this long separation—this fearful and mysterious disappearance?"

"The hand of providence will, by his wise means, restore you to each other," said Mademoiselle Lenormand. "Hark! hear you not that cry for vengeance? listen to those distant murmurs which are approaching nearer and more near every instant! They grow louder, more distinct—they change into intelligible sounds—they grow into loud voices—and now, now those dread shouts proclaim vengeance, and death, and liberty! Hark again! hear ye not the din of the artillery, and the sharp crack of the musket? falls not the roll of yon drum on your ear? is your soul unmoved by the braying of those war-trumpets? Hark once more! the battering-ram is striking the wall: there—now again—there—there, with each stroke the huge stones shake and totter. And now the conflict begins—it is hand to hand, and foot to foot: on, on go the assailants, like a whirlwind! 'Tis done;—see yon crowd of trembling and pallid beings—amongst them are faces that are familiar to you—there, there is your father, and there also is your brother!"

The sorceress had commenced this harangue in a low tone, which imitated the distant murmurs of a multitude: then as she seemed to witness each progressive incident to which she alluded, her voice grew louder— and her utterance more rapid: her eyes rolled, and she waved her wand more and more rapidly, pacing the *dais* at the same time with steps increasing in speed, in unison with the exaltation of her voice; until at length she strode backwards and forwards like a tigress in her den, while her manner grew wild, her eyes dilated with apparent frenzy, her bosom heaved convulsively, and her naked white arms waved over her head, brandishing the book and the wand, and giving her the air of an inspired Druidess or of Cassandra raving.

Henri and Pauline gazed and listened with breathless attention; and when the sorceress concluded her remarkable address, accompanying each sentence with the befitting gesticulation, and pointing towards the further end of the room, as she exclaimed, "There is your father! and there also is your brother!" —the startled Pauline turned round to see if they were not really *there*. But the eyes of the sorceress appeared to be glaring upon vacancy; and Pauline, whose nerves were worked up to the highest pitch, experienced a sudden reaction which threw her fainting into her husband's arms.

Mademoiselle Lenormand instantly flung aside her wand and her book, and hurried forward to administer aid to Madame Alvimar. Taking a bottle of some powerful essence from the table, she applied it to Pauline's nostrils, and immediate signs of life were the result. In a few moments Pauline was perfectly restored; and the sorceress then seated herself

No. 9.—The Empress Eugenie.

at the table covered with the implements of her art.

She took an egg and broke it into a wine-glass; she then cut the yolk with a penknife, and watched the yellow commingling with the white for some minutes. She next filled a large cup with coffee from the silver urn over the spirit-lamp; and then she poured the reeking liquid into a flat silver dish. There she watched the motion of the bubbles, the course which the current took in turning round and round, and the shape of the white foam upon the surface.

"Pauline," she exclaimed, when these preparations were complete, "in what month were you born?"

The question was answered; and the sorceress then inquired—"What is your ag ? What colour do you prefer in regard to dress? What is your favourite animal? To which animal have you the greatest antipathy? Which flower do you love best?"

To all these inquiries Pauline replied in a trembling tone, and when she had answered them, she said, "But, if you are about to tell me my future fate, I would rather not listen to the narrative. If it be happy, I shall be restless until the period of felicity arrive: if miserable, I should be anxious to quit this world in time to avoid the inauspicious epoch."

Mademoiselle Lenormand seemed annoyed by the observation—for she pushed the glass containing the egg away from her with impatience.

"But," continued Pauline, after a moment's pause and willing to efface any cause of displeasure, "should your art extend to the power of giving me some information more precise——"

"Concerning your father and brother?" hastily ejaculated the sorceress: "no—no! I have said enough! that inspiration has left me. Have you no other friend—none in whom you feel the slightest interest—concerning whose fortunes you may be anxious to make inquiry?"

"Ah!" said Pauline, a sudden reminiscence flashing through her mind, "you spoke ere now of one who vowed eternal friendship to me, in our days of girlhood. I feel an interest in Mademoiselle Josephine Tascher—a curiosity——"

"That interest and that curiosity shall be satisfied," said Mademoiselle Lenormand. "You shall see the lady of whom you speak, and be thus convinced that she is happy, and in health."

Mademoiselle Lenormand directed Pauline and her husband to withdraw to the further end of the apartment, so as to be as distant as possible from the extremity where the table and *dais* stood. They obeyed her commands, their breasts being the prey of the most lively suspense, and fraught with the most profound awe. Vainly did Henri struggle against the superstitious feeling which was gradually gaining a more complete ascendancy over him. Meantime the sorceress ascended the *dais*, waving her wand mysteriously, and muttering words whose import the anxious spectators could not understand. Suddenly a portion of the black drapery overhanging the stage gave way, and revealed what appeared to be a small chamber, about twelve feet square, and yet more nearly resembling a picture seen in a mirror. Upon the sofa in that mysterious boudoir was seated a lady—elegantly attired, with a coronet upon her brow. She raised her head the moment the drapery fell; and Pauline immediately recognised the countenance of that same Josephine from whom she had received the chain in pledge of friendship. And upon that lady's wrist was the bracelet which had been given in exchange.

The vision—if such it were—lasted only for a moment: the drapery was suddenly expanded again over that bright and luminous picture—or reality (whichever it might have been);—and Pauline, uttering a scream of terror, threw herself into her husband's arms.

"Depart—depart!" ejaculated Mademoiselle Lenormand: "my art can do no more!"

Henri threw his purse upon the seat which he had just abandoned, for he knew that the sorceress accepted payment for her services; and with his own mind a prey to the most conflicting opinions, he bore his wife from that abode of mystery and wonder.

When Alvimar and his wife sat down next day, coolly and quietly to discuss the events of the preceding evening, their marvel and bewilderment increased only with conjecture. Henri possessed a strong mind; and he was unwilling to admit the powers of the sorceress to their full extent, but still there was no room for placing faith in a part, and rejecting the remainder. She certainly was acquainted with them, and their history; and she had declared that the venerable Pierre and Albert were still alive. This statement he was inclined to believe, because she was evidently well informed with regard to the past events of the Michel family:—but how reconcile with all preconceived opinions the affair of the apparition? To convey information in respect to the life or death of persons was within the attributes of mortal power: but to summon to a certain spot the effigy—all animated, warm, and smiling—of a being dwelling elsewhere, at the option of any particular individual, was a proceeding calculated to disturb even those minds which were prepared, by previous education or experience, to place reliance upon any wonders, however superstitious—however unnatural.

As is usual in such cases, all the discussion and conjecture in the world led to no satisfactory result: at one moment both Henri and Pauline were inclined to believe in the association of the sorceress with invisible powers; while at another they looked upon the whole proceeding as a well-combined fraud and imposture. Time, however, wore on; and the dangerous aspect of political affairs would have driven Alvimar and his wife away from Paris, back to their abode in the Basse-Ville of Calais, had not a secret and indestructible hope that Mademoiselle Lenormand's prophecy would be in some way or other fulfilled, retained them in a city which was about to be the scene of the most extraordinary popular ebullition which he world had ever yet beheld. The measure

of regal iniquity had arrived at its full: the people could no longer tolerate the state of bondage in which they lived:—and the Revolution commenced with the storming of the Bastille.

It was upon that eventful day when this terrible fortress was attacked by the Parisians, that Henri Alvimar was returning from the Faubourg St. Antoine, whither he had been upon business of some importance. On that day the adamantine bars of the most formidable prison in the world were rent by the popular will, as Samson snapped asunder the cords of the Phœnicians:—the secrets of that dread castle were displayed;—the dark dungeon of slavery was illuminated by the torch of popular vengeance! The words of the prophetess were fulfilled to the letter: the drum beat—the trumpets brayed—and the cannon roared;—the royal troops fought like demons against the incensed people; but the citizens prevailed then, as they have prevailed since in France, and as they will prevail ever, because they possess the true courage inspired by the noblest feelings—feelings of honour, of patriotism, and of glory, which seem, alas! to be unknown elsewhere!

Yes—the words of Mademoiselle Lenormand were fulfilled. Alvimar, entangled amidst the crowds pressing onward to aid in the attack upon the Bastille, and aware that all endeavours to extricate himself would be useless, became resigned to the necessity which forced him to witness, if not to take part in the glorious achievement; and he was hurried on towards the principal gate, just at the moment when the popular banner waved upon the wall—a symbol of Freedom's victory. The gate was forced; and in a short time the captives obtained their release. Some of them rushed into the streets with the looks of madmen, anxious once more to gaze upon the houses, the people, and the vehicles—and yet doubting whether they were not in a state of somnambulism and dream, in their own dreary cells;—others came forward timidly to the gate, and then drew back, alarmed at the appearance of a great crowd;—here one danced for joy—there another seated himself upon a stone and wept—never was seen such a strange display of various feelings and emotions, all produced by a common cause!

Captives of twenty, thirty, forty years—aye, even of half a century—and prisoners of only a year or a few days—came forth from their dread abode, scarcely daring to believe that they were really free. But suddenly amidst the crowd of captives, two men have recognised each other—an old one with a long white beard covering his breast, and a younger man with a black beard curling short upon his chin;—they have uttered cries of surprise and joy—the people have formed a circle around them—they exclaim, the one, "My father!" the other, "My son!"—and they have fallen into each other's arms. And then, almost at the same moment, another individual darts like lightning from the ranks of the spectators of this affecting scene, and claims a share in the old man's embraces, and in the younger one's joy. Thus was it that Henri Alvimar met Pierre Michel and Albert once more;—thus was it that the father and son suddenly found that they had languished for years in the same prison-house, without knowing that one was near the other;—and thus, in a word, was it that the prophecy of the sorceress was fulfilled!

Oh! who shall describe the joy and delight which prevailed in the dwelling where the entire family were soon united once more? Pauline ran from father to brother to embrace them again and again; and Henri was never wearied of demonstrating his affection towards the old man and his sincere friendship for his brother-in-law. But at length the fervour of awakened and renewed passions become mellowed down to tranquil happiness and ineffable contentment; and then commenced questions and explanations on all sides.

It appeared that on the day when Albert was to have returned with Henri Alvimar to Calais, he made the necessary preparations for his departure, and finding that he had a leisure half-hour still to dispose of, walked out to take a parting survey of the magnificent palace and the beauteous gardens of the Tuileries. While he was on his way thither, he was stopped by two men dressed in plain clothes, who inquired if his name were Albert Michel, and whether he had not accosted a lady on several occasions in her barouche. He immediately replied in the affirmative: they stated that the lady in question desired an interview with him, and that they were to conduct him to the spot where she was waiting for him. He suffered himself to be persuaded to step into a carriage, although he at the moment could not help entertaining a distant suspicion that some treachery was intended; and in this manner was he conveyed to the Bastille. There he had languished until the day of its destruction in the year 1789—unaware that his father shortly afterwards became an inmate of the same horrible prison—ignorant of the crime for which he was incarcerated, unless indeed it were connected with the lady, whom he had known as Mademoiselle Josephine Tascher—and left in a most terrible state of incertitude with respect to his family and his own future fate.

The narrative of Father Michel recorded the preliminary circumstances which led to his own incarceration, and with which it will be remembered that Alvimar and Pauline were hitherto unacquainted. The old man's history corroborated the idea that some motive connected with M. Tascher's daughter Josephine had led to the confinement of father and son in the most horrible of prisons: but in what way they could have committed an offence calculated to draw down upon them such a dread penalty, they were at a loss to determine. The years of their captivity had been passed in privation and misery, mental and bodily: the vigour of Albert's mind was destroyed—the strength of his constitution undermined—and the generosity of his disposition perverted. His cheek wore the mark of disease—and his brows lowered with hatred upon mankind. To his family, it was true, he was affectionate and tender: but when he spoke of the world, his lips compressed, his hand was clenched, and his forehead dark-

ened. His heart was, however, the same towards one being—unchanged in its love for her—unaltered in respect to that maddening passion which had devoured him in secret, and preyed upon his vitals! He breathed not a word relative to the existence of that undying flame: it was his secret—he conceived that he had suffered on account of it—and again he determined to recommence his search after the object of his love. He determined to throw himself at her feet and implore her hand, if she were still unwedded;—or to seek an explanation of the past, and then take leave of her for ever, if her heart were no longer at her own disposal.

The old man had suffered much less by his long incarceration than even his son. The feelings of old men are not so acute, nor so violent as those of the young, and produce less effect upon the physical constitution. He was now verging towards four-score years: but he was still hale and hearty; and restoration to his family speedily wiped away from his mind the most poignant impressions created by his painful captivity. All were unanimously of opinion that the late misfortunes had arisen from some secret cause connected with those whom Albert rescued from the waves, at the risk of his life, and who had received the hospitality of the cottage in the Basse-Ville; and all—save Albert—expressed their conviction that the wisest and most prudent course was to return to that tranquil home—afar from a metropolis which teemed with so many perils. Albert declared his intention of remaining in Paris to take part in the great struggle which he saw approaching: in vain did his father command, Henri remonstrate, and Pauline implore:—the young man was unmoved, and pertinaciously refused to sacrifice his own wishes to the will of his friends. It was therefore determined that the entire family should prolong its sojourn in Paris; and a convenient house was taken in the neighbourhood of the Boulevard du Temple.

Although many incidents be crowded into this narrative, it is necessarily hurried and condensed; and with the rapidity of the changes of the magic lantern, or the shifting of the scenes on the stage, do we skip from scene to scene, and from date to date. We must now again solicit our readers to suppose an interval of four years to have passed away; and in that time the contemplated changes had been all effected. The righteous wrath of the people, so long enslaved and trampled upon, had commenced its sway and was still progressing: the awful retribution, so insanely provoked, was sweeping onward in its giant course. The house of the Bourbons had been plunged into mourning—a king and a queen had perished upon the scaffold—and the Reign of Terror had succeeded the *regime* of monarchy. Father Michel's family was still in Paris—Albert bent constantly on his vain and fruitless search after Josephine; and Henri and his wife living contented and happy in each other's society.

One morning Albert was wandering along that quay of the Seine which is overlooked by the terrace of the Tuileries, when the condemned cart approached, on its way to the guillotine in the Place de la Concorde close by. Urged by a natural feeling of curiosity, Albert stood aside to mark the fatal vehicle proceed on its melancholy journey: but his interest was speedily enlisted in the freight which the cart bore—for amongst the condemned ones he recognised, to his unfeigned wonder, the stern-looking gentleman who had accompanied M. Tascher's daughter Josephine on former occasions, and who had uttered those memorable words, "*Back, fellow—back!*" He was also the same, be it remembered, who was with that lady on the day when Pierre Michel encountered her in the gardens of the palace, and when the restoration of Albert was promised but as the snare to entrap the old man into captivity.

Albert followed the cart, but could not catch the prisoner's look. The unhappy man never raised his eyes off the missal which he held in his hand; and when he suffered himself to be bound to the fatal plank, he glanced neither to the right nor to the left. In a few moments after that portion of the ceremony, he had ceased to exist.

Albert inquired the name of the individual who had just suffered.

"Alexander Viscount de Beauharnais," was the answer.

"Was he married?" asked Albert.

"Yes—and has left a widow and two children. The Viscountess is in the prison of the Magdelonettes, and is most probably reserved for the same fate."

"Do you know the maiden name of his wife?" demanded Albert of his informant.

"Mademoiselle Tascher," was the reply.

"I thought as much—I thought as much!" murmured Albert to himself: and dashing through the crowd, he hurried onward as quickly as possible, to the hospital or prison of the Magdelonettes.

He inquired of the turnkey if the Viscountess de Beauharnais was confined there, and learnt that she was. He essayed to obtain access to her—but failed. Day after day, however, did he walk beneath the windows, and endeavour to obtain a glimpse of her countenance through the dark bars of iron which fenced them. But no—his hopes remained unsatisfied; though his perseverance continued the same. At length the constancy of his visits to the vicinity of the prison became noticed by the gaolers; and information was sent to the Committee of Public Safety. In those times the most trifling act was sufficient to create alarm; and Albert's pertinacity in endeavouring to obtain a means of communication with the Royalists was sufficient to effect not only his own ruin but that of all his family. One night the house in which they dwelt was surrounded and entered by the soldiers of the Republic; and all were arrested. Pauline was immediately despatched to the hospital of the Magdelonettes, that being the receptacle for female prisoners in those times; while her father, husband, and brother were consigned to the Luxembourg. Thus in one moment did misfortune again enter upon the domestic hearth of that unfortunate family, and sweep away all those hopes

of peace and happiness in which the inmates had indulged.

Albert had informed his relatives that Viscount de Beauharnais had perished upon the scaffold—that his wife was the daughter of M. Tascher—and that she was a prisoner in the Magdelonettes. Pauline was therefore prepared to meet her on her arrival at that place of detention; and the moment she entered the room to which female prisoners were consigned, she recognised the Viscountess amongst four or five ladies who were also captives there. Madame de Beauharnais threw herself into the arms of Madame Alvimar; and the two friends, thus so singularly united again, wept copiously upon each other's bosom. When the first effusion of feeling was somewhat passed, Pauline narrated all that had occurred since the day when they parted upwards of fifteen or sixteen years previously, at the white cottage in the Basse-Ville; and the tears of the kind-hearted Josephine fell fast, when she heard all that the family of the Michels had endured. "It is now my turn to give you certain explanations," said she, "which will fill up some of the gaps in your narrative, and account for much which as yet remains dark and mysterious to you. My name, as well you know, was Josephine Rose Tascher de la Pagerie; and I was born at St. Pierre, in the island of Martinique. My mother died when I was young; and I accompanied my father to France in 1776, my hand having been previously betrothed to Viscount Alexander de Beauharnais. It was upon the occasion of my arrival in France that I had the pleasure to form your acquaintance, and should have been overjoyed to cultivate your friendship, as promised, but for the reasons which I will now explain. I found my husband—for you must know that I had no time allowed to obtain an insight into his character during a period of courtship—a man of stern but honourable character, attached to all the prejudices of rank and birth, and so jealous of his fair fame that he considered every one he met inclined to filch him of it, or injure it in some shape or way. Thus he was the most miserable husband upon the face of the earth—and he would have rendered me the most wretched wife, had not the natural volatility of my character, prevented me from taking his behaviour on all occasions in a serious light. He was the most jealous man in existence;—alas! he has now gone to a better world—and God knows he had many virtues and brilliant talents to counterbalance his defects. His jealousy would not permit him to allow me out of his sight. He had heard of the circumstance of your brother Albert having so nobly saved my life at the risk of his own, and of the interchange of gifts which took place between us all: and he immediately conceived the idea that Albert was chivalrous enough to assert a claim to my heart. Pardon me mentioning this fact—it may argue vanity on my part: but it is necessary to my narrative. Indeed it explains the motives of my silence—the reason that I was never enabled to write a line to you to renew my gratitude for the hospitality which I experienced at your hands. My father stayed not in Paris; and I was without a friend whom I could instruct to communicate with you. The Viscount insisted upon all correspondence being broken off in that quarter; and what could I do? I was compelled to submit to the decree, however unjust, especially as almost immediately after our marriage he conceived certain fears prejudicial to his honour, but as false and unfounded as calumny could be. He appealed to the tribunals, and a reconciliation was effected between us. It was immediately after this circumstance that your brother met us in Paris. My husband's fears all returned with new strength: I will not insult you by even alluding to the accusations he made against your brother in regard to myself;—suffice it to say that he used his influence with the King to obtain a *lettre de cachet*, and your brother was consigned to the Bastille. Of this I was unaware, until some time afterwards I met your father in Paris; and he mentioned the extraordinary disappearance of his son. The truth instantly flashed to my brain; and my suspicions were corroborated by the changing brow and quivering lip of my husband. I boldly desired him to restore the old man his son. He promised to do that act of justice;—and as God is my judge! I believed that he had fulfilled his word. Oh, Pauline! could I have supposed that he would have accomplished such a deed of black and horrible treachery! Alarmed that the hints already given to your father relative to the Viscount's knowledge of the place where Albert was confined would lead to an investigation that would set the youth, of whom he was so absurdly jealous, once more at liberty, and thereby give occasion, if the tale got abroad, for his friends to laugh at him for his ridiculous fears, he preferred to condemn that poor old man to an endless imprisonment rather than make him happy by the restoration of his son! Oh, Pauline—you must hate me for having been connected with such a man!"

"Hate you!" ejaculated Madame Alvimar; "oh! say not that word! Rather let me commiserate your unhappy position. But he of whom you speak is now no more—let his faults be buried with him. I freely forgive him, for my part, for all the anguish he has been the means of producing to myself and those who are dear to me."

"Amiable disposition!" exclaimed Josephine, pressing her friend's hand. "But let me clear up the next mystery which occurs in your own narrative;—I allude to that of Mademoiselle Lenormand."

"The apparition of yourself!" cried Pauline. "Can you explain that also?" she demanded, in amazement.

"I can—and most satisfactorily, too," answered Josephine, with a smile. "You must know that I and Mademoiselle Lenormand have been excellent friends ever since she first appeared in the world as a soothsayer. You will probably remember that on the morning of my departure with my dear lamented father from your hospitable abode at Calais, a gipsy told my fortune over the garden ailings?"

"I remember the incident well," said Pauline.

"She prophesied that you would be Queen of France."

"And she prophesied truly," returned Josephine, with solemnity, while she drew herself up to her full height, as if she were already invested with regal authority. "But to the point. Conceive my astonishment when I found that same gipsy in the service of Mademoiselle Lenormand, but with a stoop, real or affected—I know not which—that did not allow me immediately to recognise her."

"Oh! a light breaks upon me!" cried Pauline.

"The day you and your husband called to consult Mademoiselle Lenormand," proceeded Josephine, "the old hag whispered in her ear who you were; and she had already heard from me the whole tale of the rescue from shipwreck and the interchange of the presents. I was with her at the time when you and M. Alvimar called: but it was not until after you were gone that I was aware you were the visitors to whom I allowed myself to be shown in the little magic boudoir which Mademoiselle Lenormand has had secretly built, with a thick plate-glass in front, in communication with her mystic apartment."

"Then it was no apparition!" exclaimed Pauline. "Oh! how foolish, how blind have not I and my husband been!"

"Not at all," said the Viscountess. "The delusion was excellent,—and your own fears and the superstitious awe you experienced in such a place, helped to complete it. Doubtless you fancied you saw my form reflected in some magical mirror, as Lord Surrey beheld that of his beauteous and absent Geraldine?"

"But what motive could have induced Mademoiselle Lenormand to practise such a deception?" inquired Pauline.

"Several motives," answered Josephine. "In the first place, she is fond of being deemed skilful in the black art, and will always step out of her way to produce that impression: the opportunity on that occasion—the coincidence of you and me being there at the same moment—was too good to be lost. She doubtless thought that next day the news would have been all over Paris. Then, again, she is fond of money; and she expected that such a grand display of power would elicit a noble donation. Lastly, I was well dressed on that day, looked pretty, and was more than ever in her good graces: so I suppose she felt proud in displaying me. Then, as for her prophecy about your father and brother, which seems to have been fulfilled, she most probably guessed where they were—or, at all events, imagined that they were in captivity in some royal fortress. Nevertheless, she is a wonderful woman: and," added Josephine, sinking her voice to a solemn and mysterious whisper, "has confirmed the prophecy uttered by her old sybil attendant, that I shall be Queen of France!"

Scarcely were these words uttered when the gaoler entered the room and proceeded to remove the flock bed and bedding allotted to Madame de Beauharnais.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded the Duchess d'Aiguillon, who was one of the prisoners present.

"I am only going to give the bedding to another captive," answered the gaoler brutally.

"How to another?" asked the Duchess. "Is Madame de Beauharnais to have a better?"

"Oh! ah—a better indeed!" said the gaoler, with a laugh. "No, no—she won't want a bed here any more: she is going to another place to-day, and to the guillotine to-morrow."

"The guillotine!" ejaculated Pauline, throwing herself into her friend's arms. "Oh! no—impossible—impossible!"

The other ladies gathered around the Viscountess in deep and solemn silence: but the tears that trickled down their cheeks, and their hands clasped in prayer, showed how sincerely they felt for their companion.

"No—I shall not die to-morrow!" suddenly exclaimed Josephine: "I shall not die yet—it is impossible. The prediction must be fulfilled—I am to be Queen of France!"

"Your ladyship had better then appoint your household at once," said the Duchess d'Aiguillon, somewhat impatiently.

"True! I had forgotten to do so," returned Josephine mildly: and, without appearing to entertain the least apprehension that her fate was indeed already sealed, as her companions feared, nor yet in a tone of bravado or banter, she proceeded thus,—"You, my lady of Aiguillon, will take the situation of Mistress of the Robes; you, Madame Alvimar, will become First Lady of the Bed-chamber."

Thus did she continue to distribute situations amongst her fellow-prisoners, who all prayed the more earnestly and wept the more copiously, under the impression that fear had turned her brain. The gaoler tied up the bedding in a bundle, and was about to leave the apartment with it upon his shoulder, when the door was suddenly flung violently open, and Albert and Henri Alvimar made their appearance—"Robespierre has fallen—and you are saved!"

"There!" exclaimed Josephine: "I shall yet be Queen of France!"

And Robespierre had fallen: for this was the 9th of Thermidor—and all the prisons of the capital were thrown open.

A week after this incident Pierre Michel, Albert Henri, and Pauline dined with the Viscountess de Beauharnais, at her temporary residence in the Rue de Lille, Faubourg St. Honore. It was a happy party; and even upon Albert's countenance there was a smile of hope and contentment. In the course of that evening he contrived to have a few moments' conversation to Josephine alone; and to her profound astonishment he revealed his passion. He spoke of the fervour of that love which had alone sustained his mental courage during his long imprisonment, and which, nevertheless, had undermined his health simultaneously:—he pleaded his cause with an energy and an eloquence which at one time appeared to make a deep impression upon the lady—but at length he heard his doom pronounced—the fiat was declared—she did not love him,—and where she loved not, she would not wed. She, however, expressed the most lively interest in all his prospects

and proceedings, and the most sincere friendship for his sister. For the rest of the evening Albert remained gloomy and thoughtful; and when he took leave of Josephine in the evening, he pressed her hand with convulsive force, whispering in a hoarse and guttural tone at the same time, "Farewell, madam—you will never see me more!"

Josephine had been too much accustomed to the dissipation, the gallantry, and the empty compliments of the infamous Court of Louis XVI, to attach any very great deal of importance to this species of menace on the part of Albert; she considered it rather the "words of course" which every polite and well-bred man uttered to a lady whose love he had not succeeded in gaining, or from whose lips no avowal had been wrested; and she only smiled—but sweetly as Josephine alone could smile—as she bade him farewell. Her parting words with Pauline upon that occasion were, "Remember, my dear friend, in a short time I shall call upon you to enter on your functions of my Chief Lady of the Bedchamber."

"Father," said Albert to Pierre Michel, that evening as they walked away from the hospitable mansion where they had been entertained, "I have no longer any inclination to remain in Paris: let us return home without delay. I long for my boat and sea exercise once more."

"It shall be as you say, my dear son," replied the old man; and accordingly on the following morning they all commenced their journey back again to the Basse-Ville of Calais.

The remainder of this narrative may be summed up in a few words. The father and son returned to the cottage—and Henri Alvimar, with his amiable wife, to their own abode close by. But Albert never launched his boat from the shore of Calais again;—never more was it given to him to tempt the dangers of the deep—never more to push his frail bark over the curling waves. A deep, an inconsolable melancholy took possession of his soul, and defied all the powers of man to eradicate it—because inaccessible to all sympathies: and in a few months it hurried its victim to the tomb. He died at the white cottage; and on his death-bed he acknowledged that he was the victim of his attachment to her whom he had first seen within its walls. His remains were laid in the suburban cemetery; and his father was interred by his side a few weeks afterwards. Pauline communicated the fatal news to her friend the Viscountess of Beauharnais, who terminated her reply in the following manner:—"I admired your brother, Pauline, for his noble and generous heart—his truly manly nature; and I felt grateful to him as the saviour of my life. But I knew that he was not destined to be the King of France—and I am to be the Queen. Pardon this observation—do not set it down to levity on my part: I have shed tears at your brother's death—and am incapable of either ingratitude or indifference."

How accurately were all the prophecies and the presentiments relative to the exaltation of Josephine fulfilled—or more than fulfilled—for she became not Queen, but Empress: not the wife of a King—but the wife of the Emperor Napoleon! In 1804, the imperial purple adorned the shoulders of herself and her heroic husband; and the principal lady in attendance upon Josephine was Pauline, the Countess of Alvimar.

CHAPTER XI.

MIRA.

SUCH was the tale read to the Empress Eugenie and her favourite ladies in the boudoir; and it was listened to with the intensest attention. At its conclusion, the Empress remained thoughtful for a few minutes; and then she said, "After all, how true is the remark which a great English dramatist has put into the mouth of one of his most admirably drawn characters,—that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in man's philosophy!"

"No doubt of it!" exclaimed Georgette Villefranche. "Who shall be enabled to explain the coincidences involved in the *clairvoyant* scenes wherewith our friend Julie and her heroic lover M. Vigors have been so singularly connected?"

Mademoiselle Talmont threw a look of gratitude upon her friend for that highly complimentary mention of her lover's name; and the Empress, perceiving that look and understanding it, said in a kind tone, "My dear Julie, you do indeed possess a hero for your lover!—and you will rejoice in a husband of whom you may well be proud! I am sure that the Emperor will bestow adequate rewards on him to-morrow."

After a little more conversation, the Empress retired to her chamber; and the ladies of her Household were soon permitted to separate to their own respective apartments in the palace. And were not the dreams of Julie Talmont bright and blissfully serene?—were not her visions fraught with a beatific happiness well calculated to reward her for many, many long hours of anxiety, affliction, and almost of despair? Ah! need we dwell upon the subject?—need we pause to tell how sweet is the sense of a happy and prosperous love in the heart of a young maiden, or how it colours her dreams with a roseate hue, as it sheds the same tinted halo on her waking thoughts? Or need we add that when she awoke in the morning, she bestowed more than usual pains on her toilette, for she knew that she should presently see Henri; and was it not natural that she should endeavour to look as well as possible in his presence? Not that her natural charms required the embellishment of artificial means:—not that the beauty with which she was endowed as a birthright, could be enhanced by even the nicest details and most exquisite appliances of the toilette! But Julie was too artless to be aware how *very* beautiful she was;—and thus she strove to render herself as attractive as possible by studying the toilette which she thought would best become her.

No. 10.—The Empress Eugenie.

Shortly after ten o'clock in the forenoon Henri Vigors made his appearance at the Tuileries; and on inquiring for Mademoiselle Talmont, he was conducted up to one of the sitting-rooms appropriated for the general use of the members of the Imperial Household. There he was almost immediately joined by the young lady; and they were alone together. Oh, the happiness of this meeting! And though on the preceding evening, at the Countess de Mauleon's mansion, they had talked over all those past circumstances which had so deeply interested them, yet did they now review these occurrences again and again! And Henri Vigors displayed to Julie his pocket-book, in which he had pencilled the memorandum—"*Half-past twelve in the night between the 9th and the 20th of October. To be the date of a new epoch. Moral courage!*" He explained to Julie the nature of the feelings which influenced him at the time when he wrote those words in his tent,—adding in a low soft voice, "I never have actually proved faithless to your image, dearest Julie; and the existence of that memorandum, written in the solitude of my tent on the Crimean soil, must prove to you how anxious I was to make my peace with my own conscience, even when I was only *fancying* at the moment that I had proved an infidel to that adoration which my heart cherished towards you!"

For an hour did the lovers remain together; and at the expiration of that interval they temporarily separated—for Henri Vigors was now about to be introduced into the presence of the Emperor in that splendid apartment of the palace known as the Saloon of the Marshals. It is not however our purpose to dwell at any length upon the reception which the young Crimean hero experienced at the hands of the Emperor. On this subject a few words will suffice. The rank of Captain was bestowed upon Vigors,—together with a higher decoration than that which he already possessed in the Legion of Honour; for be it understood that this order of Knighthood has its degrees and grades, unto which pensions of different amounts are respectively attached. After the ceremony the Emperor bade Henri Vigors follow him that he might be presented to the Empress. The introduction took place accordingly—Eugenie being attended by the principal ladies of her household, amongst whom was Julie Talmont. And then how exultingly beat Julie's heart, and how rapidly the colour went and came on her beauteous countenance, when she heard how the Emperor eulogized the gallant deeds of him whom she so fondly loved, and how Henri had received promotion and honours! But nothing on the part of the Emperor indicated that he was acquainted with those circumstances of a more private character which had so deeply affected the welfare of the lovers; for though Eugenie had in reality told her husband everything, yet the stringent rules of that Court etiquette which he so tenaciously upheld, prevented him from making any allusion to those circumstances on the present occasion.

The ceremony of the presentation to the Empress was over: and Henri Vigors withdrew, after having received an invitation—or a "command" as it is called in Court language—to dine at the palace in the evening. As he was issuing from the Tuileries, a handsome carriage drew up at the middle entrance in the Place de Carrousel. It was evidently the equipage of wealthy personages; for all the appointments were distinguished by costliness and taste—and two *chasseurs*, or lacqueys in military uniforms, sprang down from the footboard behind. The door of the carriage was opened; and first a venerable-looking man, in a suit of deep black, alighted. Vigors started—and an ejaculation burst from his lips; for this individual was none other than the patriarch whom he had seen at the humble cottage on the heights of Balaklava! Another moment, and the transcendingly beautiful face of Mira was revealed to him as she stepped forth from the carriage. She was not now clad in a simple robe loosely wrapping her form; but she was elegantly dressed in a style becoming a lady of distinguished rank. Yes—wondrously beautiful seemed she; and Vigors was bewildered to determine whether she looked more lovely when he had seen her in her humble unpretending raiment in the Crimea, or as she now appeared before him, with all the advantages of an elegant and most tasteful toilet.

Neither the old man nor Mira looked to the right or to the left; and thus Henri Vigors remained unnoticed by them, though he had stopped short at a distance of scarcely half-a-dozen yards from the handsome equipage whence they were alighting. The expression of the venerable patriarch's countenance was somewhat anxious and indicative of suspense, as if he felt that much depended on the interview he was about to obtain with the Emperor of the French. Mira's look was that of an angelic tranquillity, as if her own feelings were completely at rest—or as if she were so entirely resigned to the will of heaven in all earthly things, that nothing which might happen could either excite her with a very great exultation or depress her into a very deep despondency.

The patriarch and Mira ascended the great staircase, up which two high dignitaries of the Imperial Household were in readiness to conduct them; and thus Vigors felt assured that they must indeed be personages of no mean consideration. But who could they be? How was it that at one time he had found them dwelling in an obscure humble cottage in the Crimea, and that now he beheld them in a position which indicated wealth and consequence? He remembered the mysterious words which fell from the lips of the old man: he remembered the turban-like crown he had seen in that old man's possession; and he wondered more and more who those personages could be. He did not like to appear too anxious, by putting a question to any of the imperial lacqueys who stood near: but as he slowly went away, he thought within himself, "I will presently call upon the old man and his granddaughter; and perhaps they will clear up this mystery. If not, I shall doubtless learn everything from Julie in the evening."

It will be remembered that Henri Vigors had recommended the patriarch to take up his quarters at a particular hotel in Paris. Our young hero therefore knew in which direction to bend his steps when a couple of hours after he had left the Tuileries he thought he might venture to call on the old man and his beautiful granddaughter. He knew not by what name to ask for them; but on arriving at the hotel, he made his inquiry through the medium of a personal description. The answer was promptly given: the old gentleman and his beautiful grandchild had put up at that hotel—but they had taken their departure about half-an-hour previously, immediately after their return from a visit to the Tuileries. It was not known whither they had gone. They had arrived in Paris with two carriages and a suite consisting of eight persons: the departure had been suddenly ordered and promptly executed. In addition to these particulars, Vigors learnt that the surname borne by the old gentleman and his granddaughter, as described in their passports, was Palestrino; and they were unquestionably personages of considerable wealth.

In the evening Henri Vigors returned to the Tuileries, to dine, according to invitation, at the imperial table. He sat next to his beloved Julie; and she took an opportunity to whisper to him these words—"The Empress has told the Emperor all that concerns us; and his Majesty has written with his own hand to my father—you can judge for what purpose."

A modest blush suffused itself over the countenance of the young lady as she thus spoke; and Captain Vigors, surveying her with the most affectionate admiration, whispered in reply, "There is now no fear, dearest Julie, that M. Talmont will object to our union."

"I have something to tell you, Henri," said Julie, after a brief pause, "which will surprise you. I have seen that beautiful heroine of the Balaklava heights——"

"What! Mira?" said Vigors. "Oh!—and I also beheld her to-day. She was with her grandfather."

"And do you know who they are?" inquired Julie.

"No:—and I am dying with curiosity!" rejoined Vigors.

"I thought that curiosity was a failing peculiar to my sex," said Julie, with a smile. "However, I will gratify your's—although," she continued, lowering her voice to a still smaller whisper, "there is a certain degree of mystery and secrecy thrown around the circumstance of the visit."

"Then who, in the name of heaven, are these mysterious beings?" inquired Henri.

"What should you think," resumed Julie, "if I assured you that the old man is the claimant of a crown for himself and the recognition of the rank of a princess on behalf of his granddaughter?"

"Is it possible," ejaculated Vigors, as a suspicion now struck him, "that the venerable man and his beautiful granddaughter can be the legitimate descendants of the Khans of the Crimea?"

"You have guessed it," answered Julie. "This old gentleman, who bears while travelling the assumed name of Palestrino, is in reality none other than Seadet-Ghirai, son of the last Khan of the Crimea. I need not tell you that some sixty or seventy years ago his father was dethroned by the Russians: but the Ghirai family, on leaving the Crimea, took immense wealth with them——"

"Yes—and the crown of the Khans likewise," added Captain Vigors: "for I myself have seen it."

"It seems," continued Julie, "that Seadet—this old man—passed many of his earlier years in Italy: he was reared in the Christian faith—he married an Italian lady——"

"Yes—all this he himself told me," said Vigors. "But his visit to the Emperor——"

"Had for its object," rejoined Julie, "nothing more nor less than to demand the recognition of his rights as Khan of the Crimea. When the political horizon began to darken in the East, Seadet Ghirai repaired with his granddaughter to the Crimea, to watch the progress of events, and to ascertain the feeling of the Tartar population towards the exiled family of which they are the principal, if not the *sole* living representatives. In order that they might use the utmost circumspection, they affected poverty—they dwelt in a cottage—and they were careful to conceal their real names. Or perhaps I ought to say that it was the old man himself whose calculations were so carefully made; for his granddaughter Mira appears to be indifferent to all the circumstances that are passing around her. Gifted with wondrous powers we know she is—inspired with a peculiar gift: yet is she like a bright and beautiful star which shoots out of its own original sphere and traces for itself a new course—wild, strange, and erratic! In a word, Henri, there cannot be the slightest doubt that her mind is so peculiar——"

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Vigors; "do you mean that her brain is touched?"

"Such is assuredly the impression which she made upon the Empress and all the others present, including even myself, Henri. She is sweetly amiable—innocent and ingenuous: but alas! I fear that the possession of the gift of *clairvoyance* is indicative of a certain state of the brain which is inconsistent with the healthful soundness of the intellects."

"Poor young lady!" murmured Vigors, compassionately. "But what answer gave the Emperor to the appeal made unto him by the old Prince Seadet-Ghirai?"

"The Emperor could say nothing that was favourable," rejoined Julie,—"no, not a single syllable!"

"And the hurried departure of the old man and his granddaughter?" said our hero: then perceiving that Julie looked as if she did not understand him, he added, "Yes—they are gone: they left their hotel almost immediately after their return from the audience with the Emperor and Empress."

"Indeed!" said Mademoiselle Talmont. "Then rest assured that the old man considers himself aggrieved by the Emperor's refusal to recognise his rights; and he has hastened his

departure from what he may now regard as an inhospitable city!"

This conversation between Captain Vigors and Mademoiselle Talmont was carried on in tones inaudible to any of the neighbouring guests: but it was now put an end to by a movement at the table—for the Empress was rising, and all the other ladies were preparing to follow her. It is not however the custom for French gentlemen to remain long at the board after the departure of the ladies; and thus the former were soon reunited with the latter in the spacious suite of drawing-rooms. Captain Vigors enjoyed the happiness of passing another hour in company with the beautiful Julie Talmont; and when he returned to his hotel, it was to indulge in all those delightful dreams wherein the fond devoted lover is so prone to cradle himself.

The Empress, on seeking her boudoir at ten o'clock, conversed for some little time with her favourite ladies, upon the same topic which had previously engrossed the attention of the lovers: namely, the circumstances and the claims of Seadet-Ghirai and Mira. But when this topic flagged, the Empress desired Julie, in her capacity of *lectrice*, to read something amusing for the purpose of whiling away an hour ere it was time to retire to rest; and our beautiful heroine accordingly commenced the narrative which we shall now proceed to lay before the reader.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SECOND TALE OF THE BOUDOIR.

Our tale opens in Paris, in the autumn of 1826; and we must at once introduce our readers to an apartment on the third floor of a lodging-house in the fashionable quarter of the Chaussée d'Antin. This room, which was evidently a bachelor's abode, would have been decently furnished, had not its whole appearance indicated a certain negligence or slovenliness on the part of its occupant. A bed, with disordered curtains suspended over it from a pole nearly touching the ceiling, stood in a kind of alcove: a good Brussels carpet was stained with red wine in various parts; the blue damask cushions of the chairs were similarly soiled;—and a number of empty bottles stood upon the table, the chest of drawers, and even the washing-stand. The same confusion, which reigned throughout the little room, might also have been traced in the person of its inmate, who was a handsome young Englishman of about four-and-twenty.

This individual was sitting at the table; and from time to time he sipped the glass of Bordeaux which stood before him. A few books and papers lay, pell-mell, amongst the glasses, the corks, the remnants of cigars, and the pieces of a broken bottle, upon the table; but the young Englishman's eyes were turned away from them;—his head leant upon his left hand; and his whole attitude indicated the profound mental affliction to which he was the prey. Frequent sighs escaped his breast; and the traces of tears lingered upon his countenance. The fingers of the hand, which supported his head, played negligently with his soft black hair; and from time to time a nervous compression of the lips bore full evidence to the agonizing nature of his meditations. Occasionally an expression of despair appeared to settle upon his really handsome countenance; and then he ground his teeth together, and clenched the hand that hung over the arm of the chair, as if he were only waiting for the presence of a foe upon whom to wreak the passion and the vengeance that seemed to occupy his bosom. Alas! misfortune's barbed arrows pierce the hearts of the young, as well as of the old,—of the beautiful as well as of those with whom we can scarcely sympathise,—of the innocent as well as of the guilty!

"Ruined—totally ruined!" said the young man, at length, musing aloud. "Scarcely a few small coins left to ensure myself a meal! Ruined—and without a friend to assist me!—without a relative in the wide world to relieve me from my embarrassments. O fatal education,—dangerous acquirements, that induced me to seek after literary fame, instead of embracing some profession which might have ensured me my daily bread! Whither can I go? what can I do in this great city? 'I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed?' O God! the thought is maddening!"

As he uttered these words, he caught hold of his hair with both his hands, and pulled it violently.

And, in truth, the unfortunate young man had enough to drive him to the verge of despair. Presuming upon the excellence of the education which he had received, and actuated by a desire to follow the path that leads to the temple of Fame through the fertile fields of literature, he had been induced to embark the few hundreds of pounds which he possessed, in a literary enterprise that was represented as eligible to him in two points of view. He was led to believe that his capital would be productive of a considerable interest; and, in the second place, a chance was offered him of introducing his own writings to the notice of the public. For a few months he dreamt and thought of nothing but the future fame, the foundation of which he fondly imagined himself to be then laying; he had fed and existed upon hope,—that aliment which is the most nourishing, the most general, and yet the least substantial of all food!

Hope creates fortunes, fabricates crowns, defeats armies, inspires the most timid with the courage of the lion: hope throws down all obstacles with the force of a battering-ram against a castle;—it fills the purse of the aspirant with gold in the great city, and the cup of the traveller with water in the desert: but the gold slips from the hand, and the water from the lip; and hope proves to be nothing more than a delusive phantom, with a will-'o-the-wisp lantern in its hand, leading its votaries along paths which terminate only in pools and marshes.

And amongst the number of the votaries and the victims of hope, was Victor Melville, the hero of our tale.

He was an orphan,—he had not resided in Paris long enough to make many real friends; and his acquaintances were not likely to assist him. There was, however, one being in the world who would afford him sympathy and consolation for his misfortunes, and who would have given him the wealth of Golconda, had that fond creature possessed anything beyond sympathy to give: but this sympathy would flow from a sincere affection; and Victor felt himself less miserable as the idea suddenly entered his mind.

Under the impulse of this idea, the young man seized his hat and gloves, and hastily retreated from the little apartment where his hopes had germinated, and where they had been so cruelly withered. When he reached the street, he was about to call a hackney-coach; but, recollecting the condition of his pocket, he determined to walk to the place which he had thought of visiting.

The day was remarkably sultry; and as he proceeded at a rapid rate, the perspiration poured down his forehead. He felt thirsty, and could not resist the temptation of encroaching upon the few francs he possessed in his pocket, to procure liquor at a wine-shop, although he was already overtaken by the hand of poverty. *Poverty!* the word grated upon his ears, as he muttered it between his teeth, like a sound that affected his nerves; and as the idea entered his mind, it was accompanied by all the sad escort of all its agonizing associations. Hunger, the chances of a sick bed, houseless wanderings, mendicity, the iron bars of a debtor's gaol,—all these were the visions that crowded with the horrors of reality, upon the mind of the poor young man, and induced him to repeat his libation ere he left the wine-shop to proceed on his way.

With no other companion than his cheerless ideas, Melville hastened along the Boulevards; and it would almost seem that he hoped to outstrip those sad companions by the rapidity of his pace. But, alas! vain was the attempt; there is no adherent to the steps of a man more faithful than Misery; for Misery accommodates its pace to that of him whom it accompanies, whereas Happiness hurries onward and outsteps us, seldom if ever to be again overtaken.

Victor pursued his way along the banks of the Seine, towards Auteuil. In a short time he accomplished a long distance; and on his arrival in that beautiful little village, which is about three miles from Paris, he proceeded straight to a small dwelling, the garden of which communicated with the wood, known as the Bois du Bologne. The house was that which might be termed a cottage: but its appearance was exceedingly neat and picturesque; and some choice flowers were reared in the garden belonging to it. Over the door hung clusters of ripe grapes, from a fruitful vine that entirely covered the front of the dwelling; and the garden was well provided with fruit-trees.

The moment Victor appeared at the garden-gate, a young female, who had been busily employed in tying up some favourite flowers, hastened to welcome him with a joy that would scarcely have been experienced by a sister; nor did the kiss which the youth imprinted upon her chaste brow, resemble that which is usually given by a brother.

The maiden was not more than eighteen years of age; but her form already possessed the voluptuous proportions of womanhood. The figure was rather inclined to embonpoint, but was so symmetrically modelled that the most fastidious could not have wished to change its proportions from those of a Hebe to the more delicate ones of a Sylph. Her feet were small, even to a fault: her ankles were beautifully turned; her hands might have been the envy of a queen; and her neck was like that of a swan. Her large blue eyes and light brown hair seemed to proclaim her to be one of England's daughters: but she was of French extraction, and welcomed the youth in the latter language. When she spoke, her lips revealed a set of teeth that were as white as the pearls of the East; and the tones of her voice possessed the peculiar softness which usually characterizes the accents of the Italian. There was a halo of innocence and a glory of beauty about that young maiden, which in spite of the native modesty of her disposition and the proper reserve evidenced in her manners, fascinated the beholder to such an extent, that he would almost tremble in the presence of charms seldom united in one person. Her voice appeared to touch chords which oscillated to the very heart. The glance of her eye inspired feelings which the most indifferent could not repress, nor the most experienced explain; and, in the presence of that unaffected and retiring girl, a greater awe would be felt by the libertine than that which would take possession of him at the footstool of an empress decked with the insignia of her power.

"Louise," said Melville, as he led the fair creature towards a seat beneath an arbour of clematis and roses, at a little distance from the gate of the garden,—"I was not deceived in my evil presentiments of yesterday."

"Do not keep me in suspense, Victor," exclaimed the beautiful girl, gazing anxiously upon her lover's countenance. "But, alas! I see no ground for hope!" she added, after a moment's pause, during which she endeavoured to read in his eyes all that was passing in his mind.

"It is too true," cried the young man, "and I am totally ruined!"

"Say not so, Victor," ejaculated Louise: "all cannot be so bad as you anticipate. You must recover some of your money, if only a little."

"Not one fraction!" said Melville, impetuously.

"Oh! do not despair on that account," cried Louise, with the consolatory manner and voice which women know so well how to assume, even in cases of desperation where no remedy or relief is apparent: "my guardian is attached to you,—he is poor, but he has enough for us all,—you can make our house your home until happier times, and——"

Louise cast down her eyes, for she felt that a blush had suddenly suffused itself over her features.

"Dear, generous girl!" exclaimed Victor, clasping her to his heart; "I care not for all the persecutions of my adverse fortune, so long as you love me! Oh! without your love, Louise, I should not be able to support this cruel, cruel blow! My hopes blasted; my resources dried up! and I——Oh, Louise, how shall I ever confess to you the terrible secret?"

"A secret!" ejaculated Louise, in a tone which indicated alarm; "a secret,—and connected with yourself? O Victor! you surely have no secret with which I may not be acquainted?"

"Ah! Louise! it is a dread, a terrible secret —a secret the full extent of which, even when revealed to you, you cannot understand?" cried Victor, striking his brow frantically with his clenched fist.

"Victor, Victor!" cried Louise, in a voice that was scarcely audible through deep emotion,—"keep me no longer in suspense: let me be the confidant of your thoughts and of your afflictions; and if this secret be anything so very terrible——"

"Terrible!" almost howled Victor, as he interrupted the beautiful girl: "yes, yes, it is very, very terrible! But you will partially understand me, Louise, when I tell you that there are hours in a man's existence when he knows not himself—when he dares not leave himself alone with his own thoughts—when a dread for the future sits upon his mind like a remorse—and when no hope illumes his soul! In those hours he has but one consolation—one means of solace;—for he cannot even sleep!"

"And what then are those means?" demanded Louise, now as much astonished as she was before alarmed at the strange language of her lover.

"What are those means?" repeated Victor, with a sickly smile; "what are those means, Louise?" he added in a hoarse voice, and after a moment's pause. "In those hours, when the unhappy man cannot sleep, when he dares not leave himself alone with his thoughts, and when he sees naught but horror should he glance into the future,—in those hours of anguish, of doubt, and of dread, he seeks artificial joys in the bottle!"

A deadly pallor overspread the countenance of Louise, as her lover thus confessed his weakness to her. He did not notice the effect his language had produced upon her; she could not answer him:—and he continued as follows:—

"I know that this habit is only contracted by those who have not a sufficiency of moral courage to support their misfortunes; and I know that such men will never be suicides, because they have not the magnanimity to die. But, alas! it is a failing of which we cannot divest ourselves at will: for, Louise, there is such sovereign virtue in the juice of the grape, such charms in the rich red wine, that despair cannot grapple with those remedies. Alas! often and often during the last few m nths, have I drowned all my miseries in complete oblivion of this world and its woes; and then, when I have awoke on the ensuing morning, feverish and more dispirited than ever, I have sworn to abandon this vicious, this ruinous pursuit. But it is impossible! I have not courage enough to remain alone without that jovial companion whose presence can awaken all the mirth and joy which misfortune has overshadowed, and whose society is full of the happiest delusion."

"Victor," said Louise, who did not altogether comprehend the impassioned language of her lover; "you must renounce that vice which you yourself condemn—you must make this house your home—you must seek no other companion than my guardian and myself—you must abjure the rich red wine which you praise so much—and——"

"And what?" cried Victor, somewhat impatiently: "again, I say, all my hopes are defeated."

"Your hopes in this instance are defeated," interrupted Louise, continuing her part of comforter: "but there are still modes and means of exercising your talents, and making yourself known to the world. Others have risen to eminence in the sphere of literature, over the obstacles which they encountered;—why should not you?"

"Alas! my dearest Louise," replied Victor, softening in his manner; "what can I do in Paris? I am not sufficiently acquainted with your language to write it, although I speak it tolerably fluent; because," he added with a faint smile, "I have had so good a tutoress;—and, therefore, in London alone do I stand any chance of seeing my desires eventually fulfilled, or of meeting with any immediate encouragement."

"You are right," murmured Louise, tears starting into her eyes as the thought of a separation entered her mind: "your native land must be the theatre of your exertions. Perhaps you were wrong ever to have visited Paris?" she added mournfully.

"Wrong, Louise!" ejaculated Victor: "oh, no,—not since I have met you! Dearest girl, we must part for a time. O God! the idea is distracting; but the necessity is imperative! I could not consent to become a burden upon your guardian; and I would not wed you now, even were he to accede to our immediate union. I should only be connecting you with my poverty, my vices, and my misfortunes!"

"It is hard to part; but it is necessary that we should make this sacrifice of our present feelings to our future prospects," said Louise, her voice almost stifled with sobs, for she now required consolation in that hour of her troubled spirit and early afflictions.

"Dry those tears, Louise," exclaimed Victor, "or the hour of separation will be dreadful to us both. We will correspond often; I will write to you as if I were conversing orally with you; and I will make you acquainted with all my hopes, and my fears—my prosperity and my adversity, as I do now. Perhaps, I may yet do well—could I only renounce the terrible vice which has become my habit," he added aside, in a tone inaudible to the maiden.

"And you will not forget your own Louise?" said the beautiful girl, smiling

amidst her tears. "I have heard that the ladies of your country are exceedingly beautiful, Victor, and you are very young——"

"Oh! it is cruel of you to torture me with the doubt which your words imply relative to my love, Louise," interrupted Victor. "I can never love any one but you;—I could not live without you; for even in my debaucheries have I raved of you."

A sudden fantasy struck the poor girl, as her lover thus essayed to soothe her mind; and, as she put her whim into execution, she partially forgot her grief. She snatched a beautiful rose from the branch on which it grew, and which waved above her head: she selected two leaves which no insect or blight had touched or spoilt;—one she kissed and tendered to her lover;—the other she placed upon his lips for a moment, and then consigned it to her bosom.

"Night and morning shall I look upon this leaf; and I feel that I already possess a means of consolation," said Louise, in her soft fluid voice.

"And night and morning shall I kiss that leaf," returned Victor, as he placed it between the leaves of his pocket-book; "and I know that the sight of it will teach me to nerve myself with a more natural and manly courage than is found in the indulgences of wine. To-morrow I shall bid you adieu, Louise, for some time: to-day, let us endeavour to be happy in each other's society."

How rapidly flies the time when we wish it to linger; and how slowly does it pass away when each hour conducts us nearer to some long-anticipated happiness! The young couple did not notice how the hours glided on, so absorbed were they in the passion that was dearest to their souls: and it seemed as if they had only been a few moments together, when the voice of Louise's guardian was heard summoning his ward to the dinner-table. Victor accompanied her to the house, where he was cordially welcomed by the kind protector of the orphan girl; for the youth had received the conditional assent of the old gentleman to his union with Louise, as soon as circumstances should permit him to enter upon the matrimonial state.

The guardian of Louise was a retired captain in the French army. He was a man of about sixty years of age, and had passed the greater portion of his life in a camp or barracks. He had not married until he retired from active service at the age of forty-two; and a short time after his union with an amiable woman, whom he had long loved, Louise was thrown upon his care. But heaven withdrew from the humble hearth of the old soldier one blessing when it sent another; and the lady in whom Louise would have found a mother, or from whom she could have at least experienced a mother's care, was snatched away to the grave at a moment when the little stranger required all her tenderness. The child was, however, reared with the greatest care by a faithful female domestic; and old Madeleine was as proud of her beautiful young mistress, as if she had been her mother. Captain Dorvalliers possessed no other pecuniary resources than his half-pay: but the house and garden were his own: and he not only lived comfortably upon his income, but also paid annual sums to an Insurance Company for the future benefit of her whom he loved as tenderly as if she were his own daughter.

Accident had introduced Victor Melville to the old soldier and the beautiful maiden about six months previous to the period at which this tale commences; and, although Dorvalliers would have probably been better pleased had an individual possessing a competency presented himself as the suitor of his adopted daughter, still he loved Louise too well to thwart her inclinations in a matter which might affect the future happiness of her life. He accordingly permitted the young Englishman, whose dreadful failing he had never once suspected, to visit her as her intended husband, so soon as he was informed of the attachment the young couple had formed for each other; and he therefore now deeply deplored the misfortune which had overtaken our hero.

* * * * *
* * * *

The dinner was served up, but was scarcely touched by either of the three individuals who sate down to it. The eyes of Louise were frequently filled with tears, as she cast stolen glances towards her lover, in order to ascertain the impression the approaching hour of separation produced upon his mind. The old Captain forgot his jokes and his military anecdotes; and Victor himself was a prey to the most heartrending affliction.

"By Jove!" cried Captain Dorvalliers, after a long pause, as he dashed his hand upon the table: "we are but a sorrowful party this evening. Louise, my dear, do me the favour to fetch a bottle of that Chateau Margeaux, you know—with the green seal on the cork. We will try if that cannot enliven us, Victor."

"I am sorry, my dear sir," answered the youth, "that my private afflictions should affect you: but I feel the kindness of your heart, which knows how to sympathize with the cares of a fellow-creature."

"My dear boy," returned the old officer, "I should be a brute were I not to feel for you. And do you think that, even if I did not care for *you*, I could be happy when I see that dear girl's eyes red with weeping, and her heart ready to break?"

"I would give worlds to make her happy!" passionately exclaimed our hero.

"Let us hope for better days, my boy!" said the old soldier. "But here she is with the wine. Give me the corkscrew, Louise dear—and mind you set the bottle down gently. There! that's a good girl. Now let Madeleine clear the table, and we will at least pass one agreeable hour together."

As the captain thus chattered, he extracted the cork from the bottle and filled the three glasses which Louise placed upon the table.

"This is the best wine in my cellar," resumed the captain; "and may we all be in a better humour the next time we open a bottle! Excellent, upon my soul," continued the old soldier, as he drained the glass; "I will be

bound for it that Napoleon never, never drank better wine in his life. But he was fond of the Burgundy wines! For my part, I would give all the Burgundy in the world, for one bottle of nice cool Bordeaux! Here, girl," added Dorvalliers, refilling his glass,—"here's your health, and God bless you, my dear child!"

The Captain grasped the hand of his adopted daughter as he uttered these words, and wrung it cordially, while a tear trickled down his weather-beaten cheek. Louise rose and imprinted a kiss upon the forehead of her benefactor; and as she lent towards the old man, she murmured the following words in his ear:—

"My dear friend—my more than father, you have only done to-day that which you never omitted to do for years, upon the 30th of September; and I thank you for this, as well as for all other tokens of kindness and affection, which you have manifested towards me."

"Ah!" ejaculated Captain Dorvalliers, starting on his seat as if he were suddenly bitten by some venomous reptile; and all the smiles which he had endeavoured to assume in order to chase away the melancholy of his two companions, suddenly faded from his countenance, leaving behind them expressions of anger and sorrow strangely commingling together.

"Yes," repeated Louise, gently, "this is the 30th of September."

"And on this day you are eighteen, Louise," said the old man hastily. "I had forgotten it—I did not wish to remember it—and yet for months have I vainly endeavoured to chase from my memory, the conviction that this day must come! Singular, that the anniversary should not have struck me till now, during the whole of this day; and yet I have looked forward to it with anxiety for years, and have dreaded its presence, as if it were the hour destined for my death!"

"My dear friend," exclaimed Louise, "you alarm me! What means this agitation—and wherefore do you shun the arrival of the eighteenth anniversary of your adopted daughter's birth? Oh! tell, me my kind friend: do not keep me in suspense."

"I was weak,—I was foolish thus to frighten you, Louise," cried Dorvalliers, endeavouring to smile: but the attempt was as abortive as if it had been made by a man about to suffer the extreme penalty of the law.

"No—it is but fair that I should be made acquainted with your sorrows, I who share all your pleasures," cried Louise, falling upon her knees beside her venerable guardian—then taking his hand in hers, and glancing up towards his countenance in so bewitching a manner, that Victor, who was a spectator of the singular scene, could have rushed from his seat and clasped her in his arms. "No—I will not suffer you to keep this secret from me," she continued in that coaxing manner which women know so well how to assume; "I am determined you shall tell me the cause of your alarm—your fears, relative to the presence of this day. On former birthdays you were invariably gay and happy, and the bottle with the green cork was produced, and my health was drunk, and Madeleine was permitted to share our happiness in the evening. Why should the day, on which I attain my eighteenth year, be one of sorrow to you?"

"When once a woman gets a whim into her head, she is terrible till it is gratified," said the Captain, endeavouring to assume an air of gaiety. "Little fairy, I suppose I must gratify your curiosity," he added, in a tone gradually becoming more serious as he proceeded, "and perhaps the sooner I perform an unpleasant duty the better. Victor, this is the last evening we shall probably pass for some time together: let it then be devoted to the revelation of a circumstance which I have long concealed in my own breast, but which is my own secret no longer. That secret now belongs to your future wife; and, as I fondly hope you will one day become her husband, you may be safely entrusted with the same narrative which I am about to disclose to her."

Louise rose from her kneeling posture and returned to her chair, her mind agitated with a thousand hopes and alarms as she prepared to listen to the tale which her guardian thus prefaced. Victor drew himself closer to the table; and after a few moments of profound reflection, Captain Dorvalliers commenced as follows:—

"I am not going to weary you, as romancists and novel-writers usually do, with a long story about birth, parentage, and education; because all these have no reference to the circumstances which it is my duty this day to reveal (so far as I myself am possessed of a knowledge of those circumstances) to my adopted daughter. It will, therefore, only be necessary to observe that I retired from active life a little more than eighteen years ago, and at that period married a lady to whom I had been engaged for some time. She possessed a small dower; and with this we purchased the house in which I at present dwell, and where I have passed the happiest portion of my existence, in the society of you, Louise,—you whom I love as dearly as if you were my own child. But the object of this disclosure is to make you aware of the manner in which you were entrusted to me—how I became your guardian—and wherefore I trembled when you reminded me ere now that you were this day eighteen years of age. So now, without any further preface, let me dash *in media res*, as my colonel used to observe when he broke the enemy's line, in the Austrian campaigns."

The worthy Captain paused for a moment, emptied his glass, and then continued in the ensuing manner:—

"I was married to my lamented wife on the 20th of September, 1808; and on the 30th of the same month occurred that which I am about to relate to you. We were sitting in this very apartment, at about nine o'clock in the evening, and conversing on a variety of interesting topics, all of which are as fresh in my memory as if they had been engraved upon it with red-hot iron, when the gardener, who had been employed about the premises until a late hour, rushed into the room exclaiming, '*There is a woman dying at the outer-gate!*' I immediately fetched a lantern from the kitchen, and, accompanied by my wife, the gardener,

No. 11.—The Empress Eugenie.

and old Madeleine, hastened to the spot, whence low moans reached our ears the moment we had set foot within the precincts of the garden. We proceeded to the outer gate; and there we found a female lying upon the cold ground, speechless, and apparently in the agonies of death. To raise her in my arms, and carry her into the house, was my first care; and my wife and Madeleine hastened to convey her to the best bed which we possessed. The gardener was immediately despatched to procure a doctor from Passy; for the wretched woman was about to become a mother. She was young—scarcely seventeen years of age, and beautiful — Oh! as beautiful as those heavenly beings which we dream of in the visions of the night! Her attire was costly in the extreme; and several rich jewels adorned her neck and fingers—all which baubles are still in my possession, in my own room. The surgeon arrived; and in a few hours you, Louise, were born. But your entrance into this world was the signal for your mother's departure from it; and she expired without having even experienced the sweets of maternity for one short hour, and without having uttered a word to say who she was, or whence she came."

Captain Dorvalliers paused for a moment: for the tears flowed profusely from the eyes of her who was so deeply interested in this narrative. The poor girl wept as she thought of the sufferings of her mother; and, although she had never known that mother's care, she felt that she could have loved her with all the enthusiasm and all the piety of filial devotion. Victor did not attempt to console his affianced bride: grief like hers was too sacred to be interrupted, even by the words of sympathy; —and he remained a mute, though far from disinterested, spectator of the scene.

"For some time I was uncertain how to act," continued Captain Dorvalliers, after a long pause, "so singular appeared the circumstances under which my house had become the scene of a birth and a death at the same moment. The doctor advised to communicate the particulars of this extraordinary adventure to a Commissary of Police, in order that measures might be adopted to ascertain to whom the lady belonged, and what was to be done with the child. I immediately followed this advice, and informed the magistrate, that a lady, who had laboured under too severe an attack of indisposition to articulate an intelligible syllable during her residence in my house, had just died there and left an infant behind her. The Commissary forthwith sent a report of my history to the Prefecture of Police in Paris, and advised me to await for a few days the result of this measure, ere I caused the body of the deceased to be interred. But my patience was not put to so long a test; for, in the course of a few hours, after the Commissary's report had been sent to Paris, an individual of noble manners, and who refused to give me his name or address, called and requested to be permitted to view the corpse. He was immediately conducted into the room where the deceased lay, and appeared satisfied that the remains were those of her concerning whom he was interested. But he was evidently in no way related with the deceased; for he demonstrated no signs of grief, and treated the whole matter, so far as he himself was concerned, with the indifference of a man who is only acting on the behalf of others.— '*This lady*,' said he, '*has been the victim of an attachment which separated her from her family; and that family must never be permitted to know the disgrace that has fallen upon one of its members. The child, which the lady has left behind her, has no friend nor relative to whose care it can be confided: will you undertake to rear it —to adopt it?—and a handsome stipend shall be allowed for the trouble and expense thereby entailed upon you. A befitting dower shall also be provided and ensured to her, when she arrives at the age of maturity*.'—I did not require long to reflect upon this proposition, although it was so abruptly made. I felt convinced that I should not myself be blessed with any offspring, as my wife was nearly my own age; and I knew that she was already attached to the infant thus thrown upon our hands. I accordingly acceded to the proposal, observing at the same time that I should be content with a very small sum until the expenses of education should accumulate with the growth of years. The stranger placed four thousand francs in my hand, declaring that a similar sum would be paid annually until the child should be old enough to be sent to school or provided with governesses, when the allowance would be doubled. He then took his leave."

"And was it thus that I was thrown upon your kindness,—with no other tie to bind me to you, than that of your own generous sympathies?" ejaculated Louise, rising from her seat, and throwing herself into the arms of the old soldier, who embraced her fervently. "Oh, my more than father, how can I ever repay so deep a debt of gratitude?"

"You have repaid it, dearest child," answered Dorvalliers:—"your attention to the old man's comforts—your affectionate disposition, your amiability, your goodness, have more than repaid me for any kindness I may have had it in my power to show you. But let me make an end of a sorrowful tale, the most afflicting portion of which is yet to come."

Louise returned to her seat; and Captain Dorvalliers drew forth a pocket-book, and thence extracted a letter which he laid upon the table. Victor and Louise watched him with the utmost anxiety: and, after a few moments' consideration, the old soldier thus concluded his narrative:—

"Seven years passed away, and Louise sprang up beneath the fostering care of the excellent Madeleine, who supplied the place of the mother whom she had lost, and of the one whom she would have found in Madame Dorvalliers, who was snatched away by the hand of death a few months after our marriage. During this period, the annual allowance of four thousand francs was regularly paid by the same stranger who had first proposed to me to adopt the child; and no inquiries concerning the little girl were ever made by any one but him. Shortly after the battle of Waterloo,— that fight which decided the fate of Europe,

and overshadowed the glorious star of the greatest man that the world ever produced,—I received a letter, through the post, upon the very day on which the seventh annual payment should have been made. This is the letter," continued Captain Dorvalliers, holding up the one he had extracted from his pocket-book, "and these are its contents:—'*A thousand thanks, generous man, for the kindness which you have manifested towards an unprotected child. Continue to act the father's part towards Louise (for such, it is understood, is the name you have given to her), and heaven will reward you far more than man can do. On the receipt of this letter, proceed to the office of M. Mezeray, a notary, who resides in the Rue Saint Honore; and he will entrust you with the secret of the birth and parentage of Louise. He will moreover transfer to you the sum of five hundred thousand francs (20,000l. sterling), and now lying in the Bank of France, and destined for the use of Louise, under your sole guardianship. When Louise shall have attained her eighteenth year, you may make her acquainted with that secret which M. Mezeray will confide to you; and at that age it would be advisable that she should be comfortably settled in life by some eligible marriage, to which her property may enable her to aspire.*'—Such, Louise, and Victor, was the letter which was conveyed to me on the 30th of September, 1815. I immediately proceeded to the house of M. Mezeray, burning to unravel that deep mystery which seemed to hang around the nativity of my beloved *protegee*. But, O God! how have I survived that terrible day? The wretch, the villain, who was entrusted with the orphan's gold, had betrayed his trust—had fled with the wealth confided to him—and had left me to curse his name!"

"And thus the secret was never fully revealed to you?" ejaculated Victor, in breathless suspense.

"Never!" answered the old soldier, rising and pacing the room with uneven steps. "All that I know relative to the nativity of your intended wife, Victor, I have told you; and I have thus far fulfilled the intentions of the writer of that letter, by revealing to her *on this day* some of the particulars of her birth. God only knows whether the remainder of this deep, deep mystery will ever be cleared up!"

"Ah! my dear friend," ejaculated Louise, hastening to embrace her venerable guardian, "you need not have dreaded this day, because you have done nothing for which you can reproach yourself. The villany of an unprincipled man has deprived me of my fortune: but it did not alienate your affection!"

And the beautiful girl used all her most endearing wiles and ways to soothe the old man's pain.

It is not, however, our object to extend this portion of our narrative. We shall therefore content ourselves with observing that the evening passed rapidly away—far too rapidly for the young lovers; and that the moment of separation at length arrived. The old Captain had delicately inquired into the state of Victor's pecuniary resources, during a momentary absence of Louise from the room, and had endeavoured to force a sum of money upon the young man. But nothing could induce our hero to acknowledge the extremely impoverished condition of his purse, or to accept the proffered assistance; and the old officer was at length satisfied in his own mind that Melville did not require any immediate aid of that nature.

The lovers parted, with tears, sighs, vows, and whisperings of fond hopes: they promised to correspond frequently, and renewed their former pledges of unchanging affection. Still, all these devices, suggested by a vain hope of cheating adversity of a portion of her savage delight at human misery, could not divest the hour of separation of many bitter—bitter pangs; and for some time they could not tear themselves away from each other's arms.

"God bless you, my boy!" cried the old officer; "and may every prosperity attend you."

"Farewell, dearest Victor!" murmured Louise, adown whose pale cheeks poured floods of tears.

"Farewell,—farewell, my ever dear, dear girl!" said Victor; and, wringing the hand of her guardian, the youth tore himself away from the spot which contained all that he held dear in life.

* * * * *
* * * * *

With a very heavy heart Victor returned on foot to Paris. He entered the gay city a few minutes before midnight: and from many of the houses by which he passed, issued the sounds of music and streamed the roseate floods of luxury. As he passed along the Faubourg St. Honore, numbers of splendid equipages swept by, bearing their wealthy owners from the fashionable circles where they had passed their evening, back to those dwellings in which every luxury awaited their slightest signal. In those carriages were beautiful women, with diamonds on their arms and necks, and birds-of-paradise feathers on their brow: and elegantly-attired men, who had probably lost or won a few minutes before, at some game of chance, that amount which would have made our young hero happy. And, as he contemplated these gorgeous equipages, and caught a glimpse of their inmates as a lamp threw its glare upon the carriage-windows, a murmur of discontent escaped his lips, and he wondered wherefore a few were born to happiness, and so many to misfortune.

Victor Melville pursued his way up the Boulevards, to the street where he resided. The porter of the house gave him a light as he passed by the little lodge where that individual dwelt; and the young man ran hastily up a narrow staircase, until he arrived at the third storey. There he took a key from his pocket, and opened the door that led into the little apartment which he had occupied since his arrival in Paris. The contents of that chamber were all his worldly possessions; and he had made up his mind to dispose of them, in order to defray the expenses of his journey to England, and ensure the means of procuring a lodging and a meal on his arrival in Lon-

don. A tear stole down his cheek as he contemplated the sacrifice he was thus forced to make; for, on the first day when he had purchased these few things, he had surveyed them with a sentiment of pride and satisfaction, although he had not lately thought of keeping them in proper order. Alas! it grieves us to be compelled to confess that, in spite of his good resolutions, so recently expressed to Louise, he drowned his regrets and his cares in the red juice of the grape ere he retired to his couch!

He, however, awoke at an early hour, and fancied himself obliged to take a dram to enable him to commence his struggles against the world. The old porteress who lighted his fire and prepared his breakfast was thunderstruck when she was informed of his intention to leave Paris; and she proceeded with a sorrowful countenance to execute the last order of her English lodger, which was to procure the immediate attendance of a broker.

"I am desirous of disposing of all my furniture this very morning," said Melville to the broker who soon made his appearance: "I gave about a thousand francs (40*l.*) for it only a few months ago."

"You know, sir," said the broker, who was one of the polite French tradesmen of the old school, "that property never fetches what it cost. But I shall not be very hard upon Monsieur: I will give a hundred and fifty francs (6*l.*) upon the spot,—and—and—not keep Monsieur waiting one moment."

"Six pounds for that which cost forty!" mused Victor aloud, in English: then, after a moment's pause, he said, addressing himself to the broker in the vernacular tongue spoken by that individual, "You offer me very little: it is a great sacrifice which I make."

"No, sir," cried the broker: "but the sacrifice is on the other side! I tender fifty francs more than the real value of the goods; and I think you cannot hesitate to throw your sketches and paintings into the bargain."

"Give me two hundred francs—eight pounds in English money—and I close with you at once!" said Victor, disheartened at the mediocrity of the man's offer.

"To oblige you I will; but only to oblige you," returned the broker; "upon my honour!"

The youth was compelled to accept this sum; and then it was not paid to him until all the goods were safely stowed away in a covered van which the broker proceeded to fetch from his own premises. Victor settled his little debts, packed up his clothes, corded his own trunk, and consigned it to a ticket-porter. The clock was striking five as he entered the great yard of the Messageries Royales (or great coaching establishment) in the Rue Notre Dame des Victoires.

The young man found, upon inquiry, that there was exactly one place still free; and this was in the *rotonde*, or hindermost department of the vehicle. This division of the triple coach, which forms a French diligence, is also the cheapest. It was therefore with feelings of satisfaction that Victor took possession of the place he had been fortunate enough to secure In a few minutes after he had entered the vehicle, the conductor ascended to the *imperial*, the postilion mounted his horse, and the ponderous machine was set in motion.

There were six persons in the *rotonde* of the diligence. On the right hand of Victor sat a gentleman, whose age might have been estimated at about thirty, and whose garments might have been supposed to have owed their origin to the year 1. He wore large bushy black whiskers; and his dark hair hung in lanky masses over an especially greasy coat collar. The coat itself was of light green, with brass buttons; the waistcoat beneath it was buff; and whether there was anything at all beneath the waistcoat, no one could venture to assert, because a large black stock concealed the shirt, if there were one, or the place where there ought to have been one. This gentleman's trousers were of shabby black, and were stretched over a pair of half-boots by means of thin straps. Upon his hands he wore a pair of old black gloves, which had been cunningly contrived to admit the fresh air at the fingers; and when he required to blow his nose, he invariably turned his head as much round as possible, took off his hat, and thence extracted an article which only a capacious fancy could have taken for a handkerchief. For the rest, this individual gazed upon his fellow-travellers with a patronising air, but was exceedingly polite to every one whenever he made an observation, or listened to one; and as he seemed to be a person of considerable information, Victor was far from displeased to discover that he was an Englishman.

On the left hand of our hero was an old English lady; and opposite to her was her daughter. The former was very ugly; the latter rather pretty; and each had a very good opinion of herself. The other two inmates of the *rotonde* were French gentlemen, whom it is not necessary to describe.

"Going to Calais, sir?" said the English gentleman with the shabby attire, to Victor.

"I am," was the answer; "and thence to Dover."

"So am I!" ejaculated the stranger. "Where do you put up at Calais?"

"I really have no choice," replied Melville.

"We'll go to the first hotel. Believe me, it is always the best plan to patronise the best hotels. They would do anything for me at Dessein's; and I am as well known as an Apicius in my way."

"I shall be most happy to place myself under your guidance," observed Victor. "Do you go as far as London?"

"London! of course I do," ejaculated the shabby gentleman, as if he were surprised at the doubt implied by the question. "So do you—eh? Well, we'll travel together all the way. There's nothing like society; Alexander was miserable without Clitus; and if Brutus had not been left alone in his tent, he would not have seen the ghost which gave him an appointment at Philippi."

"You are fond of the classics, doubtless, sir," was the remark ventured by Victor Melville, after a pause.

"Fond of them!" exclaimed the stranger,

almost insulted by the mere idea of the possibility that he should *not* be so; "fond of them! Why, they are meat, drink, lodging, and fire to me."

Melville could not help thinking that if they played the part of a tailor and bootmaker also, it would not be amiss: he however surveyed his new acquaintance with considerable respect, —a sentiment that was encouraged by the literary predilection manifested by his great veneration for the classics.

"There, ma, I knowed what it would be!" exclaimed the young lady, at this crisis, to her mother, in consequence of a peasant leaping up on a step behind the vehicle, and gazing into the *rotonde*: "I knowed we should be compelled to put up with all kinds of unpleasantness, riding in this part of the diligence."

"Well, my dear Betsy," answered the parent, in a conciliating tone, "there was no other places to take, and your'e aweer that your pa expects us. What a prowoking thing it is, that Balls couldn't puspone his marriage, till he'd gived us time to get home. But them pawnbrokers always does things in such a hurry."

"Yes, yes—I know all about it," cried Miss Betsy, bestowing a violent kick upon her mother's toes at this betrayal of the calling professed by Mr. Balls, in consequence of whose nuptials it appeared that the two ladies had been suddenly compelled to return to their native city.

"Lor, Betsy, do mind my corns!" exclaimed the poor lady, screwing up her mouth in agony: "my feet isn't so hard as your'n. But, what was I saying of? Oh! we were talking of Balls' marriage with your cousin Henrietta Maria. I dare say there'll be a strong muster of wery gen-teel people at the weddin. Balls thinks of giving up the pawnbroking business, and going into the wine way. I wonder at that: to give up such a business as he's got. Why, I think he said that he never lent less than fifty pounds on flat-irons alone, every Saturday night of his life!"

"I am sure he's not my cousin reglarly?" cried Miss Elizabeth, who had in vain endeavoured to arrest the progress of this torrent of words, by such small obstacles as winks, nods, kicks, and "hems," were likely to throw in the way: but all her attempts were as unavailing as if she had essayed to build an embankment at the mouth of the Orinoco; for her mother never ceased speaking until she had exhausted the topic.

"Ah! a wedding is a fine thing!" cried the shabby gentleman, who seemed anxious to form every one's acquaintance, to effect which aim he had already begged a pinch of snuff of one of the Frenchmen, and trodden on the toe of the other, in order that he might have an opportunity of begging his pardon: "a wedding is a fine thing! Apollodorus has left us a splendid description of the union of Ataulphus and Placidia, at which Attalus, the ex-Roman emperor was present.

"Yes, I recollect reading of it in the papers," observed the young lady, with an affected tone.

"The deuce you do!" exclaimed the stranger, taken somewhat aback by this announcement: but instantly recollecting himself he added, "I never was at more than one wedding in my life; and that was when my old grandmother, who was in her dotage, married a third time. She threw herself away upon a young fellow of seventeen!"

"Or rather he threw himself away upon her," said Victor, smiling at this anecdote.

"No—he got plenty of money; and she *had* been very handsome," rejoined the shabby gentleman. "Paris, you know, could have only loved Helen for the renown of her beauty, as she was upwards of sixty when she ran away with him; and my grandmother was only seven years older."

In such conversation as this was the time whiled away, until the travellers alighted to sup at Claremont. Had Victor been prudent, he would have saved the few francs to be disbursed upon this meal, and satisfied his own appetite with a bun or a roll purchased at a baker's shop: but he could not resist the temptation of finding an excuse to partake of a bottle with his companions; and he accordingly took his leave at the *table d'hote*. The shabby gentleman seemed perfectly well acquainted with the landlord and the domestics of the inn, and was treated by them with the utmost respect. A bottle of champagne, besides the ordinary wine, was served up to him; and, to increase the mystery in the eyes of Victor, not a fraction was demanded of him, when the rest paid their accounts. Our hero was not however, as yet sufficiently acquainted with the shabby gentleman to demand an explanation of this phenomenon; and the shabby gentleman, on his part, did not seem to observe that the circumstance had attracted any particular attention.

The travellers resumed their places in the diligence; and, as it was now quite dark, they could only *hear*, and not *see* each other. One of the French gentleman profited by this circumstance, to consign his wig to his pocket, and substitute a white cotton night-cap as a egument for his head; and the other smoked a cigar out of the window, Miss Betsy having declared that she was a great admirer of the smell of tobacco-smoke in the open air. The old lady chattered about her London acquaintances—Mr. Balls, the pawnbroker—the way to serve up a sucking-pig—the best remedy for a cough—the delights of Paris—the fatigues of travelling—and a variety of matters equally interesting, but all too numerous for enumeration; and when she was thoroughly tired of making a noise with her tongue, she tried what her nose could do in the way of snoring, to the unmitigated disgust of her daughter.

Victor and his new acquaintance sustained a miscellaneous conversation with Miss Betsy for some time; and then they sank off to sleep one after the other. When they awoke in the morning, just at that chilly hour at which the dawn begins to break, they all wondered that time had passed away so rapidly; and the old lady, who had not ceased snoring throughout the night, delared most solemnly that she had never slept a wink.

At about ten o'clock they arrived at Amiens, where they were to breakfast; and here Melville remarked a repetition of that which had so recently astonished him at Claremont, in respect to his new acquaintance. The shabbily-attired gentleman was treated with the utmost respect; and it was evident that if he were ever so much in want of shirts, he was by no means put to his shifts on his road to Calais. Indeed the best of everything was served up to him; and of all the guests at the breakfast-table, he alone received a card setting forth the excellencies of the hotel, from the hands of the landlord. Melville was still compelled to put the bridle of patience upon the steed of curiosity: he however hoped that a short time would elucidate the mystery; for he could not conceive how a man, whose personal appearance was not calculated to command credit for a penny loaf, was thus enabled to eat and drink of the best, without disbursing a fraction at the inns at which he stopped.

During that day, Victor and the shabby gentleman became much more intimate with the two English ladies than they had previously been; and the mother actually carried her condescension so far as to say, "that she should be delighted to see them at her house in London." She then inserted her hand into a large bag, which she called a "*ridicule*," and from a miscellaneous collection of hard eggs, biscuits, cakes, lozenges, a smelling-bottle, and a handkerchief, she drew forth two cards, one of which she presented to Victor, and the other to the gentleman in the shabby attire. On these cards, which were about the size of those used to play with, were printed in very large type, these words: "MRS. TERRYWHIST, *Number 2, Terrywhist Terrace, Camden Town.*"

"That's the name of our place, gentlemen," said the old lady, with a complacent smile. "My husband built the terrace, you see; and we occupy one of the houses."

"Mr. Terrywhist is then an architect, I presume, ma'am?" said the shabby gentleman.

"No, sir, he is not," was the reply.

"A surveyor, probably, ma'am?"

"No, sir."

"Oh! I see—a builder," cried the shabby gentleman, determined to guess on.

"No, sir, nor yet a builder," said the lady.

"A speculator?"

"No, sir."

"What then, ma'am?" asked the stranger.

"He was once a tinker, sir," was the answer.

"Retired from business with a large fortune," immediately superadded Miss Elizabeth Terrywhist. "It was with the greatest difficulty that we could perwail upon pa to give his name to the terrace, he is so exceedingly dewoid of pride. He even wanted to call it after an old uncle of ours, from whom we've considerable expectations; but we couldn't abear the hidear."

"Abear it—no!" echoed the old lady. "What a pretty address it would have been to give —'MR. TERRYWHIST, *Tunks' Terrace*' To be sure, Tunks is a name as well as another, and may be a very ancient one for anything I know; but at the same time *Tunks' Terrace* doesn't sound by no means aristocratic; so that's the reason we rejected the name of Tunks, and gave our own, which is Terrywhist."

"And very right you were, too," said the shabby gentleman, endeavouring to elongate his coat-sleeves, between the cuffs of which and his gloves were very large portions of his wrists left bare. "The ancients gave the names of illustrious men to their streets; and I do not see wherefore the moderns should not imitate them."

At about four o'clock the travellers reached St. Pol, where they stopped to dinner. At the *table d'hote*, on this occasion, as on others, the shabby gentleman commanded the respect of the landlord; and Victor thought that he must be either a nobleman in disguise, or a swindler travelling upon promises. The stranger was not, however, solicited to disburse a fraction for his expenses at the hotel: and the landlord even solicited a favour at his hands at parting.

"Do not forget, sir, to recommend my establishment as strongly as you have hitherto done," said he; "and have the kindness to inform your friends that I have diminished my charges, and that I have ceased to send in weekly bills. Nothing will induce the English to come to my house more than long credit: and, if one or two take me in, those who pay will make up for the loss. There is excellent sporting in this neighbourhood."

"I shall not forget what you have just told me," said the shabby gentleman. "Next year, at precisely the same time, I shall pass this way again."

The travellers returned to the diligence; and Melville was more than ever at a loss to solve this mystery. The object of his wonder did not, however, notice the sensation which he had created in the mind of the young man; and no one else had observed that which had so profoundly excited the curiosity of our hero.

At about five on the second morning the diligence entered Calais. By the advice of the shabby gentleman the two ladies repaired to Dessein's Hotel, whither they were accompanied by that individual and Melville. Having retired to their respective chambers, they all for a few hours slept off the fatigues of the long journey from Paris. They breakfasted together in the coffee-room: and there, as elsewhere upon the road, did the shabby gentleman escape without being even solicited for payment. As soon as breakfast was dismissed, the little party proceeded to the quay, where they embarked on board a steam-packet bound for Dover.

On the road from Paris, Victor had not found much leisure to indulge his gradually increasing propensity to the most demoralizing and degrading of habits—drinking. But the moment he arrived on board the vessel, the excitement of travelling having passed off, and the monotony of the sea being only too well calculated to awaken the morbid longing on the part of the young man—he hurried into the cabin, and sought a deceptive and evanescent felicity in a glass of strong liquor. All his good resolutions vanished from his memory as he imbibed the exhilarating fluid: he bestowed one sigh upon Louise, but did not choose to remember her kind counsel; and as soon as the glass of brandy and water was disposed of, he could not

resist the temptation of ordering a second. His cheeks became flushed, his eyes sparkled with unnatural lustre, and he felt himself inspired with that brutal species of courage which defies alike the sorrows and the temptations of this world. He rose from the seat in the cabin, and with a light heart—though still with a lingering consciousness in his bosom of having done wrong—ascended to the deck of the vessel.

"This shall positively be the last time that I will drink in the morning," said he, as the fresh air o the sea fanned his heated countenance. "O, Louise! your image henceforth shall suffice to fortify me to dare all the evils which fate may have in store for me!"

* * * * * *

* * * * *

"And, pray, what is taking you to London, my dear sir?" inquired the shabby gentleman of our young hero, as they sat upon the deck of the steam-packet together. "Are you compelled to proceed thither upon business?—or are you merely returning from a continental tour?"

"I am going to London to do what many a man has done before me—to find that which seems to throw itself in the way of some, and to fly away from others as if they were a pestilence—to seek after a thing which I have vainly sought elsewhere," answered Melville: "in other words, I am going to London to endeavour to make my fortune."

The shabby gentleman bestowed a look of extreme curiosity mingled with commiseration upon our hero; and then shook his head gravely.

"You tremble for me in the pursuit of my object," said Melville, with a bitter smile. "But everything had a beginning; and some lucky accident has often effected that which real talent and perseverance could never have achieved. You will laugh when I tell you the nature of the profession in which I am about to embark, and in which I have already entered as an apprentice," continued Melville, induced by the recklessness which is imparted to the soul by drinking, to make a confidant of his travelling acquaintance: "I aspire to the honours of literary renown, and I seek after the gold paid for the outpourings of genius."

"Gold—the gold!" ejaculated the shabby gentleman, with a satirical laugh; "the copper you mean! Some half-a-dozen men make large incomes—even fortunes—by their pens—especially those who can write tales and romances. But they are only the exceptions to the rule——"

"I knew that you would laugh at my scheme," said Melville; "but your own feelings appear interested in the matter of which we are speaking."

"I recollect!" cried the shabby gentleman, slapping one of his hands upon his knees, as a sudden idea seemed to start across his brain: "we have been travelling a hundred and seventy miles together, and do not as yet know each other's names. What is yours?"

"Victor Melville," replied our hero.

"And mine is Tibbatts—Titus Tibbatts, at your service," said the shabby gentleman.

"What! the author of the 'Guide to Paris?'" cried Melville, to whom the name was somewhat familiar.

"The sa e," was the answer. "I have been a literary man myself for some years; but to tell you the candid truth, cannot earn a penny otherwise than by my 'Guides' to the Continent. The occupation is pleasant enough, if it were only a little more lucrative. I live at the best hotel in Paris for nothing, during my residence there; and, on the road, I am not troubled with any bills at the *table d'hote.*"

"I cannot comprehend the meaning of this exemption from such unp.easant demands," said Melville.

"Oh! the reason is very simple," returned Mr. Titus Tibbatts. "When we are told that Hannibal softened the Alpine rocks with vinegar, we do not believe a word of the story; but when I assure you that all I do, in return for my breakfasts and dinners, is to recommend the several establishments at which I feed, to my fellow-countrymen in my 'Guides,' you may readily believe the assertion."

"I do not doubt your veracity," said Melville; "and, indeed, I noticed the fact of your escaping without any demand for payment at the several hotels upon the road, and my curiosity was naturally awakened."

"But let us speak of your intentions," said Mr. Tibbatts, after a pause. "You are going to London to set up in business as an author: and you hope to live upon the profits. Your stock-in-trade is your brain. But if you possessed the coal-mines of the north, and had not the means of working them, you would continue a poor man. However, let us see! Do you know any one to take you by the hand in London?—any Mæcenas to recommend you to public notice?"

"Not a soul," was the reply.

"Are you acquainted with any publisher, who will probably take an interest in you at the commencement of your undertaking?" pursued the catechiser.

"Not one," answered Melville.

"Any printer who will use his types as a matter of speculation in your behalf?" was the third query.

"None," responded Victor.

"Have you the necessary funds to publish a first work, and trust to that foundation as the basis of future success?"

"I have scarcely enough to maintain me for a week after my arrival in London."

"Then in the name of heaven," exclaimed Mr. Titus Tibbatts, "how do you hope to do any good? You had better hire yourself as porter to a warehouse, sweep a respectable crossing, ring a church-bell, or turn costermonger at once, than pursue this mad scheme. Trust to my experience—believe an old hand—and renounce all idea of continuing in a career which can only lead you to want and misery, unless you have friends, money, or interest to help you on."

"There have been instances where persevering men have forced themselves upon public notice," said Melville; "and their abilities have been recognised as soon as they procured a fair hearing. Do you pretend to tell me, that if I write a good book,—I merely speak

for the sake of example,—submit it to a publisher, and demand an impartial opinion, that I shall not obtain one?"

"You will not be judged according to your own merits," answered Mr. Tibbatts. "I know all that you say is said and argued by every beginner in the literary sphere; and then, in a few years, they find out their mistake,—as I did."

"Every literary aspirant does not experience the same fate," remarked Melville; "or else there would be no good authors in existence."

"And you think that you may probably prove one of the exceptions?" said Titus, somewhat bitterly: "but I see—excuse me—that you have the failing which I possess!"—then, in his habitually hilarious voice, he added, "You behold me—you behold my garb—this old coat, these gloves, and these pantaloons; and then," he added in a lower tone, "I have totally lost the confidence of my washerwoman for a long—long time. Well—I am an author: I began as you do, full of hopes; I speedily experienced the most galling disappointment. I struggled on for some time, as a contributor to periodicals. I then attempted a novel, but could never find a publisher, or even a printer for it; so I took to drinking to drown care, and to writing 'Guides' to support myself; and this occupation just sustains a narrow partition between existence and starvation."

"Your picture is most melancholy," said Melville, shuddering as be remembered that *he* also had been already compelled to take to drinking. "I shall however give the profession, which I have marked out for myself, a fair trial; and——"

"And when you find yourself in the workhouse or Queen's Bench, you will call to mind the advice I gave you on board this vessel," added Mr. Tibbatts, laconically.

"I am resolved to follow my own inclinations," said Melville, somewhat impatiently.

"My advice is perfectly disinterested," returned the shabby gentleman: "and to convince you of the truth of my assertion, I will afford you all the assistance I possibly can on our arrival in London:"—but as he uttered these words, the rapid look which he threw upon Melville became sinister in the extreme—a sufficient indication (though Victor perceived it not) that an evil disposition or at all events a reckless and dangerous character lurked beneath the air of good-temper and offhandedness of manner which seemed habitual to Mr. Tibbatts.

In the meantime Mrs. Terrywhist had laid herself down on a sofa in the cabin; and from the bed a lurch of the vessel speedily removed her to the floor, where she fell, with all the weight of a carcase by no means sylph-like. Her daugdter declared in the most positive terms, that, for her part, she was sure of never reaching Dover alive; and yet, in spite of this conviction, the young lady, probably through some idiosyncracy of disposition, expressed her intention, in the same breath, of writing a long account of her vexations and sensations, on her arrival at home.

All things must have an end; and so the voyage from Calais to Dover terminated at last. Mrs. Terrywhist was hoisted out of the vessel in a most interesting state of helplessness; and Miss Betsy did not feel "herself" again, until she had looked in the glass at the York Hotel, to which the four travellers proceeded; for our hero and Mr. Tibbatts determined to continue their attentions to the ladies until their arrival in London. A slight collation was ordered; and, in spite of her late seasickness, Mrs. Terrywhist and her daughter paid their respects to the cold fowl with peculiar enthusiasm, sustained a very animated discussion with a pigeon-pie, and then exchanged a few civilities with some bottled porter. On this occasion a bill was presented to Mr. Tibbatts, as the landlord of the York Hotel did not require a puff in a continental *Guide;* and the poor author disbursed his reckoning with a deep sigh, but in coin extracted from a very shallow purse. Four places were taken in a night coach for London, as the anticipated nuptials of Mr. Balls, the pawnbroker, did not admit of any delay on the part of the ladies; and the pecuniary circumstances of the gentlemen were equally potent inducements for celerity of travelling, in order that the expenses of a night at an hotel in Dover might be avoided.

Victor, who had slept during the greater portion of the night, awoke at about six o'clock in the morning, just as the coach entered the vast metropolis of England. He had at length arrived in that city, where he was to toil for bread, and where he hoped to procure the means of being one day happily united to his beloved Louise. But what an abyss seemed to yawn between him and the fulfilment of this fond anticipation! He shuddered to think of his desperate position in the world—a position that was rendered more hopeless by the terrible habit he had incurred: and closing his eyes once more, as if he could thus cast a veil over his thoughts, he endeavoured to expel the gloomy ideas which took possession of his soul. But the essay was a vain one; for the natural ardour of youth was checked by the reaction arising from the use of strong and stimulating drink; and while a desire for that stimulant filled his mind, a melancholy cloud hung upon his countenance.

The coach stopped at the Spread Eagle in Gracechurch Street; and Victor's first care, as soon as he had alighted, was to procure a hackney-coach to take the two ladies to their own home.

"Mind, we expect to see you both at Terrywhist Terrace," said the elder of the female travellers.

"Coriolanus visited his enemy," observed Mr. Tibbatts; "and surely we may call upon our friends."

"I shall not forget your kind invitation," answered Melville; and the hackney-coach, in which the two ladies and their nine trunks were packed, rolled slowly away from the door of the Spread Eagle.

"What are you going to do with yourself?" demanded Mr. Tibbatts, shouldering a small portmanteau, and looking our hero fixedly in the countenance.

No. 12.—The Empress Eugenie.

"I shall seek for some cheap lodging for the moment," was the reply, delivered with some hesitation: for the poor fellow scarcely knew what he *was* to do.

"Come along with me," said Titus: "you cannot be better off elsewhere than in the place where I live, and where there are always two or three rooms to let."

Without any further hesitation, Victor imitated his fellow-traveller's ease of manners, with respect to carrying his own portmanteau; and Mr. Tibbatts led the way towards the abode, which, when at home, his presence and a rushlight illuminated between them.

Bartholomew Close, consisting of a square and its purlieus, is in the vicinity of Aldersgate Street and Little Britain; and is entered from the former by a lane called Westmoreland Buildings. The traveller, who walks down St. Martin's Le Grand on the left hand side of the way, from Newgate Street, will see a flight of three or four steps, leading to an alley; and if the aforesaid traveller will turn up this alley, take a slight curve to the right at the end, then walk straight on again for a few paces only, he will see on his left hand, and opposite a picture-shop where valentines are exhibited all the year round, as if there were no other day than the fourteenth of February, an archway leading to a narrow and dirty court called Albion Buildings. On a little board, which is nailed up against the wall of the archway, is painted a mangle with white posts, yellow body, black rollers, and a green handle; and a few letters, scrawled in yellow on the bottom of the board, indicate that mangling is done at one of the houses up this alley or court. The houses themselves are large and high; and their landlords are very much prone to letting lodgings, and taking people in without asking them many questions, and turning them out in an equally unceremonious manner when they do not pay. The doors of these houses usually stand half open, day and night; and when any one calls upon an individual on a particular floor, he gives as many raps with the knocker as correspond with the number of the aforesaid individual's room. When the postman calls at either of these dwellings, he gives his usual double knock; and then the whole multitude of tenants of that particular abode, rush to the door as if they were every one in expectation of letters with large remittances.

It was to Albion Buildings that Mr. Titus Tibbatts conducted Victor Melville; and it was into a house in Albion Buildings that Mr. Tibbatts turned, when he arrived in that respectable and respected court. Throwing open the front door, as if he were quite at home, which indeed he was, Mr. Tibbatts continued to lead the way, up a very dirty and dark staircase, as far as the fourth storey, where he was the sole tenant of a very comfortable apartment, commanding a beautiful view of the stacks of chimneys opposite, and only separated from the starry vault of heaven by the tilings.

The room itself was characterisic both of place and owner. A tent bedstead, without any curtains, stood in one corner; an immense chest occupied the middle, and supplied the place of a table; and on a real table, near the window, were the papers, writing materials, and books pertaining to Mr. Titus Tibbatts. A few pictures of ladies with gorgeous costumes, and gentlemen in blue coats, yellow trousers, red waistcoats, and purple stocks, graced the wall over the black wooden mantel-piece; the ladies being intended to represent celebrated actresses, and the gentlemen eminent highwaymen and murderers.

"Well, here we are at last!" exclaimed Mr. Tibbatts, throwing himself upon a chair, and motioning to Melville to do the same: "Diogenes was rejoiced when he returned to his tub; and why should not I be pleased to welcome my own home once more, humble as it is?"

"It seems very comfortable," observed Victor, by way of saying something: although he shuddered as he glanced at the chilly appearance of the bed without curtains.

"Oh, yes," answered his new friend, quite seriously; "it does very well for a bachelor, you know. But let us get some breakfast first, and then think of hiring a room for you."

"With pleasure," said Victor; and Mr. Tibbatts proceeded to light the fire, fetch some water from the common pump, lay the cloth, wipe the cups and saucers, and, in a word, perform all the light and pleasing duties of a thrifty housewife.

He then hastened to the baker's, where he procured a loaf; to the grocer's, where he bought a quarter of an ounce of tea and four eggs; to the milkwoman's, where he disbursed a halfpenny upon milk; and concluded his toils by purchasing half a pound of fourteen-penny butter at the shop which he usually honoured with his custom for that article, bacon, and cheese.

The luxuries thus speedily acquired, were soon converted into edible or potable food; and Mr. Tibbatts very philosophically observed, that "if the things weren't first-rate, at all events they were paid for." The two gentlemen accordingly ate with a good appetite; and the viands rapidly disappeared from the table, or rather the chest. When this meal, which was seasoned by a good appetite and Mr. Tibbatts' edifying conversation, was despatched, the founder of the feast proposed "to shed a tear." Melville replied to this singular offer in no other manner than by a good long stare; but Mr. Tibbatts speedily explained his meaning by extracting a bottle from the corner of his cupboard, and pouring a part of the contents into two egg-cups—for of wine-glasses he had none. Victor, whose nose was immediately assailed by the odour of gin, gladly welcomed the appearance of the baneful stimulant; and while, with flushed countenance, and eyes that sparkled with unnatural lustre, he swallowed two or three drams one after the other, his companion raised a laugh by the observation, "that it was a pity to waste anything."

These little matters being settled, Mr. Tibbatts proceeded to the top of the stairs, and roared out the name of "Mr. Rocus," as loudly as he could bawl. The whole house echoed to the din of that magic sound; and in a few minutes, the person thus adjured slowly

ascended the staircase and entered the apartment. He was a stout man, with a pimply face and a red nose; and if he were not really addicted to the bottle, he ought to have brought an action against his own countenance for libel and defamation.

"Mornin', gen'lemen," said Mr. Robus, quietly taking a seat near the fire; "cold weather this for the time o' year."

"Yes, it is," observed Victor.

"That's right, Mr. Robus; make yourself at home," said Mr. Tibbatts, encouragingly.

"So I do," said the landlord; and, in order to convince the two gentlemen of the truth of his assertion, he helped himself to a glass, or rather an egg-cup of gin without any further ceremony.

"My young friend here wants a room, Mr. Robus," said Tibbatts, after a pause, during which the landlord's heart had time to expand beneath the influence of the liquor: "can you accommodate him?"

"Can I?" repeated Mr. Robus: "why, if its to obleege you, Mr. Tibbatts, I'd give him up my own room and welcome. You've been a good customer to me, and we hasn't no bother in getting the rent when Saturday comes round. I'm sure I've had a many writers living in this house, and none as come down so reg'lar as you. There's that gen'leman as has the two best rooms in the house, on the fust floor, and as drinks his eight or nine pints o' four-penny-ale every day as reg'larly as clock-work, doesn't behave his-self near so honourable as you, Mr. Tibbatts: so here's a health to ye, sir, and thank'ee kindly for all faviours. *Your* health, sir."

And as he uttered these words, the worthy landlord helped himself a second time to gin: thus treating his stomach to another dram, doubtless to reward it for its forbearance in not having craved any breakfast that morning.

"But you have a room, Mr. Robus?" said Mr. Tibbatts, interrogatively.

"I have, sir; an' a wery nice un it be too," answered Mr. Robus. "It's well aired, and ain't at all damp. Indeed its only been vacant three weeks come next Tuesday; the last tenants was a costermonger and his family. There was eleven on 'em lived for ten months in one room; so I'm blowed if it can be damp after that."

Victor thought this reasoning somewhat too conclusive to be pleasant; and he inquired if Mr. Robus had a vacant room in which only a fraction of that number of inhabitants had dwelt. A reply was immediately given in the affirmative; and the landlord led the way to an apartment situate beneath that which was owned by Mr. Titus Tibbatts.

"There's a room!" cried Mr. Robus, in a tone of the deepest admiration, as he ushered Victor and the poor author into a chamber, the floor of which was as black as that of a coal-cellar, and the wainscoted walls as dirty as if they had never been acquainted with water.

"It is indeed!" exclaimed Victor in a tone of the most unmitigated disgust.

But aware of his poverty, and glad to find himself in the vicinity of a friend even so poor and miserable as Mr. Tibbatts, he at once agreed to become the weekly tenant of the lodging in question. The sum of three shillings and sixpence, being the rent for the first term of seven days, was immediately paid in advance; and Mr. Robus declared, with a terrible oath, "that they should wash down the bargain with a drop of blue ruin at his expense." The three individuals accordingly proceeded to a gin-palace in Aldersgate Street; and for the first time in his life was Victor Melville a visitor to one of those superb pandemonia.

The gin-palace was fitted up in the most costly style. No expense had been spared to render it attractive; and the services of a very pretty girl had been secured to attend at the bar. Decked out in her meretricious garb, she resembled the liquor she disbursed so plentifully; for she was attractive to a superficial glance, but polluted and dangerous in character. At the bar were two or three old women, with deep wrinkles upon their brows, with emaciated arms, squalid and dirty appearance, and clothed almost in rags. These wretches were drinking a measure of gin between them; and they lapped up the fiery liquor as if they were imbibing the fabled elixir which would, it was supposed, restore its possessor to youth and beauty. Youth, indeed! drink had hurried those miserable females on to a premature old age:—beauty, indeed! the same cause had undermined every trace of those attractions which they possessed in their early days! At another part of the bar were three or four ill-looking men, whispering amongst themselves, casting suspicious looks around, and every now and then passing a pewter quart measure of beer from one to the other. It was easy to perceive that they were plotting something which they were afraid that others would overhear, and of which they were ashamed!

A woman entered the house at the same moment as Victor Melville and his companions: she had a child in her arms. She called for a glass of gin; she drank it all but a few drops, and those she gave to her child. That child was not two years old! It was thus that the wretched mother was teaching her offspring to feel an early relish for that drink which conducts its votary through all the various mazes of misery and crime,—those paths which terminate only at the door of the workhouse, or the foot of the gibbet. Unhappy mother! she was preparing the way for the ruin or the untimely end of her own son!

Victor's unpleasurable feelings at the spectacle were soon succeeded by others of delight at the liquor, of which he was so freely partaking. He forgot that he was associating with those who were only leading him into the paths of degradation and disgrace: he also forgot his own Louise, in the society of the boon companions of the bottle.

Two or three hours passed away: and Victor drowned all his cares in the temporary delights of the glass: but if he forgot his cares, he also ceased to remember his duties: and, in the broad daylight, did he issue from the public-house, his brain confused, his sight

almost failing him, his cheeks bloated and red, and his legs unsteady!

Under the auspices of Mr. Tibbatts, who was not quite so much affected by the liquor he had drunk as his new acquaintance, the apartment in Albion Buildings was not only very soon washed out, but also provided with a bed, a table, a washing-stand, and four chairs, for the hire of which Melville had to make a small deposit. This he did after having had the necessity of so doing impressed upon his mind several times; and Mr. Tibbatts agreed, in his name, that the same amount should be forthcoming weekly. As soon as these arrangements were completed, Victor (with shame and sorrow be it said) retired to his couch at half-past four in the day-time in a perfect state of ebriety; and Mr. Tibbatts returned to the gin-palace to finish the evening with his particular and intimate friend, Mr. Robus.

* * * * * *
* * * * *

Victor Melville awoke at an early hour: but his head ached and his brain appeared to be on fire. As he recalled to mind the circumstances of the preceding day, and reflected upon the excess of which he had been guilty, he was ready to tear his hair with rage. He felt that he had done very wrong—and that he had lowered himself to a level with those unfortunate wretches who may be almost said to dwell in the infamous dens of the publicans. The image of his Louise flashed across his mind; and he for a few minutes seriously meditated upon the means of breaking himself of the evil habit which he had contracted. He knew his own weakness—he was aware that if he once began to taste the inviting liquors of which he was so fond, he should continue his potations: he had not sufficient command over himself to drink in moderation;—and he also felt that even drinking in moderation was a most pernicious indulgence.

In the midst of his ruminations, Mr. Tibbatts entered the room.

"How have you slept?" asked that gentleman, whose eyes were very red.

"Tolerably well," replied Victor: "but——"

"But you were terribly drunk last night," added Tibbatts, with a loud laugh.

Melville shook his head mournfully.

"A truce to all nonsense of that kind!" ejaculated the shabby individual: "cheer up, my dear fellow—always dread reactions! The ancients universally drank a cup of Setine in the morning after a debauch upon mighty Falernian."

And as he uttered these words, the tempter slowly drew a small case-bottle from one pocket, and a wine-glass without a stand, from the other, while Victor watched his motions with mingled feelings of delight and alarm. Mr. Tibbatts poured out a glass of the liquor which was contained in the bottle. It was brandy; and as soon as the dram reached the olfactory sense of the young man, who was making such rapid progress in the evil paths of intemperance, he endeavoured to persuade himself that his exhausted frame required a powerful stimulant. Strange and fatal mistake—which has raised a powerful barrier between many a drunkard and the ways of reformation!

Melville accepted the glass from the hands of Mr. Tibbatts — swallowed its contents — and all his good resolutions fled for that day!

Tibbatts shortly after left the room: and our hero proceeded to dress himself with an unusual degree of attention; for he had already digested in his own mind the plan he intended to adopt. The full particulars of this scheme he did not communicate to his new friend, who would only throw cold water upon it: having therefore merely informed Mr. Tibbatts that he had a little business to attend to, he consigned two or three manuscripts, nicely folded up in white paper, and bound round with red tape, to his pocket; and then sallied forth, literally in search of adventures. Elated by the spirituous liquor which he had drunk, he suffered himself to indulge in hopes of success, as he journeyed along the streets towards Paternoster Row.

The classic region, to which our hero sped, is a narrow, dirty lane, between St. Paul's Churchyard and Newgate Street, the richest of whom, for the most part, possess the least attractive-looking establishments. But in the vast store-rooms of the publishers of Paternoster Row, are preserved the choicest treasures of human intellect; for all English books, now in print, and the best of foreign languages, can be there obtained. It is an imperishable mine of wealth; and as soon as one vein of the rich ore is exhausted, the printing-press soon replenishes it again. It is scarcely possible for a mere spectator, however superficially he may be accustomed to examine into the philosophy of things, to reflect, without an extraordinary interest, upon the silent action of that machinery which moves a world. Those sombre and dingy-looking houses, in the windows of which there are a few soiled volumes scarcely ever disturbed, possess a scope so vast and produce results so mighty, that their proprietors and their agents (the authors) may consider themselves the arbiters of the destinies of the moral world, and the fibres of the heart of the intellectual universe, upon which are directed all the streams of thought that sustain the harmony and connexion of its social action.

To that classic region did Victor Melville direct his steps. He had made up his mind to address himself to one of the presiding genii of the locality: and, as he walked down the Row, he glanced anxiously into each bookseller's shop, to select the one that best suited his fantasy. The first was filled with clerks—and so he did not venture into that; another was empty at the moment, and he did not choose to trouble the proprietor to leave his private apartment to talk to him;—a third was well attended with customers;—and a fourth was only occupied for the instant by an old man, with very large spectacles hanging halfway down his nose. There was something kind and benevolent in the old man's countenance; and after having walked three or four times up and down the front of the shop, our

hero mustered up all his courage, and darted into the establishment.

The old man raised his eyes from off a newspaper which he was perusing, and waited for the youth's orders.

"I have called to know if you require any assistance—that is, any literary aid—any one to write anything for you?" stammered our hero, while the bookseller surveyed him with the most profound astonishment.

"Who sent you?" inquired the bookseller, somewhat sharply.

"No one," was the reply. "I know no one —and that was the reason which induced me——"

"Oh! I see," interrupted the bookseller, speaking in a milder tone; "you are a young aspirant to literary honours, and you go about to look for a job. My dear sir, you do not understand how these things are managed."

"Indeed I do not," cried Victor, almost bursting into tears: "I beg your pardon for having disturbed you—but—I thought—I did not know——"

"You knew that I published a periodical devoted to literature and the fine arts," again interrupted the bookseller, his tone now becoming quite kind and even encouraging; "and you thought you would apply to me. Well—there is no harm in that—you haven't killed me," continued the old man, seeing that Victor was about to make some reply; for the real truth was that our hero was perfectly unaware of any such periodical work being issued from that particular house; "but these applications are usually addressed to the editor."

"And who is the editor, sir?" inquired Victor.

"Ah! that's another thing," said the publisher. "But what can you do? have you any new idea to work out? or do you want general employment?"

"I must candidly confess, that I am an entire novice in these matters," returned Melville.

"So I perceive," said the publisher, drily: "then what *do* you want, my dear sir—and what *can* you do? You doubtless had some plan to propose when you called upon me?"

"I have brought some specimens of what I *can* do," answered Victor, taking one of his manuscripts from his pocket; "and allow me to inform you that I was lately engaged upon a journal in Paris."

"Oh! then you have written something in your life which has appeared in print," observed the bookseller, with a good-natured smile;—and as at that moment his clerk entered, he desired Melville to walk into the parlour adjoining the shop—an invitation which was immediately accepted.

"This is a specimen of my poetry," said Victor, tendering a song which he had copied out three times on some former occasion, in order to avoid any erasure or alteration in the caligraphic part of the performance.

"Ah! poetry—poetry!" exclaimed the old man, somewhat impatiently: "quite a drug in the market—no good now—unless it's of a certain kind. However, let me see it; perhaps it contains some new idea."

The bookseller adjusted his spectacles, turned himself in his chair in order to catch the light upon the paper, and, in a sort of murmur to himself, read the following stanzas, which cost the young aspirant so many hours to compose and to copy out fairly:—

COLUMBUS AND HIS MARINERS.

Over the billows frantic
Of the turbulent Atlantic,
When the waves are white and tempests roar,
And the sea-gull skims the waters o'er,
As if it sought for a long lost shore,
The Spaniards ride
In their joy and pride,
And seek for a clime o'er the ocean wide,
Where their banner may wave as unshackled and free
As the wing of the bird on the tall forest tree.

Upon the ocean cheerless,
Still of death and danger fearless,
The hardy mariners track their way;—
Their path is marked by the foaming spray,
And round their prow the meteors play;
While mermaids roam
In their ocean home,
Or ascend to the brim 'mid surf and foam,
In a sudden alarm that intruders should dare
To explore the wild waste of that solitude there.

So long from us concealing,
And reluctantly revealing
Those far-off isles where summer suns reign,
The Genius of earth essay'd in vain
To preserve a spot in her domain
Where Nature's throne
Should exist alone,
And with no other law but Nature's own:—
For the Christian invaders sped over the wave,
And establish'd their sway with the lance and the glaive!

"Well—that's not so very bad," said the bookseller, as he returned the poem to the author; "but I have one person employed to write all the poetry for my periodical, and he does it for a guinea a month. The fact is, we only just want a bit here and there to fill up pages; and therefore you see that you will never get butter to your bread by means of poetizing."

"No—nor bread either," observed Melville abruptly. "But can I do nothing for you, sir?" he asked, in a different and almost appealing tone.

"Well, if you will write me a deeply interesting, melodramatic tale for my monthly periodical, I may perhaps take it," replied the bibliopole, giving this partial encouragement through sheer commiseration.

Victor expressed his thanks in terms a great deal more fervid than that limited and conditional encouragement really warranted; and, making his bow, he took leave of the old bookseller. Far from disheartened, therefore, at the result of this interview, and having indulged himself with a glass of wine at the Chapter Coffee-house, in obedience to that habitual craving after liquor which existed in his system, Melville continued his walk along Paternoster Row, and resolved to sound the opinions of some other publisher. He accordingly entered another shop; and on this occasion, the brandy and wine had fortified him with an air of assurance which immediately procured for him the attention of the proprietor, by whom he was invited to step into the office attached to the premises. The bookseller, in whose presence he now found himself, was a middle-aged man, with a stern and austere countenance, and a mouth that seemed only made to eat with and never to smile.

"I have called respecting a drama which I am desirous of publishing," said Victor, extracting another of his manuscripts from his pocket.

"Upon what terms do you propose to publish the work?" asked the bookseller.

"Oh! I should like to dispose of it altogether—for a small sum," replied Melville, bashfully.

"Dramas don't do now a-days," observed the publisher, shaking his head; "unless they are written by well-known authors, or contain some remarkably new feature.

"I flatter myself that the style of this is perfectly new," suggested Melville, half retreating towards the door.

"Is it an adaptation from the French?" was the next inquiry.

"Oh! no—it is purely original," was the answer.

"Then I am afraid it has not the slightest chance of success," said the bookseller. "Everything connected with the drama must be French, or it will fail. Is it in verse—blank verse, I mean?"

"You can look at it," said Victor, unfolding the manuscript. "It is in blank verse, and contains several songs adapted to popular airs."

"Of course it is of a serious tendency," said the publisher, glancing his eye over the *Dramatis Personæ.*

"Yes—the title tells you that much," answered our hero. "I have called it the *The Bandit's Doom*: it is entirely melodramatic—full of horrors to interest the public—serious throughout—and calculated to convey an excellent moral to the mind. Shall I give you an outline of the plot?"

"Oh! no—I thank you," answered the bookseller, returning the manuscript to our hero; "I could not entertain the idea for a moment. To write a tragedy entirely serious is to create it with the elements of destruction at once. There is only one chance for your drama; and that is the introduction of another character."

"What character would you have me introduce into my tragedy?" demanded Victor, determined to attend to the hint about to be thrown out, if possible.

"What character must you introduce?" repeated the publisher, astonished that his meaning had not been before comprehended. "Why, a fool to be sure."

"A fool in a tragedy!" ejaculated Victor.

"Certainly—a fool or a clown," answered the bookseller. "You must follow public taste, or how can you expect your books to sell?"

Victor bade the publisher good morning, and issued from the shop with a sorrowful countenance and a heavy heart. But another glass of alcoholic liquor restored him to a somewhat more cheerful state of mind; and he called upon two or three other booksellers to offer his manuscripts or solicit literary employment of any honourable kind. In one instance he experienced a rude and abrupt denial: in another, he was treated with politeness, but his proposals were declined;—in a third he was plainly and bluntly told that the literary market was crowded with aspirants, half of whom must inevitably starve;—and in a fourth case, he was desired to call again in about six months' time, when there might perhaps be an opening! Thus was he met with a deeper discouragement the farther he proceeded; and as the hour was now late, and he had promised his new friend, Mr. Tibbatts, to dine with him at five, he returned as rapidly as he could walk to Bartholomew Close. He vowed as he proceeded thither that he would relinquish his evil habit and render himself worthy of the hand of Louise: he even ventured upon the complaisant reasoning that it was a comparatively easy task to abstain from strong drink or partake of it only in the strictest moderation;—and he felt quite proud of himself and altogether elate with the strength of his resolution when he passed the last public-house in his way homeward without turning into it to take a little refreshment.

But how long did this wholesome state of mind endure? Not an hour: no—not an hour! For Tibbatts had got a bottle of brandy ready to produce after dinner; and, with a good deal of persuasion, Melville was at length induced to take *one* glass. The ice was then again broken: he scarcely needed any persuasion to prompt him to refill his tumbler; and the *third* glass he took quite as a matter of course when his friend passed him the bottle.

Presently Mr. Tibbatts began to sing songs, imitate cock-crowing, and grow otherwise uproarious. He poured the hot grog down his throat as if it were water; and his chants grew more and more vociferously bacchanalian. Victor was also overtaken by the liquor which he swallowed in order to keep pace with the conviviality of his friend; and when he awoke in the morning, he found himself in his own bed, but had not the slightest idea how he got there. He nevertheless had a faint reminiscence of Mr. Robus having made his appearance, at one particular part of the evening, with his white night-cap upon his head, to implore Mr. Tibbatts "not to kick up so much noise, as the lodgers could not sleep in peace."

Having thus far collected his scattered ideas, Melville rose with a dreadful headache, and more than ever dissatisfied with himself for having been induced to commit another debauch.

* * * *

* * * * *

All that day our hero was too ill and feverish to attend to his literary pursuits; and he kept close to his own room, tormented with remorse and a prey to spirits so low that they reached almost a suicidal point. Tibbatts vainly endeavoured to rally him: sheer disgust for liquor now prevented the young man from accepting the beverage which the tempter did not fail to offer him. At length night came—Tibbatts withdrew—and Melville slept soundly.

He awoke in the morning considerably refreshed and in much better spirits. After breakfast he sat down to write a long and an affectionate letter to Mademoiselle Dorvalliers (for she bore the name of her adopted father): and when he had concluded it, he began seriously

to reflect upon the course he was to pursue. To introduce a clown into his drama, and thus endeavour to render it acceptable to the second publisher whom he had consulted, was an idea that was at once discarded from his mind: he accordingly resolved to attempt a tale for the magazine belonging to the first bookseller whom he had visited in the Row.

Pleased with the thought, and already fancying that he saw the tale in print—also extending his ideas so far as to believe that he had actually received the proper remuneration for it—Melville spread his pens, ink, and paper upon the table before him, and commenced his task. Without having any precise notion of the incidents he intended to incorporate in his tale, he nevertheless unhesitatingly began by informing the reader that the night of a certain date was a stormy one—that the rain fell in torrents—that the thunders rolled and lightnings flashed across the canopy of heaven—that the elements seemed at war with each other—and that the powers above appeared to be in deadly wrath with the denizens of the world. Indeed, according to Victor Melville, there never had been such a storm before. But, somehow or another, all writers, who are novices, commence their first essay in the walk of fiction with a dreadful storm, or else a most placid and delicious calm: none ever attempt the variety of boldly asserting that the weather was neither very fine, nor very bad, but something between the two.

However, Victor declared that a terrible storm took place; and all this thunder, rain, and lightning were only used to introduce to the reader an individual, who, with a sinister countenance, eagle eye, lowering brows, curled lips, grinding teeth, clenched fists, and palpitating heart, was pacing his apartment in a condition bordering upon despair. The gentleman (who is the hero of most tales the plots of which are romantic, but whom Melville fancied to be an entirely original character) spoke darkly of some mysterious deed, and then told himself, in a soliloquy, all the actions of his past life. It is very common to make heroes thus chatter in tales and plays—and it is very kind of the author to do so; as, unless he possessed so much forethought, the reader might possibly remain ignorant of many important facts: but it is at the same time very extraordinary that any gentleman, whether the hero of a book or of real life, should take the trouble to tell himself a quantity of things that he could not possibly fail to remember, and which are not always the most comfortable to a qualmish conscience. Be that as it may—Victor adopted this plan, and through it did he intend to make his reader (when he had one) aware that this individual with the gloomy countenance and the explanatory soliloquy, had poisoned his brother in order to obtain possession of the family estate. Then a ruffian suddenly interrupted this reverie, during which the murderer was recapitulating to himself every particular of the crime; and this ruffian talked in a high-flown language that Victor hoped would quite delight the fairer portion of his readers.

Melville then proceeded to state how this ruffian had been the accomplice of the hero in the murder, and how he came to torment him for money. The hero throws him a purse of gold, with a tragic air, and the ruffian departs well pleased with his nocturnal visit. Then comes a tender wife—beautiful as a star—who inquires what is the cause of her husband's melancholy. But the husband declines gratifying her curiosity; and so about two pages of foolscap closely written are devoted to the secret grief and melancholy of the amiable wife.

Years pass away (so Victor continues his tale), and the hero and heroine are again introduced to the reader; but this time a beautiful daughter is presented along with them. Then the ruffian comes again, and demands in his most high-flown language, the hand of the daughter. The father will not consent; a quarrel ensues—words lead to blows—and the ruffian has his brains blown out by a convenient pistol, which is lying already loaded near at hand in the apartment where the dispute takes place; the ladies rush to the room; the hero confesses his guilt and falls down and dies (although in the possession of the most excellent health) upon the body of the ruffian. The mother and daughter throw themselves into each other's arms; and there ends the tale.

As soon as the task, which occupied nearly the whole day, was accomplished, Victor laid down his pen, and leant back in his chair to refresh himself with a few hopes which he was enabled to enjoy through his conviction that he had just composed one of the most interesting tales in the English language. What pathos in those parts where pathos was required! What a graphic description of the apartment where the last struggle took place, and which was delineated even to the colour of the window-curtains! And what a magnificent scene between the murderer and his accomplice when they first meet! Victor felt persuaded that his tale would be received with pleasure and paid for on the spot; and he already fancied that he saw before him, in elegant type, the words, "THE FRATRICIDE'S FATE. *A Tale.* BY VICTOR MELVILLE."

Pleased with these ideas, our hero permitted his fancy to range a little more extensively in the fields of hope; and he speedily saw himself a popular writer—solicited by booksellers to accept engagements—riding in his cab—talked about by the public—quoted in the papers—and sought after by the fashionable. He thought he was in a little library, with Louise sitting opposite to him reading one of his own volumes, while he was engaged in composing his new work. This new work was to crown his glory—to stamp his fortune—to raise him to the pinnacle of fame: and he was already deeply buried in the plot of the romance, when he was awakened from his reverie by a loud knock at his door.

"Come in," cried Victor, the library and the books vanishing from his mind's eye, and the nakedness of his apartment usurping their place.

"It's only I," said Mr. Tibbatts. "What have you been doing all day?"

"Writing one of the most romantic tales I ever invented," was the answer; and Victor

half made a motion as if he were inclined to read it to his friend.

"Oh! is that all?" cried Mr. Tibbatts; "a romance, eh? Well, I dare say it is very interesting: but what should you say to a bit of cold mutton and a drop of half-and-half? You know I am fashionable and dine at six," he added with a laugh.

"What! is it dinner-time?" exclaimed Melville, somewhat shocked at the anything but sentimental associates of cold mutton, half-and-half, and romance: "I had no idea it was so late; but I have been so occupied."

"Ah! so have I," said Mr. Tibbatts, shaking his head.

"What—writing?" demanded Victor.

"Oh! no—not to-day," was the reply.

"What then?"

"Why, baiting traps to catch the mice in my cupboards," returned Mr. Tibbatts: "I am swarming with them."

Victor began to suspect that authors were common men after all, and that they were occasionally under the painful and disagreeable necessity of performing many of the every-day occupations which he had hitherto imagined to belong only to the scope of the rest of mankind. His appetite, however, strengthened the suspicion he had just entertained, by making him aware that authors must eat and drink, and that they cannot live upon that pure and wholesome element in which he had been building so many castles; he accordingly agreed to accompany Mr. Tibbatts to this gentleman's dinner-table. He nevertheless first enclosed his tale in a clean envelope, accompanied with a very polite note to request the earliest attention to it, and to say that he should call in a few days for the answer; and then despatched the parcel by the accommodating Mr. Robus to the first publisher whom he had addressed in Paternoster Row.

The promised cold mutton and a dish of steaming potatoes were served up on the table—or rather chest—in Mr. Tibbatts' apartment; and Mrs. Duncan, the old char-woman who waited upon the lodgers in Mr. Robus's house, went and procured a pot of beer from the adjacent public-house. Victor was exhausted with his hard day's work; and the half-and-half proved a very welcome stimulant.

"Anything more this evenin', gen'lemen?" said Mrs. Duncan, when she had cleared away the things.

"Nothing," answered Mr. Tibbatts; "except that you may put the brandy-bottle upon the table—the chest, I mean—and then make yourself particularly scarce."

This command was obeyed; and as soon as Mr. Tibbatts had mixed for himself a glass of spirits and water—an example which Victor was not asked twice to follow—he observed, after a few sips, "Well—it is devilish lucky that we have had a good dinner to-day. But how shall we dine to-morrow? I am quite aground."

"And my exchequer is very low," said Victor. "I have not so much as a sovereign left: but in a few days, I dare say, I shall be paid for my tale——"

"Your fiddlestick," interrupted Mr. Tibbatts. "However we can go on pretty comfortably with what you have got for a short time: and then, if nothing turns up, why—I must have recourse to my uncle again—that's all."

"Ah! it is a fortunate thing to have a relation to fly to in the hour of need," said Victor, with a sigh.

Whether horses really do laugh in any peculiar manner, even if they laugh at all—or whether the phrase be only a poetical license, we know not; but very certain it is, that Mr. Tibbatts broke out into that which is usually denominated "a horse-laugh," and a long and sincere one it was, too, as our hero made this pathetic observation.

"Why, my dear fellow," said Mr. Titus, when he had partially recovered himself, but with the tears still running down his cheeks, "you really *are* green! This is a Lombardy uncle to whom I allude—a general relative to the human race—a well-known person who dwells at the sign of the three balls——"

"Oh! I comprehend you," interrupted Victor, now laughing in his turn: "you mean the pawnbroker? But do you really anticipate being shortly reduced to such a dreadful alternative as that of being compelled to pledge your property?" asked our hero anxiously, as he had indulged a little inclination to mirth at his own expense.

"I only wish I was reduced to the dreadful alternative of having a few more coats and breeches to spout," said Mr. Tibbatts. "But look here."

As he uttered these words, he took a small greasy parcel from his waistcoat pocket, opened it, and displayed to the astonished eyes of our hero about thirty duplicates for articles pledged.

"God bless me!" exclaimed Victor: "are those the pawnbroker's receipts?"

"These are the mortgage deeds," coolly answered Mr. Tibbatts: "and a very tidy collection there is, I hope. If there were a place in London, as there is in Paris, where they would buy the duplicates, I dare say I should have sold them long ago. See, here is one for a stomach pump: they only lent nine shillings upon it; that was a burning shame. Here is another for a lady's work-box—twelve shillings; and a third for a kitchen-fender—three and sixpence. Next is a warming-pan——"

"What strange articles for a man, especially a bachelor!" ejaculated our hero.

"Ah! this matter requires explanation," said Mr. Titus Tibbatts, replacing his duplicates in his pocket. "The fact is, that I once got a bill discounted: it was for eighty pounds; and so I took twenty in money, twenty in warming-pans, ten in penknives and paper-cutters, and the remainder in miscellaneous articles of all kinds."

"Upon my word, you astonish me!" cried Melville, really expressing his true sentiments; for everything he had seen or heard since his arrival in London convinced him that he knew nothing at all of the world.

"Astonish you indeed!" exclaimed his companion: "you will be still more astonished by the time you have been in this city a year. You know not as yet one-half of the shifts to which men, situated as we are, are put some-

LOUISE.

times to obtain a meal. There are thousands who leave their beds every morning, without knowing where they will sleep at night, or whether they will have a mattrass to sleep upon at all; and those same individuals are equally uncertain about their dinners and breakfasts. A man has accomplished half his fight against adversity, when he has got a house over his head and a little furniture about him which he can call his own: he then manages to live on, somehow or other, if he has the least sense about him."

"This must be the case," said Victor, after a moment's pause, during which he reflected upon all that his companion had remarked to him: "but I never thought of these matters before."

"I have *seen*—and have *felt* all I tell you," said Tibbatts; "and you will probably have to do the same. I therefore thought it prudent to forewarn you. Would you like to see a little of London life?"

"With pleasure," returned Victor. "I now perceive that it is impossible to get on in this world without experience."

Mr. Tibbatts tossed off his brandy and water, threw his hat upon his head, drew on his gloves, and intimated his readiness to act as Victor's guide for the evening. Our hero did not hesitate for one moment to accompany his new

friend: and they sallied forth together, after having locked the doors of their rooms.

* * * * * * *
* * * * * *

It was then about ten o'clock in the evening; and London was was all bustle and light. The honest portion of society had desisted from its labours: and the toils of the bad had begun. The merchant, the clerk, and the tradesmen had given up the avocations of the day; and the adventurer, the thief, the prostitute, and the gamester commenced their pursuits with all the ardour that is usually manifested in a good cause. Then the poor houseless wanderer begs the charity of the passenger with more assurance, because the partial darkness of the hour conceals his face, and because the prospect of sleeping in the streets fortifies his courage to do that at which his soul revolts. A strange contrast to that shivering mendicant is the lady of pleasure—clad in gay attire, bedecked with ribands, her cheeks covered with rouge to supply that hue which dissipation has taken away—and arraying her countenance in all the smiles usually worn by happiness and contentment. The lot of the beggar is preferable to that of the fallen girl: the former may be loathed by an uncharitable world; the latter is loathed both by the world and by herself!

Victor was led by his guide along Fleet Street and the Strand, to Leicester Square; and Mr. Tibbatts did not fail to call his companion's attention to everything worthy of the observation of a novice in London. When they reached Leicester Square, the guide knocked at a door over which a lamp burnt brightly. The summons was immediately answered by a domestic in a very shabby livery: and Tibbatts, without making any inquiry, led the way to a room on the first floor, where a scene, to our hero quite new, suddenly broke upon his sight.

In the midst of this room, to the windows of which there were dingy red curtains, was a large oval table, covered with green cloth; and the green cloth itself seemed to be embellished with certain caballistic lines and divisions, which were evidently of great use to those who were seated or standing round the table. On each side of this table, at the flattened parts of the oval, sat shabby, ill-looking men, with wooden rakes in their hands, and large green shades over their eyes to protect them from the glare of the lamp which was suspended immediately over the centre of the table. These men were the *croupiers*, or managers of the gaming-table. Before one of them was a tin box containing money, and which Victor understood to be denominated the "Bank;" and four or five other individuals were engaged in playing at the game called "Hazard." One was a young man, with a very pale countenance, sunken eyes, and hollow cheeks, and drank gin-and-water as he attempted the chances of the game. Chances! there are no *chances* at "Hazard;" but there are *certainties* —and they are all in favour of the "Bank," which in process of time must possess itself of all the capital advanced against it. This young man, however, played desperately; and each time he lost was signalised by a fresh draught of spirits-and-water.

The money staked at this gambling-house was only silver; and Mr. Tibbatts informed our hero that it was therefore called a "Silver Hell."

"There are several magnificent establishments of this kind, upon a very grand scale, and where only gold is staked, at the West End," said Tibbatts: "but *here* my shabby coat is not noticed, and it would be *there*. Besides, it is easier to obtain a lesson from life in these minor dens, than in the larger pandemonia of infamy. Watch that pale-faced young man!"

Victor glanced again towards the youth whom he had before noticed, and saw that he was now deeply agitated. He plunged his hands desperately into every pocket, and found nothing more to stake. In the course of an hour, as it appeared from an observation which he suffered to fall from his lips, he had lost about ten pounds in stakes of a few shillings each; and then an old man, who was sitting close by one of the *croupiers*, and who was busily engaged in pricking a card (a method by which he calculated the chances of the game), coolly informed the young gambler, that he deserved to lose his money for having played it so recklessly. Impatient of receiving advice on such an occasion, the young man threw the remnants of his gin-and-water into the face of the old one; and in a moment all was riot and confusion. The *croupiers* called to order, while they kept a fast hold upon the tin box; and Tibbatts, fearing to be compromised in the disturbance, should the police visit the house, desired Victor to follow him away from the den.

"Well—what think you of the first scene in the great drama of London life?" inquired Tibbatts, when he and our hero were once more in the open air.

"I am glad that I have visited that place to-night, because I feel that I can now never become a gambler," was the reply.

"You may depend upon it—if I *may* hold forth upon morality—that it is better to let the youth who is just embarking in the world, see all that is hideous in the shape of those snares into which he may be likely to fall; and this measure will be a better preventative against delinquency than the opposite system of forbidding him even to gaze upon such scenes. At least, such are my sentiments," said Mr. Tibbatts with well-affected sincerity.

"I am inclined to agree with you," observed Victor. "But here is a poor fellow apparently in a great state of exhaustion."

As he made this latter remark, our hero pointed out a mendicant who was lying upon the threshold of a door in Leicester Square, and was sending forth the most piteous moans. The light of the street lamp shone fully upon his countenance; and Victor saw that it was distorted with pain and anguish. He accordingly took a few halfpence from his pocket—poor as he himself was—and presented them to the beggar.

"Thankee kindly, sir," said the man, appa-

rently deeply grateful for this assistance. "You have probably saved the lives of nine innocent children this night by your bounty. I dared not go home without taking them bread; and now I have sufficient to make them happy, at least for a few hours."

The beggar raised himself up with great difficulty, as he uttered these words, and clung to the railings for support.

"What is the matter with you, my good fellow?" inquired Victor, commiserating the man's condition.

"Misery and want have nearly killed me, sir," was the answer. "This is the first night I ever came out into the streets to beg; but I could not see my wife and children famishing before my face. I have not tasted food myself for three days, and shall only eat a mouthful of bread to-night. But, while I eat that mouthful, I shall bless you, sir."

The tears started to our hero's eyes, and he hurried his companion onward at a rapid rate, his mind deeply affected with the idea that there were hundreds of poor wretches in the same predicament as the beggar whom he had just relieved in the streets at that moment. Mr. Tibbatts said nothing; but led the way towards the Strand.

At the corner of one of the streets leading from the Strand to the banks of the river, is a well-known pawnbroker and jeweller's shop. The proprietor of this place is a great discounter, and does a considerable quantity of business in many ways with the fashionable young men about town.

It was to the shop belonging to this pawnbroker that Mr. Tibbatts conducted our hero; and, when they reached it, the former led the way into the side entrance, which communicates with the row of little boxes, in the door to each of which there is a window.

"Three words were sufficient to denote Cæsar's pursuits," said Mr. Tibbatts; "let the same quantity be enough to instruct you how to act. Use your eyes!"

Victor did as he was bade, and glanced into the half-dozen boxes, one after the other. The first contained a fashionably-dressed individual, with long flowing hair, a slight moustache, and incipient whiskers. He leant against the side of the box with an easy sort of listlessness and playing with his eye-glass, while one of the shopmen, on the inner side of the counter, was strictly examining a very handsome watch which the young fashionable had tendered to him: indeed, he seemed as happy and comfortable as if he had just received a magnificent present, instead of being compelled to take his watch to the pawnbroker's.

Presently the shopman said something to him; and the young fashionable answered in a voice which was easily overheard by our hero.

"Well, 'pon my word that's too bad! Only eight guineas upon a watch which I paid—or rather am to pay, forty-five for! I got it as a part of the value given for a discount—a little vulgar piece of stiff; and the discounter swore it would pledge for fifteen at least! This is deuced provoking: you must make it ten—I shall take it out again to-morrow!"

The shopman however refused to give any more than the sum he had originally offered, which was eight pounds eight shillings: and the young gentleman calmly consigned the money to his waistcoat pocket. He then sneaked out of the box, and darted down the street towards the Thames, tearing up the duplicate into little pieces as he went along. So much for his intention of redeeming the watch again.

In the second box was a sickly, but interesting-looking girl, belonging to the working classes. Her eyes were of a soft deep blue; and there was a placid melancholy upon her countenance, which immediately riveted the attention of our hero towards her. It was therefore with a certain tightening sensation about the heart that he saw her take from beneath her shawl, a shirt—probably her father's shirt—and receive from the shopman four shillings in exchange. She carefully placed the duplicate in her bosom, and then issued from the box with hasty and timid steps, casting down her eyes, and drawing her shawl more closely around her, when she found that two persons were standing in the corridor communicating with the boxes.

In the third department allotted to customers, was a gaily-dressed female, whose face was flushed with drinking, and who laughed and joked with the shopman, as she exchanged her gold ear-rings against a sovereign: then, as she left the box, she uttered some obscene joke for the behoof of our hero and his companion, and walked boldly up into the Strand, as if she were not ashamed of the place from which she had just emanated.

In the fourth box there was a poor old man, bowed down apparently as much by misfortune as by years, and with a deep settled melancholy upon his countenance. He pledged a blanket, and begged so hard for a shilling beyond the amount proffered, that only a pawnbroker's shopman could have refused the demand.

We shall not introduce our readers to the fifth and sixth boxes at this pawnbroker's shop on the evening when Victor Melville and Mr. Tibbatts performed their journey of discovery, and (as far as regarded the former) of initiation. We shall follow them away from this dispiriting scene, and pursue their footsteps as far as High Street, St. Giles's, to which quarter Mr. Tibbatts conducted his companion through the most convenient cuts and alleys, not forgetting to take Seven Dials in his way.

Like no other quarter of London is St. Giles's at twelve on Saturday night. In all the streets leading from the High Street, the doors of the houses are for the most part open; and groups of women stand at the wooden railings before the dwellings, engaged in a conversation where oaths and curses are far more frequent than flowers of rhetoric. The men sail home from the public-houses in a happy state of independence and elevation—caring not whether they make their way over the bodies of friends or foes—anathematizing the policeman who dreads the denizens of that happy region—and ready to fight all the world, from their deadly enemies, if they have any, down to their own wives. Before the shops close at night, numbers of itinerant venders of fried fish, meat pies, and oysters, erect little portable shops on

287591B

the curb-stones of the pavement, and ply their trade with all the importance of licensed victuallers.

But it was now twelve at night, and the shops were closed;—so were the public-houses. The principal objects of attraction in those regions, at that hour, were the groups of women engaged in conversation, the numbers of men who had been *overtaken* by liquor (and, by the way, this was a *pursuer* which they never eluded), the little knot of individuals engaged in witnessing a fight between two drunken coal-heavers, on one side,—the beggar-woman and her four or five starving children all crowding together, on another—the women of the town, and the old libertine sneaking along some obscure alleys, as if he were well aware of the impropriety of his conduct. Mr. Tibbatts struck into one of the narrowest, dirtiest, and darkest streets in that neighbourhood;—its precise situation we shall not, for many reasons, point out to the reader:—and, after having examined three or four houses with the utmost attention, he boldly knocked at the door of one of them.

"Holloa!" said the voice; "who's there?"

"Fly to the fakement (*a*), old fellow," returned Tibbatts, suddenly, changing his tone to that of the most familiar vulgarity. "Hand up the darkey (*b*), and don't keep me and my pal here in the cold. There's a bob (*c*) in his cly (*d*), which may find its way into your gropus (*e*), if you're nibsome (*f*) and will open the trap of the boozing-ken."

"I understand," said the voice; and the area door was then closed very gently. In a few moments a man, with a dark lantern in his hand, appeared at the front door, which he opened cautiously. "What's your name?" he demanded of Tibbatts, as soon as he had admitted the two visitors and had shut the door again.

"Mine's Wilkins, and his is Thompson," answered Mr. Tibbatts, pointing to his companion. "He's rather green—not full-fledged yet; but wants to soar. Still he's downy enough not to nose (*g*) it on you or the benculls (*h*); and if he don't mean to go to Tuckup-fair (*i*) himself he's not likely to send any one there."

The man, who was probably well pleased at receiving so excellent a character of our young hero, honoured him with a gracious smile; and Mr. Tibbatts intimated the necessity of a small reward being tendered to the Cerberus.

"It will cost you a shilling or two now," said this gentleman: "but depend upon it, the lesson will be a useful one."

Victor presented the man with a shilling; and he and Mr. Tibbatts were immediately ushered into a large room, to which they descended by a flight of about half-a-dozen steps. The door then closed behind them; and Tibbatts, hastily leading the way to two vacant chairs at a long deal table, whispered to his companion not to appear embarrassed or alarmed.

(*a*) "Wide awake." (*b*) Dark lantern.
(*c*) Shilling. (*d*) Waistcoat-pocket.
(*e*) Pocket. (*f*) Gentlemanly—civil.
(*g*) Betray. (*h*) Good-fellows.
(*i*) The gallows.

But in sooth there was enough both to embarrass and alarm our hero. He had suddenly burst upon a scene which cannot be done justice to by the most graphic pencil. In a room, about seventy feet long by twenty-five broad, were assembled upwards of forty of the most strange-looking persons Melville had ever beheld. Rags, filth, and ugliness seemed to be their characteristics. Two long tables were laid out for supper;—that is, so far as a greasy cloth and a quantity of knives and forks of all shapes and sizes, can be denominated a preparation. The room itself was lighted by means of a number of tallow candles in tin shades; and as no one took the trouble to snuff them, the tallow streamed either upon the floor, or else on the backs of the individuals nearest. But neither the floor nor the backs were much injured by this species of anointment, the former being covered with sand, the latter with rags. The walls of the apartment had originally been whitewashed; but they now manifested a complete eschewal of expense on the part of the proprietor of this house of entertainment.

The inmates of this apartment were immediately taken by our hero for that which they really were:—namely, the beggars from the streets. One had a coat without sleeves; another had sleeves and no coat: here was an individual, one leg of whose trousers was of canvass, and the other of cloth;—and there was a fourth, whose garments were so perforated with holes, that it was impossible to decide whether a larger portion of rags or naked flesh met the eye. One had a wooden leg in reality; another had a sham one: or rather they had both wooden legs, but the former required that substitute, and the other did not. One had a black patch over a sound eye; and another left his blind eye naked. In fact, the guests assembled at those two tables, presented to the eyes of our hero the most extraordinarily combined mass of contradictions, deceptions, and misfortunes he had ever gazed upon. And then the hum of all their voices—their oaths—their obscenities—their flash language—and their disputes, added to the embarrassment which he naturally experienced upon suddenly finding himself in such society.

In the course of a quarter of an hour after Victor and his companion had taken their seats, and when the members of the club had ceased to regard them with looks of curiosity, a side-door opened, and two or three waiters, with aprons which seemed to have been usually hung up the chimney when their proprietors did not require their services, hastened into the room, laden with gigantic dishes which they placed upon the table. The sound of the busy voices was then suddenly hushed, and all eyes were turned to scrutinize the luxuries provided for the evening's entertainment. There were joints roasted and boiled—mighty pies—large quantities of vegetables—and a profusion of bread. Vigorous arms soon made deep incisions upon the joints; and hungry jaws speedily committed dire inroads upon the dainties thus provided. Numberless pots of porter were then introduced by the same dirty-aproned lacqueys; and the clatter of knives and forks for a time superseded the din of tongues.

In order not to appear singular amongst that strange society, our hero and his companion forced themselves to partake of the viands set before them. Suddenly Melville laid down his knife and fork in the most unfeigned astonishment, and followed with his eyes an individual who had just entered the room, and who, ere he took his seat, cut a saucy fling in the middle of the apartment, thereby displaying a great elasticity of limb.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Titus, in a whisper. "You must not seem to be astounded at anything here."

"Astounded!" returned Victor, in the same subdued tone: "who could help being astounded, at now seeing a man in full possession of health and strength, when only a short time previously that same individual was apparently all but dying in the streets? Do you not recognise him?"

"Ah! I was not mistaken," coolly observed Mr. Tibbatts, as he glanced towards the man whom Victor had relieved in Leicester Square. "My dear fellow," he added, still whispering: "it is more than probable that this man is unmarried, and has no more children than you or I."

"I am really astounded," observed Melville. "But see; the impudent fellow has recognised us, and is amusing his companions with the tale."

"Do not appear to notice the circumstance," whispered Tibbatts. "We have no right to intrude ourselves here; and these men, who only tolerate us as long as we behave in a quiet and tranquil manner, would make us remember this evening to the latest hour of our lives, if they suspected that we came to spy into their actions with any other motive than one of pure curiosity. They know that gentlemen occasionally come amongst them; and then they affect to take no notice of their presence I have been here before, and am acquainted with the efficacy of a few flash words uttered to the porter of the establishment."

"That was the secret which obtained us admission," said Victor;—but ere Mr. Tibbatts could make any reply, a plate was handed round by the waiters, and every individual threw nine-pence into it.

This was the price of each man's supper: Victor accordingly increased the contributions by eighteenpence, thereby settling for himself and companion.

When this ceremony was accomplished, the dishes were cleared away—the cloths were removed—and pipes, tobacco, and cheroots were placed upon the tables. The guests then proceeded to order that which each preferred to drink; some chose beer; others spirits; and one or two, who had probably carried on their traffic that day to considerable advantage, indulged in a little hot elder-wine. Our hero and his companion immediately followed this example; although no one pressed them to take any refreshment. Not a syllable was addressed to them by a soul; and when the conversation again became general amongst the beggars, their presence seemed to have been entirely forgotten.

It is almost impossible to rush headlong into scenes of temptation, either through motives of curiosity, or to test our powers of self-control, without becoming contaminated. Such was the case with Melville in this instance. He drank glass after glass, and at length entered into familiar conversation with the mendicants around him. He became their intimate friend and their jovial companion in that hour of debauchery; and low as he had already fallen from the effects of drink, he now fell lower still. Like all drunkards, he had increased the quantity of his diurnal potations by degrees; and in the same gradient manner had he each day descended a step more on the ladder which led him from the eminence of his respectability to the depth of his shame. He had committed a debauch in a gin-palace, and he thought *that* was bad enough: he now committed a debauch amongst beggars; and he made the impostor and the rogue his equals. When he awoke in the morning, he found himself in his own room in Albion Buildings; and it was with feelings of the most unmitigated disgust that he recalled to mind the particulars of the previous evening's dissipation.

Scarcely had he collected his scattered ideas, and convinced himself that he was veritably that degraded being—an habitual drunkard—when Mr. Robus entered the room, bearing a letter in his hand. The epistle was addressed to Victor Melville: its edges were marked with a broad black border. Hastily snatching it from the hands of his landlord, Melville tore it open; and when his eyes had rapidly scanned its contents, the letter fell from his hands—he threw himself back upon his pillow, and exclaimed in a tone of the deepest grief and perplexity, "Heavens! what can I do? I have not even a friend to assist me with his advice."

* * * * * *
* * * * *

As soon as Mr. Robus had delivered to Melville the letter which produced so strange an effect upon the young man, he hastened down stairs to pursue his usual avocations. These avocations chiefly consisted in writing out fair copies of his lodgers' bills, and delivering them at the respective doors of those tenants. He however found it a much more easy task to write out than to collect the amounts due to him; and he frequently assured his friend the milkman, and his flying acquaintance the twopenny postman, "That if it weren't for an occasional drop of half-and-half he didn't know how he ever should get through the fatigues of the day." This was one amongst the numerous delusions that intemperance imposes upon its votaries.

Be it known, then, to all men, by these presents, that Mr. Robus proceeded to his own apartment as soon as he had delivered the letter to Victor Melville. But scarcely had Mr. Robus seated himself at a table and commenced the addition of the three-pair back's running account (so called because the three-pair back did subsequently run away without paying it), when a low knock was heard at his door.

"Come in!" shouted Mr. Robus: and his invitation was immediately obeyed.

The door opened: and an old man, of about sixty-five years of age, and of venerable appearance, entered the apartment. This individual was bowed down by the weight of affliction as well as of years: and this much was betrayed by his deeply-thoughtful countenance. There was a certain dread and timidity about the manners of the stranger which only tended to increase the native impudence of Mr. Robus. He was well dressed, and appeared to belong to that class of society which bears the miscellaneous denomination of "gentlemen."

"Sit down, sir," said Mr. Robus, indicating a chair with his left hand, and helping himself to a draught from a pewter-pot with his right.

"I thank you," answered the stranger, with an accent which immediately proclaimed him to be a foreigner—a fact that delighted the heart of Mr. Robus, who was resolved that if any business were to be done, due advantage should be taken of the presumed ignorance associated with foreign extraction. "I believe you are in the habit of letting lodgings?" added the stranger.

"Well—that is von o' my numerous habits," answered Mr. Robus;—and he might have added that drunkenness was two; but he prudently suppressed that unnecessary particular.

"Have you a lodging to dispose of now?" demanded the stranger:—then, without waiting for a reply, and apparently forgetful that he was overheard by a soul, he said in a low and musing tone, "Yes, I will retire from the busy world,—I will fly that phantom which is ever pursuing me,—I will hide my head in this retreat—and there—there—there will I die!"—and as he thus gave vent to his excited feelings, he struck his forehead violently with his clenched fist, as if he were in a paroxysm of rage.

"A lodging is it that you want?" cried Mr. Robus, who did not trouble himself much with the affairs of other people, unless those affairs were more or less connected with his own: "well—I am quite full now, sir. There was that there lovely room as the baked-tatur man and his family lived in, and was never cleaned out all the time: but that's taken by the cat's-meat man as supplies this wery thickly-populated neighbourhood. But if you really wants a room—and as you seems a decent sort o' chap—why—I don't care if I let you have this here."

The stranger was a man of a very few words, and he immediately concluded a bargain with Mr. Robus for the apartment in which they were then seated. It was pretty tolerably furnished by Mr. Robus's own moveable materials; and a second bargain was immediately ratified for them. The stranger did not attempt to cheapen the price put upon the furniture by the landlord; and the landlord did not attempt to act over honestly in the transaction. The consequence was that the stranger paid about fifty per cent. above the cost price of the furniture;—and Mr. Robus was so overjoyed at this unexpected piece of good luck that he proceeded to an adjacent public-house, where he expended in reckless dissipation the greater portion of that which he had acquired by the most deliberate dishonesty.

In the meantime, Mr. Tibbatts sought his friend Victor Melville, as usual.

"My dear boy," said Titus, "what means this air of dejection—this mournful countenance? You resemble Cato meditating suicide."

"Alas! nothing but misery pursues me in this world," said Melville, as he pointed towards the letter which he had just received, and which lay open upon his bed.

"What, bad news!" ejaculated Mr. Tibbatts. "Ah! my dear boy, and I have not a single drop of anything to console you."

Victor shuddered as the sense of this observation flashed upon his mind; and he ground his teeth with the ferocity of a maniac.

"If you knew," said he to his companion, "what it is to love—and if you knew what it was to feel assured that the object of your affection is overwhelmed with grief, while you are unable to fly to her—to assist her with your advice—to console and comfort her—then would you give way to the force of your affliction. There is a young girl in the vicinity of Paris, at this moment—a young girl of exquisite beauty and great accomplishments—a young girl whose personal and mental endowments would adorn a queen,—a young girl, in a word, who adores me, who would lay down her life to make mine happy, and who is at this instant suffering and wretched. She has just lost the kind guardian of her youth—her more than parent—the man who has acted a father's part to her: he is gone—gone to the cold grave, and left a warm heart behind to mourn his loss.

"Why don't you marry this Phœnix of all perfection?" demanded Mr. Tibbatts, carelessly sitting down upon the edge of the bed, while Victor rose and proceeded to dress himself.

"Marry her!" ejaculated Victor, in a hoarse tone of voice: "marry her!" he repeated, laughing wildly. "What—marry her, without a farthing to provide for us! It is sufficient for me to dream all day and all night of misery for myself; but misery for another—misery for a third—misery for a fourth—misery for numbers—for misery is as prolific as was the box of Pandora—Oh! all this is too horrible to think of!"

There was a decanter of water upon the table: Victor took it up and emptied it almost at a draught.

"Water! water!" he exclaimed; "would that I had never drunk anything but water!"—and then he began to walk up and down his chamber.

Nothing is so bad as to turn about in a narrow space; the wolf turns, the sorceress turns, the eagle turns: to turn about is to encourage the presence of misery; hell is invoked by turning about in that foreboding fashion. The more Victor increased his steps and augmented the number of his circles, the more his head wandered and his brain became confused. His lips were white, his cheeks were burning; from his mouth emanated a whirlwind of scarcely articulated and unintelligible words; and his whole frame trembled. He forgot that another human being was in the room: and suddenly

he opened the window and looked into the court beneath. He appeared irresolute, uncertain how to act, and seemed to calculate the chances of life and death: and then he once more resumed his walk up and down the room. But death was always in his eyes—death was in his gestures—death was in all his thoughts. He hastened once again towards the window—a curse issued from his lips—he leapt upon a chair to reach the sill—he was about to execute his horrible purpose of suicide, when a strong arm pulled him back, and the voice of Tibbatts recalled him to his proper senses.

"That is not the shortest way to marry the girl," said Titus, as he closed the window, and returned to his seat upon the bed. "Cato was a coward—so was Cleopatra: Victor Melville shall not follow their example."

"I am a wretch—unfit to live!" ejaculated our hero, in a tone of despair.

"Let us see whether we cannot induce you to honour this world a little longer with your presence. Have you any money?" demanded Tibbatts.

"Not a farthing," was the answer. "We expended all my stock last night at the beggars' assembly-room."

"Have you anything to eat?"

"Nothing."

"Nor I."

And the two men exchanged such looks with each other as two hungry, poverty-stricken men would exchange in such a case.

"I wish I knew where or how to obtain a few pounds!" ejaculated Victor, as his ideas were once more reflected towards the far-distant orphan whom he loved, and who solicited his advice—because she had no other friends whose counsel she could implore.

Oh! he thought of her—of her who was so beautiful and whom he loved so well! He thought of her, first as a lovely thing which seized upon and captivated his imagination—then as a soft lustre which stole for a moment upon the dark cloud of his ideas, like an angel passing into the hell of his soul,—and then, by dint of thinking upon so much youth, innocence, accomplishment, and beauty, he felt steal into his heart that which he had never felt before—a kind of icy cold that made his teeth chatter—a kind of remorse that made all the misery of his mind the more appalling!

"You wish you had a few pounds?" said Mr. Tibbatts, slowly, and gazing fixedly upon Victor's countenance.

"I do—I do!" cried the young man. "Oh! to know that she is there—all alone—without protectors—and not to be enabled to fly to her!"

"The case is very urgent then?" said Tibbatts, eyeing Melville as before.

"Very—very," was the impatient reply.

"Robus has money," said Tibbatts, assuming a careless air.

"But he would not lend it to a stranger—he would not assist me," cried Victor.

"We would not ask him," laconically returned Mr. Tibbatts.

"Then of what use was your observation that he had money?" demanded Victor.

"You say the case is urgent," replied Tibbatts, pretending to be looking towards the mantel-piece; "you want to get away from here as soon as you can—you will perhaps lose the girl if you don't—so I just thought——"

"Thought what?" interrupted our hero, a partial shudder creeping over him.

"Oh! don't bother me," said Tibbatts. "If you want the money, it can be had—that's all: and if we don't get it, we shall starve—that's all again."

These words were uttered with an affected pettishness that added materially to the mystification in which Victor's mind was enveloped relative to the real meaning of his new friend. A long pause ensued; he did not choose—he knew not wherefore—to ask for any farther explanation; and Tibbatts remained in a half-sulky, half-musing attitude on the bed.

"Well, this won't do," said Tibbatts, after a long silence. "We can't starve—that's very certain."

"I see no other prospect," quietly remarked Victor.

Mr. Tibbatts suddenly rose from his seat, hurried out of the room, and returned at the expiration of about ten minutes with the well-known case-bottle in his hands. How he obtained the liquor Victor did not think of inquiring: he suffered himself to be prevailed upon to partake of the alcoholic poison produced by the tempter; and he suddenly felt curious to know at what end his companion had ere now been aiming. Another glass of brandy was poured out for him and drunk: and he then hazarded a leading question.

"Why, I will tell you what it is," answered Tibbatts, a demoniac smile of satisfaction and triumph playing upon his lips;—"the truth is, Robus has got plenty of money—and I know where he keeps it. It is all in a small bag in his portmanteau: the rascal! he has often consigned the produce of my brain to that spot! He sleeps deuced hard—and as you could replace the money on your return—and as he would never miss it—why——"

"Say no more!" cried Victor, a deadly pallor overspreading his countenance, and his whole frame trembling, as he now comprehended his companion's design.

"Well, just as you like!" said Mr. Tibbatts coolly; and he handed Victor another glass of the burning fluid.

The young man seized it—swallowed it to drown thought—and, as he had as yet eaten nothing that morning, he soon felt the effects of the liquor ascending to his head. He then thought once more of Louise's letter, and settled all his ideas upon a paragraph in which she styled him her only friend and adviser. He knew not what step to pursue: he did not like the idea of writing to her, confessing the denuded state of his resources, and soliciting the means of joining her in Paris:—and he felt deeply anxious to proceed without delay to that city. He pictured to himself the inexperienced young girl in the hands of the harpies of the law; and he wrung his hands with agony as he thought of his inability to hasten to her assistance. He again paced the room; and Mr. Tibbatts watched him as a boa-constrictor eyes its victim from the bough of the tree

nearer and nearer to the trunk of which that victim is advancing at every step.

Suddenly Victor stopped short and addressed himself to his companion.

"Do you think Robus might be induced by the prospect of heavy interest to lend me the money?" he said.

"He would as soon give as lend," was the reply.

Victor again paced the room. Presently a clock in an adjacent apartment struck the hour of mid-day.

"Twelve! twelve already," said Melville;—"and nothing done."

"And nothing will be done at this rate," doggedly observed Tibbatts.

"I must write to her," exclaimed Victor, impatiently.

"And where is the money to pay the postage of the letter?" demanded Tibbatts, who seemed resolved to take advantage of every untoward circumstance to excite the feelings of the unhappy young man.

"You will drive me to desperation—to madness! You are my evil genius—to show me my misery in all its nakedness!" cried Victor, almost foaming at the mouth. "What would you have me do?"

"Nothing is more easy than to make yourself comfortable and happy," was the reply.

"How? speak—I am nerved to hear," said Melville, folding his arms across his chest.

"You can make Robus act as your banker!" answered Tibbatts, handing him the last glass of spirits out of the bottle.

"Well—it can be replaced, as you say," murmured Victor, *after* he had imbibed the intoxicating drink which fills the strongest imagination with delusion.

"So it could," added Tibbatts; "and no one ever the wiser."

And then there was a great deal of whispering between the two—and much hesitation and reluctance on the part of Victor—and much persuasion on that of his companion. At length Victor ceased to speak save at long intervals; and Tibbatts continued talking in a low and very earnest tone, while the young hero of this tale sat by him and listened to all he said with the deepest attention.

At length Victor broke silence once more, after a long—long pause.

"When—when can it be done?" said he, in a low and hoarse tone, and laying one of his feverish hands upon Tibbatts' arm.

"To-night—to-night at twelve," was the reply.

"Then I shall be able to start to-morrow!" murmured Victor, as he endeavoured to steel his soul against the approach of compunction and the warning voice of the good genius that had not as yet entirely deserted him.

* * * * *

* * * *

The old gentleman, who had hired the apartment which Mr. Robus had surrendered to him in the manner related in the preceding chapter, appeared suddenly overcome with delight when he found himself alone in his new lodging. A beam of joy animated his pale and careworn countenance; and his heart expanded with a strange sentiment of independence of the world, as he gazed around him, and exclaimed, "Heavens be thanked! here at least all my actions will not be overlooked!"

He spoke in a foreign accent; and any one, who had been accustomed to associate with Frenchmen, would have at once perceived that he belonged to the land of our gallant and great neighbours. He was attired in a fashionable manner: a massive gold chain was appended to his neck, and communicated with an elegant watch in his waistcoat-pocket; a valuable diamond-ring glittered upon one of the fingers of his right hand: and the purse, from which he had extracted the coin to liquidate the first week's rent to Mr. Robus, was apparently well filled with gold. He had arrived at the gate of the alley in a hackney-coach; and the driver had carried a portmanteau and a writing-desk up to the apartment hired by the stranger. In a word, everything belonging to, and about, this old gentleman bespoke wealth and importance.

As soon as the first feeling of satisfaction at finding himself alone had passed away, the stranger placed his writing-desk in a convenient spot upon the table, and sat down to pen a long epistle, during which occupation he was frequently agitated by inward emotions to such an extent, that he could scarcely hold his pen. He wrote with trembling fingers; and from time to time, he pressed one of his hands to his forehead, as if he were anxious to suppress the very thoughts that crowded in his imagination. The perspiration rolled down his cheeks; and ever and anon he started and half-closed his desk, as a footstep in the passage, or on the staircase without, fell upon his ears.

At length he terminated his letter, which he endeavoured to read through; but in this attempt he totally failed, and the big tears now chased each other from his eyes in rapid succession. He threw himself back in his chair, and sobbed violently; and then, as if reckless whether he were overheard or not, he muttered broken sentences aloud.

"Well—it may not be too late! Oh! no—God forbid that it should be too late to do this act of justice! Poor innocent creature—thus to have been neglected! Wretch—villain that I am! How have the thunders of heaven slept so long? Wherefore have not the lightnings blasted me in my wicked career? But, Oh! the wrath of an offended Deity has overtaken me: it has never left me since I did the deed! I have not known a happy hour—a happy minute,—no, not even an instant devoid of care, since that thrice accursed day! Oh! it was vile—it was cowardly—it was despicable thus to have acted! To rob the traveller on the highway, who could defend himself—that were a noble deed compared with this! Alas! alas! I have suffered much—I have suffered severely—but I have not suffered enough! No—this state of being is only a foretaste of the horrible torments—torture—hell—that are reserved for crimes like mine!"

He ceased; for his voice was rendered hoarse by deep emotion, and was then drowned in sobs. The agony endured by that old man—

No. 14.—The Empress Eugenie.

the bitter, bitter anguish of his soul was indeed the consequence of some dread crime—the fruit of a remorse which belonged to turpitude that must have been very terrible!

He rose and walked towards the window. The morning, which had been sunny and beautiful, was succeeded by an afternoon of rain and gloom. The waters poured down in torrents; and for some moments he watched the pyramid of rain as it fell into the court beneath. And the variable climate of this country brought to his mind the beautiful atmosphere of his own native France: and as he read the address of the letter which he had folded and now held in his hand, he sighed deeply. For he knew that the shores of that land were closed against him; he felt that he should die without beholding its capital—the gay city of Paris, once again;—and he felt the interdiction to be one of the most oppressive and intolerable grievances attendant upon the crime which he accused himself of having committed.

And the rain continued to pour in torrents. But still the stranger determined himself to convey his letter to the post-office; for he felt that he should not die happily unless he knew that he had performed that last duty. He accordingly enveloped himself in his cloak, took an umbrella, and, having locked the door of his room, proceeded to the General Post-office. He paid the postage of his letter, which was destined for France, and then retraced his steps through the torrents of rain, to his humble lodging.

In the meantime Victor Melville had thrown himself upon his bed, and, in a state of the deepest agitation, had begun to reflect upon the course on which he was now entering. Tibbatts had retired for the purpose of procuring something for their dinner,—for breakfast they had had none, unless the deleterious spirits they had drunk might be thus denominated;—and thus our young hero was left to his own meditations. But, Oh! to toss upon one's bed in the broad daylight—while the rains are pouring without, and poverty and hunger prevail within—to stand upon the threshold of a crime which we dare not contemplate, and from which we have not the courage to retire—to know that that crime will alone produce the means of accomplishing some much desired object—and then to calculate the probabilities of failure, and the chances of punishment,—Oh! this is passing from one kind of hell to another—this is merely making an exchange of tortures—this is the difference between physical and mental suffering—the hunger of the body, and the thirst of the soul, —this is drinking molten lead after having been burnt with red-hot iron,—and this is experiencing the punishment of Victor Melville!

"This is indeed the progress of a drunkard in the ways of crime!" said Victor, aloud, while he writhed upon the bed in the folds of his own thoughts, as if he were in the embraces of an anaconda: "this is the career of him who yields himself up to the most pernicious of all habits! And yet—how to withstand the temptation! Oh! at this moment there are thousands of individuals in this great capital, who know not the cares of poverty! Why should this difference exist? Why should I be wretched and poor—and another happy and rich? Wherefore should I not seek that equalization which the unjust laws of this country forbid?"

This wretched sophistry was interrupted by a knock at the door of the youth's apartment. He started as if he had already been guilty of the crime he meditated, and already feared the domiciliary visit of the police. A moment's reflection banished the cause of alarm. He hurried to the door, and received a packet from the hands of a young man, who merely said, "With my master's compliments, sir,"—and then turned hastily away. Melville closed the door, seated himself at the table, and with a trembling hand opened the packet. A manuscript fell to the ground—it was his own tale—the tale he had so confidently sent to the publisher in Paternoster Row! All hopes sank with him. There was a short note in the envelope which contained the manuscript: and that note briefly expressed a regret that the tale was not suited to the pages of the periodical, to the editor of which it had been addressed.

Evils never come singly: and if anything were wanting to confirm the wavering resolutions of this poor young man, and urge him on to crime, circumstances had of a surety conspired to accomplish this aim. From that instant he no longer hesitated what step to pursue; but awaited the return of Mr. Tibbatts in a sombre mood of obstinacy, dogged resolution, and the recklessness of a despairing man.

Mr. Tibbatts returned, after having prevailed upon a butcher in the neighbourhood to supply him with some meat—a publican to fill his botttle with brandy — and a baker to display his generosity to the extent of a quartern loaf. At three o'clock he and Melville sat down to their dinners; and the remainder of the afternoon was passed in drinking and smoking.

As the evening approached, the rain fell less violently; but the artillery of heaven commenced its dreadful din. The thunders rolled, and the lightnings flashed; and the moments of perfect stillness which succeeded each clap seemed to inspire the minds of the two carousers with awe. But this effect soon passed away; and as, one by one, the lights in the windows of the houses in Albion Buildings were extinguished, they exchanged significant glances with each other,—as much as to say, "The hour approaches!"—and then, as if those words had really issued from their lips, they said, "Come, drink,"—another manner of expressing a sentiment understood by both—the sentiment that the time for the trial of their courage was at hand!

The storm howled without—the thunders rolled at less distant intervals,—and from time to time the flashes of vivid lightning called into full and perfect outline all the houses seen from the window of Victor's apartment. It was at the moment when one long and loud clap of thunder had just sunk into the silence

of the night, that the clock of St. Paul's proclaimed the hour.

Melville counted the strokes,—one, two, three,—and so on,—until he had numbered eleven.

"Eleven!" cried Tibbatts: "I did not think it was so late."

"Eleven!" said Victor;—and that hour appeared to be the knell of his happiness for ever—the tocsin of a ruined soul!

"In half-an-hour we'll go to work," observed Mr. Tibbatts; "I know that Robus sleeps pretty sound. It was a capital idea of mine. But you don't drink!"

Melville filled his glass with brandy-and-water, and lighted another cigar with the hope of composing his ideas. But he experienced a mental agitation and bodily uneasiness—an oppression at the heart, and a weight upon the chest—which rendered that half-hour of suspense absolutely intolerable!

At length Tibbatts tossed off the remainder of his liquor, and rose hastily from his chair.

"Every one is in bed now," said he, in a low and hoarse voice: "we cannot choose a better moment."

"You are afraid, Tibbatts," said Melville, appalled at the change in his companion's tone.

"Afraid!" ejaculated the tempter, affecting a chuckle: "there is not much to be afraid of!"

"Suppose the door should be locked?" observed Melville, trembling violently, and almost hoping that a reply in the affirmative would be given.

"I know all about *that*," answered Tibbatts. "The door is sure to be locked; but it lifts off its hinges: and *that* we must do as gently as possible. I've got a dark lantern in my room, which I shall take with me, so as to throw a momentary glare upon the portmanteau in case I don't put my hand upon it in an instant."

Mr. Tibbatts procured the lantern from his own apartment; and at the same time he satisfied himself that all the inmates of the extensive lodging-house were quiet. He returned to Melville's room, and then informed him of the mode of procedure to be adopted. Victor was about to decline at once to enter any farther into the scheme of villany: but the thought of Louise—of his unsuccessful tale—of his poverty—and of his denuded pocket, once more armed him with that desperate courage which was necessary for the execution of the project.

It was within half-an-hour of midnight,—the storm still raged with appalling violence,—and the night was dark as pitch, save at those intervals when the whole metropolis was lighted up with a sudden blaze of fire produced by the flashes of lightning. Tibbatts slowly led the way down the flight of stairs leading to the apartment of Mr. Robus; and Victor followed with noiseless steps. Tibbatts gently tried the door; and, to his joy and astonishment, he found that it was not locked.

"Now, then, my boy," said Tibbatts, in a low whisper to his companion, "we shall soon complete the job."

As he uttered these words, he cautiously pushed the door open, and Victor mechanically drew nearer towards the threshold. Tibbatts stole into the apartment, and was silently and slowly advancing towards the spot where he knew that the portmanteau of his landlord usually stood, when his foot slipped upon something that seemed greasy and wet. At that instant a flash of lightning of exceeding brightness illuminated the whole room for several seconds, and Tibbatts mechanically cast his eyes towards the floor. He staggered, as a terrible picture rapidly but distinctly met his view, and then disappeared.

"Victor—Victor—Melville!" he cried in a faint tone of voice; "in the name of heaven, where are you?"

"Here—here," was the reply: "is anything the matter?"

Tibbatts immediately opened his dark lantern, so that the light fell upon the floor: Melville drew near the spot; and a ghastly—a hideous spectacle met the eyes of those two men who had sought that room for plunder. Beneath the glare of the lantern was seen the body of a man, lying with his back upon the floor, and with his distorted countenance upwards. A hideous gash across the throat, and a razor lying in a pool of blood near him, at once convinced them that some terrible deed had been lately committed there. Again a flash of lightning illumined the chamber; and Victor recoiled, horror-struck, towards the door, for he thought that the lips of the corpse moved, and that its eyes, which were open, rolled in their sockets. But his imagination alone had produced that idea.

"Come—come away,—for heaven's sake let us stay here no longer!" said Melville in an agonizing tone of voice.

At that instant a footstep was heard upon the stairs; and a long and hearty curse at the darkness of the night fell from the lips of the individual who was ascending the steps.

"Here is Robus himself!" ejaculated Melville; and, without knowing what step to take, or what to do, he hurried up-stairs to his own apartment.

Influenced by some idea that his own safety was at stake, he seized his hat, and again rushed towards the stairs with the precipitation of an individual escaping from the officers of justice. The form of that bloody corpse haunted him at every step: his brain seemed on fire—and yet a cold perspiration broke out all over his body. As he hurried down the stairs, he heard the voices of Tibbatts and the landlord in loud altercation in the apartment where the body lay; and he perceived that the tones of Mr. Robus were coarse and thick, as if influenced by drinking.

Without waiting to ascertain the cause of the dispute between Tibbatts and his landlord, and still urged onwards by the idea that his own safety should be alone consulted at that crisis, the young man flew down stairs, hurried out of the front door, and continued his flight along the court, into the street, as rapidly as his legs would carry him. He was heedless of the rain and of the violence of the storm; for he was pursued by the constant conviction of imminent danger, and haunted by the grim

and ghastly features of the corpse of which he had caught so perfect, although transient, a view in the chamber of a mysterious death.

* * * * * * *

* * * * * * *

The clock of St. Paul's struck the hour of midnight as Melville entered Aldersgate Street from Westmoreland Buildings. The rain had subsided, and a cold wind had sprung up in its place. The din of the loud bell oscillated upon his ears with that foreboding prolongation of sound which is caused by the breeze; and this circumstance recalled all the horrors of his situation to the mind of the unhappy young man. He was houseless—abroad in London, in the middle of the night, without the means of procuring a lodging, and not daring to return to the one which he had just left. It was for some time impossible for him to collect all his ideas into such a focus as to enable him to reflect with precision; but the chilly night air soon cooled his heated brain, and he was enabled, as he walked rapidly along the street, to examine the circumstances which had thus rendered him an outcast from the only place he could call his home.

He knew not how to account for the mysterious events of that evening. A dreadful murder or a determined suicide had been evidently committed in the apartment which was usually inhabited by his landlord; and he knew that the victim was not the landlord himself. He did not feel any apprehension relative to a suspicion of the murder being excited against him or his companion in the attempt at robbery; but he dared not return home, because he knew not how to explain his presence in the room where the dreadful deed had been committed.

As he thus pondered upon his position, he walked rapidly on towards Goswell Street, and scarcely noticed which way he was taking, or what was passing around him. The pale, squalid, and nameless forms of vice, which haunt the night of vast cities, were creeping back, one by one, to the darkness of their own abodes; and all those hideous representations of poverty,—those personifications of all the miseries and crimes of the human race, which the hours of dusk spawn forth, were gradually relinquishing the streets that were even too cold for *them*. And those wretched beings had places which they might designate homes; but Melville had not even a heap of straw on which to rest his head! The silence of the night, which in a few short hours would again be broken by the awakening thousands of hearts, the lifting up of myriads of voices, and the collision of countless interests, was absolutely appalling to the houseless wanderer. The echo of his own footsteps seemed to remind him that it was shortly destined to cease at any hospitable door thrown open to receive him.

He could not conceal from himself the fact that his desperate habits of intemperance had reduced him to the pitch of misery in which he then found himself. Had he not yielded to the force of example and partaken of the deceitful draught tendered him by his companion in crime, he would never have suffered the power of temptation to predominate over the better feelings of his mind. His brows contracted as he thought of his degraded condition; and had not the reminiscence of his Louise been ever in his memory, he would have at once terminated all his sorrows in the blood of suicide.

It would be impossible to say how he contrived to while away the time till morning. He wandered about the streets, reckless of the direction he pursued, and having no distinct aim in view. He at one time arranged a thousand wild plans of reformation and happiness in his mind; and when they were all suddenly destroyed by the conviction that he was a miserable outcast—a prey to a vice which threatened him with bobily and mental destruction. Sometimes he sat down upon the steps of a door until the gruff voice of a watchman commanded him to "move on;" for the enactments of the English government and its myrmidons do not even allow the houseless wanderer to rest himself in the open streets, while the rulers of the land repose on beds of down and silk!

Many miles did the poor young man wander about on that miserable night—a victim to all the conflicting emotions which may be supposed to have haunted his troubled mind. At one moment a prey to delusive hope, the miseries of the streets were all banished from his memory: in the next he wept bitter—bitter—burning tears of anguish, as he saw himself thus destitute of even the means of procuring rest!

At length the morning dawned upon the vast metropolis: and Melville found himself upon the confines of that mighty Babel. There the mind, oppressed by the consciousness that in the myriads of houses in that city a happiness was in existence with which itself was unacquainted, might step aside and find a breathing-space, even amid the reckless action of its own giant breast. On looking back, that vast assemblage of edifices was seen stretching over hill and plain like the Babylon of ancient days; and its thousand towers were gilded with the rays of a joyous sun. Those rays fell brightly upon the dome of St. Paul's, and made its pinnacle glitter like a distant lighthouse upon some tall rock. The dark towers of the Abbey of Westminster, which seemed to defy the ravages of time, and despise the centuries that have already passed over their heads, frowned above the myriads of dwellings around them, and raised their summits to heaven like two Goliahs in the midst of a mighty army. For it is in the still hour of the morning, before the wholesome life of cities is fully awake, that London presents her most striking aspect to him who surveys her from a little distance. Then it is that the everlasting cloud is lifted for a moment from her forehead, and the fresh fan of the morning passes through her stifling streets; and amid the yet smokeless air, the eye rests upon pinnacle and spire that steal, one by one, into the unadulterated light of the young day, and mark distances, which in another hour, will have no representative at that majestic congress. Then London, in her vastness, may be reckoned by her steeples;

and the thousand fingers with which she points up into the clear cool morning, are as an index to the mighty volume whose myriad pages lie closed below.

Melville still wandered on, ignorant of what course he was pursuing, and scarcely knowing what plan to adopt. Upon inquiry of a gardener whom he met, and who was on his way to one of the markets of the metropolis, Victor found that he was in Camden Town. A sudden idea flashed across his mind. He remembered the old lady and her daughter with whom he had travelled in the diligence from Paris; and he determined to avail himself of the pressing invitation which had been given him when he bade them adieu in Gracechurch Street. He did not stay to reflect upon the excuse he was to make for his early intrusion; but no sooner had he ascertained that the clock had struck eight, than he inquired his way to Terrywhist Terrace, and presented himself at the dwelling of the proprietor of that line of buildings.

He gave a loud double knock at the front door, and awoke the echoes up and down the terrace. In a moment a window was opened on the second floor, and out popped a head with a white cotton nightcap upon it; and, as soon as the eyes which belonged to that head had ascertained the nature of the visitor, the head popped in again: then a window on the fourth floor was hastily thrown open, and another head, ornamented with curl-papers, was thrust forth; and meteor-like, that also disappeared in another instant. Then the front-door was thrown wide open; and a dirty girl appeared upon the threshold.

"This is the house of Mr. and Mrs. Terrywhist, I believe?" said Melville, somewhat timidly.

"Yes," replied the girl. "They isn't up yet."

"Oh! in that case I will wait a little," said Melville, making a motion as if he would enter the house.

The girl hastily abandoned the door, rushed up the passage, and called forth the name of Mrs. Jubbins as loudly as she could, at the top of the kitchen stairs. The female thus adjured shortly made her appearance; and a very singular appearance it was. She was an aged woman of about sixty; and her nose was considerably begrimed with snuff. An old black silk bonnet was very airily perched upon the summit of her head; and her sleeves were tucked up, because this worthy female was engaged in the pleasing and domestic avocation of cleaning the kitchen grate. To her did Melville explain the circumstance of his acquaintance with Mrs. and Miss Terrywhist, and invented some lame excuse at the moment for his early call.

"You'd better walk in, then," said the old woman, eyeing our hero most suspiciously; and when she had conducted him into the little back parlour, she very prudently removed the silver spoons and forks which were lying upon the table. She then banged the door, and crept up-stairs to announce the arrival of this untimely visitor.

In about a quarter of an hour, a very slow and solemn step was heard descending the stairs; and a little old man, very stout, very consequential, and very sedate, and whose corpulence was enveloped in a Parisian silk dressing gown, entered the room where Melville was sitting."

"Good morning, sir," said the little old gentleman. "You are welcome. My wife has communicated to me, in impassioned language, and with a due appreciation of your kindness, the pleasing fact of the attention which she experienced at your hands during her journey from the metropolis of France to the capital of this country."

This harangue was delivered in a slow and solemn tone, which admirably suited the pace at which the old gentleman walked; and due emphasis was laid upon every word. Melville immediately comprehended the failing of Mr. Terrywhist—namely, a desire to be thought a very clever man.

"You will excuse my early visit, sir," began our hero; "but the truth is——"

"I do not apprehend," interrupted Mr. Terrywhist, with suitable gravity, "that any apology is necessary: indeed, I can safely bring my mind to the satisfactory conclusion, and to the settled opinion, that a morning's walk in the suburbs of this city has procured me the honour of your company. The morning's meal will be shortly served up: your presence at the breakfast-table will confer an honour upon me—a favour upon my family—and, I fondly hope, no inconvenience upon yourself."

"Curiosity impelled me to visit the Terrace, which, I understood, owed its origin to you, sir," said Melville; "and therefore I accept your invitation with the greatest pleasure."

"This Terrace, sir," continued Mr. Terrywhist, seating himself with the solemnity of a Pasha, and talking with the gravity of a judge, "was built by the humble individual who now addresses you. Mine, sir, has been a chequered life—but I am not ashamed of confessing that the trophies of my present fortunes were raised upon the glories of my own abilities."

Mr. Terrywhist paused to see what effect this well-rounded period would produce upon our hero: but as Melville only knocked an obtrusive cat off his knees, Mr. Terrywhist proceeded with additional solemnity.

"Yes, sir," said he, shaking his head, "mine has indeed been a chequered life! I commenced my career in this world in the honourable, but humble sphere of a tinker; and to the fortunate occurrence of being sent for three months to the county gaol, I am indebted for my rapid, and I may say, my astonishing success in life."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Melville. "That was a strange beginning, was it not?"

"A deep mystery is attached to that transaction, young man," said Mr. Terrywhist, with awful solemnity of manner, in which he quite outdid the Ghost in *Hamlet*. "The particulars of the case are these, as they are now confidently exposed to you. It was on a delicious evening in May, while the birds were singing in the country, and London was full of life and animation, that I was drinking beer out of a quart pot in a cellar. A nobleman—one of

those wild children of nature who delight in nocturnal revels—entered the place, soon became engaged in a dispute with an unoffending coalheaver, and knocked him down with the quart pot out of which I had been drinking. I was somehow implicated in this affair; and the nobleman, myself, and coalheaver were all taken up next morning before the magistrate. The nobleman instantly proposed to me to take the whole blame upon myself, in consideration of a munificent reward. I did so—I pleaded guilty to the fact of having levelled that respectable coalheaver with a quart pot—I exonerated the nobleman—I was sent to prison for three months—I received a noble reward—and from that day everything has prospered with me."

Melville was about to make some suitable comment upon this extraordinary tale, which was delivered with all the solemnity of a monarch's speech from the throne, when an old woman, who had now condescendingly laid aside her bonnet, entered the room to say that "the breakfastesses was all served up in the front parlour, and that the ladies was a waitin' for the favour of the gen'lmen's company."

"Very well, Mrs. Jubbins," said Mr. Terrywhist; and rising from his chair with all imaginable solemnity, he led the way into the front parlour, where Mrs. and Miss Terrywhist where seated at the breakfast table. A grand interchange of compliments, inquiries, and answers then took place.

"Ah! Mr. Melville, how air you?" cried Mrs. Terrywhist. "I raly thought you'd quite forgot us."

"This *is* kind of you to find us out," simpered Miss Elizabeth. "I often told ma we should be sure to meet you again."

"How is that nice gentleman which travelled with us?" asked Mrs. Terrywhist: and before Melville had time to reply, she added, "But you ain't looking so well as you was."

"The wind is rather high this morning," answered Victor, glancing hastily at his disordered dress; "and I have been taking a very long walk."

"Well, now—*do* sit down, and make yourself *quite* at home," said Mrs. Terrywhist, with peculiar emphasis upon the words printed in italics.

"Mr. Melville is as welcome as if he were a prodigal son, returning to partake of the fatted calf," said Mr. Terrywhist, drawing his dressing gown around him, as a prior arrangement to the occupation of cutting a magnificent ham which stood before him.

Scarcely had the little party got settled over their coffee, muffins, &c., and scarcely had Mrs. and Miss Terrywhist discussed each about half a pound of ham and quantities of scandal to boot, when a little pony-chaise drove up to the door.

"Here's Balls come to breakfast, I *do* declare!" ejaculated Miss Betsy, as soon as she had taken a survey from the parlour window;—and in the course of a few minutes, Mrs. Jubbins introduced that gentleman into the room.

Mr. Balls was an individual of about thirty, and possessed features which were marked with peculiarly angular characteristics. His nose was quite peaked—his chin was pointed—his lips were thin—and the termination of his forehead at his eye-brows was also marked by a sharp line. He was attired in a suit of somewhat dingy black: but a massive watch-chain with numerous seals, divers gold rings on his fingers, and a large diamond pin in his shirt, showed that he was not so dressed by reason of poverty. It will be recollected that Mr. Balls carried on the extremely lucrative and responsible business of a pawnbroker, and that he had married one of Miss Terrywhist's cousins. In fact, he looked like a pawnbroker: and he took his seat with the familiarity of a family connexion.

"A fine morning, sir," said he to Melville, as soon as an introduction had taken place between the two gentlemen.

"Rather chilly," observed our hero.

"I suppose you have taken a good walk this morning, sir?" said Mr. Balls. "Did you come from London?"

Melville answered in the affirmative.

"Oh! then I dare say you have told the ladies all the news?" said Mr. Balls. "Ladies like hearing or reading of things of that kind."

"Of what kind?" ejaculated Mrs. Terrywhist: "I'm sure that Mr. Melville hasn't told us no news."

"Farther than his own conversational powers are possessed of originality and novelty," said Mr. Terrywhist, solemnly conveying a piece of ham to his lips while he was speaking, "I know nothing absolutely new which he has detailed to us."

"Then you havn't heard about that singular business in the City, sir, I suppose?" said Mr. Balls, addressing himself to our hero.

"No," replied Melville. "At all events I am ignorant of the matter to which you may allude;"—and, as he spoke, he turned deadly pale and trembled violently.

"Why, the fact is," resumed Mr. Balls, "that a most dreadful murder was committed——"

"A murder!" ejaculated Melville, in a voice of terror.

"Yes—a dreadful murder, upon the person of an old gentleman—name unknown—in some place leading out of Bartholomew Close."

"Good heavens!" screamed Mrs. Terrywhist: "and so there will be another person hanged, then?"

"Hanged!" involuntarily repeated Melville; and the knife and fork which he held in his hand, fell upon his plate.

"It appears," continued Mr. Balls, not attaching any sinister importance to the emotions displayed by the young man,—"it appears that a person of the name of Robus, was returning home very late last night, and was going up-stairs to sleep in a garret of his house, as he had let his own apartment in the morning to a strange gentleman, who, by the way, they say was a Frenchman——"

"A Frenchman!" exclaimed Melville.

"Yes—a Frenchman: and this Frenchman was the victim," continued Mr. Balls. "But,

as I was saying, this Robus was going up-stairs, when it seems that he found a person in the room which he had let to the Frenchman. He asked this person what he wanted there; and the person said that he had heard a noise—that he had come down stairs from his own room—and that he found the Frenchman murdered. When the constables came (for this Robus soon went and spread the alarm), the witness said that he had also seen a young man, who lived in the house, which is a lodging-house, hurrying out of the room where the murder had been committed."

"And that young man was the murderer then?" said Mrs. Terrywhist.

"Of course he was," answered Mr. Balls. "I have not been able to ascertain any further particulars; nor do I know the names of any of the parties connected with the transaction. One thing, however, is very certain;—and this is that the officers are after the young fellow, who has absconded."

"The villain!" cried Miss Betsy: "I hope they will take him. Heavens! Mr. Melville—are you ill?"

"No—it is nothing—a sudden headache," cried Victor, impatiently. "This news—the idea of a fellow-creature being murdered—and the long walk that I took—all this——"

"You had better lie down a little," observed the old gentleman: "it was wrong to take so long a walk, despite the charms of the country, without slightly breaking your fast, before you set out."

"Perhaps, Mr. Melville," said Mrs. Terrywhist, "you would like a drop of brandy?"

At that instant a loud knock resounded from the front door; and a glance through the blinds into the street convinced Melville that the officers had detected his hiding-place. The moment the other inmates of the room caught sight of the ill-looking fellows who wore the unmistakable air of "Mansion House runners," they all expressed their surprise and astonishment at such a visit being paid to that house; and they were too much occupied with this idea to notice the ashy pallor of Melville's countenance, or the attitude of undisguised alarm which he had assumed.

The knock at the door was soon repeated with considerable impatience; and Balls himself hastened to answer it.

"What do you want here?" he demanded of the officers, who crowded round the steps.

"We have traced the supposed murderer of the unfortunate Frenchman to this terrace," was the answer, "and our last informant says that he entered one of the houses. I hope you will not offer any obstruction to the execution of our duty."

"Not in the least," said Balls. "But I can assure you that you are mistaken. There is no one here, but the family of Mr. Terrywhist, and a young friend of his—a Mr. Melville——"

The officers did not allow Mr. Balls time to finish his sentence. They rushed into the house—saw that the parlour-door was open—and crowded into the breakfast-room, to the utter dismay of Mr. Terrywhist, his wife, and daughter. But who can depict the horror and surprise of those worthy and hospitable individuals, when the officers of justice pounced upon Melville, and when that unfortunate young man fell upon his knees, exclaiming, "Mercy! mercy! I am innocent—Oh! I am innocent!"

"Come—come along!" ejaculated one of the officers, brutally shaking his prisoner.

"What! Melville a felon?—impossible!" exclaimed Mr. Terrywhist, who had not overheard the parley of Mr. Balls with the officers at the front-door.

"It is very possible, though," cried the head constable;—"and if he don't take precious good care, he'll have this before he's two months older," added this merciful man, laying his head upon one shoulder, and diving down a little—a pantomime which was intended to convey the idea of a man hanging.

"Mr. Melville, what does this mean?" demanded Mr. Terrywhist, still confident that the behaviour of the constables was the result of a mistake.

"It means, sir," answered our hero, in a voice almost choked with sobs, "that I am accused of that murder, of which you have now heard some of the particulars! But I am innocent—I take God to witness that I am innocent! A strange combination of circumstances—the villany of a friend—and other collateral events, have thus tended to throw suspicion upon me. I repeat, I repeat—that I am innocent."

The officers did not allow their prisoner time to say anything more: they speedily attached a pair of manacles to his hands, and dragged him away from the house, while Mr. Terrywhist and his family surveyed this singular and unexpected scene with the utmost astonishment, commingled with the deepest grief.

* * * * *
* * * *

The wanderer, amid all the crowded and stirring scenes of this Great Babylon of the West, will find few presenting more gloomy effects to the outward eye, and the moralist none offering more varied or affecting objects to the eye of the spirit, than the prison of Newgate. The death-bed hath known no anguish, and the churchyard witnessed no sorrow, like the anguish and the sorrow that have wandered within those walls. Many a light heart hath passed by the door in the days of innocence, and subsequently been dragged thither as an unwelcome visitor, over the rough places of this world. There hath been quickened in many a breast the undying worm; and there hath arisen in many an one the ineffable star. Hope hath laid down her treasure, and fear his burden on the threshold of that place; and beneath those lofty roofs have met all the secrets and mingled all the emotions of the human soul!

There is another point of view in which the yards and cells of Newgate are scenes of most mournful interest. Like the churchyard, they are places of separation—their moral atmosphere is heavy with farewells. How many a fond tie has been for ever broken in Newgate;—how many bosoms have there throbbed

against each other for the last time! How many hands have there exchanged the lingering press which seems afraid to sever, for fear the pulse should cease to beat! How many souls, keenly tried by the rigour of acute misery, have intercommunicated for the last time on the threshold of one of those dungeon-doors, and set forth on those opposite roads, one of which leads through the low, dark, and ominous portal to the scaffold! The golden bowl of Hope has been for ever broken within the walls of Newgate, and the silver chords of affection loosened in its cells: but no monument remains of all the mournful scenes which that prison hath witnessed, save those only which memory hath erected in the lonely hearts that were widowed or orphaned there,—and which love has too often since inscribed with the name and characters of THE DEAD!

It was to Newgate that Victor Melville was conducted, after having been subjected to a long examination before a magistrate. The heart of the young man was nearly broken; for the very individual who had led him into crime—the very person who had tempted him with the proposal to relieve his embarrassments by robbery—the very wretch who had primed him with the flames of hell which the ingenuity of man has modified into alcoholic drink—that very man had appeared in evidence against him! With the cool and calm indifference of innocence, had Mr. Tibbatts stepped forward as the witness against his friend—his young, his inexperienced victim: with all the fluency of truth had he told so plausible a tale to the magistrate, that Melville's guilt was deemed but too evident;—and with the most perfect callousness had this miscreant put upon record that testimony which could not do otherwise than materially accelerate, if not altogether seal, the dreadful fate of the hero of this tale.

For how many crimes has Intemperance to answer! Appeal to the widow—the orphan—and the childless,—ask the diseased, the poor, and the criminal,—address yourself to all the loathed inmates of prisons, of mad-cells, of hospitals, and lazar-houses,—ask them all, *who* made them what they are?—and one appalling, agonizing, terrific combination of unearthly voices will proclaim the accursed name of Intemperance! Mr. Tibbatts was therefore only one of the agents through whose means this same degraded and degrading vice was indirectly acting.

The reader can easily conceive the nature of the evidence given against Melville upon the occasion of the examination before the magistrate; and so conclusive was that evidence considered, that this functionary did not hesitate to commit the prisoner for trial at the approaching assizes. Melville had not offered a word of explanation: in the first place, because the prostration of his mind beneath this accumulated weight of misfortune was such, that all his energies seemed paralysed, and the powers of utterance were suspended;—and in the second place, because he could only escape from the imputation of one horrible crime by confessing to another—and death would have been preferable to the longest existence when shaded by dishonour.

And now we find the unfortunate Melville left to himself in the dreary cell to which he was conducted in Newgate. In Newgate! Yes—he was in Newgate; and he soon set himself busily to work to anticipate all the horrors of the career which seemed to stretch before him. He thought that he should probably leave that prison only *twice* again. The *first* time would be to proceed to the solemn tribunal, where he—innocent and guiltless of the dread crime imputed to him—would be condemned by human short-sightedness to a terrible death—death upon the public scaffold! He thought that, while men without would be pursuing their daily avocations as if all were proceeding pleasantly and smoothly with this world's denizens—as if there were not in existence a single soul then tormented with all the agonizing anguish of the damned—as if no call upon tender sympathy at such an hour demanded one look to be averted from the sordid interests of life, towards a suffering fellow-creature;—he thought that at the moment when music would be playing here, people laughing there, and the rulers of the land walking abroad in all the self-complacency of pomp and power,—he thought that while some fond couple was being joined in the bonds of eternal love, or while some father was hailing the birth of his first-born,—while, in a word, millions and millions were supremely happy, and joyous, and gay,—he thought that a sentence of death would be pronounced some morning, while all this was taking place upon himself! And such a death,—the death of strangulation — the death of apoplexy — the death of a gush of the blood to the brain, the tenderest part of the human body,—a death which would almost force the eyes from their sockets — a death which would leave him dangling in the air, while he could not even gratify the natural impulse of holding up his hands to save himself, because those hands would be bound together *before*, and a cord would connect his arms *behind* him;—O heavens! such a death as this—for a human being, gifted with the acutest feelings, to die! Death by strangulation,—hanging,—falling by one's own weight,—and then that gush of blood, through millions of yielding, cracking, bursting veins and arteries, to the head,—Oh! the idea was horrible—horrible—most horrible! It made the poor youth press his hands to his brow, as if to drive that maddening thought from his heated—his burning imagination!

Yes,—the *first* time that he anticipated to leave his cell, would be, he thought, to hear that dreadful sentence pronounced; and the *second* time—No—no!—he could not suffer his imagination to complete the sentiment,—he would not entertain so atrocious an idea,—he could not permit himself to believe that the thought was true! But, alas!—the dread reality must be contemplated—he must look the grim spectre in the face! Even if he shut his eyes, that dreadful goblin was there, before him, substantial and palpable, and circling around his narrow cell. Oh! there was the horrible thought—a thought that would not abandon him,—the thought which he enter-

No. 15.—The Empress Eugenie.

tained that his *second* departure from that place would be to pass through a small yard to a cell called the press-room, where his chains would be knocked off, and while a chaplain was calling upon him to prepare for death,—and that from the press-room he would have to walk slowly and solemnly (a mourner at his own funeral!) through three or four narrow and gloomy passages, every echo of which would seem the warning voice of some one who had traversed those corridors before, and upon the same mission;—and that he would pass through the kitchen, where people would be preparing the food of those who were to *live* for that day and for many, many days,—and that all this while the minister of the gospel would be reading the service for the dead, and the bell of Saint Sepulchre's (ominous name!) would be ringing a funeral knell;—and that tens of thousands of human beings would be assembled in the street to behold a human being die, and that he would see the grim apparatus of death erected, dark and lowering as the sky might be, at the door which so many pass day after day, and hour by hour, with light hearts! Could he extend the picture, and anticipate all the horrors of the dreaded death—and the chances of eternity!

Misfortune and crime had fallen upon that young man, first as a languor which seizes upon the soul—then like a malady which drives that soul to insanity—and, lastly, they resembled an agony which consumed the heart. He could not even find solace in the remembrance of his love for Louise; because he felt that he was unworthy of so pure a passion as that entertained for him by that amiable girl! Alas, is love then a flame so subtle that at the first violation of its purity, it abandons us and returns to the heavens whence it originally descended? Is not love a religion?—and does it not possess the sweetest consolations? Has it neither revelations, nor laws, nor prophets? Has it not progressed in the heart of man simultaneously with science and with liberty? Is it always placed beneath the sway of a blind destiny, without our being able to discover in ourselves a power of borrowing purity from its own immaculate source? Or must it externally succumb, devoured by the flames which it has excited?—and shall we always transform into a poison, through the means of our own unworthiness, that balm which was the purest and most divine that has been bestowed upon us in this world?

Melville dared not write to Louise. What could he tell her?—and yet he trembled to remain silent, and conceal from her the real truth of his desperate—his terrible position! Day after day passed—a week went away,—and he still lingered in a prostrate condition of the most utter helplessness. He ate his meals mechanically, when they were brought to him: he walked in the yard mechanically, when he was told that he might avail himself of the hours of recreation;—and he retired to his couch mechanically, when the appointed time arrived. His couch! a miserable thin mattrass, stretched upon a narrow wooden framework, with one rug to cover him! And then his meals—a few ounces of meat, with two or three potatoes for his dinner, scarcely enough to satisfy a child, and not more than sufficient to tantalize, in a cruel manner, the appetite of a healthy and vigorous man! Oh! human nature has reached the extreme of refinement in torturing the victims of a diseased state of society—of savage and brutal laws!

And during that week, which passed away as if every moment were borne upon the wings of lead instead of feathers, one constant idea alone haunted the mind of Melville. If he lay down and buried his face in the bed-clothes, he still saw the idea: if he walked about, that idea followed him;—if he stood with his back against a wall, the idea got before him;—and that idea was *that he would be doomed to die!* When he awoke in the morning of each day of that week, he said to himself, "Oh! what a hideous dream! Thank God, it is but a dream!"—and then that momentary impulse passed away—and *there* stood Death in all its dread reality once more!

Oh! if the drunkard only knew what misery dwelt in the mind of this young man, and how deeply he craved, even then, one drop of those fatal liquids which had brought so much anguish upon him,—if the drunkard could but have read the innermost workings of that youth's soul, he would not hesitate one moment to abjure the terrible habit for ever!

At length life became a burden to the young man; and he made up his mind to rid himself of so much misery, and to annihilate the chances of an ignominious end, by immediate dissolution. He would not permit himself to think of his Louise;—the remembrance of her charms and her virtues was maddening to him. He gradually accustomed himself to ponder on suicide more and more calmly; and at length he methodically reflected upon the means of executing his design. Those means were not wanting. There was an old nail in the wall of the court in which he was permitted to walk; and this he secured about his person. Rejoiced at his success at thus discovering the means of destruction so near at hand, he hastened to sharpen the point on the floor of his cell. It was about mid-day, at the expiration of the first week of his incarceration, as he thus employed himself;—and, as soon as he had worked the nail into a point, he closed the door of his cell, and prepared to execute his dreadful determination.

He seated himself upon his bed—took off his coat—turned up the shirt-sleeve of his left arm—and then calmly and tranquilly considered the veins, in search of the most suitable one to perforate with the nail. Oh! it was with a horrible—an unnatural coldness of eye and of soul that he thus entered upon the dread work of suicide. That young man, in the bloom of youth, seated upon his miserable couch, and contemplating Death face to face, was a frightful proof of the methodical calmness with which the suicide can arm himself, in that which he deems the last hour of existence!

He selected the vein which he intended to pierce; and he was about to apply the nail to the soft flesh, when precipitate steps in the corridor communicating with his cell, alarmed

him. The steps stopped at the door of his dungeon—there was a momentary hesitation—then the door was pulled hastily open, and a female rushed into that dread abode. In a moment Melville was clasped in the arms of the affectionate girl from whom he had only a few moments previously deemed himself about to separate for ever.

"Louise! Louise!" exclaimed the young man, now suddenly recalled to new life: "what angel has sent you hither?"

"Oh! my dearest—dearest Victor!" ejaculated the young maiden, a ray of joy and animation lighting up her countenance: "it was reserved to me—to your own dear Louise—to save you from this horrible place!"

"Alas! no human power can save me, Louise," said the poor youth solemnly.

"Yes—I can save you—and I will!" exclaimed Louise: "I have the proof of your innocence in my possession—a proof which none can controvert!"

As she uttered these words, Mademoiselle Dorvalliers hastily drew a letter from her bosom, and presented it to her lover. Melville tore it open, and greedily perused its contents, his joy and his surprise increasing with every line. When he had read the whole, he raised his eyes to heaven to express his thanks to his God, and then once more caught to his arms the young and lovely messenger of such joyous news.

Oh! let him despise who will, the heart of Woman: it is the purest of that clay which was fashioned by the hand of the Deity. Nothing is more sublime than to see the nature of angels ministering, on bended knees, to human power; to see woman converting all her sufferings into a source of happiness! and taking to herself alone the bitter cup which is presented to man! Poor Woman! let him who will despise your noble heart: if there be a paradise, your place shall be far more joyous than ours; and, if there be justice in another world, it shall be more indulgent for your frailties than for our backslidings!

Who can explain the full extent of the rapture experienced by the lovers at this meeting? The place and the occasion were for some time forgotten; and their thoughts and their language dwelt only upon the conviction that they were once more restored to each other.

Melville clasped the beautiful girl in his arms, and gazed upon her heavenly countenance with the most unfeigned delight. Her voice, in its language of love, was so soft and intoxicating, that the tones of the young lover also imbibed somewhat of that impassioned and dulcet accent. When she breathed those delicious words, "*I love thee still*," it almost seemed that she raised around her a marvellous echo: everything about her was agitated by her love;—the air vibrated with the sweet avowal;—and then she spoke of her fond hope of recovering that tranquillity of mind which she had lately lost, and of passing the remainder of her days in joyousness and peace.

Then, as if she had said too much, she bashfully bent her eyes towards the earth—she wiped away her tears—and concealed her countenance with her hands. Then she suddenly raised her eyes upwards—those eyes that were drowned in a sorrowful reflection! Her mouth, which was half open in consequence of a rapidly flowing respiration, revealed teeth as white as the pearls of the east; and then she turned upon her lover that look which had ere now been lost in the space above; and when she saw that she was admired by him, she concealed that look beneath her long lashes. But before she first concealed that look, she darted upon the youth whom she so tenderly loved, one of those lightning glances which the eyes of the purest passion can shoot forth, and which burn to such an extent that they compel him on whom such a glance falls, to apply his hand to his heart as if a red-hot iron had penetrated into it. Oh! when the most chaste and innocent of women love with all the impassioned warmth of their young and virgin hearts, and when circumstances have divested their interview with the object of their affection of all the restrictions of ceremony, as in the case of Victor and Louise,—Oh! then, in that hour of mingling hearts and unity of feelings, the young maiden casts upon her lover that fascinating look with which heaven has endowed her—that look which seizes upon and retains him as it were in strong chains—that look which penetrates to the heart and seems to pierce the vitals—a look which even makes the young lover tremble and be afraid; which imparts to him a sensation as if he were about to become mad, and which almost compels him to fall at the feet of the fascinating girl, and implore her pardon for loving her so sincerely and so well!

There is one period of our lives—a period that forms a delicious episode in the existence of all,—which makes a heaven of earth, and which recompenses us for a world of prior and posterior misery;—and that period is the one in which we first experience the blessings of a pure and holy passion. Melville cast his eyes upon the lovely girl that had now fallen upon her knees before him, while her long and luxuriant tresses fell in rich clusters over her white shoulders: he was trembling and humiliated as he remembered her spotless innocence and his own unworthiness; and he could scarcely induce himself to believe that such an assemblage of charms might be in aught associated with the evil career of his own destinies. But that beauteous girl, who seemed so far separated from him, by reason of his vices, that nothing in the world could ever lesson the distance—that beauteous girl was there—there, at his feet! Long did Victor contemplate Louise! He was afraid to speak to her;—for the first time he felt that his hand was too rude to extend to a female so delicately beautiful;—for the first time he would have wished to soften that voice which spoke so boldly;—he was afraid of wounding her, in touching or consoling her;—and when, at length made aware by the motionless attitude of Louise, and by the silence which reigned throughout the cell, that the affectionate girl was awaiting a promise which should confirm all her hopes of happiness, he exercised a violent effort over himself, in order to articulate these few words,

—"Oh! Louise, henceforth, indeed—indeed I will be worthy of you!"

"Then am I now rewarded for all the anxiety I have undergone on your account and on mine own," answered Louise. "Oh! often and often has that rose-leaf, which I received from your hands in the little summer-house at Auteuil, been my only consolation. And then, when the spirit of my more than father took wing, had it not been for this emblem of your affection, Victor, I know not how I should have supported such a weight of sorrow."

"And often and often—even in the midst of my dissipation," murmured Victor, "have I thought of the rose-leaf which had been pressed to your lips, and which I have religiously preserved. But, tell me, my Louise—tell me that you still love me, and we shall yet be happy."

"Love you, Victor!" ejaculated the amiable girl: "Oh! you know not how agonized were my feelings when I read the account of the suspicion that had been raised against you, in the French journals; and I hastened, ill and miserable as I was, to the office of one of those journals in Paris, to ascertain if the account had not been incorrectly translated from the London papers. But the arrival of *that letter*—and the fact of your having lodged in the same house where the dread deed took place, convinced me that the tale was indeed too true, and that the suspicion of your guilt was naturally excited by the singularity of the circumstances. I therefore determined to hasten to your assistance without delay, and prove the innocence of him I love?"

Not for worlds would Melville have confessed to one so pure and innocent, that the real motive which had taken him, on the fatal night, to the room where the dreadful deed had been committed, was a criminal one, and that he was bent upon a guilty errand when he became involved in the circumstances which had almost proved his ruin. He was compelled to have recourse to a falsehood; and he explained the fact of his being present in the room of death, by stating that a strange noise in that part of the house had attracted him thither.

It was with a sentiment of mingled pride and joy, that Melville sent for the solicitor, whom he had already engaged to conduct his case, and showed him the letter which had been placed in his hands by Mademoiselle Dorvalliers: and as the curiosity of the reader is doubtless excited with respect to this epistle, we shall now proceed to lay it before him:—

"To Mademoiselle Louise Dorvalliers,—

"In the sincere hope, most injured girl, that this letter will reach you, and remedy, although so late, the great evil which I have done to you, do I hasten to make all the reparation that lies in my power. I have injured, deeply injured you. I have played the part of a heartless villain; but I hope that you will pardon me, for my sufferings have been great indeed. I have not experienced one hour of perfect peace since the fatal day on which I accomplished the diabolical thought that was suggested to my mind by the great temptation which was placed in my way. I was a gambler; and one evening my losses were so severe that ruin and disaster stared me in the face. I had not the moral courage to triumph over the evil promptings of Satan: I remembered the gold which was entrusted to my care for you; and I determined to appropriate it to my own use. Your kind guardian has doubtless told you the sad tale:—I fled with your fortune—the fortune which had been entrusted to me—and I left you portionless!

"Eleven years have now elapsed since that fatal day—eleven years of misery and woe—eleven years of remorse and horror. Often, often have I been about to write to you—to restore your fortune—to confess all my infamy—and to demand your pardon. But shame and fear have always prevented me; and these feelings have triumphed over my good resolutions until this moment. I can now support the load of my infamy no longer—I can bear up against the tide of compunction no more,—I feel that I am going mad—that remorse has robbed me of my intellects, and I must hasten to do an act of justice ere it be too late. My mind is made up to leave this world of woe,—my misery shall terminate in the blood of a suicide, sooner than be closed amidst the ravings of maniacs!

"I have sought a humble and obscure abode in which to execute my purpose; and if I make up my mind to live a day or two more or less, my resolution will eventually lead me to the same end. The precise moment only is not as yet settled. Perhaps by the time you receive this I shall be no more. There are instants in which my mind is seized with such an excess of raging delirium—the association of a dread remorse—that in one of those whirlwinds of passion my fatal purpose will be doubtless accomplished.

"I make you a full though tardy reparation; and you will be happier in my death than you have been in my lifetime. I enclose you the necessary documents to receive all the fortune of which I robbed you, at the hands of my agents in Paris, to whom I have transferred the whole amount, with compound interest up to the present moment. I have also made a will in your favour, leaving to you the residue of my property. That testamentary document will be found in my desk after my decease. In the same envelope with it is a formal disposal of the order upon the Bank of France, which transferred the amount of your fortune to my care: that order is signed by your own father; and consequently the secret of your birth, in respect to him, will be thereby revealed. Your mother was a lady of rank, whose name I never knew. The history of this parent, then, will most probably remain a secret to you for ever.

"And now, Louise—pardon me;—pardon the wretch who has so deeply wronged you,—pardon him in consequence of this ample though tardy reparation: and breathe a prayer for the welfare of his soul—for a prayer from your lips must avail on high—when you hear of the self-destruction of

"JEAN MEZERAY."

The solicitor was overjoyed when he perused this letter, which presented so certain an evidence of Victor's innocence. The statement contained in the document relative to the intention of the unfortunate Mezeray to end his days by suicide, was also borne out by the nature of the wound, the position of the body, and the manner in which the razor had fallen from the hand of the self-murderer. These circumstances, without the letter, would have however been overruled by the idea that Victor had purposely made arrangements suitable to those appearances: but the solicitor now declared that the epistle from Mezeray to Mademoiselle Dorvalliers would prove conclusive. The only drawback to the happiness of the young couple was that Melville would have to remain in prison to await his approaching trial: but it immediately occurred to him that Louise would experience a welcome reception at the house of Mrs. Terrywhist, now

that his innocence was certain to be made manifest. He was not disappointed: that kind-hearted lady received the unprotected young girl with the utmost cordiality; and the solicitor hastened to take the necessary steps to procure the papers from the desk of the deceased notary, which would put Louise in possession of the property left by that gentleman, and also reveal the secret of her birth. She had ascertained, previous to her departure from Paris, that her fortune, which, through the exertions of the deceased notary, had been more than doubled, and which now exceeded a million of francs,* had really been transferred to a highly respectable banking establishment in the French metropolis; and thus no pecuniary embarrassments seemed to menace the future happiness of the lovers.

Louise, accompanied by Mrs. Terrywhist, paid frequent visits to Melville in the gloomy prison where he still remained;—and as the young man frequently alluded to the dissipation in which he had indulged during his residence in London, he reiterated his often repeated promise to Louise to abstain for ever from the fatal habit of intemperance. Alas! temporary misfortunes frequently extort from frail humanity a vow of perfect reformation; but time in many cases demonstrates the falsity of all earthly resolutions!

Weeks passed away, and at length Victor was placed upon his trial. Ignominious as was the ordeal through which he had to pass, he knew that he should prove his innocence of the crime of murder; and this conviction strengthened him to submit to the degradation of a public examination. The result was in accordance with his own sanguine hopes: he was honourably acquitted; and, as the real motive for which he had proceeded to the apartment where the suicide took place did not transpire, the judge assured him that he left that court without the slightest imputation against his character.

At the door of the tribunal from which he had just been released, he encountered Mr. Tibbatts, who came forward to congratulate him upon his escape. Victor surveyed him with the most unmitigated disgust, and repulsed with scorn the proffered hand of him whom he considered to be the cause of all his late misfortunes. Tibbatts gnashed his teeth with rage, and turned away, muttering threats of the most deadly vengeance. But Melville heard them not: for his Louise and her kind friends were waiting in a carriage hard by, to bear him far away from the dread vicinity of the gaol.

What now appeared to stand as an obstacle in the way of the happiness of Victor and Louise? The young maiden was wealthy beyond all her previous hopes and expectations,—and her lover was restored to her. On his part, he flattered himself that he was entirely weaned from a habit which had menaced him with the most certain ruin; and he resolved to take advantage of the opportunities now afforded him by fortune to carve out for himself a grand career in the world of literature. Everything, therefore, seemed smiling in the presence of Melville and Louise; and the cares of the past were forgotten in the real joys of the present.

Louise continued to reside with the family of Mr. Terrywhist; and Melville anxiously awaited the expiration of the year's mourning which this amiable girl had imposed upon herself for the loss of her kind guardian. But in the meantime a grand and important revelation was made to the young lady and her lover. The solicitor, who had been assiduously occupied in the investigation and arrangement of the affairs of Mademoiselle Dorvalliers, procured the documents, which related to her, from the desk of the late Monsieur Mezeray. As that gentleman had seemed to promise in his letter to Louise, he had left her the heiress to a considerable private fortune of his own —a fortune which he had amassed by the prudential usage of her own money, with which he had eloped from Paris. But the other document, to which allusion had been made in the letter of the suicide, was of the greatest importance. It revealed the cause of all the mystery which had been observed in respect to the early days of Louise,—the liberal income that had been allowed Captain Dorvalliers for her maintenance, — the reason wherefore a handsome fortune was portioned to her just after the battle of Waterloo,—and the secrecy which had been observed up to that period, relative to the young foundling. The whole family of Mr. Terrywhist was assembled round the table, when the solicitor displayed this document to the astonished eyes of Louise and her lover; — for that document, which was explanatory of an order previously given upon the Bank of France, bore the signature of the greatest hero that ever became the envy, the glory, or the scourge of this world: close by that signature there was a large seal,—and on the seal was an imperial crown!

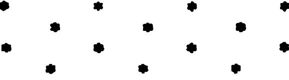
"Napoleon Bonaparte was your father, Louise," said Victor in a voice almost choked by the ineffable emotions caused by this strange discovery. "Oh! how proud should I be to possess the affections of the daughter of that mighty hero."

Louise turned aside, and shed many—many tears: but those tears fell rather for the memory of an unknown mother, than as a tribute of filial love to that of an imperial sire!

Months passed away: Victor, who had taken a house in the neighbourhood of Terrywhist Terrace, passed nearly all his time with Louise; and during the year which intervened between his accusation of the crime of murder and his union with Mademoiselle Dorvalliers, he never once demonstrated any symptoms of the return of the vicious propensity of intemperance. He accordingly felicitated himself upon having entirely crushed that ruinous predilection; and Louise soon ceased to remember that he had ever been its victim. But let not the mariner who has escaped shipwreck upon a coil of rocks, imagine that all the dangers of the ocean are passed; the perils of a lee-shore or of an adjacent quicksand may probably prove more fatal than the point of destruction which the buoyant bark had just eluded.

* Forty thousand pounds.

The year of Louisa's mourning expired, and the day of the bridal dawned. We shall not, however, dwell upon this happy period in the lives of our hero and heroine: suffice it to say that their union was blessed by the minister of heaven; that many friends attended at the solemn ceremony; that they removed to a dwelling at the West End of London, where their fortune and the loveliness of Louise soon suppressed the whispers of scandal in respect to the misfortunes of Victor, and where every luxury and enjoyment which wealth could purchase awaited them.



Four years had passed away since the union of Victor Melville and Louise. The marriage, during this period, was blest by a boy and girl; and an uninterrupted series of prosperity had seemed to recompense the young couple for the misfortune of the few weeks prior to their union. Victor had soon found publishers for his works, now that he was no longer the needy author soliciting patronage; and the world greedily sought after and devoured all that was written by the wealthy novelist. He was courted by all the eminent literary men of the day: he became a member of scientific institutions and learned societies; and every *re-union* of authors was considered incomplete unless it reckoned him amongst its number.

Melville, as we observed at the conclusion of the first part of this eventful narrative, hired a house in a fashionable street at the West End of London, and was soon courted by the wealthy and the great. Young men about town sought an introduction to him, because he was profuse with his hospitality, elegant in his style of living, and liberal with his purse; and families readily accepted the invitations of "the charming Frenchwoman" (as our hero's wife was called), to the delicious *soirees* and parties, the arrangements of which were in the best possible style.

Expensive habits were soon contracted by the young man; and, in spite of the occasional remonstrances of his fair partner, he pursued a career of fashionable dissipation which menaced his purse in an alarming manner. But his reiterated asseverations that he could command any amount at the hands of his publishers for anything he chose to write, and the fact that he occasionally brought home large sums for which his wife could not otherwise account, succeeded in tranquillizing her mind. With the amiability which was natural to her disposition, Louise suffered her husband to superintend the full control of their finances, although all their fortune belonged to her;—and so long as he behaved kindly to her, and so long as she was enabled to enjoy the pleasure of her children's presence, Louise did not often permit any evil forebodings with respect to the future to enter her imagination. The young mother centred all her affections in her domestic enjoyments; and when occasionally Victor remained abroad until a very late hour, she did not reproach him, because his literary engagements were pleaded as an excuse.

For some time after their union, Melville never touched even the more harmless kinds of intoxicating liquors. He shuddered when he recollected that all the dreadful risks he had run of ending his days upon the gibbet of the malefactor, were to be traced to the vice of intemperance, which he had suffered to gain upon him; and he long abjured the most moderate use of wine and strong drink. And, during that interval, he was joyous and happy: he rose early, and sat down to his literary pursuits with pleasure to himself;—and all he wrote was remarkable for a vigour of language and a freshness of idea, which at once ensured the success of his productions. But, as he became acquainted with literary friends, and as he gradually got introduced to their clubs and places of meeting, he was again induced to partake of a little wine; and then he satisfied—or fancied that he satisfied—the scruples of his conscience with the idea that he had seen too much of the dread effects of intemperance ever to indulge to excess again. But the moderate quantity of wine which he drank soon increased little by little; and now and then—at distant intervals—he was induced to pledge his friends in cups so deep that he experienced the results, both mentally and physically, on the following morning. Dread for the future would then for a moment take possession of his soul: but he quieted these fears and compunctions by the wretched sophistry invariably used on such occasions.

"It is ridiculous to suppose that I can ever become a drunkard again," he would say to himself. "I must not debar myself from a little indulgence: but I will not take more than is proper for me in future. I should be a wretch, indeed, if I could not control my own habits. And then, one cannot appear ridiculous before one's friends: one must do as others do. All I have to do is to be careful."

And thus, by imitating the evil example of his friends in order not to be laughed at,—and by doing as others did, so as not to be thought singular,—Melville soon abandoned those abstemious habits which had characterized his honeymoon, and drank his wine after dinner with all the ease and freedom that distinguish this vicious custom at the tables of the fashionable and wealthy. We however repeat, that he did not very frequently suffer himself to be led into an excess: but still the quantity of his daily potations increased by almost imperceptible degrees;—and the intervals between the periods when he imbibed too much, became shorter and shorter. He did not perceive these circumstances: or if he did, he called some foolish reasoning to his aid, in order to dissipate gloomy reflections.

On the whole, the first four years which succeeded the union of Melville and Louise were characterized by that tranquillity and absence of actual misfortune, which the world denominates happiness. Louise expanded from the sweet and retiring girl into the fascinating and amiable woman,—one of those tender mothers who know how to make their maternal feelings one of the greatest ornaments of their character, without carrying them to the excess of obtrusiveness. Her children throve in beauty

and amiability; and the literary reputation acquired by her husband was the only element of human pride which found a resting-place in her bosom.

Four years thus passed away; and Melville was suddenly awakened to the appalling fact that his expenditure had greatly exceeded his income, and that if he pursued the same costly style of living he had adopted since his marriage, the remnant of the handsome dowry of Louise would soon be swallowed up. He came to this conviction one evening as he was sitting in his study, and during an interval of rest from the fatigue of composition. He was writing a new book; and the sudden fantasy of examining the state of his finances had seized upon him. The result was anything but satisfactory, as we have just stated; and the waste and extravagance of which he had been guilty now struck him with all the violence of remorse. He had been methodical enough to keep a memoranda of his expenditure; and, as his eyes wandered over the various items of disbursement in his account-book, he saw the name of his wine-merchant occurring very, very often. He had the curiosity to calculate the amount he had paid, during those four years, for the expensive wines with which he had been in the habit of regaling his friends; and the aggregate was so enormous, that he almost started from his seat with dismay. He felt that there must be something wrong in the domestic economy of a fashionable household, when the amount of the wine-merchant's bill so greatly exceeded that of the butcher—the retailer of wholesome and necessary food; and then—Oh! strange inconsistency!—he hastened to soothe the disagreeable reflections awakened by this conviction, in the very liquor the expense of which caused his dissatisfaction with himself. Yes—alone in his study, did he again fly to the bottle for an evanescent consolation; when his wife and beautiful children were a few rooms distant from him, and could have been a more effectual source of happiness than all the artificial delights which he found in the bottle!

Suddenly the door opened, and a servant announced Mr. Terrywhist. Melville, whose cheeks were flushed with drinking, staggered to meet his old acquaintance, whom he had not seen for some time, and desired him to be seated. He then ordered the servant (as a matter of course) to place another bottle of wine upon the table; and when this command was executed, and the domestic had withdrawn, Mr. Terrywhist, whose peculiar failing of sententious prolixity the reader will probably recollect, expounded the object of his visit.

"My dear sir," said this gentleman, "I have a most important—a very particular, and a singularly remarkable favour to solicit at your hands,—a favour I feel confident you will not refuse, inasmuch as it is an old friend who asks it."

Melville sipped his wine, and awaited the climax of this apostrophe.

"My daughter—my dearest daughter Elizabeth, Mr. Melville," pursued the old gentleman, "is to be married to-morrow. To-morrow she changes her name of Terrywhist for the equally honourable, though probably less euphonious one, of Chizzlehurst; and my fondest hope—my most sanguine expectation—my enthusiastic wish is that you will honour us with your company at the breakfast which Mrs. Terrywhist will provide?"

Melville expressed his readiness to accede to this request; and Mr. Terrywhist drank off a couple of glasses of wine, one after the other, with all the gravity which usually accompanies a good action.

"I felicitate you upon the intended marriage of your daughter," said Melville, after a long pause.

"Ah! you may indeed felicitate me," said Mr. Terrywhist. "I have found a treasure in Mr. Chizzlehurst—a great treasure, I can assure you upon that veracity which was never impeached! In a word, my dear sir," added Mr. Terrywhist, "my future son-in-law is a man of your stamp—a genius—an unknown Milton—a private Byron—a domestic Scott—a fireside Moore—a——"

"A very clever fellow, I suppose," said Victor, seeing that his companion hesitated.

"Exactly, my dear sir," answered the old gentleman, grateful for this suggestion. "And if you wish for a proof of my future son-in-law's super-admirable, transcendent, and unparalleled abilities, you have only to peruse this effusion."

As he uttered these words with a more than usual pomposity, Mr. Terrywhist slowly extracted a pink paper from his pocket, and handed it to Melville, who was just sober enough to be enabled to read the following lines, which were addressed "To Miss Elizabeth Terrywhist, by her Adoring Lover:"—

When a man cannot pay his debts, he
Must go to quod, my charming Betsy:
And, though the fault may *not* be his'n,
Still he is doomed to stay in prison.

Such is my case. A large amount
Of love for which I can't account,
To you my dearest girl, I owe,—
But how to pay it, I don't know.

Imprison'd in your heart am I,
As in the spider's web the fly:
But there is no Insolvents' Court
To which my love can have resort.

As an old rag will burn to tinder,
So has my heart become a cinder:—
Be faithful to the man who sets ye
A good example, dearest Betsy!

So now no more from one who knows
That he's your's from head to toes;
For I'm your last love and your first—
Your own devoted Chizzlehurst!

"There," said Mr. Terrywhist, rising as Melville returned him the paper; "what do you think of *that*?"

"Excellent," answered our hero, with difficulty suppressing a laugh.

"Good bye for the present, my dear sir," said the old gentleman. "We shall expect you and your amiable wife to-morrow morning, at eleven o'clock precisely. You shall then have an opportunity of forming the acquaintance of one of the most erudite persons in existence—no

other, indeed, than the author of that pathetic poem which you have just read."

Mr. Terrywhist consigned the paper to his pocket with the care which any one would naturally bestow upon so valuable a document, and then gravely took his leave. At that moment the time-piece upon the mantel in Victor's elegantly furnished study, struck eleven; and our hero pushed away from before him the writing-materials with an impatient air. He felt that he had partaken too copiously of the wine which had effected so deep an inroad upon his property; and, in spite of the flow of artificial spirits which it had produced, he could not avoid the thought that he was again laying himself open to the wiles of a most dangerous enemy. He rose from his chair, with the intention of seeking his wife in the drawing-room, and banishing his infelicitous thoughts by hearkening to the melody of her sweet voice,—when the door of his study was again opened, and a servant entered the apartment.

"A gentleman wishes to speak to you immediately, sir," said the domestic.

"Who is he?" demanded Melville.

"A stranger, sir," was the answer; "and he said it was no use to give his name."

"Let him come up," returned our hero.

The servant withdrew; and in a few moments the visitor was ushered into the room. Melville advanced a few steps to meet him: but he retreated with feelings of horror and disgust when he recognised the features of his ancient companion in iniquity—Mr. Tibbatts.

* * * * * *
* * * * *

Mr. Tibbatts was attired in the height of fashion. His hair was well anointed with Rowland's Macassar; his hat was after the fashion of some duke's or marquis's design; his coat was made by Buckmaster—his pantaloons by Anderson—and his boots by Hoby; and in his left hand he balanced a gold-headed cane, while he extended his right to Melville with all the warmth and cordiality of an old and sincere friend. For some moments our hero was so astounded at this sudden apparition of his ancient ally, that he was unable to give utterance to a syllable. Mr. Tibbatts took advantage of this confusion on the part of Victor, and, with the most ineffable coolness, flung himself into a chair after he had seized the young man's hand and wrung it forcibly.

"Well, I am delighted to have found you out at last," said Mr. Tibbatts, passing his fingers through his hair. "Your works have made such a noise in the world that I am really quite proud of your acquaintance;—and, faithful to my friend as the dog was to Ulysses, I come to congratulate you on your rapid rise to fame and fortune."

There was something so exceedingly ludicrous in the very impudence of this man's manners, that Melville was well-nigh disarmed of any resentment which he had cherished against him. The effects of the wine he had drunk were also calculated to inspire him with a false spirit of forgiveness; and he followed the example of his visitor by resuming his seat.

"You have indeed made a noise in the world," continued Mr. Tibbatts, who knew full well that the weak side of all men is their vanity, and that flattery, like oil upon the stormy ocean, smooths many an angry feeling;—"and I have read all your works with the greatest delight. Some of my friends declare that you are the first author of the day; and all agree that you are a perfect Tacitus for the graphic truths of historical description."

"To what am I to attribute the honour of this visit?" demanded Melville, mustering up a sufficiency of courage to put this question to his imperturbable visitor.

"What! are you grieved to receive a call from an old friend?" ejaculated Mr. Tibbatts, with a smile.

"I do not know that I have any reason to give you that title," retorted Victor impatiently.

"I hope you do not consider that I am anything else," said Mr. Tibbatts, affecting the most extreme surprise: "I am a Damon to you, and you should be a Pythias to me."

"A very pretty Pythias you made of yourself in the police-office when summoned as a witness against me a few years ago," said Melville, ironically.

"My dear fellow, I merely adopted a political course," returned Mr. Tibbatts: "if you were hanged, it was no use getting me hanged likewise. I thought the best thing I could do would be to live to prove your innocence. Upon my honour I had no other motive."

"Well, of all the impudent fellows——" began Melville, hovering between an inclination to laugh and a conviction in his own mind that he ought to eject his companion from the house without a moment's delay.

"Stop! stop! my dear fellow," interrupted Mr. Tibbatts: "do not put yourself into a passion. You know that Alexander killed Clitus in a moment of anger; and I have no inclination to be a Clitus just now. But—how is this? I am talking till I am dry,—and—and—there is not a clean glass upon the table."

Victor started up and rang the bell violently: the footman made his appearance in due time.

"A clean glass," said Mr. Tibbatts very coolly, as he drew off his yellow kid gloves, and placed them very neatly across the brim of his hat: he then drew himself close up to the table, exclaiming, "Well, now I'm comfortable. This is what I call a pleasure—meeting with an old friend again. Ah! my dear Melville, I have often thought of you, my boy, and have been wishing to see you every day for the last four years——"

"Do you recollect how and where we parted," interrupted Victor, with a certain impatience and bitterness in his tone. "We separated at the door of the tribunal of the Old Bailey: you attempted to address me—and I spurned your acquaintance."

"Just the heat of the moment, and a wrong impression," said Tibbatts, without losing one atom of his equanimity of temper. "But here is a clean glass, and no wine."

The servant, who had returned to the room, cast an inquiring glance towards Melville, who

MISS TERRYWHIST.

seemed buried in a profound reverie. Mr. Tibbatts repeated his observation: and our hero started from his meditative mood. The domestic awaited his master's orders; and Mr. Tibbatts regaled himself with a pinch of snuff from an elegant gold box. Melville was just so far inflamed by wine that he felt glad of a companion — be that companion who he might; and he fancied that there was no good companionship without the bottle. He accordingly issued the necessary command; and in a few moments a fresh supply of the inebriating liquor was placed upon the table.

"Well, this is very fine," said Mr. Tibbatts, sipping the wine with great relish; "very fine indeed. But you can afford good things now, Melville: you can get anything you like for a book, I should think;—any publisher must be glad of your assistance?"

"I have no trouble in disposing of my manuscripts," said Melville, softening a little, both from the effects of the compliment and the fresh supply of wine.

"Ah! you are a lucky dog," cried Tibbatts. "Nearly all authors are poor: the ancient authors were poor—and so are the modern, with but few exceptions, of which you are one. Plato was so poor that he was compelled to write his works by the light of the eyes of his cat; but Seneca, who was enormously wealthy, composed an essay on the deceitfulness of riches. Ah! my dear Melville, all the world is talking of you now!"

"I did not think I was so very popular," observed the young man, filling his glass, and passing the bottle towards his companion.

"Popular!" ejaculated Mr. Tibbatts, who saw that Victor's resentment was rapidly

melting away: "why, no one hears any other author spoken of but you; and that last novel of yours——"

"What about that?" demanded Victor, drawing his chair closer to the one occupied by Mr. Tibbatts.

"Why! the people actually fought at the circulating libraries to get it first, on the day of publication," said Mr. Tibbatts. "Melville, my boy, here's success to you!"

"Thank you," answered Melville. "The same to you;" and he emptied his glass.

"I myself have had some luck since I saw you last," continued Mr. Tibbatts, after a short pause. "An old aunt of mine died. I was very fond of her, and hearing that she was ill, went to see her. The doctor ordered her to take a little laudanum; and I had to give her the doses. One night she seemed to me to be so bad that I increased the quantity; and the poor old creature died. I knew she had made a will in my favour; and so it turned out. I was determined to be economical in future, and, by way of a beginning, left the parish to bury her. So, you see that I have had a lift in the world," added Mr. Tibbatts: but, as he turned his eyes towards Melville, he perceived a frown upon his face; and he accordingly observed with some degree of precipitation, "But if I had only your abilities, I would soon become as rich as Crœsus. You are the envy of all aspiring authors."

"I hope I am not proud, either," cried Melville, the frown changing to smiles at this new compliment. "But you don't help yourself."

"I am waiting for you," answered Tibbatts.

"Oh! I have had my share already," said Melville, with a feeble effort to avoid the temptation.

"Well! I cannot drink alone," exclaimed Mr. Tibbatts; "and I thought that the world generally gave you credit for doing the honours of your house with such surprising tact and good taste."

"If I must, I must," observed Melville, determined that the world should not be wrong, although the world had never said any such thing; and he accordingly refilled his own glass, prior to handing the decanter to his companion.

"How very comfortable you seem here," remarked Mr. Tibbatts, after another pause. "I suppose you receive the first literary men of the day at your house?"

"My *soirees* are invariably well attended by all that is fashionable or worth knowing," said Victor, with a complaisant air.

"I am told that you are courted by the first people in London, quite as a curiosity," returned Tibbatts: "and indeed, with your abilities and personal appearance, this is to be expected."

"I shall be very happy to see you as often as you pass this way," said Melville, after a moment's hesitation: but how could he avoid inviting the man who thought so highly of his literary achievements?

"Oh! I shan't desert you now that I have found you out," exclaimed Mr. Tibbatts. "But here's to the health of your family. Come—you must join in this toast."

"I suppose I must," returned Melville: and here was another excuse for another glass.

"I understand that you have a most amiable wife and such fine children," cried Mr. Tibbatts: "I shall really grow jealous of your happiness soon."

"I shall be most happy to introduce them to you, my fine fellow," said Victor, now slapping his companion on the back.

"Melville, my dear boy," cried Mr. Tibbatts, grasping his friend's hand, "I am delighted to see you in this glorious and prosperous condition; and I'll still stick to you as long as you live."

A disinterested observer would have seen no reason to doubt this assertion, because it was made on the same principle on which the leech will adhere to the body that it is sucking. Melville was, however, quite affected by such a display of attachment on the part of his friend; and, being in a maudlin state of drunkenness, he was almost melted to tears.

"My dear Tibbatts," said he, wringing the other's hand with reciprocal violence, "I am more delighted at this reconciliation on your part than at anything that has ever happened to me. Bless you, Tibbatts—you are my only friend after all."

"To be sure I am," said that gentleman. "But—I declare—the bottle's empty!"

"Bottle empty!" shouted Melville. "Well—we'll deuced soon have another. Now, then, Tibbatts, what wine will you have? Anything my cellar can give an old friend like you! What shall it be? Port—sherry—burgundy—claret—champagne,—only say the word."

"Let's have a bottle of champagne, then," cried Mr. Tibbatts, after a moment's reflection.

Victor staggered towards the bell, and pulled it violently. The servant attended the summons; and Victor ordered him to bring two bottles of champagne as soon as possible. The command was obeyed; and the effervescent liquor soon produced a species of raving hilarity in respect to Melville; but Tibbatts continued to drink glass after glass, without experiencing any very evident effects from the sparkling juice of Epernay.

"Excellent wine, this," said Mr. Tibbatts, filling his own and Melville's glass for the fourth time.

"Excellent!" cried Victor, whose eyes flashed fire, and whose cheeks were almost purple with the unnatural excitement.

"Oh! if I only had a chance like you," said Mr. Tibbatts, shaking his head somewhat gloomily,—"if I only had a friend to come forward and assist me at this moment, I should make a fortune."

Now a man, who is himself almost rabid and raving with the artificial happiness produced by champagne, cannot endure the sight of the slightest appearance of gloom in a companion. Melville accordingly pressed Mr. Tibbatts to unfold the nature of his wants; and after a considerable display of reluctance on the part of this gentleman, the truth was revealed.

"My dear Melville, I didn't come here to annoy you with my griefs," said Mr. Tibbatts, heaving one tremendous sigh, and washing down another with a glass of champagne.

"But I *will* know what it is that vexes you," persisted Melville.

"Well, if you must," said Mr. Tibbatts, who enacted his part to perfection, "I suppose I must gratify your curiosity. The truth is, I have a certain opportunity just at this moment—which never may occur again—and if I only had a few hundreds—but—I suppose I must do without them——"

"Now I understand," said Melville, impatiently interrupting these broken sentences: "how much do you want?"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Tibbatts, as if he were quite astonished by the question.

"How much do you want?" demanded Melville, doggedly.

"Why—if you must know, about five hundred pounds," replied Tibbatts, in a tone approaching a whisper.

"You shall have it," cried Melville, dashing his clenched fist upon the table. "I will go and fetch my cheque-book out of the drawing-room, and will do what you require this minute."

"My dear fellow, you will be the making of me!" said Mr. Tibbatts, clasping his host's hand with a warmth that was apparently the most sincere.

Melville hastily withdrew his hand, because he was as anxious to demonstrate his kindness to the designing Mr. Tibbatts, as in his sober moments he would have been inveterate in his hatred against the same individual. He staggered out of the room, and proceeded to the saloon where his wife was sitting alone, her children having by this time retired to rest. The moment Victor entered the apartment and met the glance of his tender spouse, he started, while a deadly pallor overspread *her* countenance.

"My dear Victor," said she, in her usual mild and musical voice, "you have been drinking."

"Nonsense," cried Melville, impatiently: and he began to reflect whether he should not find fault with something, in order to avoid the placid remonstrances of his wife. "Where is my cheque-book?"

"You cannot require it at this time in the night, Victor," said Louise, in a firm tone, but one devoid of all irascibility or even reproach. "Sit down with me—here—and tell me if anything has annoyed you."

"No—no, my dear Louise," returned Victor: "I am not annoyed—on the contrary, I am very happy—I have found an old friend."

"An old friend?" repeated Louise: "and who is he?"

"My old and intimate friend Tibbatts," answered Melville, somewhat impatiently. "Where is the cheque-book?"

"Tibbatts! Tibbatts!" almost screamed the now miserable wife. "What! the wretch who bore false witness against you? Oh! Victor—Victor, spurn him from your house—cast him away from you—he is a viper come to sting you to the heart. Oh! my dear, dear husband, for once listen to the entreaties of your wife—I implore you upon my knees!"

And as she uttered these words in a tone which indicated the most acute grief, the lovely young woman sank upon her knees before him whom she adored as something more than human.

"Come, come, Louise," he murmured half angrily, "this is childish: Tibbatts is a very good fellow, and I mean to lend him a little money to ensure his fortune."

"Victor, hear me!" cried the distracted lady, joining her hands together. "By your children, I implore you to hear me,—by all that you hold dear or deem sacred, I implore you to attend to my words,—Oh! Victor, do not refuse to listen to me! Let not that man remain in this house for one moment longer——"

"Louise, he is my guest," interrupted Melville, almost fiercely.

"He is a fiend—he means to do you no good—he will be the ruin of us yet,—Oh! I know—I know he will!" sobbed Louise in so earnest and plaintive a tone that only a man who was brutalized by strong drink, could refuse to accede to all that was asked in so sweet a voice, and by one so transcendently beautiful. "It is not often I implore a favour of you, Victor,—I beseech you, do not refuse me this."

"Nonsense—nonsense, Louise," ejaculated Melville, disengaging himself from her embrace, and proceeding towards his writing-desk, whence he took his cheque-book with an air of dogged and desperate determination.

"Victor—Victor—you will break my heart," screamed Louise, falling with her face downwards upon the carpet, and sobbing bitterly.

Melville rang the bell, and coolly desired a female servant who answered the summons, "to attend to her mistress." He then left the apartment, in a state of the utmost indifference in regard to one who loved him with all the enthusiasm and passion of a young and devoted heart, to return to lavish a kindness upon an individual who had already behaved in the most diabolical manner towards him.

Mr. Tibbatts anxiously awaited the return of our hero;—and when Melville once more entered the study, with the cheque-book in his hand, that individual's eye beamed with the most unfeigned delight. Melville sat down, drank off another glass of champagne to expel the reminiscences of the dispute with his wife, and then proceeded to write a cheque for five hundred pounds. It was with the greatest difficulty that he was enabled to fill up the draft: but Tibbatts, by dint of spelling each word for him four or five times over, and occasionally guiding his pen, at length enabled him to complete the task.

"Well, I am very much obliged to you, old fellow," said Mr. Tibbatts: "you will be the making of me with this kindness on your part. Good bye for the present."

"One glass more," stammered Melville.

"Only one, then," said Tibbatts, who was now anxious to take his departure, having obtained all that he at the moment required.

The glasses were filled and emptied; and the two friends separated, with many vows of uninterrupted good feeling for the remainder of their lives. Melville retired to his couch, without thinking of inquiring after his distracted wife, who had sought the means of consolation

in the same room where her beloved children were sleeping;—and Mr. Tibbatts took his departure to his own lodgings, with a demoniac smile of satisfaction playing upon his lips.

* * * * *

* * * * *

"What is the use of making yourself and me miserable also?" demanded Melville pettishly of his amiable young wife, on the morning after the adventures related in the two preceding chapters.

"Oh! Victor, you know not my heart, if you think that I would willingly afflict you," answered Louise, endeavouring to smile through the tears that trickled down her charming countenance: "but I tremble—I am afraid—I dare not contemplate the future—now that your mortal enemy has become a visitor to this house. It is not for myself that I fear, Victor,—oh! no—believe me, I can support all the evils of penury and want: but when I think of our dear children—of those little beings who smile so innocently upon us, and amuse us with all their winning ways,—oh! it is then, Victor, that I tremble for the consequences of this renewal of your intimacy with that man!"

"This is childish, Louise," said Melville, endeavouring to console his afflicted wife;—"this is childish. The truth is, I am almost ashamed to admit that I had drunk too much last night,—and—that—when in that state——"

"When in that state, my dearest husband," interrupted Louise, "you would sacrifice anything to that which you call *friendship!* Alas! friendship is often nothing more than a coin with which one man endeavours to cheat his neighbour; and intoxication blinds the eyes to the baseness of the metal."

"True, dear Louise," answered Melville: "I will not cultivate this man's friendship."

The young and affectionate wife threw herself into her husband's arms, and poured forth her gratitude for this promise in terms so endearing, that Melville inwardly cursed his own brutal conduct on the preceding evening, and of which he entertained a slight reminiscence, towards so amiable and fascinating a creature. He gazed upon her with the most melting tenderness, and whispered words of consolation and promise in her ears.

"Dearest, dearest Louise," he said, "I will never, never make you or the children unhappy. I was idiot enough to lend, or rather give Tibbatts some money; but if he ever calls again, I will dismiss him with contempt from my presence."

This promise entirely relieved the beautiful wife from all further uneasiness; and a servant at this moment announced that the vehicle which had been ordered, was ready at the door, to convey the expected guests to the house of Mr. Terrywhist.

From an early hour on that same morning, had everything been in bustle and confusion at the abode of this gentleman. When the cat's meat man passed by with his wheelbarrow, Mr. Terrywhist felt persuaded that the bridegroom had just arrived in his carriage; and he rushed down stairs to receive him with such precipitation, that he strangely unsettled the equilibrium of Mrs. Jubbins, who was cleaning out the hall. Then, when the collector called for the water-rates, Mr. Terrywhist scampered to the door with such extraordinary alacrity, that the aforesaid collector retreated to a considerable distance, under the apprehension that assault and battery were meditated against him. In a word, the usually tranquil and sedate Mr. Terrywhist was as lively as if he had swallowed a pound of quicksilver; and Mrs. Jubbins was mortally offended with her once respected master, because when she delicately and gently remonstrated with him for kicking over her pail in his hurry to rush to the door every time there was a knock, he had coolly desired her to go to the hottest place he could think of at the moment. But as this respectable female probably fancied that journey to be somewhat too long, she undertook a shorter one just round the corner to a gin-shop, where she regaled herself with a quartern of rum.

At length Mr. Terrywhist was gratified by the arrival of Mr. Chizzlehurst, who made his appearance in excellent spirits and a new suit of clothes. Mr. Chizzlehurst was a gentleman on whom beneficent nature had conferred an abundance of bright red hair; his eyes were light green—an ominous colour in respect to jealousy; his lips were large and thick, and his face was curiously studded with freckles. He fancied himself to be a very clever person, and was particularly fond of intruding his verses upon any one who would listen to him. But he was tolerably well off; and riches, like charity, cover a multitude of sins. Indeed, the police magistrates of London often corroborate this assertion of ours by their own decisions; inasmuch as they slightly reprimand those delinquencies in the rich for which the poor man is abused and sent to the treadmill for three months.

"My dear Mr. Chizzlehurst, I am so delighted to see you," exclaimed Mr. Terrywhist, grasping the right hand of his intended son-in-law with uncommon violence.

"There is nothing like punctuality, my dear sir," answered Mr. Chizzlehurst. "As I have observed in one of my poems—

> When one has promised to be married,
> If he can't walk he must be carried:
> E'en on a donkey should he ride,
> Rather than disappoint his bride;—
> Or hire a dog-cart, or a stretcher,
> So long as he don't fail to fetch her.

There, sir,—that's my opinion upon the subject," added the poetic bridegroom, with a smile of complacency.

"Really Hudibrastic, I declare!" ejaculated the admiring Mr. Terrywhist. "What a facility you have for poetry to be sure!"

"We might convert your remark into a pleasant little distich," said the red-haired votary of the Muses: "for instance:—

> In manners few so well are versed
> As Mr. Thomas Chizzlehurst."

"Capital! excellent!" shouted Mr. Terrywhist; but as some of the relatives and friends now began to arrive, it was deemed prudent by the happy father to hasten the ceremony as quickly as possible. He accordingly rang the bell, and inquired whether Miss Betsy was

ready, as the carriages were waiting. In a short time that young lady made her appearance, blushing like a peony, and casting her eyes upon the ground in a sentimental manner which quite charmed the poetic lover. The bride's mother then issued some necessary orders to Mrs. Jubbins relative to the breakfast;—and the party shortly proceeded to the church where the nuptial knot was duly tied. On the return of the cavalcade to the house, Mr. and Mrs. Chizzlehurst were duly complimented upon their happy union by Melville and Louise, who had arrived at Terrywhist Terrace in the meantime.

A most excellent repast was now served up; and what with the succulent provisions, and the happy jests that prevailed, the little party continued to make themselves very comfortable. Only one accident occurred to disturb the hilarity of the scene; and this was brought about by Mrs. Jubbins, who had stepped round the corner so often to drink the health of the newly-married couple at the public-house, that when she made her appearance in the parlour of her master's dwelling with the tea-kettle in her hand, she stumbled over the cat and emptied a portion of the boiling water upon Mr. Terrywhist's foot. The old gentleman literally roared with pain; but Mrs. Jubbins was forgiven, at the intercession of Mr. Balls, who was one of the guests.

"Accidents will occur in the best regulated families," said Mr. Balls, as he made a desperate attack upon a pigeon-pie which stood near him.

"They will indeed," assented Mr. Chizzelhurst; "and it is to *that* that I allude in one of my poems, when I say—

He who at each mishap is flurried,
Is like the cat by bull-dogs worried."

"I have often asserted, and now I maintain," said Mr. Terrywhist, with his usual pomposity of manner, and his solemn enunciation, "that Mr. Chizzelhurst is one of our most talented aspirants to the heights of Parnassus, and I see no reason for changing my opinion. Chizzelhurst, your health—and may happiness attend you and Betsy."

Mr. Terrywhist filled his glass with champagne, and this example was imitated by all the gentlemen present. Melville drank a few glasses with peculiar zest; and when he became exhilarated, his conversation grew animated and interesting. He saw that his sallies amused those present; and he considered that the old adage must be true, which says, "wine is the soul of wit." No evil habit has obtained so much support in respect to deluded sayings of all kinds, as that of drinking!

There was, however, one young gentleman present, who did not partake of the wine, and who wished the bride and bridegroom all possible happiness, without pledging the hope in the glass. This gentleman was a friend of the bridegroom: and the circumstance of such abstinence somewhat astonished our hero. At the expiration of an hour and a half from the commencement of the meal, the postchaise which had been previously ordered for the purpose of conveying the happy couple to the house they were in future to occupy, drove up to the door. We shall not dwell upon this portion of our tale: suffice it to say that the poetic Mr. Chizzlehurst handed his beloved spouse into the vehicle:—and the newly-married pair departed, followed by the prayers of the mother, and the admiration and complacent approval of the father.

"Let us now drink one more glass to the health of the happy pair," said Mr. Terrywhist. "But my dear Mr. Thornton," added the worthy host, addressing himself to the abstemious gentleman before alluded to,—"you do not follow our example."

"I hope you do not think me rude," was the reply, "or consider that I am less anxious than yourselves for the prosperity of the newly-married couple: but the truth is, I never partake of intoxicating liquors."

"What!" ejaculated Melville, in astonishment; "you refuse a generous glass of wine, sir?"

"Certainly I do," was the quiet answer; "and for the very simple reason, that I do not consider it to be at all generous, either in its quality or its effects."

"You drink spirits and water, perhaps," said Mr. Terrywhist.

"Neither wine, nor spirituous, nor malt liquors of any kind," rejoined Mr. Thornton, who was a good-looking young man, and endowed with pleasing and quite unassuming manners.

"Probably your health will not allow you those indulgences?" said Melville, who began to take some interest in the subject of conversation.

"On the contrary, my health is unexceptionable," answered Thornton; "and it is for the purpose of conserving that state of health that I abstain from the use of alcoholic drinks."

"This is a species of self-mortification which I cannot understand," said Melville, emptying his glass.

"Do you imagine it a greater punishment to abstain from an occasional indulgence and enjoy constant health, or to use that occasional indulgence and invariably feel the ill effects of it?" demanded Mr. Thornton:—"or, in other words, which is preferable—health, or sensual enjoyment?"

"I do not conceive that a moderate use of wine or other strong drink can be ruinous to the human frame," said Melville.

"The least quantity of alcohol imbibed into the human frame is hurtful," answered Mr. Thornton, "and the constant diffusion of it throughout the body must weaken the physical energies, by the mere process of excitement and reaction."

"But wine and beer are strengthening," retorted Melville, somewhat angrily.

"That is the usual delusion, my dear sir," said Mr. Thornton, mildly. "Nutriment alone affords strength—strong drink produces excitement—but nutriment and excitement are two very different things. The former supports the human frame: the latter obviously enfeebles it."

"And yet the labourer in the field cannot

toil without his beer," said Melville almost in a contemptuous tone of voice.

"That is also a delusion, my dear sir," continued Mr. Thornton. "Strength to labour is only given by nourishment; and wholesome food is the proper means of producing that effect. Nutriment emanates from substantial aliment; and thus wine or beer can only be so far nutritious as in the proportion of the solid substance to which they can be reduced. A gallon of ale does not contains more nourishment than is equivalent to about one pound and a quarter of barley; and thus a good penny loaf contains more nutriment, and that of a more wholesome kind, than a gallon of strong ale. In the same way it can be proven that a bottle of the best port wine does not contain as much nutriment as one quarter of a penny loaf of good wheaten bread."

"But man requires a certain stimulus, at all events," persisted Melville, who saw that he could not controvert this system of reasoning.

"A proper and necessary excitement is afforded by nutritious food, by exercise, by physical or intellectual employment, and by the mere variation of occupations," was Mr. Thornton's answer. "It is evident that nature has not formed us in a manner adapted to the idea that alcoholic drinks are necessary conditions of our being, seeing that we are better without them. If you be ill, the medical man orders you to abstain from those liquors, because they are heating and unnaturally exciting; and if they excite the blood improperly when you are ill, they do not fail to produce the same effects when in a state of health."

"On the score of indulgence, then—as a means of enjoyment and conviviality," urged Melville.

"If the indulgence be a vicious one, and calculated to produce moral, physical, and social evils," said Mr. Thornton, "we should not demonstrate so much weakness as to wish to adhere to it. The most moderate use of strong drink places a dangerous temptation in our way: we do not set out in life with the idea of being drunkards; but the habit grows upon us by means of its own fascinating powers. That is the reason which induced me to adopt the only safe and sure principle,—the principle of total abstinence."

"I certainly should advocate the *moderate* use of strong liquors," said Melville.

"My dear sir, *abstinence is by far more easy than moderation*," answered Mr. Thornton; "and be assured that the boldest and most courageous often submit to a temptation by only slightly connecting themselves, in their habits, with it. We see evil customs grow upon us by degrees: from stealing a penny, the thief proceeds to the plunder of a pound; and so does the moderate drinker of one glass gradually turn into a confirmed drunkard, after having passed through all the various phases of temperance—a little more—a little more still—a very little more still—a little too much—a great deal too much—and then habitual indulgence."

"But are the consequences of the indulgence so fatal as to render such a principle of self-denial necessary?" demanded Melville.

"No one can calculate the effects of intemperance, because some of them are very remote, and others are not always seen," replied Mr. Thornton: "but, be assured, sir, that three-fourths of all the crime, all the poverty, and all the disease, which prevail around, may be directly or indirectly traced to the vice of intemperance."

"But total abstinence is so extreme a measure," said Melville: "it is almost absurd!"

"Extreme cases require extreme measures," was the ready answer. "Society is in an extreme case of crime, poverty, and disease,—and to so extreme a case only an extreme remedy can be applied."

"Would you, then, propagate this doctrine?" inquired Melville.

"I hope to see such a doctrine one day not only propagated, but also embraced by thousands," was the answer. "We are now towards the end of the year 1830—and I will venture to prophesy that in less than twenty years millions will have abundantly seen the good effects of this principle. It is impossible that society can tolerate the evil of intemperance much longer. The working classes, who particularly suffer by it, will doubtless arouse themselves to exertion, and be the first to embrace the means of their salvation."

"You speak enthusiastically," ejaculated Melville.

"And this observation of yours reminds me that I have probably incurred the imputation of discourtesy by endeavouring to force my opinions upon you at a moment when you are engaged in the very occupation which my arguments tend to discountenance," said Mr. Thornton.

"You have considerably interested me," cried Melville. "I shall be most happy if you will visit me at my own house, and enable us there to continue this discussion."

"I shall accept your kind invitation," said Mr. Thornton, to the infinite delight of Louise, to whose mind this novel idea of total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors had imparted a species of hope, relative to her husband, which quite cheered and enlivened her. She reflected that the wife was the greatest sufferer by the intemperate habits of a husband; and although no selfish feelings were allowed to find a resting-place in her mind, she could not avoid entertaining a fond anticipation of total reform on the part of Victor, for the sake of himself—of her—and of his children.

After they had taken leave of Mr. and Mrs. Terrywhist, and during their ride back to London, Melville seemed plunged in the deepest meditation. When questioned by Louise as to the nature of his thoughts, he replied, somewhat impatiently, "I cannot help reflecting upon all that this Mr. Thornton has been saying to me."

Louise smiled—for she saw that conviction was working upon the mind of her husband, in spite of himself.

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

The conversation with Mr. Thornton had awakened a strange train of reflection in the mind of our hero;—and Louise faintly hoped

that the observations of their new acquaintance would lead to ultimate good in respect to her husband. Her delicate mind could not appreciate all the horrors of intemperance; and although she saw but little more than mere mental degradation and debasement in the practice of that hideous vice, she still anxiously hoped that Mr. Thornton would be the means of inculcating into the bosom of Melville a principle which would for ever place a barrier between him and an indulgence in intoxicating liquors. She did not therefore attempt to interrupt the chain of her husband's reflections; and the moment they reached their own home, Melville retired to his study, where he sat down with the determination of considering the subject in all its bearings.

Victor's meditations were interrupted by the entrance of a domestic who handed him a letter. He opened it and found it was a circular from the secretary to a joint-stock company, in which he had taken shares to a considerable amount. The circular required his immediate presence at the office of the company, where a meeting of the shareholders was to take place. Glad of a means of abstraction from the numerous subjects of serious thought that weighed upon his mind, our young hero ordered his cabriolet; and at the appointed time drove to the offices of the British and Foreign Equitable Lucifer-Match Joint-Stock Company, in Bridge Street, Blackfriars.

The "Board-Room" was thronged with as motley a crowd of gentleman as the eye could wish to gaze upon. Some were dressed in the first style of fashion; and others had scarcely taken the trouble to dress at all. Old and young — washed and unwashed — polite and vulgar — to the number of about fifty, formed the miscellaneous audience to whom a stout gentleman standing behind a mahogany desk was addressing himself. The individuals who formed that audience were seated upon a number of forms that had been placed in rows, at one extremity of the apartment, for their accommodation; and although the characteristics of their personal appearance were so essentially varied and diversified, one common expression seemed to animate their countenances. The same light falls upon all subjects, though each receives the light in a different manner; and thus did the same gleam of satisfaction illume fifty physiognomies in as many discrepant fashions. The broad grinning face —the wizen countenance, partially relaxing from its accustomed serenity—the pursed-up lips, but laughing eye—the complacent smile —and the placid expression of contentment, were all visible upon that occasion.

The stout gentleman, who was standing at the mahogany desk, was about fifty years of age. His complexion was swarthy,—a circumstance which gave an air of uncleanliness to his whole person: his forehead was high and broad, and seemed to indicate the full extent of the intellectual qualities possessed by its owner;—and his restless dark eye had an expression of cunning and suspicion which would never enlist a phrenologist in his favour. His voice was sonorous, and authoritative in tone; —his manners were familiar, and consequently somewhat vulgar; — and when he moved a slight lameness was perceptible in his gait.

"Gentlemen," said the individual, whom we have briefly sketched, "according to the forms prescribed by the Sixtieth Article of the Deed of Settlement, which constituted our Company, I have summoned this meeting to communicate to you the condition of those self-acting lucifer-matches, the idea of which was founded by *your* capital, and has been worked out by *my* talent and experience."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Bubbel," exclaimed one of the shareholders; "but I thought that there was to be no general meeting of the shareholders until the expiration of six months from the foundation of the Company."

"Unless the Managing Director considered it necessary to the interests of the shareholders, to summon such meeting," observed Mr. Bubbel, endeavouring to apply this corrective in his most mellifluous tone;—"and such an opinion is now entertained by me. I do not feel myself justified, gentlemen—I may say, I do not even feel comfortable, at having been entrusted with so large a sum, and not being called upon to give any account of the business for which it was advanced, for so long a period as six months. Gentlemen, I am too conscientious to keep you in the dark relative to your own affairs; and I think—I flatter myself, gentlemen—I fondly imagine, in a word, that you will not blame me for my scrupulousness."

"What a straightforward, honourable man!" whispered one of the shareholders to his neighbour.

"Oh! I knew very well, when I received the circular," was the answer, "that everything was right; and yet my foolish wife declared that she had a presentiment that everything was wrong."

"Those women are terrible with their presentiments!" remarked the first speaker. "It was only a few days ago that my old mother dreamt that the great sow was dead; and when we went to look into the stye, we found it was well and hearty as you or I."

"No!—really?" ejaculated the other, very naturally surprised at this remarkable event. "But let us be quiet;—Bubbel is going on."

"The success of our lucifer-matches, gentlemen," resumed the Director, as soon as his last words had made a favourable impression upon his audience,—"the success of our lucifer-matches has exceeded my most sanguine expectations."

Here the worthy Director was welcomed with such a clapping of hands, thumping of sticks and heels upon the floor, and shouts of "Bravo!" and "Hear!" that he was compelled to conceal his emotions in his pocket-handkerchief; during which manifestation of his modesty he was observed to shake very much. The shareholders immediately conjectured that he was overpowered by the sensitiveness of his feelings: but a clerk, who was peeping through the key-hole of the door has since declared that Mr. Bubbel was nearly convulsed with laughter,—doubtless at the ludicrousness of some idea which just then flitted across his fertile imagination.

"Yes, gentlemen," continued Mr. Bubbel, after a long pause, during which his feelings and the dust, which had *both* been excited by the applause of the shareholders, had had due leisure to subside—"yes, gentlemen, I may safely say that the British and Foreign Equitable Lucifer-Match Company has altogether exceeded my most sanguine hopes."

"He is already going to offer a dividend, I declare," whispered a shareholder to his companions.

"I'll be bound he is!" coincided another.

"Fifteen per cent., perhaps," suggested a third.

"I'll buy your shares at ten per cent. premium, Slivers," said one fat old gentleman to a very thin young one.

"No, I thank'ee, Binks," was the immediate answer, accompanied by a shake of the head, that intimated the resolution of Mr. Slivers not to part with the slips of paper on which the words, "One hundred pounds" had been printed in large red letters in the midst of sky-blue flourishes.

"But it was not simply to inform you that my most sanguine hopes have been exceeded, gentlemen," continued the Director, after another pause, "that I convened this meeting. My object was far more important to the interests of the concern than that announcement; and I can assure you that it gives me the greatest pleasure thus to meet you all—well and happy—in the 'Board Room' of the Company's offices. My only regret is that you did not all take more shares in this profiting and profitable enterprise, at its commencement;—I regret it, because you are all personally known to me; and the hundreds of other shareholders who dwell in England, Germany, Belgium, and elsewhere, are total strangers to me. They however reap, or rather *will* reap, equal profits from the concern; and I could have wished that it would be my pleasant and pleasing duty to divide those profits amongst *you!* But regrets are useless, gentlemen: let us forget that we ever entertained them."

"I wish I had taken a few more shares," observed Mr. Binks to Mr. Slivers.

"So do I," said Mr. Slivers to Mr. Binks.

"I shall first make a few observations relative to my administration of the affairs of the Company, ere I unfold the object of this assembly," resumed Mr. Bubbel. "I have neglected nothing that could ensure the prosperity of the enterprise, and conduce to the interests of the shareholders. I put into force many ingenious schemes to give publicity to the matches; and I do not fear contradiction when I assert, that they all perfectly succeeded. For instance, I wrote a pamphlet containing a desperate libel upon another Lucifer-Match Company: an action was brought against us, and we had to pay fifteen hundred pounds for damages. This was all I wanted, and the sale of our lucifers instantly increased. Again—in pursuance of the same correct line of policy, I have kept open house to all individuals who are likely to benefit the undertaking; and in order to produce a favourable impression upon those persons, I furnished my house anew from top to bottom. I did not spare my wines: but, by buying a very large quantity at once, I saved the Company at least ten *per cent.* in this outlay. You therefore perceive, gentlemen, that I neglected nothing which might conduce to the interest of the concern. In order to devote as much time as possible to the business of the office, I purchased a cabriolet and horse, as my house is at a considerable distance from London—at Richmond, gentlemen: and to be punctual, I procured a handsome chronometer watch, which now lies, gentlemen, upon this desk. But all these *items* are duly entered upon the books of the Company;—and those books, gentlemen, are open to your inspection. From the observations which have just fallen from my lips, you will see that I have religiously fulfilled the pledges I made to you when I received the sacred trust you deposited in my hands. I promised to economise your money: the transaction of the wines shows that I have not been unmindful of the vow. I swore to adopt all legal measures to ensure the sale of our matches: an action for libel was immediately courted. I declared that I would devote myself entirely to the business of the Company: I purchased (as I before informed you) a cabriolet to ensure an early attendance here in the morning, and to enable me to remain at my post until within an hour of dinner time in the evening. What, gentlemen, has been the result of this unwearied attention—this conscientious behaviour—this prudent and politic line of conduct? Need I repeat the words I uttered just now? Shall I once more assert, in the most solemn manner that the British and Foreign Equitable Lucifer-Match Joint-Stock Company has exceeded my most sanguine expectations? Yes, gentlemen, it *has* done so! It has only swallowed up one hundred thousand pounds, the amount of the capital subscribed. It has existed for the period of six months; and it only requires a fresh advance of capital for the purpose of buying a whole forest to cut down to make into lucifer-matches."

As when a sudden squall sweeps the surface of a calm and waveless sea,—as when a boa-constrictor darts from a tree upon the unsuspicious traveller beneath;—or as the merchant receives the tidings that his bankers have failed,—so came this appalling communication to the assembled body of shareholders. All the members of that body were suddenly convulsed, as if they had possessed a common neck (in modern fulfilment of the wish of the ancient Roman) round which a rope had been twisted with the tightness of the eastern bow-string in the hands of the executioner: Mr. Bubbel marked the effect produced by his disclosures, and calmly played with the handsome chronometer watch before alluded to, like the animal that "hushed in grim repose, expects its evening prey."

"Binks, I'll sell my shares now," suddenly exclaimed Mr. Slivers, kindly relenting.

"Slivers, I'll not buy your shares now," as abruptly returned Mr. Binks, prudently reflecting.

"A hundred thousand pounds!" exclaimed another shareholder.

"All gone!" cried a fourth.

No. 17—The Empress Eugenie.

"Fifteen hundred pounds damages in the action!" ejaculated a fifth.

"And law expenses to boot," observed a sixth.

"He can't make us pay for the cab," said a seventh.

"Nor for the wines," added an eighth.

"Nor for his furniture," super-added a ninth.

"How much money did you receive in all?" demanded Mr. Binks of Mr. Bubbel.

"How much?" repeated that gentleman, with ineffable coolness: "why—exactly one hundred thousand pounds."

"And how much is there left?" inquired Mr. Slivers.

"One hundred thousand naughts," answered Mr. Bubbel, chuckling and rubbing his hands—probably with a view of imparting a little of his own good humour to his audience; a task in which he however experienced as miserable a failure as Lord John Russell did when he attempted to prove to the world that he was undeserving of the name of "Finality Jack."

"One hundred thousand pounds sterling in three *short* months!" exclaimed Slivers.

"I beg your pardon," cried Mr. Bubbel; "two of the months were *long* ones: this is the thirtieth day of September, of the year 1830, and consequently the Company existed in both July and August, each of which has thirty-one days."

"The time, then, has been short enough!" grumbled Mr. Binks.

"But what's to be done?" demanded several shareholders in a breath.

"Oh! that is very simple," said Mr. Bubbel. "All I require is an advance of capital—there is no other obstacle to the purchase of the forest. How much shall we say, then, gentlemen?" exclaimed the Director, rubbing his hands together.

"It's very easy for you to stand there asking for money and rubbing your hands," returned Mr. Slivers: "as for me, I wash mine of the whole transaction!"—and having uttered these words, he left his seat and the room.

"In that case, gentlemen," said the Director, "this meeting is dissolved. I wish you all good morning."

And having uttered these words, the celebrated Mr. Bubbel limped out of the room—hastened to his cabriolet which was waiting for him at the street-door—and proceeded to Radley's Hotel, where he ordered an excellent dinner, to which he had already invited two or three of his fashionable friends. Amongst these was Melville, who cared but little for the loss of a few hundred pounds which he had sustained in the British and Foreign Equitable Lucifer-Match Joint-Stock Company; and who forgot all the sage observations made to him in the morning by Mr. Thornton. He returned home at a very late hour, in a dreadful state of intoxication, and found Mr. Tibbatts awaiting his return in his study.

* * * * * *
* * * * *

"My dear Melville, how are you?" exclaimed M. Tibbatts, rising from a chair in which he had ensconced himself; "you seem as happy as Apicius after a good dinner."

"Mr. Tibbatts," began Melville, recalling to mind his promise to his wife not to see this man any more; "you——"

"What! is it thus that you ceremoniously address your old friend?" interrupted Tibbatts. "You see I did not use any ceremony with you. I have been waiting upwards of two hours for you; and I resolved to make myself comfortable."

He pointed towards the table: and Melville saw that a decanter of wine and a glass stood before his visitor.

"I ordered it up myself," said Tibbatts: "I thought I might take that liberty."

"Well—what do you require of me?" demanded our hero, less impatiently than before.

"Nay—you must not be cross," cried Tibbatts. "Come—show me a welcome, or I shall depart at once. Pledge me in this."

He filled two glasses—handed one to Melville—and took the other himself. Victor gazed at him for a minute, and then tossed off the contents of his glass. In the next moment he stretched forth his hand to Tibbatts, and called him by the most familiar and endearing names.

"Well—I heard you famously eulogized the other night," said Tibbatts, endeavouring to turn the conversation upon a subject which he knew would flatter the weak side of his companion.

"Indeed!" said Melville, flinging himself into an arm-chair, and preparing to converse and drink with Tibbatts on a footing of perfect intimacy.

"Ah! at a gay party, where there were some very clever fellows; and they a l agreed that you are one of the first writers of the day," continued Titus, as he sipped his wine.

"I am not vain," stammered Victor: "but still one likes to hear what the public says of one's writings. That is only natural."

"Here is success to your next work," cried Tibbatts. "If it be like the others, it will beat Cicero for eloquence and Tacitus for terseness."

"Your health, Tibbatts," said Melville, perfectly delighted with this mellifluous flattery.

"By the way, my dear fellow," cried the visitor, after a moment's pause, "you can do me a little favour if you like. I don't want to bother you about money concerns—you have already lent me some—we will settle one of these days: but here is a little thing to which if you just put your name, I shall be excessively obliged. If not—nothing but ruin, absolute ruin stares me in the face; and if you do, I shall make a fortune."

As he uttered these words, Tibbatts handed a long slip of paper to Melville, who had just sense enough left to see that it was a bill of exchange: he could not, however, precisely define the writing or figures upon it, and appealed to his visitor relative to the amount.

"Oh! only a paltry hundred and fifty," returned Tibbatts hastily. "All you have to do is just to write your name across it for me—make it payable at your banker's—and the thing is done."

Melville hesitated for a moment, intoxicated as he was; and Tibbatts coolly filled the glasses. Our hero drank off the contents of one which stood near him, and then seized the pen which Tibbatts presented to him.

At that moment the door of the room slowly opened, and Louise entered. Her countenance was deadly pale — the traces of tears were visible upon her cheeks—and her lips quivered with alarm and emotion. She held her hands clasped before her, and her whole appearance wore an air of such deep melancholy, that it would have melted the heart of an anchorite. Yet so lovely was she in her mournfulness, that it seemed as if all the rudest shocks of adversity would fail to injure or efface one particle of the transcendent beauties of that fair creature's person. There was such grace in her attitudes, and such meekness in her manners, that a more interesting being was never condemned to shiver at the cold blasts of this rude world's storms. The fancy of poesy would almost have imagined that the direst grief would have turned to smiles at her presence.

Melville turned round to see who was entering the room; and he started when he saw that it was his wife.

"My dear Louise," said he, "I will join you directly in the drawing-room. I have business with this gentleman."

"It is as I was afraid it would be," she murmured; and then she stood motionless and speechless for some minutes, uncertain what to say or do.

In the meantime Tibbatts sat uneasily in his chair, and Melville was partially sobered by the sudden appearance of his wife.

Louise at length cast her eyes towards the table, and perceived the bill of exchange. Her first allusion had been made to her husband's inebriate condition,—an allusion which only the excess of her grief could have forced from her lips: but when she saw that document thus lying prepared for his signature, and knew just so much of business as to make her aware of its purpose and design, she suddenly burst forth into a violent flood of tears, and sank at the feet of her husband, exclaiming, "O Victor! — do not ruin your dear, dear children!"

This appeal of a tender mother in favour of her innocent and beloved offspring, produced only that effect which such appeals invariably do upon the man whose intellect is impaired with wine, and whose tender sympathies are temporarily destroyed by the same cause. Melville was irritated at what he termed a "scene," and sharply rebuked his wife for her conduct.

"O Victor!" she exclaimed, in a voice that was scarcely audible amidst the deep sobs that were convulsing her bosom, "I would not reproach—but your words pierce like an arrow to my heart. You have been guilty of unkindness towards me, because I pleaded for my children's sake,—and you have made my very heart bleed,—that heart which always was, and always will be faithful to you! Oh! you should not sully such love as mine with the breath of suspicion or selfishness. Do you no onger love me yourself? Oh! speak—speak!"

The suspicion of the tender and affectionate wife was founded upon truth: intemperance had gradually undermined the affection of Victor for his wife. His soul had lost the flower of its magnanimous youth;—its sympathies were deadened: and a secret remorse rendered it melancholy without preserving it from fresh faults. Oh! doubtless there is in love a sanctuary into which we cannot return when we have made one false step beyond its boundary; —and the barrier which separates us from evil, and which we throw down, cannot be raised again. Error succeeds error—outrage follows upon outrage—and bitterness increases like a torrent whose embankments have given way. Who can define the termination of these ravages? Still never had the conduct of Melville robbed the soul of Louise of the smallest portion of that enthusiasm which characterized her love. Alas! she was so pure and virtuous in mind, that she never should have hoped to have found a heart worthy of her,—never could she have inspired a love that would correspond with her own; because never could worship be worthy of her divinity! If men do not yet know the true nature of that homage which is pleasing to the Almighty, how can they find upon earth that grain of pure incense, the perfume of which has not as yet ascended to heaven?

The appeal made to Melville was made in vain. He surveyed his wife with an angry countenance;—she reiterated her supplication in the name of her children—his countenance relaxed not from its sternness—and when she almost fell senseless at his feet in a paroxysm of grief, he thrust her from him,—for he was under the influence of the demon of intemperance!

Suddenly Louise exerted an almost superhuman courage over herself; for she remembered that a third person was in the room, and that she had probably given way to her emotions somewhat unseasonably. She rose—cast a look of the deepest, deepest despair upon her husband—and then rushed precipitately out of the apartment, evidently unable any longer to restrain the ebullition of her agonizing feelings.

Melville was annoyed at what had taken place; and partly from a feeling of obstinacy, and partly because he did not choose to seem to Tibbatts to be led by his wife, he unhesitatingly affixed his name to the bill which lay before him. Thus did he sacrifice every feeling of humility and of love to the friend who had proved so treacherous once,—while the tender wife, who had presented him with all her fortune and the endearments of all her attachment, was weeping bitter, burning tears over her two innocent children, in a chamber at a little distance!

When Mr. Tibbatts had obtained all he required, he took his departure, laughing covertly at the facility with which he had induced his victim to comply with his request.

As soon as he was gone, Melville drew his chair near the fire, and endeavoured to reflect upon the scene that had just taken place. Amidst the thousands of vague ideas which filled his imagination, there was one which he

did not like to contemplate. He felt that he dealt brutally—inhumanly to the woman who loved him so tenderly, and so well,—who had visited him in his dungeon, who had clung to him when all the world deserted him, and who had laid her fortune at his feet;—and he was ashamed of his conduct,—ashamed, even amidst the recklessness and the indifference which invariably characterize the mind under the accursed influence of liquor.

It seems that Melville must have fallen asleep in his chair, in the midst of his ruminations, and that, by some sudden movement, he threw one of the candles down upon a heap of papers lying on the table. It is, however, certain that he awoke—started up—and experienced a strange sensation which appeared akin to suffocation. He rubbed his eyes—a noise like that of a distant torrent fell upon his ears; and to his horror he found that the room was enveloped in flames. Uncertain how to act, he rushed wildly towards the door, and thence into the passage, exclaiming, "Fire! fire!" in a tone of agony and alarm. A natural impulse drove him to the chamber of his wife, whom he found weeping over her two children. The innocents were found sleeping together in a little bed at the foot of her own; and it seemed a sin to disturb that soft and guileless slumber. Louise started up in a state of horrible suspense, when the portending cry of her husband fell upon her ears.

"Fire! fire! Louise," he exclaimed. "For God's sake, save the children."

He then ran back again into the passage to summon the servants; and by this time the whole house was filled with a dense volume of smoke. The table in Melville's study stood near a book-case, the wood-work of which was probably the first object to catch the fire from the table, and afford food for the devouring element. Thus, in the course of a very few minutes, the whole room was in flames; and the devastating rage of the infuriate devourer was speedily communicated to the adjacent premises.

And then arose throughout the spacious dwelling that bustle and confusion, and those wild cries, which only added to the terror of the scene. Servants flew about in all directions, scarcely knowing what course to adopt—unless, indeed, it were to save their own property from the fury of the destroyer. An alarm was quickly spread in the neighbourhood; the engines of the vicinity arrived; the crowds collected in the street; and all the awful solemnity and the wild confusion attendant upon a conflagration of the kind, were there displayed. The red volumes of flame poured forth from the windows, and made the surrounding darkness of the night the more profound; the flickering glare played upon the countenances of the myriads of persons assembled in the street;—and the cracking of beams, the fall of bricks, and the roar of the destroying element, formed a dread combination of sounds for the ears of those present.

Melville was quite sobered by the terrible occurrence of which he felt persuaded that he was the cause. He ran to the study with the view of ascertaining whether it would be possible to extinguish the fire; and when he saw that this hope was useless, he returned to the chamber of his wife, whom he found in a state bordering upon distraction. The poor young woman was paralysed with alarm, and unable to exert herself. Melville implored her to rise and save the children: he scarcely knew what he said to her. Seeing that there was no time to be lost, he caught his wife in one arm, and then hesitated which child to take in the other. He then ran towards the door, to see if any succour were at hand: but no one hastened to his assistance. He ran back again towards the spot where his wife and children were: he again took Louise in one arm, and he endeavoured to clasp the children in the other, but he could not. They were both awake, and were crying bitterly—they scarcely knew why. Determined to save one, and return for the other, he rushed out of the room with his wife and the little boy. He precipitated himself down the stairs as quickly as he could—the dense volumes of smoke nearly blinded him—and he saw with sentiments of indescribable horror, that the fire was gaining upon the room communicating with the staircase on the second floor, where he had left his child. He succeeded in reaching the street—he there deposited his wife and little boy upon the steps of the front door, and rushed once more amidst the burning ruins to rescue his infant daughter.

With the speed of lightning did he climb the stairs to the first floor; and there he paused for an instant to recover breath, for the smoke almost suffocated him. He looked upwards—the flight of steps above his head was enveloped in flames; and burning pieces of wood were falling in all directions. He hesitated no longer—a sensation of unutterable alarm seized upon him as he took that transitory survey of the scene—and he turned to ascend the stairs. But a volume of flame opposed his passage: he attempted to force his way through it; and the heat was intolerable. The cries of his daughter at that instant met his ears: they sounded like the cries of a dying child.

"Papa! papa!" screamed the little being;—and that tender appellation rang in his ears.

He again rushed forward to ascend the stairs—he was determined to dare all to save that dear, dear child who was thus imploring his succour. But, Oh—horror! the staircase gave way—the burning beams fell with a tremendous crash, and no means of access to the floor were now left. Melville tore his hair with the fury of a maniac—he raved—he cursed—he foamed at the mouth! The flames drove him from the spot where he stood, down several steps; and, like a madman, did he stand upon the uppermost step that was left of the ruined stairs, shrieking amid the roar of the devouring element, "My child! my child!"

Suddenly he felt a dizziness come over him—the smoke nearly suffocated him; and, yielding to the impulse which prompts us to cling to life in all circumstances, he rushed down the steps towards the hall.

Louise hastened to meet him: she was now recovered, and had anxiously awaited his return.

"My daughter! my daughter!" she exclaimed; "where is she?"

"Oh, God!—oh, horror!" ejaculated Melville; "I am the murderer of my own child!"

* * * * *

* * * *

"My child! my child!" echoed Louise, catching up the death-note uttered by her husband, and experiencing in that moment of unutterable alarm, all the anguish of a bereaved mother.

She dared not ask her husband any more: she read upon his countenance—she saw in his manner —she heard in his words, all the history of that dear infant, swallowed up, amidst its cries and its prattling, in the ruins of the house. And how must that poor child have suffered in the embrace of the terrible element! —Oh! she dared not think of its tortures: but she pressed the boy that was left to her in an agony of woe, to her arms.

The fire gained upon the building with fearful rapidity; and, in spite of the exertions of the firemen, the entire house was consumed. It was with the greatest difficulty that the adjacent dwellings were saved from the contagious fury of the element: but all Melville's beautiful furniture was swallowed up in the ruins. His plate and jewels were preserved; and amidst the latter were the ornaments worn by Louise's deceased mother, and which Captain Dorvalliers had left to his adopted daughter. But the jewel most valued—the brightest ornament of the domestic circle—one of the dearest treasures, was lost in the conflagration, —never to be restored: and that was the sweet girl, with the blue eyes like its mother's eyes, the innocent smile, the curling flaxen hair, and the soft winning and affectionate ways!

We must not pause to depict the grief of the unhappy parents on account of this loss. Melville was some time before he was aroused from a state of lethargy to a sense of the necessity of taking his family to some temporary residence; and then he seemed as if his intellects had nearly forsaken him. He asked for brandy: —and when some one in the crowd was foolish enough to comply with his request, he drank deeply of the liquor that was offered to him.

He proceeded with Louise, his remaining child, and his servants to an adjacent hotel; and on the following morning, he sat down to look into the state of his affairs. He saw that he was on the eve of absolute ruin, unless he at once adopted arrangements and plans of economy for the future; and he proposed to his deeply afflicted wife to move a short distance into the country.

Louise was almost heart-broken at the terrible loss which she had sustained: but she still felt that she had a duty to perform to the child that lived. She accordingly exerted herself to think upon the plans proposed by her husband: and she ventured to suggest that a return to her own native France would probably be the best means, for the moment, of recovering from the shock which they had sustained by the loss of their property, and the horrible fate of their daughter. Melville however represented to his wife that his literary interests required his residence in England; and they accordingly determined to take a small house in the neighbourhood of London. Louise ventured to exact a promise from her husband that he would not see Tibbatts again; and the readiness with which he solemnly gave it re-assured the afflicted wife.

A cottage was hired in the vicinity of the metropolis; and for some weeks Melville seemed to have totally abjured all desire to enter into society or to resume the gay life he had lately led. He was deeply impressed with the idea that he had indirectly caused the death of his child; and the last cries of that innocent little being constantly rang in his ears.

But in progress of time Melville found his way to a public-house in the neighbourhood of his new dwelling; and he, who so lately had been the ornament of literary circles, now became the great man in a tavern parlour. He there found people who were ready to treat him with the utmost deference and respect, because he treated them to liquor; and he soon began to think that he had discovered a very pleasant means not only of passing away his time, but also of drowning his cares. Louise ventured again to remonstrate with him upon his recurrence to the fatal habit of intemperance: but he heeded not her earnest prayers—he preferred the society of the tavern to the domestic peace of his own house,—and he thus plunged a step lower in the downward path he was taking towards the realms of irretrievable ruin.

One evening he was sitting in his accustomed corner in the tavern-parlour, smoking a long clay pipe, and drinking hot brandy-and-water, with about a dozen other individuals of all appearances and avocations; and the discussion upon politics was on this occasion somewhat warm.

"Well," exclaimed a man, who was out at the elbows, and who spoke very much as if he were also out of his senses, "all I can say is that England is the freest country in the world; and so here goes for Old England!"

And as he uttered these words, he flourished a quart-pot in his hand, and then imbibed a considerable portion of its contents, by way of drinking the health of "the freest nation in the world."

"Well, you know nothing at all about it now, Ben," cried another individual, who wore a straw hat: "we're all a parcel of slaves; and there's no more liberty in this country than there is among the West India negroes—nor half so much!"

"Yes, there is, though," cried the first speaker: "wot can't you do in this here blessed country? Can't you get as drunk as an owl for about a shilling or eighteen-pence, and ain't that liberty?"

"And the beak fines you five bob for it on the following morning," said the other: "that's your *liberty*, is it?"

"Ax that there gen'leman there," said Ben, "what he thinks on it?"

"Who—I?" exclaimed Melville: "why—my opinion is that England is the land of liberty?"

He could not proceed any further at th

moment; for a violent clapping of hands, shouting, and hurraing, welcomed this observation, to the entire discomfiture of the man in the straw hat, who, by the way, was the only person that entertained a correct opinion upon the subject amongst the whole company.

"Yes," said Melville, rising with all the grandeur of the parlour-orator of a public-house,—"yes, gentlemen, I think that I may safely congratulate you upon being inhabitants of the freest country in the world. Here, gentlemen, the laws are equally distributed—here property is respected—here personal freedom is safe,—and here no one can be arrested without the judgment of his peers, according to the glorious provisions of that bulwark of English liberty, the Magna Charta."

A tremendous shout of applause welcomed this speech; and Melville was enjoying the welcome odour of flattery, when the door was gently opened, and in walked a very singular-looking person, with a cut-away green coat on his back, an immense stick in his hand, a pair of dirty-white pantaloons, a broad-brimmed hat, and a flashing silk waistcoat. He was followed at a little distance by a man who carried a larger club-stick still, who wore a dirtier pair of trousers still, who looked more singular still, and who had the most hang-dog countenance that ever was seen.

"Is Mr. Melville here?" inquired the first man, looking inquiringly round the room.

"That is my name," said our hero.

"Oh! it be—eh?" cried the other. "Oh! wery well:—Bill, keep the door, will'ee?"

This observation was addressed to the second stranger, who immediately closed the door, and placed his back against it.

"The fact o' the matter is," said the first of these queer-looking people, "I've got a writ agin you. My name is Nabem—that there is my man, Bill Holdemorl—this here is the copy o' the writ—and that is the 'riginal."

"A writ!" cried Melville: "what do you mean. Impossible!"

"Oh! yes—I des say it be impossible," ejaculated Mr. Nabem:—"don't you think it be, Bill?"

"Not knowing, can't say," answered Mr. William Holdemorl, with a facetious wink at the company, by whom this scene was surveyed with the deepest interest.

"Yes—it's all black and white howsomever," said Mr. Nabem. "Here you air, you see—fifteen hundred pounds. I'll tell'ee wot it's for, too. Do you know a feller o' the name o' Tibbatts?"

"Tibbatts! Tibbatts!" ejaculated Melville, clashing his hands despairingly against his brows: "that man is destined to be my ruin."

"Well, then, it's for a bill of his'n," said the sheriff's officer; "isn't it, Bill?"

"Wouldn't take a davy on it," was the laconic reply; "'cos it may be forged."

"Now, then, look sharp," said Mr. Nabem. "Wery sorry, sir, to take you away from sich excellent company,"—and here Mr. Nabem nodded his head in a free and easy style to the guests present: "but it can't be helped—can Bill?"

"Can't indeed," returned the man, shaking his own head with a grim smile, as he responded to this fresh apostrophe on the part of his master.

"How shall we go to town—jarvey, or tramp it?" cried Mr. Nabem.

"What! must I accompany you, then?" demanded Melville, totally unaware of what line of conduct to pursue.

"Must you!" shouted Mr. Nabem, surveying our hero with an air of the most ineffable contempt; "must you? In course you must,—musn't he, Bill?"

"In course," was the reply.

"We've got a long way to go—and so we'll have summut short fust," observed Mr. Nabem. "Won't we, Bill?"

"Don't care if I do," returned Mr. Holdemorl.

Two drams were brought according to order; and the sheriff's officer pretended to be looking at a picture while the landlord waited to be paid for them. Melville accordingly took the hint, and liquidated the amount of the liquids.

"I say," said the man with the straw hat on, "this is rather a queer specimen of your blessed liberty in this country according to the Great Charta. The great humbug I call it; for here you are arrested on a man's oath, and without any judgment of your peers."

"I am ready to follow you," said Melville, impatiently. "I see that pot-house oratory is not always truth. Good evening, gentlemen: you will often meet here, and amuse yourselves while I am languishing in a debtor's prison. But how," he added, forgetting that he was speaking before strangers, and in a tone of the deepest agony,—"Oh! how can I break this to poor Louise?"

And as he uttered these words, Melville followed Mr. Nabem out of the tavern-parlour, while Mr. Holdemorl brought up the rear.

* * * * *

* * * *

It seems to be a strange method of making a man pay his debts, by shutting him up in prison;—or rather, it is a cruel and unnecessary punishment inflicted upon an individual, for no possible good. There is not one man out of a hundred who is forced by incarceration to liquidate his debts; and laws should not be made for the minority, but for the mass. Where this system compels one to disgorge the money which he may have secreted by years of iniquity, it reduces thousands to beggary. Most people are under the necessity of obtaining their livelihood by their trade or profession: and imprisonment curtails all the resources of those occupations. But to our tale.

Melville implored Messrs. Nabem and Holdemorl to allow him to proceed first to his little cottage and break the dread news to his wife, before he accompanied them to the lock-up house in London. This request was backed by the donation of a few shillings; and a reluctant consent was at length accorded. We shall not attempt to describe the grief of the young lady at the terrible announcement. She clasped her little boy to her arms, and already seemed to look upon him as if he were an orphan. She then clung wildly to her husband, and declared that nothing should separate her

from him, or prevent her following him to gaol!

Suddenly a thought struck her.

"For how much is the debt?" she demanded, a ray of hope animating her beautiful countenance.

"Oh! it is for Tibbatts' bill—only a hundred and fifty pounds," he replied.

"A hundred and fifty pounds!" ejaculated the young wife, with an exclamation of joy: "my mother's ornaments will produce nearly that sum; and those jewels—the only ones which I have left—together with the money now in the house, will make up the amount required."

This dialogue took place in the French language; and Louise was about to put her plan into execution, when Melville said to the officer, "If you wait for an hour or so, the hundred and fifty pounds shall be paid to you. I shall not sleep in gaol to-night."

"Hundred and fifty pounds!" cried Mr. Nabem, with a look of the most sovereign contempt at our hero: "what gen'leman ever thought o' going to quod for such a sum as that there? But this one, for wich you are to be laid up in lavender, is fifteen hundred pounds. Ain't it, Bill?"

Mr. Holdemorl nodded an affirmative, as he twisted a battered gossamer about in his hands: and Louise fell almost senseless upon a chair as these words met her ears. A flood of tears at length relieved her:—and, with a sorrowful heart, she put on her bonnet and shawl, for the purpose of accompanying her husband to his sad destination. Mr. Holdemorl was now despatched to fetch a hackney-coach; and in a short time the whole party was on the way towards the residence of Mr. Nabem, Chancery Lane.

During the ride, Melville observed a sullen silence. When the officer had intimated the amount for which he was arrested, he made no comment,—not a word escaped his lips, because he instantly comprehended the cheat that had been practised on him by Tibbatts. He saw that he was trampled under foot—ruined—undone;—he knew that he had a young and lovely wife, and a little child whom he had brought to distress;—and he felt that his own dissolute and degraded habits were the cause of all that misery. His spirit was almost broken within him;—and he did not even feel a sufficiency of courage in his soul to thank the affectionate wife who would not desert him in the hour of his tribulation and despair!

At the expiration of about an hour and a half, the vehicle stopped at the door of the lock-up house in Chancery Lane. Mr. Nabem alighted first, and Melville was desired to follow him. Holdemorl descended next; and Louise was left to follow as she could, with the boy in her arms. As the clock of St. Dunstan's in Fleet Street struck the hour of midnight, the unfortunate young man ascended the flight of narrow stone steps leading to the door of Mr. Nabem's establishment, which stands at the corner of a carriage gateway, and commands a pleasing view of a butcher's shop on the other side of the street.

Melville was conducted to a bed-room on the second floor, and his family were allowed to remain with him at the express solicitation of Mr. Holdemorl, who appealed to his superior to grant that favour on the payment of two sovereigns on the spot. The same laws that provide prisons and temporary places of incarceration for debtors, have forgotten to legislate against the extortions and preposterous amounts of fees which make them poorer than they were before, and place the chance of payment at a greater distance than ever: the process of arrest frequently costs an unfortunate man, in the long run, much more than the sum for which his body was captured!

The room to which Melville and his wife, with their little boy, were shown, was tolerably well furnished, but excessively dirty. The dust was an inch thick upon the massive gilt frames of some pictures representing naval engagements; and the mantel-ornaments were enveloped in a similar hazy cloud. The carpet was stained and soiled with grease: the table-cloth was singed in various parts. The wood-work round the fire-place was perforated with a hot poker every here and there; and the poker itself was worn away at the end by the repetition of times it had been heated in the fire. These trivial circumstances spoke volumes concerning those who inhabited *that* room in *that* sponging-house. The mind, harassed by a thousand evils, and tormented by the anticipation of more, finds no amusement in books, and whiles away the time in the most childish pursuits. Hearts are broken in those walls—ay, irrecoverably robbed of peace, of happiness, and even of hope! The handsome furniture of the rooms enveloped in dust, are emblems of the noble heart surrounded by the cobwebs of despair. Some may imagine, but none can describe, the acuteness—the bitterness—the agony of woe that has often been experienced in that chamber!

The bed in that apartment was pressed only by the form of the little child on the night of Melville's arrest. The unhappy father paced the room bemoaning his fate: and the heart-broken wife remained seated upon a chair at the barred window, gazing listlessly upon the lamp opposite. The morning dawned—cold—cheerless—and rainy; and, although many hours had passed away since his arrival at the lock-up house, Melville was as yet undecided how to act.

"A prison!" he exclaimed, as he walked up and down the room; "a prison! and to take my wife and my child to a prison!"

And this was all that he said to himself; but he repeated these words very—very often. They seemed to express the only idea that retained any degree of consistency in his mind.

Wearily passed away the time; and at length a dirty servant-girl entered the room to light the fire. She seemed astonished at finding the occupants of the room already dressed; and then her surprise was increased, when she perceived, by a glance towards the couch, that they had not retired to rest at all. She did not however make any observation, but proceeded to light the fire.

At eight o'clock this same dirty servant-girl

brought up a breakfast-tray, and spread the table for the morning's meal. The little boy ate heartily, and laughed, and prattled, and expressed his surprise that "papa had changed his house:"—for, alas! the poor little fellow knew not that the parents, who were kind to him, were the victims of an accursed law!

But the morning's meal was untasted by either Melville or his wife; and from time to time those two disconsolate beings exchanged looks of sorrow, and a few words of vain consolation.

Suddenly the door opened, and Mr. Tibbatts entered the room.

"Ah! booked at last!" cried that gentleman, who was attired in the very height of fashion, and about whose person there was enough jewellery to have paid a fifth of Melville's debt.

"Through *you* I am imprisoned, villain!" ejaculated Melville, eyeing with furious indignation the man who so coolly seated himself in that abode of sorrow.

"Through me—how?" demanded Mr. Tibbatts, affecting a tone of astonishment. "It is your acceptance to the bill, is it not?"

"Alas! too well I have reason to curse the hour of my acquaintance with you!" cried Melville. "Wretch—you cheated me out of that bill—you falsified the amount—you have betrayed my confidence in you, like a villain, as you are!"

"Calm yourself, my dear Melville," said Tibbatts, very coolly; "I can pardon a little excitement, under the circumstances. Marius might have felt himself annoyed, when sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage; and Victor Melville may certainly entertain the same feeling in a sponging-house. But—after all—it is your own fault: you should have paid the bill."

"I never received the value for it," cried Melville, furiously.

"Oh! I forget all about the transaction," said Mr. Tibbatts, playing with a beautiful watch-chain: "but my object in calling upon you is to see what you intend to do. You know my name is at the back of the bill; and I shall be sued unless something is done. Now, I tell you what I can do——"

"What—what?" ejaculated Louise: "speak —sir,—can you liberate my husband? Oh! if you can—I will forget all the past—I will call you our friend, our benefactor——"

"Silence, Louise!" cried Melville. "The miscreant cannot liberate me! He has encompassed me round about with his infernal machinations—he has ensared me in his toils—and I have no hope but a debtor's gaol, and a debtor's straw!"

"Nonsense!" cried Tibbatts, affecting a laugh: "come pay a thousand pounds, and you shall have your discharge."

"A thousand pounds!" exclaimed Melville, contemptuously: "all my fortune is swallowed up!"

"Well—seven hundred and fifty then?" proceeded Titus.

"No—no—I cannot!" responded Victor, terribly excited.

"Say five hundred, and there's an end of the whole affair. We will dine together at the Piazza Hotel in the evening, and forget all these little unpleasant matters," said Tibbatts, coaxingly.

"Not one shilling will I pay, were I worth millions!" ejaculated Melville, dashing his clenched fist violently upon the table. "I have been ruined as much by you as by my own vices—I have been deceived, cheated, swindled by you,—and I will not enrich you more at my expense! No—I will go to the prison that awaits me, and relieve myself from this liability by the law that frees the honest debtor from imprisonment, after a few weeks' delay."

"Such is your intention?" cried Tibbatts, interrogatively.

"Neither hell nor heaven shall induce me to change my mind!" said Melville. "And now, villain—depart—leave this room,—irritate me no longer with your presence! If you stay I am capable of doing you an injury—for I feel that I am not master of my own passions!"

"Very well," cried Tibbatts, somewhat alarmed by the frantic manner of the young man; "you will soon grow tired of your sojourn in the King's Bench—Spike Island, we call it! Good bye, my dear fellow; when you want to get out, just write me a line—Captain Tibbatts, Stephen's Hotel, Bond Street—and I'll do all I can to serve you. Mind you don't forget the *Captain*—that is my rank for the moment!"

And having delivered himself of this speech, Mr. Tibbatts turned upon his heel, and walked gently out of the room. Louise was about to hasten after him, to implore him to assist her husband in his present embarrassment: but Melville, who divined her intentions, held her back, exclaiming, "Say not a word in my behalf, Louise—I conjure, I command you! I would sooner die in a gaol than lay myself under the slightest obligation to that miscreant!"

* * * * *
* * * *

It was about five o'clock in the evening that Melville arrived at the Fleet Prison in the custody of the tipstaff. Louise had returned to the cottage, to dispose of the property, and realize as much money as the wrecks of their former magnificence would produce;—and, as Melville did not expect to "get settled" in his new abode that evening, it was arranged that his wife and child should remain at their own house for that last night of their possession of *a home!*

Melville was admitted into a species of lobby, between two doors; a part of which said lobby was enclosed by a wooden partition breast-high, and served as a kind of office. Two somewhat stout men were engaged in keeping the doors: one had very black hair, and the other grey hair; and both took a good long stare at Melville as he entered the place. They however surveyed him with considerably more respect, when they espied the heavy portmanteau which a ticket-porter had brought on his shoulder from Chancery Lane.

The turnkey with the grey hair abandoned his seat upon a stool behind the door com-

No. 18.—The Empress Eugenie.

municating with one of the prison yards, which is denominated the "painted ground," and proceeded to register Melville's name in a large book, the leaves of which had been well-thumbed and dogs'-eared. The entrance fees were then solicited; and a very shabby individual, with excessively porous shoes, a coat well ventilated at the elbows, no crown to his hat, and probably not half a one in his pocket, undertook to conduct Melville to the crier, who had "a splendid room to dispose of."

Melville followed his guide into the main-building of the prison, at the entrance to which two or three gentlemen were leaning against the arch, smoking cigars; and presently the crier was fished out of a baronet's chamber, where he was drinking half-and-half with the baronet himself and some of the baronet's friends. It was some time before the crier could quite collect his ideas in such a way as to be able to transact any business at all;—and, when he did, he accompanied all he said with so many rhetorical flourishes, that Melville could not help thinking that he was considerably addicted to "enormous lying."

A bargain was struck with a decayed linen-draper, who occupied a room in the uppermost gallery of all, and who consented to resign it upon payment of one guinea per week. The crier then exacted six shillings in advance for the hebdomadal hire of furniture for the aforesaid room; and Melville was safely installed in his new abode by seven o'clock in the evening.

"Where can I get some dinner?" inquired Melville. "Is there any place——"

"*Is there?*" repeated the crier, in deep indignation that the accommodation of the prison should have been even suspected for a moment: "in course there be! Come along, and I'll introduce you to the coffee-house."

Melville was about to follow the crier, when the latter turned abruptly round, and said, "But mind and always lock your door, and don't go leavin' the key in the lock, or droppin' it out o' your pocket, or no sich games as that there, cos there's a lord as lives in the next room to you, and, if he caught your room-door open, he'd prig every bit of coal in your cupboard."

"A lord!" ejaculated Melville.

"Yes—a lord, to be sure," returned the crier.

"A lord steal coals!" cried Melville, unable to divest himself of the surprise into which this communication plunged him.

"Steal coals!" said the crier: "why, in course he would—and anything else too as was worth cribbing. 'Twas but the other day—this day week, I think—that he found a feller's door open, and walked off with a leg o' mutton, taturs and all! Yes—*that* I'm blowed if he didn't!"—and, having uttered these words, the crier led the way to the coffee-house, which was only two rooms turned into one, and fitted up with benches and tables. At the end of this apartment there was a small enclosure, with a green-baize covered table in it; and this was the wine-room.

"Ain't *this* a place?" continued the crier, as he surveyed the dark and dirty nook with infinite admiration: "blest if I don't think that vith sich comforts as this here, a man's better off in quod than he is out."

Melville bestowed a remuneration upon the crier, and then ordered something to be got ready for his dinner. While this command was being complied with, he desired a bottle of wine to be brought;—then, as no one was there besides himself at the moment, he amused himself with the liquor, which enabled him to forget in an artificial and injurious excitement all the wretchedness of his real condition.

While he was sipping his wine, with that taste and relish which unfortunately attend upon the use of the fascinating liquor, the door of the room was suddenly opened, and three individuals entered and seated themselves at the farther end of the table.

"Well—what shall we have?" said one, who was a young gentleman, with a white hat, fustian shooting jacket, and corduroy unmentionables.

"I don't care what it is," said the second, who was a very stout man of middle age, and who was attired in a very shabby suit of black.

"Sherry, I say," cried the third;—and this speaker was a tall thin man, without a coat, but with a buff waistcoat and Oxford-mixed trousers.

"Well—let it be sherry," coincided the first speaker;—and the landlord of the coffee-house executed the order as soon as he saw the amount thereof placed upon the table beforehand.

The three individuals drank each a glass of wine, saying, "Well, here's to us," as they did so; and then they all had a good stare at Melville; and as this stare was simultaneous on their part, and somewhat long—covering the space probably of three minutes—our hero felt somewhat abashed.

"New-comer, I presume, sir?" said the stout gentleman in seedy black.

Melville replied in the affirmative.

"Ah! prison's a rum place," observed the stout man, shaking his head mysteriously, and casting an appealing glance towards his companions: "but it's a blessin' it's no wuss."

"So it is," cried the gentleman without a coat. "Hope you won't be here for long, sir?"

"I hope not too," said Melville, with a sigh; "but no one can say."

"Nor more they can," coincided the stout gentleman, filling his own glass and that of his companions.

At this moment Melville's dinner made its appearance; and the conversation languished while he partook of it. As soon as the things were cleared away, the discourse was resumed.

"Pr'aps you'll jine us in a little negus, sir," said the gentleman in the fustian coat, so soon as all the wine was disposed of.

"I should prefer punch," returned Melville.

"Can't be had *here*—'gainst regulation," said the stout gentleman mysteriously: "but I can take you to a crib where we can get as decent a glass of lush as anywhere in the whole place."

These words were uttered in a low tone of voice; and Melville was about to refuse the invitation. But the first good impulse was

superseded by the idea of the loneliness of his condition within those walls: and he accordingly accepted the proposal. The three friends, who were all prisoners as well as himself, then rose, and led the way to a room in the same gallery, and which was fitted up with some regard to comfort.

"Well, Bill," said the stout gentleman to a little, thin, shrivelled old man, who seemed to be the tenant of this chamber; "we've come to give your whistling-shop a turn to-night."

"Yes—but if you're come to give me such a turn as you did Tom Phillips the other night—drinking sixteen bobs' worth o' grog, an' boltin' vithout payin' a brown,—I sha'nt thank 'ee," was the reply.

"You old fool," cried the stout gentleman, with a terrible imprecation against the eyes of the old man,—"we know what we're about."

He then desired Melville to sit down and make himself quite at home; and, by way of setting an example, he coolly knocked off the old man's hat, which this individual had kept on. The old man did not dare grumble aloud: he however muttered something between his teeth, at which the stout person seemed quite indifferent. Indeed, there was so much Newgate freedom and Billingsgate ease of manner with the three gentlemen, that Melville began to feel himself quite upon familiar terms with them.

The stout gentleman undertook to brew a mighty jorum of rum-punch in a hand-basin used in that room on such occasions; and, when the liquor was poured out and handed round, it was pronounced to be excellent. The old man was then sent for some cigars; and when he returned, his guests made themselves as comfortable as they could.

When the first basin, or bowl of punch was discussed, a second was proposed; and, as Melville's brain now began to feel the effects of the liquor, his companions doubtless thought it a fine opportunity to suggest a game of cards. The stout gentleman, "by a very extraordinary coincidence," as he declared, *happened* to have a pack in his pocket;—and the party commenced a rubber of whist. But although whist was the denomination of the game, noise was the order of the evening.

"How shall we play?" said the stout gentleman.

"Oh! half-crown pints," said the fustian-coat-clad individual, in a careless kind of manner.

"Jist as you like," said the gentleman without a coat: "I don't care a fig about money, for my part!"

It was very lucky that he did not, seeing that his empty pockets might otherwise have been inconvenient.

"I say half-crown pints, too," observed the stout gentleman;—and, as no one objected to this arrangement, the proposal was adopted. Melville's partner was the gentleman without a coat: and never was there a more unlucky partner in the world. He suffered every favourable opportunity to escape his notice; and was frequently seized with a fit of winking one eye, to the great delight of their adversaries, inasmuch as—by another coincidence, we suppose—those telegraphic signs conveyed a pretty tolerable idea of the real state of the game.

"How very unlucky I am," said the gentleman without a coat.

"Never mind," cried Melville, emboldened by the punch, of which he partook most plentifully; "we will do better this time."

But that time, as well as every other time, our hero and his partner lost their rubber; and Melville's money passed rapidly over to his adversaries, to whom the gentleman without a coat as often exclaimed, "Well, that makes so much that I owe you!" It struck our hero that those gentlemen must be upon very intimate terms thus to play upon credit: but the punch prevented him from devoting much attention to those little pecuniary arrangements, which would have opened the eyes of a sober person. At length Melville lost all the money, which amounted to several pounds, that he had in his pocket: and, then, he threw down the cards, declaring that "he had had enough of it."

Amidst the vapours of the punch, there penetrated to the mind of the young man, at that moment, a ray of proper feeling, which awakened a remorse in his bosom for having thus dissipated the money he could so ill-afford to lose. But he hastened to ply himself with more punch, in order to chase away the gloomy thought; and, in the course of the evening, he found himself slapping the stout gentleman on the back, and declaring that he would stick to the one without a coat to the end of his life.

"I tell you what," he said, "I'll introduce you all to my wife to-morrow: she's a very nice woman, and will be delighted to form your acquaintance. You shall all dine with me—and not only to-morrow but every day in the week besides. I like good fellows, and none of your ceremonious, distant, reserved sort of chaps!"

Thus was the young man, who by education had been fitted to become the ornament of intellectual society,—thus was he making the low dissipated swindlers of the Fleet Prison his associates, and stammering forth all the fulsome rubbish invariably uttered in those affectionate humours which seize upon men when under the influence of deep potations. Strong drink is the leveller of all noble sentiments—refined ideas—and proper feelings:—it is an enemy to good fellowship, because it leads to that familiarity which breeds contempt; and it puts words into the mouths of its victims, at which they blush in their sober moments!

Melville could not recollect, when he awoke on the following morning and found himself in bed, how he had reached his room. He, however, had a faint idea of the termination of the orgies of the previous evening. Some more gentlemen had strolled into the whistling-shop, and a row had ensued between them and the three persons with whom Melville had formed an acquaintance. The table was overturned—the candles put out—the remnants of the third bowl of punch were thrown over the old man—and the entertainment concluded with a

general fight in the dark. Just as our hero turned all these incidents over in his mind, a slight inconvenience about the left cheek-bone caused a strange suspicion to enter his head. He accordingly jumped out of bed—hastened to a looking glass which hung against the wall,—and he found, by a process of self-contemplation, that he had as pleasant a black eye as he could wish to gaze upon. Disgusted with himself, and feeling the most unmitigated abhorrence for his companions of the previous evening, whom he now ceased to regard as "the best fellows in the world," he lamented in vain the excess of which he had been guilty, and the loss of money at gambling to which that excess had led. He could almost have wept for rage, as he cursed his folly;—and, with his black eye, and his denuded pocket, he was ashamed to meet that wife whom he was so rapidly reducing to ruin.

* * * * *
* * * * *

In hours of prosperity and happiness, the mind of woman is strangely versatile; and her disposition is frequently characterized by the most unaccountable caprices. All her actions appear to be rather the effects of sudden impulses or whims, for the original of which she herself cannot account; and by a peculiar species of idiosyncracy, she not unfrequently imagines unreal sources of annoyance or vexation. In such moments as these, she inflicts upon him she loves all those little nameless torments—those indescribable instances of a difficulty in being pleased, which, pretty though they be, manifest the incessant activity, restlessness, and jealousy of the female bosom. But, in the hour of misfortune—when the gloomy frowns of an unsympathizing world look darkly upon man,—and when his sedulous and faithful friends have fled, as the fickle butterflies flock from flower to flower, courting the fresh blooming rose, and leaving the faded one in its chilling solitude,—Oh! in such hours as those, does the mind of woman expand from the circumbscribed range of frivolity and fickleness, into the elaborate scope of noble sentiments, generous feelings, and magnanimous views!

Animated by the courage which was imparted to her soul by the conviction that many important duties now devolved upon herself, Louise returned from the lock-up house to the cottage, as before mentioned, and prepared to dispose of all the little property which remained to herself and husband. She agreed with a broker for the price of the goods; and she slept, with her innocent boy, in the bed which she was to sell on the morrow. She quenched the tears that a sense of her afflictions wrung from her eyes—she pressed her child in her arms,—and she felt that she had that dear boy and his father still to bind her to life. Though wealth and prosperity had fled, the ties of love still remained to attach her to existence; and although the heart of that poor young woman had been deeply seared by the hot iron of misfortune, the attachment she felt for her husband and child was a balm to the wound. There was, however, one idea on which she could never dwell, save in the utmost bitterness of her spirit,—and that was the dread death of her only daughter in the burning ruin of the mansion which had witnessed the several phases of their prosperity, their decline, and their fall!

She rose early on the following morning, and packed up the few things which she intended to reserve from the almost general sale of her effects; and amongst the articles thus retained were the jewels which had belonged to her mother. The unfortunate wife had maintained an unnatural composure until the moment when these things met her eyes; and then nature asserted her empire over the magnanimity of resolution, and she burst into an agonizing excess of grief. The torrents of her tears however relieved her; and she even welcomed the arrival of the broker with a smile.

The goods were conveyed to the cart which the broker had procured to carry them away, and he had just counted the purchase-money into the hands of Louise, when a postchaise drove up to the door, and Mr. Tibbatts alighted from the vehicle. Louise almost hailed this man's visit as a good omen—for she thought that he had probably sought her for the purpose of proposing some terms in reference to her husband; and she accordingly hastened to receive him with more courtesy than he had ever experienced at her hands.

"Well, my dear Madam," said he, with an air of jaunty impudence, as he seated himself upon one of the trunks in the front parlour, which was denuded of all other furniture,—"so your husband is in the Fleet after all!"

"Alas!" ejaculated Louise, mournfully, "he had no other resource!"

"But he had a friend, Madam!" cried Tibbatts,—"he had a friend who would have stuck to him like Damon to Pythias,—or, in other words, like bricks and mortar!"

"A friend?" said Louise inquiringly.

"Yes—a friend in me, Titus Tibbatts, Esquire," was the answer.

"Oh! sir—again I conjure you, release my husband from his horrible prison—and I will owe you a debt of eternal gratitude!" said Louise, appealing in the most heartrending manner to the cause of all Melville's miseries.

"That's exactly what I wish to do," uttered Tibbatts, playing with his watch-chain, and surveying his well-clad exterior with an air of peculiar satisfaction: "but as the mountain wouldn't go to Mahomet, Mahomet was compelled to go to the mountain."

Louise made no reply; and Tibbatts saw that she had not comprehended his meaning.

"Well, in other words," he continued, "the creditor won't come to you—that is very certain; and so you must go to the creditor."

"But I thought that you were the arbiter of my husband's captivity or freedom?" said Louise timidly.

"No, lovely lady," answered Tibbatts, eyeing Louise with a libertine glance which caused her to hang down her head and blush deeply: "I passed away the bill to a third party—and this party is your husband's detaining creditor. He is not a very hard man to deal with; and when he sees that you take some trouble in the business——"

"Oh! now you have encouraged a hope in my mind, which it will be cruel to disappoint!" exclaimed Louise, a ray of joy animating her countenance and enhancing the natural effect of her beauty. "Tell me where I can find the individual who has the power of restoring my husband to liberty, and I will hasten to him without a moment's delay."

"Why—as for the delay," said Tibbatts, "it certainly would be as well to lose no time;—but, the man lives some way off;—and——"

"Were he hundreds of miles distant," interrupted Louise, "I would seek him, even if I were compelled to walk bare-foot upon a rock of sharp flints!"

"All that is certainly very beautiful—and highly pathetic, sentimental, and so forth," cried Mr. Tibbatts: "but I think that a devilish good postchaise and two slap-up horses would be much better than the mode of travelling that you allude to."

"Every guinea is an object at such a period," said Louise, rising to commence her journey.

"Well—I shan't ask you for your share of the chaise-hire," returned Tibbatts, affecting an air of indifference; "and—as the creditor can't assent to an arrangement without me—I think it would be as well if I went with you."

"Oh! that indeed would confer an additional favour upon me!" ejaculated Louise, animated only by the all-absorbing idea of obtaining the speedy release of her husband.

"Let us set off, then—without loss of time," said Tibbatts, now manifesting an impatience to be gone. "You can leave these traps here behind you—and the child will sit very quietly upon that trunk till we come back, if we only give him a cake."

"Oh! no," cried Louise, "I shall take little Victor with me. He could not bear to be separated from me."

"Well—well, just as you like!" said Tibbatts pettishly;—and he led the way to the postchaise.

Louise locked the front door of the house, and hastened, with her little boy in her arms, into the vehicle, which immediately drove off at a rapid rate. Tibbatts was seated by her side: but for some time both Louise and her companion maintained a profound silence. At length the young lady awoke from a deep reverie, and inquired whether they were near the place of their destination, as they were proceeding with speed farther into the country, and leaving the metropolis far away behind them.

"Oh! we shall soon be there now," said Tibbatts, with a species of triumph in his tone, as he cast a peculiar glance upon Louise, who again quailed beneath it. She did not, however, anticipate any treachery on the part of her companion; and her whole thoughts were engrossed by the hope of returning to London with an order for Victor's discharge in her possession.

While she was thus pondering upon the joy with which her husband would hail the glad tidings, the vehicle, which had some time previously turned into a bye-path, suddenly stopped at the door of an old house, that stood in a most solitary and lonely part. No other human habitation was near; and the miserable appearance of the dwelling created some surprise in the mind of the young lady, that a creditor for a large sum of money should reside in such a hovel. For a moment, a strange misgiving seized upon her mind; and she turned to cast an imploring and inquiring look upon her companion. The expression of his countenance was, however, calm and unruffled; and, blushing for the suspicion which she had permitted herself to entertain, Louise once more resigned her soul to all the joyousness of the most sanguine hope.

Mr. Tibbatts hastened to alight from the vehicle, as soon as an old woman, with a most forbidding aspect and cross look, made her appearance at the door of the miserable dwelling. He then assisted Louise to descend the steps of the chaise; and the old woman conducted her into a wretched room on the ground floor, while Tibbats remained behind to give some directions to the postilion. In a few moments the chaise drove off; and Tibbatts entered the room where Louise was seated.

The little boy surveyed the strange apartment for some time with a look of fear and alarm; and then suddenly burst into tears. This conduct on his part instantly raised the suspicions of his mother;—and she now for the first time perceived the imprudence of the step she had taken. The old woman had retired from the room, and she was alone with Tibbatts, who had seated himself upon the window-sill, and was surveying her with an expression of countenance which only augmented her fears. Yielding to the sudden impulse of her alarm, she started from the chair on which she had been sitting, and exclaimed in a tremulous voice, "For heaven's sake, Mr. Tibbatts, where are we?"

"Where are we?" repeated that individual, somewhat at a loss for a reply:—"why, at a very pleasant retired spot, about eight miles from town—and where I hope to pass a few happy days."

"And Melville's creditor?" demanded Louise.

"Creditor, indeed!" cried Tibbatts, bursting out into a loud laugh: "I hope you don't think that after I have given myself all this trouble to get your husband safely locked up in prison, I am now going to be the means of his release! Your husband is a wretch who is unworthy of your love,—a drunkard—a spendthrift—a man without principle——"

"Silence, sir!" cried Louise with a dignity and emphasis which for a moment astounded the villain: "dare not use this language in connexion with the name of my husband."

"My dear girl," began Tibbatts, "I——"

"Oh! now I comprehend all your villany—all your baseness!" cried Louise, a deadly pallor overspreading her countenance. "But your cowardly treachery shall not go unpunished. I demand my immediate release from this place!"

And she took the child in her arms, and was proceeding towards the door, when Mr. Tibbatts placed his back against it, saying, "Gently — gently — fair lady! Faint heart never won such a stubborn beauty as you;

and Titus Tibbatts, Esquire, is not the man to take all this trouble for nothing!"

"Villain! you dare not detain me!" ejaculated Louise.

"No harsh words," cried Tibbatts: "you will cool in time."

"I will scream—I will call for assistance—I will not suffer this outrage with impunity," persisted Louise, her heart almost sinking within her.

"You may scream—but I doubt whether even an echo will answer you," was the cool reply.

"Release me, villain!" cried Louise, struggling to obtain egress from the room.

"Nay—no nonsense," said Tibbatts;—and, with the ease of a giant controlling the movements of a child, did he lead the unhappy young woman back to the chair, on which she sank almost insensibly.

"Do not cry, mamma," said the little boy, looking anxiously up into his mother's face.

Louise pressed him in her arms, and gave vent to her grief in a flood of tears, while the violence of the sobs which agitated her bosom, bore farther and sadder testimony to the acuteness of her anguish.

* * * * *

* * * * *

We left Melville in the midst of a gloomy reverie in consequence of the debauch which he had committed on the first night of his sojourn in the Fleet Prison, and the loss he had experienced at cards. The morning passed away; and, to his astonishment, Louise did not make her appearance. At first he thought that the process of disposing of the furniture probably delayed her: but as hour after hour slipped away, he gradually became uneasy, and feared that some accident had befallen her. It never struck him that she had been entrapped into the power of the ruffian whom he himself had introduced to her; and the agony of suspense soon became intolerable for a mind that was enervated by habits of intoxication. He partook of no breakfast: but towards the middle of the day he joined the three individuals who had plundered him on the preceding evening;—and with them he began to drink again, to drown his cares!

The evening came—and still Louise did not return to him. He was however so happy with his three boon companions, that he no longer suffered himself to be annoyed by her absence; but he sat smoking a pipe of tobacco, and drinking beer out of a pewter pot with those "friends," who did not choose to disburse the coin of which they had plundered him on the preceding evening, in the purchase of wine. Melville was completely denuded of all pecuniary resources; and, had not the gentleman without a coat regaled the whole party upon beef-steaks and fried onions in his own room, our hero would have lacked a supper. As it was, this was the only meal of which he partook that day. Again did he retire to his couch in a state of complete inebriation; and again did he awake with an insupportable headache, a dreadful depression of spirits, and a flushed countenance.

He was now really alarmed at the protracted absence of Louise, and resolved to despatch a messenger to the cottage in the country to ascertain the cause of the delay in her appearance at the prison. He was compelled to apply to one of his three acquaintances for the loan of a few shillings to pay the messenger, who, in pursuance of a prevalent custom in the Fleet, insisted upon being remunerated in advance; and the stout gentleman, under the hope of reaping an enormous interest for the loan, did not hesitate to accommodate our hero with it. The messenger accordingly departed upon the commission entrusted to him; and Victor resumed the pipe and the pot in the society of the three "gentlemen" whose delectable acquaintance he had formed. Gone was all his enthusiasm in the cause of literature,—quenched was the aspiring sentiment of emulation which had formerly taught him to soar upon the pinions of a laudable ambition,—departed was all the elevated tone of a mind which nature had endowed with her choicest gifts!

The messenger returned in the afternoon, with the tidings that the cottage was closed, and that none of the neighbours could say what had become of Mrs. Melville. Our hero had drunk too deeply to pay very particular attention to this report: but it was not lost upon his companions. They immediately assumed a cold and distant manner towards Melville, and soon found an excuse to leave him entirely to his own society. The truth is, that these gentlemen, with the worldly-mindedness which is to be found in prisons as well as elsewhere, immediately entertained the notion that Melville's wife had deserted her dissipated husband—never to return: and, as they supposed that he was entirely dependent upon her for pecuniary resources, they now conceived that there was no further chance of his purse being replenished. Melville soon perceived their coolness towards him; and in his sober moments he was not backward in divining the motive.

His condition was now desperate in the extreme. Poverty stared him in the face; and the dread idea that he was deserted by the only being who loved him, haunted his imagination. He wrote to several of those friends at the West End, who had partaken of his luxurious repasts in the days of his prosperity, to request the loan of a few guineas or the return of moneys which he himself had advanced them: but his letters either experienced a contemptuous silence or a formal refusal. Even those, on whose friendship he had chiefly relied, now forgot him in the hour of his adversity; and the grim—gaunt—suicidal form of Want stared him in the face, haunted his footsteps by day and night in the long dark galleries of the Fleet, and reduced him to the most dire necessities. He however continued to obtain his fill of liquor; the little money he raised by pledging his wearing apparel, or by the thousand and one means by which men in such circumstances *do* obtain a few shillings from time to time—(how, they themselves scarcely know)—this little money, we say, was all expended upon beer and tobacco. For whole days did he live upon a crust—in order that he

might steep his senses in the narcotic influence of malt-poisons. And still Louise did not make her appearance, to recall him back from this career of misery and degradation!

And now, behold our hero reduced to the lowest condition to which the drunkard can be abased. Ragged in his attire—with slouched hat, broken shoes, a waistcoat buttoned up to the chin to conceal the filthy linen beneath—blear-eyed, bloated in countenance, nervous and shuffling in his walk,—with shaking hands, unshaven beard, uncombed hair, and dirty face, skulking about as if he were ashamed to meet those strangers whom curiosity frequently induces to visit the debtors' gaols,—and seeking companionship only in the pipe and the pewter-pot, Victor Melville was one of those specimens of humanity to which the misanthrope would point, in his cynical irony, as an example of the depth of degradation to which it is possible for once proud man to fall!

But if you wish to impregnate the foundations of a mighty empire, or the elevated mind of man, with the principles of ruin, implant in them the habit of intemperance, and the wished-for ruin will not be long ere it reach its consummation!

Melville seemed to take no date of time. His mornings were marked by the headache and by the miserable reflections which invariably succeed the nights of debauch; and those nights were periods when an almost total oblivion of all cares, past or present, seemed to take possession of his mind. He ceased to become excited with liquor;—the effect it now produced upon him was a brutal stupefaction. In that lethargy were absorbed all good feelings—all hopes of release or reform—all love for the absent wife and child—all self-respect—all reference to the past—all thought for the present—all plan for the future—all joy, all grief, all sentiment! He became an automaton, that rose at the same hour—proceeded to the same tap-room at the same period—sat in the same dingy nook for the same number of hours as before—and returned to a dirty chamber, to stretch himself upon a bed which was not made at the same hour in the evening! He seldom spoke to a soul, and never addressed any one first: his glance was vacant and stupid—his habits became distressing through their very monotony, and he was soon pointed out to all strangers as one of the curiosities of the prison!

But a grand physical change was taking place in that young man. The robust health of youth was gradually yielding to the fatal habits of dissipation which he had so early imbibed, so strenuously persisted in, and so fearfully amplified:—and it was easy to perceive in the sunken eyes, the nervous movements, the shuffling step, and the trembling hand, of the once attractive and fascinating Melville, that Intemperance was preparing to offer up another victim at the accursed shrine of the Genius of Human Misery.

He had been a year in the Fleet Prison;—and for days and weeks together he had ceased to remember that the absence of his wife was as yet unaccounted for. He was now so degraded in his habits and appearance, and so reduced in circumstances by dissipation, that he was compelled to perform the most menial offices for the more wealthy portion of the prisoners, to obtain the few pence which supplied him with the means of subsistence. At length he became so weak and enfeebled, that it was with the utmost difficulty his trembling limbs conducted him from his own miserable chamber to the place where the beer was sold. One morning he found himself so much worse that he was unable to rise from his couch: and now, for the first time for a long—long while, he felt anxious on account of his forlorn condition. He had no friend to place the cup of water to his parched lips; and this painful idea brought to his mind the image of his Louise. He wondered how he could have so long supported her unaccountable absence;—and, in a moment of indescribable agony—a moment in which all the smothered reminiscences of many months were evoked to life and energy again,—he called for the being whom he knew should be there to tend him in his misery and sickness.

"O Louise—Louise!" he exclaimed aloud,—"where are you? Why have you deserted me? Where is my boy? Oh! you do not answer!"

Scarcely had the words escaped his lips, when, by one of those strange coincidences which frequently occur in human life as well as in the pages of the novelist, the door of his wretched apartment was thrown open, and Louise—followed by a venerable old gentleman, and leading her little boy by the hand—hastened into the presence of her husband.

* * * * *

* * * *

So attenuated was the mind of Victor Melville in consequence of the habits of dissipation in which he had so lately indulged to excess, that when his affectionate wife was once more embraced in his arms, he cried like a child. The fountains of his grief were opened,—and those eyes, which had not shed tears for many a long, long day, now wept bitterly. By turns he clasped his wife to his breast, and then his boy;—and the sluggishness and recklessness of a soul, which had been subdued by the degrading character of a miserable existence, gave way to the energetic feelings of warmth and passion. He pressed his hand upon his forehead to dissipate the mists which seemed to hang around his brain;—and a new light beamed in upon the secret recesses of his soul!

"Oh! my dear, dear Louise," he exclaimed, holding one of her hands fast locked in his, under the apprehension that she would leave him,—"how long have you left me in the hideous solitude of this prison? I know not how the time has passed; but I feel that we have been separated for many—many months!"

"Alas!" exclaimed Louise, the tears falling profusely from her own eyes as she surveyed the altered countenance of her husband, upon whose cheek the finger of death already seemed to have planted an indelible mark,—"you know not all that has occurred! I have suffered much—very much: but I was not

conscious, during this long interval, of my real situation;—or else I should have felt how much you must have yourself suffered in consequence of my absence."

"Your absence!" cried Melville, again pressing his hand to his forehead, for his brain had once more become confused;—"then it is true—it is not a dream—and you have really been absent all this while—and you left me to languish and to die in a gaol! O Louise—I could not have believed this of you! But I know that I have been very criminal towards you—I know that I have dissipated your fortune, and treated you with unmerited severity;—I remember now, in this dread moment of hurried reminiscences, all the acts of unkindness with which I repaid your devoted love;—and I feel that I have wrung many, many bitter tears from your eyes, and many sighs from your bosom;—I know that I have been a bad husband, and a bad father,—a spendthrift—a drunkard—a debauchee: but I have been cruelly, Oh! far too cruelly punished!"

The unfortunate young man fell back in his bed as he uttered these words, and gave vent to the agony of grief which this sad retrospect over the past had awakened in his bosom. Louise had not interrupted him during the painful detail of all his crimes and sorrows, because the sight ot her husband's misery filled her own breast with emotions that stifled her voice.

"But I will not reproach you, dearest Louise," continued Victor, after a pause, during which the little boy and the old gentleman mingled their grief with that of the afflicted husband and wife:—"I will not reproach you, Louise! You sacrificed much—all for me: you expected to find happiness in joining your fortune with mine;—and I have compelled you, as it were, to walk barefooted by my side over the rough places of this world. But—Oh! when the cold hand of death shall have released my troubled spirit from its mortal tenement of clay,—and when the husband, for whom you have done all, sacrificed all, and suffered all, shall lie in the silent tomb,—do not then look back to the years we have passed together as an epoch of your life at which you shudder when you retrospect: but rather let the natural charity of your disposition—that sweetness of temper which never complained when I was cruel,—Oh! suffer all those good qualities to teach you to forget the faults of one whose brightest years were sacrificed to the accursed demon of intemperance!"

"Victor! Victor!" cried Louise, with imploring vehemence, "I beseech you to become tranquillised."

"Tranquillized?" he bitterly ejaculated: "Oh! no—it is impossible! But, Ah! tell me, Louise!—tell me," he cried, as a sudden recollection seemed to strike him: "do you remember that picture—that terrible picture which in the days of my prosperity I purchased, and for which I composed that poem—you know the one I mean?—the poem that had such an immense sale——"

"Oh! why allude to that picture?" asked Louise, shuddering visibly.

"Ah! was it not a fearful subject?" cried Melville, shuddering also: "*Satan playing with Man for his own Soul!* Well, Louise—I—I," exclaimed the wretched Victor,—"I also played with Satan for my own soul!"

"Melville—you will drive me mad—mad once more!" ejaculated Louise, her heart almost breaking as her husband uttered these words—not in the impassioned tone of one who makes an effort for display,—but in the sad, melancholy, and plaintive accents of dark despair, which is still closely allied with calm resignation.

"Mad once more!" cried Victor, who seemed to think that there was a deep mystery concealed in that short phrase: "mad once more! What mean you, Louise?"

"I mean," returned the afflicted wife, "that on the day when I saw you last, I intended—Oh! heaven knows I intended to return; for I could not have deserted you, even were all true of which you accuse yourself;—but a villain deluded me away to a lonely spot, where he unveiled his infamous designs, which I indignantly resisted! The wretch—the less than man and more than monster, became infuriated at that which he termed my stubborn conduct; and——"

"And," interrupted the venerable stranger; stepping forward, and taking up the thread of Louise's narrative—"and I was passing by that secluded spot at the time—and I heard the screams of distress—and I forced open the door of the cottage. I rescued your wife from the power of a villain, who left the house, menacing dark threats of vengeance, to which I paid but little attention: for Louise had fainted, and demanded all my care."

"And that villain was he who has ever been my tempter and my enemy?" ejaculated Melville, no longer able to restrain his impatience and his indignation.

"The same," answered Louise;—"the wretch who threw his snares around you with too fatal an effect. But never more shall he tempt you, my husband, nor persecute me——"

"What mean you, Louise?" cried Melville. "Has heaven's vengeance lighted upon the cause of all our woes—all our sorrows?"

"It has," responded Louise solemnly. "On Monday morning last a man went forth from the gaol of Newgate to the gallows in front—and he was executed for the crime of forgery, in the presence of a vast multitude. The whole sickening, harrowing account was duly paraded in the public journals;—and that man——"

"That man—who was he?" exclaimed Melville, with feverish impatience, though already full well divining the truth.

"That man was Tibbatts," rejoined Louise.

"God be thanked—retribution overtook him at last!" cried Melville, a fiendish expression of joy suddenly spreading itself over his pale and ghastly countenance. "But now tell me, Louise—or you, kind sir, whoever you may be—tell me, I say, what happened when the rescue at the lonely cottage was effected in the manner already made known to me. You, sir, have told me that you saved my Louise from the villain Tibbatts—and I thank you

unfeignedly—sincerely. But what followed?—and wherefore this long, long delay ere my Louise came back to me?"

And, exhausted with the excitement produced by the announcement of Tibbatts' fate, as well as by the various incidents of this memorable day of his wife's return, Melville sank back gasping upon the wretched bolster of his pallet. Louise hastened to bathe his temples with water; and when he was somewhat restored, he once more turned his eyes inquiringly upon the venerable stranger.

"My tale is short and can soon be disposed of," continued this individual, in a kind and deeply compassionate tone. "Having rescued Louise from the villain who has since perished upon the scaffold, I obtained assistance and conveyed her and her boy to my residence, which is in the neighbourhood of the house selected by the villain for his intended infamy. She recovered from the state of insensibility into which she had fallen: but when she awoke—she was delirious! Her mind was affected with the sorrows and the dangers through which she had passed! But there was a ring upon her finger which caught my eye, and which awoke extraordinary sensations in my bosom,—a ring which recalled to my mind the deeds of past years, and excited the strangest curiosity in my breast. And then I contemplated the beautiful features of the fair stranger,—and they recalled to my memory the countenance of one whom I had once loved with all a father's fond affection for his child! How can I tell you in what manner the last twelve months of my existence have passed away? An unsated curiosity was consuming me;—a hope, a dread, and a wish which I dared not express even to myself for fear of its being doomed to experience disappointment, filled my imagination night and day;—and, on the other hand, the only person who seemed

Penny Numbers and Monthly Sixpenny Parts.

competent to relieve me of suspense and solve the mystery, was a prey to all the ravings of a disordered intellect!"

"Heavens! and I have been the cause of your tremendous sufferings, my poor Louise!" cried Melville, weeping like a child.

"Oh! blame not yourself, my husband—for I forgive you—God knows how freely, how sincerely I forgive you!" murmured the almost heart-broken wife, as she bent lovingly over Victor, on whose countenance her tears rained down thick and fast.

"For a year has your wife been unable to collect her scattered ideas into one focus," proceeded the old gentleman, who spoke in a foreign accent: "but a few days ago the dawn of reason appeared again, and asserted its empire over that mind which had long been enveloped in the mists of a confused night. You may believe that no care was omitted that medical skill could afford, or money could provide, to tend the patient in my abode: and at length my attentions—my vigils—my watchings—my anxieties, were rewarded! She recovered from a year's aberration of intellect; and my curiosity was soon gratified. I found that she was indeed the daughter of *my* daughter—the beauteous counterpart of a child whose disgrace I had deplored, and whose fault I would have forgiven; and the long mystery in which that dear child's fate was involved, is now cleared up. Victor—heaven threw me in the way of your wife, that she might find a grandfather in the hour of her affliction to aid her, and that I might find a grandchild whom I love for her own, as well as for her mother's sake. An emigrant from the land of my birth in the troubled times of its dark political destiny, I sought the English shore, and have continued to dwell, alone and solitary, in a retired spot, until heaven sent me this dear girl to recompense me for many long years of suffering. And, now, you for the first time will learn that your wife is the granddaughter of the Marquis de Saint Anbré."

Melville had once more fallen back in his bed, as the old nobleman concluded this singular narrative; and the exertions which he had ere now made to speak—and the excitement produced upon his enervated frame and mind by the return of his wife and child, and the development of these mysteries, appeared to have given place to a condition of weakness necessarily attendant upon a great reaction. His cheek became even paler than it was when Louise first broke upon his solitude in that dreary chamber; his eyes were suddenly divested of the evanescent brightness which had lighted them up;—and his countenance lost the expression of pleasure which had animated it as he gased upon his wife. He motioned her to place his little boy on the bed near him; and the child wept—he scarcely knew why. Victor caught him to his arms, and covered him with kisses. He then turned a glance full of gratitude towards the Marquis, and endeavoured to address a few words to Louise. But his voice failed him, and he shook his head despondingly. Louise stopped to imprint a kiss upon his lips—and he returned not that token of affection. His spirit had passed away without a struggle, in that moment when a tender wife ratified her forgiveness of the past with all the fervour of the most heartfelt affection.

He died in a debtor's gaol—in a wretched room—and after having suffered all the privations which the saddest destiny can know. But he died with kind relatives round his bed, and with the assurance that those who loved him were provided for in spite of the wreck of his fortunes.

He died:—and the disconsolate wife, and the venerable old man, and the almost unconscious child, knelt down upon the cold floor of the chamber of death, and prayed for the soul of him who had afforded so dread an example of the horrors attached to the DRUNKARD'S PROGRESS!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TWO PICTURES.

THUS was concluded the second tale of the Boudoir. It must not however be supposed that the whole of this long narrative was read on the same evening on which it was commenced: the reader may judge from its length that it spread itself over several evenings; and it proved particularly entertaining to the Empress Eugenie and the other ladies who listened to it, inasmuch as while giving a picture of English life a quarter of a century back, it likewise associated itself with circumstances pertaining unto France. Julie Talmont, the happy betrothed of Captain Vigors, was the fair *lectrice* of the tale; and when its reading was brought to an end, she received the thanks of the Empress and of her lady-companions for the clearness, precision, and taste with which she had modelled her tones and suited her looks and manner to the varying phases of the narrative.

Amongst the comments which were made upon the story, the attention of the fair bevy was naturally riveted for a space upon the allusion which had been made to the picture of Satan playing with Man for his own Soul.

"I have seen the engraving of that fearful picture," said the superb Baroness de Cardillac: "but I should like very much to behold the original."

"It is by Von Holst," said the Empress Eugenie; "and I think that I have a book here which gives a vivid description of it. Look, my dear Julie, for the volume of Celebrated German Painters."

Mademoiselle Talmont, at once obeying the Empress, took from the book-case the volume which her Majesty had indicated: and having found the particular chapter, she said, as her eyes rapidly scanned the first page, "It appears that Theodore Von Holst was the son of a German professor of music, and his mother was a native of Russia. At a very early age he showed a great taste for the fine arts; and when still a mere boy he went to study in London. Sir Thomas Lawrence, the President of the Royal Academy, who was struck by his

genius, afforded him every encouragement: but the premature death of the great English painter proved a sad blow to the prospects of his youthful protegé."

"Nevertheless," said the Empress Eugenie, "I believe that Von Holst contributed several fine pictures to the Royal Academy in London: and amongst them was the one to which we have been so particularly alluding. What says the description in that volume, Julie?"

Mademoiselle Talmont proceeded to read aloud the following extract:—

"It would be difficult to imagine a subject more fitted to the powers of Von Holst than this strange and wildly romantic conception. Like all his designs, it is eminently poetical. It is a dramatic incident of the most terrible kind, brought to its culminating point. Mark the careless attitude of the triumphant fiend!—feel the scorching glare of his eyes, as he watches the despairing brow of the human player who in vain searches for one chance to retrieve his fate! But how beautifully does the fair face of the female contrast with those two heads—the one expressive of fiendish triumph, and the other of mental despair. That charming figure, with the freely-tossed locks and the high-arched brows, points towards the board as if seeming to suggest some fresh move. This portion of the allegory most exquisitely illustrates the readiness of Woman to act as the good angel to distressed and troubled Man. In the background, as if to elaborate other contrasts, there are the evil spirits attendant upon the arch-fiend himself; while Death—himself unseen—looks on at the awful game, well-knowing that the human player must presently become his victim. And then too, upon the floor lies the drained wine-chalice, emblematical of dissipation's cup drunk to the very dregs!"

Here the Empress and all the ladies referred to the steel engraving representing the original picture, and which accompanied the descriptive chapter whence Julie was reading. After a brief pause the young lady continued in the following manner:—

"The game of chess, upon the issue of which a soul is staked, is eminently typical of the great struggle of life. The chequered board represents the natural vicissitudes of existence; while the pieces themselves are emblematical of the various powers, passions, and accidents with which humanity has to contend. In the pawns we see the representatives of the minor actions and duties of life. It is in chess as in the great world itself—much of our success depends upon the skill with which these are played; great pieces can only be brought into action on great occasions; the others are ever in the front of the battle, and upon their conduct does success or defeat depend. If the imagination can be brought thus to look upon these bits of ivory as embodiments of the powers and passions of humanity, the chessboard immediately resolves itself into an epitome of the world, and in the two players we recognise the impersonation of the Evil Spirit struggling with the weakness of Man."

"The description is excellent," said Mademoiselle Villefranche. "Did we not feel that the picture is the interpreter of a great moral idea, we should shudder and recoil in horror from its contemplation."

"And what," asked the Countess of Mauleon, "became of the great artist himself?"

"This is the very question I was about to put," said Mademoiselle Lesparre; "for one naturally feels interested in the author of so splendid a work of art."

Julie Talmont, again referring to the volume which was open before her, read the following lines:—

"Holst was unsuited to the taste of the British public, he being so strongly tinctured by Germanism, and delighting more in embodying his poetic imaginings in slight sketches than in carefully finishing any one of them. This had a very injurious effect upon his purse and reputation: his temper was soured by seeing inferior spirits rise to affluence and renown—to hear their fame from every tongue—to see their works, multiplied by the means of engraving to almost infinitude, staring from every print-shop window throughout the land—and to feel himself comparatively unnoticed and unappreciated. There is nothing harder for a sensitive mind to bear up against than neglect, for although genius is ever modest, it is never ignorant of its own worth. Holst lived in misery and died in the same; and the few great pictures which he painted are in the hands of the British Aristocracy."

The conversation in the boudoir, which had taken a more than ordinarily intellectual turn, was now brought to an end by the Empress rising from her seat as a signal that she was about to retire to rest.

A week had elapsed since the arrival of Henri Vigors in Paris; and the scene which we are about to describe occurred at about nine o'clock one evening. The banquet was over in the palace of the Tuileries; the Emperor and Empress had repaired to one of the principal theatres; and a group of the ladies of the Court was collected in one of the drawing-rooms, which, as we have before said, were specially allotted to their use. The Countess of Mauleon was seated on a sofa, playing carelessly with her fan, and endeavouring to listen to something which was being told her by the splendid Baroness de Cardillac, who was standing in front of her with a beautiful bouquet in her hand. Mademoiselle Lesparre and another young lady completed this group; while Mademoiselle Villefranche, at the other extremity of the apartment, was running her fair fingers over the strings of a harp. But why was the Countess of Mauleon somewhat abstracted on the present occasion? It was because a handsome young officer of the Imperial Guard had been bold enough to slip a *billet-doux* into her hand, imploring a private interview; and as the Countess knew what the overture meant, she was hesitating whether to grant the enamoured swain's request or to refuse it. She had suffered enough from her connexion with Marmande to induce her to vow that she would not have another lover: but on the other hand, as we have said in the opening chapter of our narrative, the Countess recoiled

from the idea of sacrificing the liberty and independence of a widow by contracting a second marriage. Therefore—matrimony being out of the question—if she yielded a willing ear to the love-tale which the handsome young guardsman might breathe, it could only be to take another false step and accept him as her paramour. As a woman of the world she was half-inclined to be prudent: but, on the other hand, her inclinations prompted her to indulge in this tender little intrigue with a young gentleman who was as handsome in countenance as he was fascinating in manners.

Thus was it that the Countess de Mauleon was abstracted and thoughtful, while the Baroness de Cardillac was relating some anecdote in connexion with the Court.

"Where is Julie Talmont?" all of a sudden asked Mademoiselle Lesparre. "She did not accompany her Majesty to the theatre—did she?"

"No," responded Georgette Villefranche, speaking from her seat at the harp. "Julie's mother has come up to Paris: she arrived somewhat suddenly just now—and she at once sent for her daughter."

"Ah!" ejaculated the Baroness de Cardillac: "then by this time our sweet young friend Julie has received the parental decision in reference to the suit of Henri Vigors."

"But can we doubt," asked the Countess of Mauleon, now becoming interested in the discourse, "what that decision will be, when we know that the Emperor himself wrote to M. Talmont, and the Empress performed the same good office towards Julie's mother?"

At this moment the door of the apartment opened; and Julie Talmont herself hurried into the room. Joy was upon her countenance; yet its expression was mingled with a modest bashfulness, and the light which shone in her beautiful blue eyes shed its rays over the rosy blushes which dyed her cheeks.

"Ah! we all understand what this means!" said the Baroness de Cardillac; "and we sincerely offer you our congratulations."

"Yes," said Julie; "thanks to the kindness of the Emperor and Empress, my father and mother, though having entertained other ideas on my behalf, have yielded their assent——"

"And therefore we shall soon have a bridal!" exclaimed the delighted Georgette Villefranche, as she bounded away from the harp and hastened to throw her arms round her friend Julie's neck.

The Countess of Mauleon, Annette Lesparre, and the other young lady who was present, now proceeded to offer their congratulations in their turn; and the Countess, on beholding the supreme felicity which the beautiful young maiden experienced, murmured to herself, "Yes—most assuredly. I must send an affirmative answer to the pretty little *billet* which I have received! This world would be but a dreary scene if it were not for love; and therefore will I smile favourably upon the aspirations of the handsome young guardsman!"

At half-past eleven o'clock on that same evening the Empress and her ladies were assembled, as usual, in the boudoir, where, after a little while, the conversation began to turn on topics similar to those which had engaged their attention the previous night.

"In turning over that volume this morning," said the Empress Eugenie, "I was much struck by a picture which forms a remarkable contrast with that of Satan playing with Man for his own Soul."

"Here is the book!" cried Julie Talmont, as she hastened to take it down from its shelf. "Ah! doubtless the picture to which your Majesty alludes is this one that is marked? *The Guardian Angel*, by Grimeaux."

"That is the very one," said the Empress. "Is it not beautiful?"

All the ladies, gathering round the table on which the volume was opened, expressed their delight at the picture, the subject of which was suggested by two verses in the 91st Psalm:—"For He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

"Read the description, Julie," said the Empress, after a while.

Mademoiselle Talmont accordingly read the following passage from the book:—

"The picture is a fine moral poem, and full of meaning in every line. The dangers of life are typified by the dark sea which lies on either side of the narrow neck of land along which perilous road the little pilgrim-child is being guided by the Angel. The brink of the precipice on each hand is hidden by flowers and fruits, representing the delusive pleasures and temptations of the world. The Angel, from behind—like a mother waiting upon the trembling feet of an infant—with careful hands watches lest the pilgrim-child should swerve from the narrow pathway. She does not touch him: to his own *free will* his footsteps are left, until his inherent helplessness calls forth the gentle guidance of her hands. Her white wings curve around, as though doubly to ensure the safety of the little pilgrim: thereby illustrating what is also said in the psalm—'He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust?' The face of the Angel is very fine; and that countenance, together with the entire figure, may be said to reach the highest point of spiritual feeling."

For some little while the picture of the Guardian Angel continued to elicit the applauding observations of the Court ladies; and then the Empress said, "It is not very late; and if we had any amusing book——But what, my dear Juno, have you there?"

Her Majesty had thus suddenly interrupted herself to put the question to the Baroness de Cardillac, inasmuch as this lady had just taken up from the table a roll of papers which she was proceeding to open.

"Perhaps your Majesty may recollect," said the Baroness, who on account of her superb beauty alike of form and countenance, fully merited the name of Juno which she bore,—"that one evening, some two or three months ago, the discourse turned upon the writings of Paul de Kock——"

"I recollect it perfectly," said the Empress. "Your husband the Baron was present at the time; and he deplored the circumstance of

Paul de Kock's novels being disfigured by passages not merely of a loose description, but also revolting and offensive in other respects."

"And perhaps your Majesty may also bear in mind," said the Baroness de Cardillac, "that you expressed a wish to read that novel in which Paul de Kock introduces the sweetly drawn character of the dumb girl—one of the most beautiful creations of any modern author."

"This also I recollect," said the Empress; "because your noble husband the Baron kindly read us two or three passages from *Sœur Anne*, which were full of a pathos so deep that tears were wrung from the eyes of us all. But what, my dear Juno, has this got to do with the roll of manuscripts you now have in your hand?"

"Simply this, may it please your Majesty," replied the Baroness — "that my husband, anxious to afford your Majesty a pleasure by enabling you to read this remarkable work of Paul de Kock, has rewritten it, omitting all passages which may be offensive, and adapting it to such an occasion as the present when young unmarried as well as married ladies form part of the audience. In a word, this is an expurgated edition which the Baron de Cardillac has had the honour of preparing for the occupation of a few recreative hours in your Majesty's boudoir."

"Indeed!" ejaculated the Empress, with delight expressed upon her beautiful features: "this is a pleasure as welcome as it is unexpected—and my sincerest gratitude is due to your noble husband. I desire that you will express it to him."

The Baroness bowed—and then said, "Perhaps, as I am best acquainted with his handwriting, it were as well if I volunteered to fulfil in respect to this tale the duty of *lectrice* to your Majesty?"

"Be it so," said the Empress. "We are all attention."

"Let it be borne in mind," said the Baroness de Cardillac, "that the tale of *Sœur Anne* is one in which the extraordinary comic powers of Paul de Kock are as signally illustrated as the exquisite pathos of his style; and I promise your Majesty and my lady-companions, that your attention is about to be directed to scenes that will elicit peals of laughter, as well as to be absorbed in others that will draw tears from the eyes."

Having thus spoken, Juno commenced reading the tale which will be found in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THIRD TALE OF THE BOUDOIR.

It was night, and a gentleman, who probably experienced no great desire to seek his couch, was roaming through the now almost quiet streets of Paris. For more than an hour he walked on the Boulevards which lie between the Rue du Temple and the Rue de Poissonniere; and every now and then he strolled up the Faubourgs without exactly knowing whither he was bent. Presently he stopped, looked hastily around him, and muttered to himself, "What the devil am I going to do in this direction?"—and he again sought the Boulevards.

The gentleman, who was thus rambling about, was an individual of thirty years of age, of middle height, and rather stout than thin. His features were neither handsome nor ugly: his eyes, which were exceedingly round, were somewhat too prominent; and his nose, which was rather diminutive, had neither the beauty of the Grecian, nor the charm of the aquiline profile. But, in compensation for these trifling defects, his countenance was expressive, and he possessed the talent of varying its aspect according to the emotions he wished others to believe that he experienced,—a talent which is as useful in the great world as upon the stage of a theatre; for mankind is only a troop of actors on a larger scale; and dissimulation prevails at the court, in the city, in palaces, in drawing-rooms, in boudoir and even in servants' halls.

The gentleman's attire was neither elegant nor shabby. His garb was that of a man who frequents good society, but who does not attach great importance to the colour or fashion of his coat or pantaloons. His gait corresponded with his garb, in reference to the absence of all pretension.

Now that the reader is enabled to form an idea of this personage, he will be also glad to ascertain the motives of his midnight ramble upon the Boulevards, when other men were asleep! The better mode of accomplishing this aim will be to listen to the words which fell from his own lips, as he walked along with his hands in his pockets, and with a demeanour as tranquil as if it were only eight o'clock in the evening.

"I had a presentiment of what would happen to me! I ought not to have gone to see Miss Delphine this evening; and then I should still have my five hundred francs in my purse! But she is so fascinating, and the letter she wrote me was so inviting, that it fairly vanquished my good resolutions, notwithstanding my knowledge of the world and my acquaintance with women! If I had put three hundred francs only in my pocket, something would have remained. But, no! I must play the nobleman, and gamble at any risk! That gentleman who cleaned me out, turned up the king pretty often. Hem! that is not quite clear! It is, however, too painfully clear that I have not a sou in my pocket, and that my landlord turned me out of my lodgings because I didn't pay the rent! For four miserable louis-d'or, the rogue! I was going to pay him, too, out of the five hundred francs sent me by my aunt, when the invitation of that enchanting Delphine came to unsettle all my plans! Poor Dubourg! thou art really incorrigible; and yet thou art old enough to know better!"

Here Dubourg (for the reader now knows his name) drew forth a snuff-box, and stopped to regale himself with a pinch.

"O my only consolation! my faithful companion!" he resumed, as he regarded his box by the light of one of the street-lamps; "it is lucky that thou art not made of anything better

than horn, or else we should have parted long ago! But let me reflect a little! What am I going to do? I have no lodging—I have no situation! They are so singular in those government offices! I only received a salary of fifteen hundred francs a-year, and I thought it was but fair to work as little as the head clerk, who is allowed three thousand francs: indeed, I question whether I ought to have worked more than half as much as he. The gentleman comes at twelve, to go away again at four; and while there he passes his time in reading the newspapers, mending his pens, gossiping, standing by the fire in winter, and walking out to breathe the fresh air in summer. So, thinks I to myself, I will not make my appearance before him, and I will leave at the same hour! Aye, more—I found it also very convenient to devote three hours to the newspapers. I mended my pen more frequently—looked very quietly at my work without touching it—examined a file of official documents for an hour, and left it without taking any notes—and then occupied as much time to go out and buy my lunch as if I had gone on a six-miles trip, and back again. Such was my behaviour, founded upon the rigid principles of justice: but, somehow or another, it did not suit the taste of my superiorrs. They wanted me to work a great deal, that they themselves might have nothing to do: and they did not choose me to imitate them. So they made a complaint to the minister, and I was turned off. It is true that they afterwards offered m a place, a trifle better than that enjoyed by the fellow who sweeps the office; but I did not think myself worthy of so great a favour."

Dubourg paused for a moment, gathered breath, and then continued as follows:—

"I next obtained a situation at a banker's. Ah! there was a change, indeed! The superiors themselves set a good example by constant working. From the highest to the lowest in the establishment, every one was obliged to be present at eight o'clock, and stay till five. Then away till seven, and back again till ten. During all that time not a moment of rest: nothing but a series of writing and calculation. And if any one dared commence a chat, it was only in opening a letter or an account. No holidays, except on Sunday! Couriers perpetually arriving—couriers going off from morn to night! No one ever told us we worked enough. And then if ever I wanted to leave my desk a few minutes before the time, a cursed German, who had already passed forty-five years of his life over an account-book, exclaimed, as he pulled out his watch, 'You are in a great hurry to run away, sir.'"

Dubourg regaled himself with another pinch of snuff, and then resumed his soliloquy:—

"I could not stand it long! That kind of life was destroying my health;—and when I one morning received a lecture because I had just stepped over to the cafe, to indulge in a drop of something cheering, I thought it high time to bid adieu to banking-houses. So I resolved upon the life of a notary's clerk; but I made a mistake in giving a gentleman who was going to be married, a certificate of death instead of a deed of settlement; and the old notary intimated that I might quit. I next accepted a situation offered me by a lawyer. For a long time, how comfortable was I in that place! The lawyer had a wife—not very young, it is true—who was excessively fond of walking; and my principal occupation was to escort her about. The husband was delighted at having thus rid himself of a disagreeable task; and I think he would have made me his head clerk, if I had only undertaken to chaperon her during the whole of my life. But I was soon sick of having a woman perpetually dragging upon my arm; and when I relaxed a little in my civilities towards the fair dame, the husband got into a rage and turned me off."

Dubourg paused a third time, dived once more into his box, and then continued his audible musings:—

"From that moment I gave up all idea of writing in offices; I felt animated by the love of independence. So I resolved upon following no profession—a determination which every one can readily adopt! The only thing is, that this kind of life is much more pleasant when aided by a little settled income. Unfortunately, I have nothing settled—not even my scores with my tailor, my boot-maker, my landlord. I am an orphan, it is true: my parents left me but a trifle; and that trifle did not last very long—especially with me, who only want money for the pleasure of spending it. My father, who was born in Brittany, by the bye, followed the profession of a physician, and ought to have made a fortune: but perhaps in his time there were not enough fevers, coughs, and colds. He left me, therefore, little besides an honest name—which I shall never disgrace. One may be an honourable character, although a little wild. When I had expended my life patrimony, I began to moralize: I had a great mind to write a book upon the deceitfulness of riches: but Seneca had a fortune of forty millions when he wrote *his* work on the same subject: he was therefore better able to treat upon the matter, inasmuch as I haven't a *sou*. And as we ought not to speak of things which we know nothing about, I thought it as well to leave riches alone—seeing that I was never acquainted with them. Fortunately there still lives an old maiden aunt of mine, in some out-of-the-way place in Britanny. The poor old creature has but slender means of her own; and yet she does not desert her nephew. It is true I have sent her some very pathetic letters. Poor dear woman! at this identical moment she fancies that I am married! Not knowing what excuse to make in my last letter, I created a wife and lovely twins with a dash of the pen! The answer was the note of five hundred francs which I have just lost at cards. I had sworn not to play any more—especially as throughout this month I have had no luck. But how could I resist the temptation? I called upon Miss Delphine, who, since she quitted the stage, receives the best society of a certain kind in Paris—artists—authors—editors—English, Russian, and Tartarian noblemen. Ah! Tartars, indeed! *I* caught one; and yet, methinks, the little old gentleman, with whom I played, was more a Greek than anything else.

To turn up the king eighteen times consecutively! that was rather too bad! And, then—that other fool, who was so anxious to offer me punch every time I lost! Just as if I could have drank five hundred francs' worth of punch! Ah! my poor dear aunt, if you only knew what has become of your money! The worst of it all is, that she will not send me any more for a long time to come! I dare not put my wife to bed every month, and cannot have twins five or six times in the course of the year! Nor can I myself be for ever ill! I have already been twice at the point of death, and have had all the maladies incidental to human nature: I have been afflicted with inflammation on the chest, and the yellow fever! So all *that* cannot be done over again. No—my poor aunt—I will not importune you more: you shall not be deprived of a thousand little comforts for your scapegrace nephew."

Dubourg walked with greater speed than hitherto: he dragged his hands out of his pockets in a rage at finding nothing in them. He, however, soon recovered his wonted calmness, resumed his ordinary pace, and exclaimed, "But what the deuce am I to do? Now, Dubourg, cheer up, my friend! preserve that gaiety and indifference in the hour of adversity which have never as yet abandoned you! Remember, it is magnanimous to know how to support misfortune—and that a great mind should manifest courage in the moment of difficulty. But it is very easy to talk in this way, as long as my stomach is full of the cakes and the punch taken at Mademoiselle Delphine's: when I am hungry I am afraid I shall make a bad philosopher. In the time of distress, one should have recourse to one's friends: but in those times, one has no friends. However, I believe that all men are not so selfish as they are represented. Ah, I recollect! Frederick! yes—he may assist me! Frederick is not more than twenty years of age; he looks upon the world as young men always do look upon it! He is good, generous, and open-hearted—too open-hearted, indeed: but it does not become me to blame him for yielding too readily to the promptings of his heart. He has already obliged me several times with a little money. Never mind—I know he will oblige me again, if he can. Now, then, I will call upon Frederick!"

The weather became threatening, and drops of rain began to fall. The hackney-coaches had long ceased to interrupt the silence of the night; and the lamps only threw a feeble, vacillating light.

"It must be very late—or rather early," continued Dubourg, casting a quick glance around him. "Frederick dwells in his father's house: how can I call upon him at such an hour? The Count de Montreville is very strict: he is not such a father as you see represented on the stage, and with whom you can do what you like. On the contrary, he keeps his son under control, and Frederick trembles before him. But perhaps his severity has been exaggerated. Besides, he scarcely knows me by sight. I have been many times to his house, but seldom had the pleasure of catching a glimpse of him. The wing that Frederick occupies is at a distance from that part of the mansion in which his father resides: I may, therefore, make my call without any danger on that score."

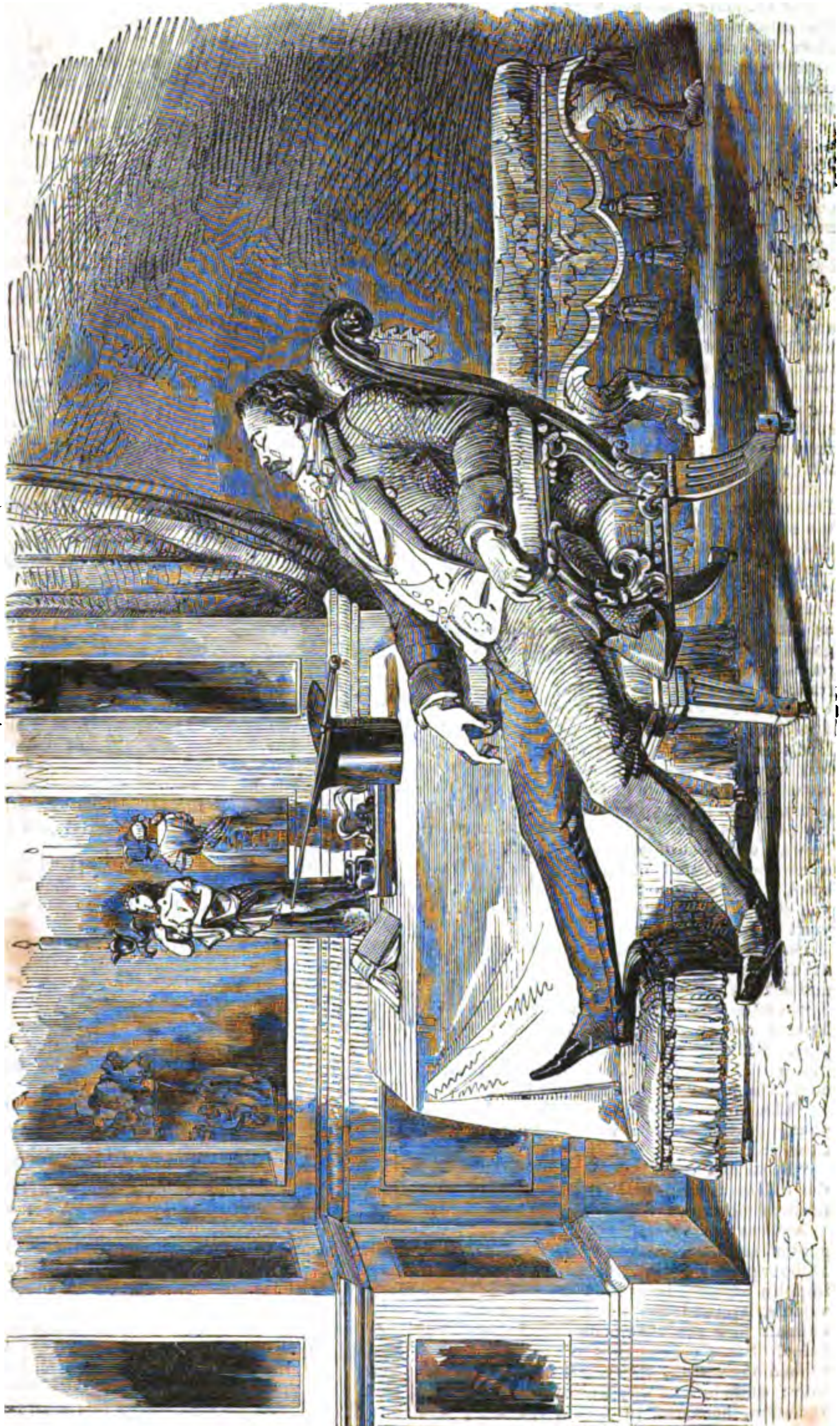
Dubourg now left the neighbourhood to which his long ramble had been hitherto confined, and hastened towards the Rue de Provence, where the mansion of the Count de Montreville was situated. The nearer he approached the house, the more feeble was his hope of being enabled to see Frederick before the morning; for he was well aware it would not be decent to rouse the porter at that hour. In awaking the son, he might also awake the father; and he fancied it was anything but an eligible way of forming the acquaintance of the Count, by presenting himself at that nobleman's abode between two and three o'clock in the morning.

Nevertheless, as Dubourg made all these reflections, he walked boldly forward; and as he drew near the mansion, his eyes were agreeably surprised by the sight of two rows of private carriages, whose lamps illuminated a portion of the street. He hastened his steps—it was before the mansion of the Count de Montreville that those carriages stood; the large gates were thrown wide open, and the court-yard was filled with chariots, cabriolets, &c. The coachmen conversed together—the footmen swore impatiently—the servants belonging to the mansion ran backwards and forwards: lamps, placed upon the posts and on the grand staircase, dispelled the obscurity of the night—and the most delicious music, issuing from the interior of the dwelling, the principal apartments of which were brilliant with light, contrasted strangely with the gloomy silence which reigned at a little distance.

Dubourg contented himself with a moderate pace no longer: he ran—he flew! The sight of the lamps, the hum of the thousand voices near, and the sound of the instruments which were playing dances, speedily chased from his memory the somewhat serious reflections he had been making.

"There is a ball here!" said he to himself. "Ah! fool that I was not to have recollected that this is Thursday, on which day the Count gives the most delightful parties in Paris! Frederick has many times invited me to his father's house; he was desirous of introducing me to the Count. It is my own fault if I do not receive invitations to all the best houses in Paris. But no: I cannot reform my habits and quit the gaming-table!—and——Ah! I remember that—it is Rossini's: I danced to it at Tivoli with the fat girl."

As he thus mused, Dubourg entered the court-yard of the mansion, and passed amongst the carriages, the valets, and the coachmen: but no one paid attention to him; and if he had only been attired in the proper costume, he might have penetrated into the interior of the mansion, played, and danced, and amused himself, without even being perceived by the master of the house; for, at such large parties, it often happens that he who gives them does not recognise, during the evening, one-half the persons he has invited.



No. 20.—The Empress Eugenie.

But Dubourg remained near the windows of the saloon in which the dance was taking place; and in order not to be seen, he stood behind a large carriage, the shadow of which concealed him entirely. For a moment he was tempted to enter the ball-room; but a glance at his attire convinced him that it was not polite thus to present himself to the Count de Montreville, who rigorously observed every kind of etiquette. Dubourg had on a blue coat with metal buttons, boots, and a black neck-kerchief. All this was good enough to play cards in at the abode of Miss Delphine; but it was not exactly suitable for the saloons of a nobleman.

While Dubourg was surveying the dance, and casting amorous glances towards the ladies, who however did not catch them, he perceived two gentlemen approach a card-table which was placed near an open window in an adjoining apartment. Presently the gentlemen were surrounded by others, who were anxious to bet upon the game; and the table was soon covered with gold.

In order to obtain a better view of the game, Dubourg clambered up behind the vehicle in the shadow of which he had been standing; and he was thus enabled to distinguish the cards in the hands of those who were playing.

"How happy are these individuals!" said Dubourg to himself: "they play at *ecarte* for as much as they choose to stake! Ah! the game waxes warm! At least a hundred louis on each side! If I had only the five hundred francs of my aunt in my pocket at this moment, I might make some good bets here. What was I saying? If ever I touch another card—— But that is the very identical point at which I lost *my* last trick—the trick that I ought to have won, according to the principles of the game. Well! what is he going to do now? He proposes!"—and Dubourg, forgetting that he was in the court-yard, and mounted behind a carriage, roared out as loud as he could bawl, "Don't propose! What the deuce are you at? Play the club—play the club—I tell you! I'll answer for the point!"

Dubourg's voice startled all the gentlemen at the card-table: they looked about them, and asked each other who it was that spoke.

"Who gave that advice?" demanded a sour-looking old gentleman, whose turn it was to play. "Has he staked more than I have upon this game, that he thus assumes the right of counselling me? I await a reply!"

"The voice came from the court," said a young gentleman who was standing near the casement.

"From the court! from the court!" cried the old gentleman. "Is it possible that those insolent lacqueys are looking over our game?"

And as he uttered these words, the old gentleman rose and looked into the court yard. Dubourg sprang from the carriage:—but the impulse which his sudden descent gave the vehicle, aroused the horses, and made the animals paw the pavement as if impatient of delay. Some coachmen who had been asleep, rubbed their eyes, thinking that the ball was over: while others, who were engaged in conversation, hastened to mount the box; and those in the street hurried back to the court-yard. Meanwhile, the coachman belonging to the carriage from which Dubourg had just leapt, had the greatest difficulty in reining in his horses and preserving the rank in which the vehicles were arranged.

Dubourg, perceiving the excitement he had created, crept along the wing of the building behind the carriages, murmuring to himself, "Alas! I am destined to create a disturbance wherever I go! Here are upwards of thirty coachmen and as many footmen all in motion, while their horses are ready to run over me—just because I kindly advised an old gentleman how to play, when he was about to propose, instead of trying for the vole. But this is the last time I'll ever meddle with the business of other people!"

At this moment, Dubourg had arrived at the door of an apartment from which a servant issued to ascertain the cause of the disturbance in the court-yard. The domestic almost ran against Dubourg, who immediately recognised him to be the valet of his young friend Frederick.

"Where is your master, Germain?" asked Dubourg.

"Ah! is it you sir?" cried the valet, who had frequently seen Dubourg with Frederick. "Shall I conduct you to the ball-room?"

"No, Germain—I am in no mood to dance," answered Dubourg. "But where is your master?"

"M. Frederick is in the ball-room," answered the servant.

"I much wish to see him," exclaimed Dubourg, "having something important to communicate. Nevertheless, I would not disturb him—nor penetrate into the ball-room, because my toilet is not fitted for a party."

"If you will wait for M. Frederick, sir," remarked the valet, "I could conduct you to his own rooms."

"Excellent!" ejaculated Dubourg: "let us hasten to your master's apartment at once."

Germain fetched a candle and led the way to the rooms occupied by Frederick, and which were at a considerable distance from those where the assemblage took place. Dubourg was delighted at having thus discovered the means of taking a few hours' repose; and the valet, who knew him to be an intimate friend of his young master, was convinced that he should not be blamed for the step he was taking.

"Shall I inform his lordship that you are here, sir?" he asked, as he placed wax-lights upon the table.

"No—it is not worth while," returned Dubourg. "I will read a book till he comes Let him dance as long as he likes:—I am no longer in any hurry!"

Germain bowed and retired. The moment he had disappeared, Dubourg threw himself into the large arm-chair, and flung the volume which he had taken upon the table.

"Deuce take the book!" cried he, extending himself in the most comfortable posture to court repose: "it is time to think of sleeping! How cosy this arm chair is—especially when one has just escaped slumbering in the street!

I am now installed at the house of the Count de Montreville—a most respectable nobleman, who has at least thirty thousand francs a-year, and an only son besides! And that only son is my friend—whose education I must perfect—for I am inclined to believe as yet his father and tutor have put nothing but nonsense into his head. He knows little of the human heart—particularly that of woman: and as I am particularly well-versed in this portion of science, I must try and make something of Frederick. I'll teach him what the world is—so that he may imitate me in his journey through——"

Thus musing, and pausing between every sentence, Dubourg gradually became more and more drowsy; and in five minutes after he had stretched himself in the arm-chair, he was fast asleep.

* * * * * *
* * * * *

At the time when our tale opens, the Count de Montreville was a man of about sixty. Sprung from a rich and noble family, he had entered the army—had served in it for some time—had then married and retired from public life—and had managed to escape throughout the dangers of the first revolution. He was a short thin man, with an austere aspect which inspired awe rather than any other feeling. He was not, however, deficient in sense, and was totally free from all those ridiculous prejudices which were entertained by so many of the old nobility, who were desirous of re-establishing the fashions of hoops and periwigs.

But the Count had been strictly brought up by his own father; and, accustomed from his infancy to the law of passive obedience, he was anxious to train his son into the same paths. Frederick lost his mother when he was only seven years old. The Count was resolved to remain thenceforth single: he had an heir to his name, and that was enough. He placed Frederick in one of the first seminaries in Paris;—and at fourteen the young Viscount gave evident tokens of the most splendid abilities. His education was not, however, finished there: for his father, fearing lest he might form some evil connexion, and anxious to have his only son under his own care, withdrew him from the seminary, and provided him with a private tutor. This tutor, with whom we shall presently cultivate a more intimate acquaintance, was not a very bright individual: quite the contrary! But he was thoroughly obedient to the wishes of the Count, and would not even have thought of taking his pupil out for a walk without privately inquiring if it was agreeable to his father. That was the reason, despite the narrowness of his intellect, why he had been placed in the capacity he occupied about the person of the young Viscount.

The Count loved his son, but sedulously concealed the full extent of his tenderness. He was afraid of losing a portion of the respect with which he wished to be regarded on Frederick's part, if he spoke to him with the condescension of a familiar friend. On the other hand, Frederick loved his father but trembled in his presence. Accustomed from his infancy to execute his slightest wishes, he had preserved as he grew up that habit of passive obedience, and that timidity which in his presence never allowed him to unburden his mind to his sire with frankness. But we must, however, render full justice to M. de Montreville, and confess that he never took advantage of his influence over his son. When Frederick was eighteen, the Count, finding that his education was finished, dismissed the tutor; and having summoned the young man to his presence, addressed him as follows:—

"Frederick, I am pleased with the progress you have made in your studies. You have repaid me for all the pains I have taken with your education; and I have no reason to complain of your disposition. You are now arrived at that age when it is necessary for you to become acquainted with the world through your own means, and not by the representations of others. From this day forth you are at liberty to follow your own inclinations. You will continue to reside in this house: but I have determined upon allowing you to use your own private apartments. You will occupy the suite in the right wing of the mansion; so that you may have full egress and ingress at any hour, without fearing to disturb my repose. My steward will supply you with money whenever you require it. I know you well enough to be persuaded that you will not take advantage of this license to abuse it. You are of an age when pleasure has charms to fascinate you: enjoy those pleasures—and avoid all pursuits which lead to danger and to crime. You are warm and open-hearted: be careful how you form hasty friendships or connexions, either with men and women. I shall not entirely lose sight of you: but I sincerely hope that I shall never have occasion to repent of the trust I am now reposing in you."

Frederick, touched by this language, was about to embrace his parent: but the Count, repressing that sudden ebullition of tenderness which his own heart also shared, contented himself by giving his son his hand, observing, in a voice somewhat softened by inward emotion, "In a few years I will take care of your future prospects. I shall endeavour to procure you a suitable wife. But we are not yet come to that point: in the meantime take advantage of your youth, and abuse not the opportunities of enjoyment which I provide for you."

With these words the Count hastened away from the apartment—for this conversation had affected him. He felt that his eyes were moistened with tears; and he would have been exceedingly annoyed if Frederick had noticed his emotion.

Two years passed away from the date of their conversation; and Frederick, having become his own master, had followed the first impulse of his heart. Endowed with an ardent disposition and fervid soul, he soon experienced the pains and the pleasures of love. At eighteen young men say, "We must love," in the same way as they exclaim, "We must play—dance—or ride on horseback." But the young Viscount did not treat that sacred passion in so light a manner: his ingenuous heart loved—

or fancied it loved—with sincerity, and sought a reciprocal warmth in return. The consequence was that the infidelity of his mistresses wrung sighs from his bosom and tears from his eyes.

Frederick possessed a graceful figure, handsome features, and an expression of countenance that was replete with softness and amiability. His eyes betrayed all the emotions of his soul. He had not as yet contracted that flippant tone and that levity of manner which distinguish the young fashionables of the day: he did not smile at himself in the glass;—he never uttered those silly nothings which render a man so much sought after in the circles of fashion;—nor did he ogle the ladies with an impudent stare, in order to let them know that they were charming.

But as these manners are excessively in vogue, and as the ladies love nothing that is not the confessed votary of their goddess, Fashion,—they soon found Frederick too sentimental, and observed "that he terribly wanted a little *bringing-out*."

A lady of the present day will not attach herself to a novice. She may have a caprice for him; but it is only a rakish fellow who can inspire an ardent passion. Hence poor Frederick was invariably deceived and duped by all whom he loved. It was at a café that Frederick had become acquainted with Dubourg. One day, Dubourg, who had plenty of money in his pocket, created an immense disturbance in the café where he regaled three or four of his friends. Some strangers, to whom the noise which those gentlemen made was far from agreeable, endeavoured to reduce them to silence; whereupon, by way of reply to their remonstrances, Dubourg threw the remainder of a bowl of punch in their faces. They jumped up, and were about to punish the imprudence of Dubourg, whose friends prudently disappeared one after another. Dubourg, indignant at the cowardly conduct of his companions who had thus abandoned him, resolved upon resisting his adversaries single-handed,—when Frederick, who was present, offered to act as his second. Dubourg availed himself of the proffer: a duel ensued on the following morning. Dubourg's antagonist was slightly wounded: and there the matter ended. It however served to cement the friendship which commenced between Frederick and Dubourg. The latter, although ten years older than the young Viscount, was far from being so steady as he: but his sprightliness pleased Frederick, who was in frequent want of amusement to distract his mind from brooding over the infidelity of the fair sex.

Now that the reader is thoroughly acquainted with the Count de Montreville and his son, let us introduce him to the brilliant saloons where all the *elite* of fashion and beauty were assembled—it being Thursday, on which day the Count was in the habit of giving his weekly *soirees*.

The company were dispersed through several apartments, all resplendent with the light of chandeliers and wax candles. In one room there was dancing—in another, cards—and in a third, conversation. In the card-room the heat was most oppressive; and the crowd there was greater than elsewhere. The Count de Montreville walked through his spacious apartments with the smiles and the amiability of a person who is well aware how to do the honours of his mansion. He hastened to exchange a few words with an old Marchioness who was seated alone upon a sofa: he then passed on to address a compliment to a lady who did not dance; and in his way he found an opportunity of uttering a few syllables to the young ladies who *were* dancing. He took care that wine, punch, and ices were frequently handed about: he then entered the card-room, and if it were necessary to cover a stake, his purse was immediately tendered.

But why was Frederick mournfully leaning against the mantel-piece?' He seemed to be devoting all his attention to the dance. Was it really the *quadrille* that occupied him? and if he were only absorbed in the contemplation of the beautiful creatures near him, why did he appear to suffer inwardly? Yes—his calmness was affected; the smile that played upon his lips whenever a word was addressed to him, was not natural. Frederick was preöccupied: but it was not with the dance! At a little distance was seated a young lady of only twenty years of age, although she had been married upwards of three years to a notary of more than sixty,—who, at that moment, was in the card-room, deep in the game.

Madame Dernange was a beautiful creature. The vivacity of her manner, the brightness of her eyes, the brilliancy of her wit—everthing in her dazzled the sight or the senses: she pleased, she fascinated, she conquered, with a single glance. But as she knew the power of her charms, she constantly aimed at increasing the number of her admirers. At the age of seventeen she gladly espoused M. Dernange, because she longed to become her own mistress, and to be enabled to enjoy the delights of that coquetry which formed her paradise. With a husband of sixty, she was tolerably certain of doing exactly as she chose: and, as she had foreseen, M. Dernange never attempted to control her actions. She frequented all the public places of amusement, and was to be seen at every ball, and every festival of any note. Sometimes her husband accompanied her; at others he retired to his couch the moment she left the house. They however lived upon the best terms with each other—indeed, it is very easy to live amicably with one's wife; all we must do is to let her have entirely her own way!

M. Dernange was a man of the world; and he was delighted to see his wife amuse herself. Many people declared that the young lady did not abuse his confidence; that was very possible. She was a great coquette—and they say that coquettes are seldom culpable: we must, not, however, rely too much upon the truth of this assertion.

Frederick had not viewed the lovely Madame Dernange with indifference. A single glance had fascinated him,;—and with a single glance she perceived that she had gained the victory. The young Viscount de Montreville was not a conquest to be disdained:— Madame Der-

nange was determined to attach him to her chariot; and in order to accomplish her aim, it only required a few tender looks, a few smiles, a slight pressure of the hand, and one or two words uttered in a tone which was made to tremble as if with emotion. These were the means which the coquette employed with such fatal skill!

Poor Frederick was soon the dupe of this manœuvre. He fancied that he was loved and adored; and for some days he was wild with joy. But at this ball of which we are writing, a young and elegant colonel had been introduced to Madame Dernange. The colonel was an individual whose reputation for gallantry was notorious—an individual, in a word, whom it was the height of every lady's ambition to enthral; and Madame Dernange had resolved upon accomplishing this new triumph. Poor Frederick was forgotten: it was no longer he that occupied the attention of the faithless one—it was the handsome colonel! Occasionally Madame Dernange bestowed upon him a tender smile: but he was desperately enamoured of her—he was jealous—and he saw that the glances of the coquette wandered from himself, to linger upon the countenance of the one whom they were now intended to captivate.

Several times did Frederick approach the lovely Madame Dernange, in order to convince her that her faithlessness was not lost upon him. But she invariably received him with a smile, exclaiming, "What is the matter with you this evening, M. de Montreville? Your countenance wears an expression of melancholy which is really quite comic!"

What soothing words for a jealous lover! Frederick made no reply:—he retired, with anguish in his heart, to a little distance, while the coquette laughed aloud at a witticism uttered by the colonel or another of her admirers. During the whole evening Frederick was in a state bordering upon distraction. At length, towards the close of the ball, he perceived Madame Dernange seated upon a sofa next to the colonel: he accordingly placed himself at a little distance from them. Leaning upon the mantel-piece, he turned his back towards them; and pretended to be occupied in contemplating the dance. But he did not lose a single syllable of all that passed between the colonel and Madame Dernange. The lady exerted all her powers to please, and put in requisition all the brilliancy of her wit: she laughed so sweetly—she herself was so graceful, so seductive, so fascinating! A continual interchange of compliments and repartée took place—while Frederick's soul was on fire. Had he not felt the necessity of restraining his anger, he would have insulted the colonel, and overwhelmed the perfidious beauty with reproaches. Fortunately he was so far master of himself as to remember the disgrace that would accrue to such a proceeding, and the ridicule it would excite against him: for in all love affairs, he who is deceived and who complains, is ever the one most laughed at.

The colonel made love like a military man: that is to say—he accomplished a great deal in a very short time, carrying things by storm. Frederick overheard the colonel ask Madame Dernange if he might be allowed to pay his respects to her at her own house? The respects of a colonel of hussars! A cold sweat broke out on Frederick's brow. The coquette started a few objections: she laughed, joked, and declared that he must ask the permission of her husband:— then, with a smile, she added, "But—yes! M. Dernange will allow you to call."

Frederick, who could support the perfidy of Madame Dernange no longer, hastened from the ball-room as quickly as he could. Many of the guests had already departed; and Frederick found the card-room entirely empty. He threw himself into an arm-chair. The apartment was only dimly lighted by the dying lustre that emanated from the crystal globes attached to the chandeliers: he was therefore enabled to give way without restraint to all the violence of his feelings. He took his kerchief from his pocket—he was nearly suffocated with rage and grief—and large tears trickled down his cheeks. The words "Perfidious!" "Changeable!" "Faithless!" fell from his lips, and were followed by deep sighs. For nearly an hour he was a prey to the sorrowful nature of his reflections. The wax candles were extinguished: the noise of the dancing was terminated. Several individuals passed through the room in which he was seated without observing his presence, or being remarked by him from the corner where he sat. Two or three ladies proceeded to fetch their scarfs which they had left upon an ottoman near Frederick's chair: and one of their voices was but too familiar to his ear. That dulcet sound made the very chords of his heart vibrate;—it was the well-known tone of Madame Dernange, who was conversing with one of her friends. The two ladies were in high spirits, and were laughing.

"What a pleasant evening I have passed!" exclaimed the wife of the old notary. "The colonel is really very amusing."

"But, my dear friend, did you observe the face which Frederick made during your conversation with the colonel?" inquired the other lady.

"Certainly I did," answered Madame Dernange; "and it was with the greatest difficulty I could prevent myself from laughing outright."

"You have made him miserable," said the other.

"The great misfortune is," contined Madame Dernange, "that the young man is really so romantic and sentimental, he quite sickens me."

"Ah! my dear friend, he is very handsome; and as soon as he has lost that school-boy appearance and has gained a little more of fashionable polish, he will be a great acquisition to our parties and balls."

"Oh! whenever I again choose to amuse myself at his expense," said Madame Dernange, "I shall only have to say one word, or bestow upon him one look, to recall him to my feet. But do give me my scarf, which you have been holding in your hand for this last half-hour: the colonel is waiting to hand me to my carriage."

The ladies left the room; and Frederick rose from his chair, scarcely able to believe his ears. Indignation, jealousy, and spite seized upon his mind; and his love for Madame Dernange gave place to less pleasant feelings; for his pride was wounded—and wounded pride soon triumphs over love!

Such was the state of his mind, when he repaired to his own suite of apartments, the outer door of which he banged with such violence that it made Dubourg start up suddenly from his slumbers.

* * * * *

* * * * *

"To propose when he had the vole!" ejaculated Dubourg, springing-up in his arm-chair; while Frederick, astonished at thus encountering his friend, stood gazing upon him in silence.

At length he gave himself up unreservedly to the pleasure of meeting with one to whom he could confide all his griefs, and who would listen to his complaints with attention.

"Ah! my dear Dubourg," ejaculated Frederick, "it is heaven that has sent you!"

"No, it is not; it is my landlord who has kicked me out of the house."

"At length I have discovered a heart that will respond to mine," continued Frederick, "and that can understand my sorrow, and sympathize with my distress."

"Did you also bet on the wrong side?" asked Dubourg.

"The faithless—the deceitful wretch!" cried Frederick, vehemently.

"My dear friend, Fortune is a woman!" said Dubourg.

"Oh! if you only knew what she dared say concerning me!" pursued the young man.

"What! Fortune spoke to you!"

"That I am still a school-boy! Yes—she is right; I was even more silly than a school-boy when I loved *her*. But it is all over now—and for ever! She fancies that a sigh, a look, and a smile can enchain me once more to her chariot! Oh! no—I will no longer be her dupe—I know her now——Ah! too well, too well!"

Dubourg rubbed his eyes, and looked steadfastly at Frederick, who, with an air of the deepest affliction, paced the room with uneven steps,—at one moment stopping to strike his forehead—at another giving vent to a scornful laugh.

"My dear friend, what the deuce are you talking about?" demanded Dubourg.

"Of Madame Dernange," replied Frederick, —"that woman whose heart is as false as her face is beautiful—that coquette whom I have adored for the last two months, and by whom I fancied I was loved! That woman, in a word, my dear Dubourg—that woman was only laughing at me after all!"

"And that astonishes you!" cried Dubourg. "Ah! my dear Frederick, you are yet very young——and very green too."

"She made me believe that my passion was reciprocated by her," continued Frederick; "and this evening, a stranger—a colonel of hussars—was introduced to her; and she bestowed upon him that heart which I would have died to secure! I had a great mind to provoke the colonel to a duel."

"Do you think that would have made Madame Dernange less cruel?" demanded Dubourg.

"No—and that reflection made me abandon the project," answered the young Viscount.

"In making love to her," continued Dubourg, "the colonel did that which every one else would have done in his place. You should not be angry with him. On the contrary, you ought to be grateful—for he was the means of showing you in her true colours, a woman who was only making game of you."

"You are right," said Frederick, seating himself near Dubourg: for the latter being by this time entirely awake, thought it necessary to preach a fine sermon to his friend.

"My dear Frederick," he continued, "I am much older than you, and have seen more of the world. I have had a large experience, though I now and then commit the most astounding follies. Believe me, you indulge in a species of romantic and sentimental passion, which, if you do not take care, will some day or another lead you into trouble. You must be loved, you say, as well as love? What! would you pass your whole life in sighs? And yet you are not more constant than those of whom you complain: for, if I recollect, this is at least the sixth or seventh love-affair you have had since I first knew you. The great evil of all this is, that the seven objects of your passion were ever the first to leave you: whereas it is for the man to set the example. Hitherto you have constantly managed to console yourself; and in respect to this Madame Dernange, you will be able to do so again. But, above all, my dear friend, do not take to heart a thing which is only a youthful folly. You may be more or less sentimental, in order to please the ladies; but you must not carry your romantic passion to an extreme; because excess of sentiment kills sentiment! What I am now telling you is perfectly true;—and I am certain that if his lordship, your father, was here, he would agree with me, and would be rejoiced to find you have a friend who can give you good advice, and who might proffer you a good deal more ——if he had not lost this very night the five hundred francs which were sent him by his poor old aunt, all the way from Brittany."

Frederick had not paid much attention to the lecture which Dubourg thought fit to inflict upon him. He was however much calmer; for the most violent crisis is always the one which is the soonest terminated; and the young nobleman had fancied himself to be more deeply in love than he really was.

"But how does it happen that I find you here in the middle of the night?" said he at length: "or rather, at such an hour in the morning?"

"My dear friend," replied Dubourg, "I am the victim of a thousand untoward circumstances. In the first place I was turned out by my landlord, who is a regular cormorant—then a little *soiree* at the lodgings of Miss Delphine, whom you know, by the way; you went with me to her parties on one or two occasions

—and——However, to continue the history of my misfortunes—I played and lost every *sou* I possessed. I really did not know what to do: I thought of you—I know your friendship for me; and though I had but a feeble hope of seeing you before the morning, I came. The house was all illumination and noise — I thought I might wait for you here—and I slept soundly while you were losing your coquettish fair one."

"Poor Dubourg!" cried Frederick.

"Oh! poor indeed!" ejaculated that individual: "poor as Job—and not quite so patient."

"An idea has struck me," said Frederick.

"Pray let me know it," cried Dubourg,

"Paris begins to weary me——"

"So it does me—especially as I have not a *sou*."

"The sight of those heartless coquettes disgusts me," proceeded Frederick.

"My views are precisely the same," added Dubourg,—"in respect to my duns."

"I wish to get out of the way of deceitful womankind."

"I really do not know where you can go to then."

"Those parties," continued Frederick, "where people converse without an object, where we know each other without becoming friends, and whither we go rather to beguile an hour, than because they actually please us —all these disgust me! Scarcely two years have elapsed since I first became my own master; and I am already sick of a Parisian life. But this is my project——"

"What!" exclaimed Dubourg: "will you turn hermit?"

"No: but I shall leave Paris for some time, and travel. I am desirous of seeing foreign lands; for it is only by admiring the beauties of nature, and contemplating the wonders worked by the hand of the Creator, we enlarge our imaginations and strengthen our minds."

"Admirably spoken!" cried Dubourg, starting from his chair. "We must travel, my dear friend—we must travel. Nothing is more useful to young men! But when people travel alone, they soon become wearied of solitude, and do not taste half the happiness which they would enjoy if they had some one to whom they could communicate the impressions and the sentiments created by a picturesque landscape, an ancient monument, or an impressive ruin. Besides, you are too young to travel by yourself: you require a companion, who is gifted with a little experience. In that case, my dear friend, do I offer myself to you as a mentor."

"I was about to make you the very same proposition," observed Frederick.

"And I accept the offer with the greatest pleasure."

"But have you nothing to keep you in Paris?"

"Oh! nothing at all!" cried Dubourg; "not even a bedstead."

"Nor a predilection of a tender kind?" continued Frederick.

"Oh! as for predilections, I am not like you!" exclaimed Dubourg. "I shall make enough of conquests as we proceed on our journey: or rather, I will make none at all! It is all over now—all my nonsense! You shall really be edified by the reformation of my conduct."

"It is then settled, my dear friend: we shall travel together?" said Frederick.

"There is one little difficulty in the way," resumed Dubourg; "and that is connected with his lordship your father. He perhaps will not allow you to travel?"

"I am not afraid he will throw any obstacle in the way. I have already spoken to him on the subject; and he appeared to approve of my plan."

"Nothing can be better! But shall you tell him that I am going with you?" asked Dubourg.

"Why not?" cried Frederick. "I shall inform him that one of my friends will be happy to accompany me for a short time——"

"Be it so; arrange everything as you choose," interrupted Dubourg. "If it is necessary, you can introduce me to your father, who only knows me by sight; and you will see what a grand and imposing air I can put on. Above all things, do not mention the five hundred francs, Miss Delphine, my pretended marriage, and my imaginary twins."

"Never fear," returned Frederick.

"As for my family, if it is not altogether noble, it is a very good one, and is much respected in Brittany."

"Well, I know all that, Dubourg!" cried the young Viscount.

"It is not for you that I am saying this," said Dubourg, "but for your father. However, our plans are agreed upon. It is now broad daylight; and I have slept enough. You must however require rest. Go to bed: in the course of the morning you may have some conversation with your father, and can then communicate with me. I shall expect you at about six o'clock this evening at the Café de la Rotonde."

"Agreed!" said Frederick.

"Ah! I had almost forgotten! Lend me a few louis: I already owe you thirty; but we will settle the next time my aunt sends me some money."

"Is any reckoning necessary between friends?"

"There are not many friends like you, my dear Frederick."

Dubourg consigned to his pocket the ten louis which the Viscount presented to him; and departed from the mansion, singing a jovial song, and hastening to take a walk on the Boulevards, as happy as if he had just been appointed to a situation of twelve thousand francs a-year where there was nothing to do.

In the course of the day, Frederick sought an interview with his father. He trembled when he first met the glance of M. de Montreville, who, so far from encouraging the advance of his son, awaited in silence the demand which he suspected was about to be made.

Frederick, having respectfully accosted his father, began his discourse, in which he frequently found himself embarrassed, because

the eyes of the Count were fixed upon his countenance, as if they penetrated to the very bottom of his soul. He however made known his wishes, and awaited the answer with fear. The Count appeared to reflect for some time; and maintained a long silence, which Frederick did not dare interrupt. At length his worship addressed his son as follows:—

"You are desirous of leaving Paris, Frederick? and you are already tired of its pleasures? This disgust has seized upon you at an early age!"

Frederick sighed, and continued silent.

An ironical smile curled the Count's lips, as he added, "You do not tell me all? Confess that a disappointment of a tender nature——"

Frederick cast down his eyes, and blushed.

"But all this is very natural at your age," proceeded the Count, in a milder tone. "You have my consent to enter upon your travels; it is a means of recreation which instructs while it amuses. But who will accompany you?"

"One of my friends," answered Frederick,—"a gentleman of the name of Dubourg, of an ancient family in Brittany—where he has an aunt still living—is desirous of travelling with me."

"No, Frederick," returned the Count sternly: "I will not suffer this M. Dubourg, whom you call *your friend*, to accompany you. I have heard much of him, although I have seen him but once or twice; and I know enough of him to object to him as a companion for my son. His family is respectable, I am well aware: but M. Dubourg himself, they say, is a sad wild fellow."

"My dear father," said Frederick, "I assure you that——"

"Do not interrupt me," cried the Count: "I cannot prevent you, while in Paris, from associating with individuals of his stamp: but when you are about to travel for your instruction, I repeat that it is not with M. Dubourg I should wish to see you associating. Neither will I allow you to take Germain: he is not so steady as he ought to be. Besides, in travelling you do not require a retinue: by the aid of money you obtain servants at every hotel where you halt."

"Am I to travel alone?" asked Frederick.

"No—you are not yet of age," replied the Count; "and are therefore too young to travel by yourself. M. Ménard is the proper person to accompany you."

"What,—my old tutor?" cried Frederick.

"He will not go with you as a preceptor, my dear son; but as a faithful friend," answered M. de Montreville. "M. Ménard is a good man — his disposition is amiable. Although somewhat pedantic, he will not oppose your pleasures; he loves you, and will prevent the son of the Count de Montreville from doing anything to disgrace himself. To that point only shall his control extend."

"But, my dear father——"

"Enough! I shall send for M. Ménard; and if he accepts my proposition, as I have every reason to believe he will, you may start to-morrow."

Frederick withdrew. He was not quite pleased with the choice his father had made, although he knew that M. Ménard was an excellent man: but he would rather have travelled with Dubourg, whose inexhaustible gaiety suited his own sentimental disposition—an assertion which may be thought paradoxical, but which is borne out by facts. Little men love tall women, and tall women love little men: gourmands make a better dinner in the society of those who eat but little; the strong ally themselves with the weak; men of genius choose domesticated wives; authoresses generally espouse fools; proud individuals cannot endure those who are proud also; rogues seek the society of honest men: the most dissipated woman loves the man who detests her vices; and the good man frequently adores the most libertine female. Extremes meet: contrasts approach each other; and in the darkest shades the painter discovers the finest colours.

"Well," said Dubourg, when Frederick joined him at the place of appointment; "what news?"

"None very satisfactory," was the answer.

"Your father will not allow you to travel?" said Dubourg.

"On the contrary—he has given me his permission," returned Frederick.

"It seems, then, that the news are very satisfactory," said Dubourg.

"There is one thing which does *not* please him: he will not permit me——"

"To do what?"

"To travel with you," added Frederick.

"And why not?"

"Because he says——"

"He says what? Speak?" cried Dubourg.

"He says that you are wild," continued the young Viscount.

"And he has never seen me more than once or twice."

"Some one has spoken to him about you."

"Ah!" ejaculated Dubourg; "calumny has been at work to depreciate the merits of innocence! But if his lordship was not your father, Frederick, I should——However, he is not far wrong, perhaps! And yet if he only knew how I have reformed myself lately— and what a lecture I have read myself since last night——"

"He has insisted upon my travelling with M. Ménard," interrupted Frederick,—"my old tutor."

"To place a tutor over a young man of twenty!" ejaculated Dubourg: "what an atrocity! Never mind—let the Count have *his* way, we will have *our's* also."

"How?" demanded Frederick.

"You wish me to accompany you?"

"Certainly," was the response.

"And I on my part shall not be sorry to leave Paris for a time," resumed Dubourg;—"at all events till my creditors, who are perpetually dunning me, have had leisure to cool."

"But my father?" said Frederick.

"Keep your own counsel, and leave me to settle everything. What sort of a man is this tutor of your's?"

"The best man in the world—but not the sharpest," answered Frederick.

"So much the better," cried Dubourg.

MADAME DERNANGE.

"He has a great respect for learned men."

"I will talk to him in Latin, Greek, English, and even Chinese, if he does not understand it."

"I think he has never travelled otherwise than on the map," said Frederick.

"I will tell him I have been round the world," continued Dubourg.

"But his principal weakness is his love of being in the society of titled people."

"I will give myself a title that shall not fail to astonish him."

"What is your plan?" demanded Frederick.

"Leave that to me—I will arrange it all. Start to-morrow with your tutor. Take care and get as much money as possible: it may be necessary. All you have to do is to let me know which road you take, and the hour of your departure."

The two young men separated, as soon as Dubourg had given Frederick the address of the place to which he was to send a letter to make him aware of the particulars just alluded to.

But let us leave Dubourg and Frederick for the present, and make ourselves more intimately acquainted with this M. Ménard, to whom we have already been partially introduced. He was an individual of about fifty—in person very short and very fat; and very ruddy as to his complexion. He had a double chin, which accorded perfectly with a nose that resembled a large peeled chestnut placed between his cheeks. His stomach began to inconvenience him a little as he walked; but his little legs, ornamented with an immense pair of calves, seemed strong enough to support the weight.

M. Ménard had passed nearly his whole life in teaching pupils; and his manners possessed all that suavity and softness which charac-

terize the fashionable tutor. He was not a very learned man; but he was rather conceited of what he *did* know, and was by no means averse to a little flattery. His mind had not been enlarged by his perpetual intercourse with children: he was, however, upright, kind, and good-natured. His principal foible was to fancy that he grew an inch every time he was in the society of a great personage; and his only fault was an occasional excess at table—not in respect to wine—but in reference to the eatables,—a liberal indulgence in which frequently caused slight indigestions.

The Count de Montreville sent for M. Ménard, who accepted with pleasure the proposition which was made to him. To travel in a postchaise with the son of the Count de Montreville was a piece of luck which came very opportune, the old tutor being at that moment without employment. The Count besought him to look well after Frederick, but not to thwart him in any of those innocent recreations in which youth will indulge.

Everything being thus arranged, M. de Montreville placed in the tutor's hands a sum of money, sufficiently liberal in amount, and which was to be held at the disposal of Frederick.

"My dear son," said the Count, "you must not forget your rank upon your travels: at the same time be economical and prudent. When you require funds M. Ménard will let me know."

Frederick promised his sire to attend to all his instructions; and five minutes after this assurance he wrote to Dubourg to inform him that he should start on the following morning and should take the road to Lyons. A young man's preparations are soon terminated; and those of M. Ménard did not occupy a very long time. The old tutor was however too prudent to think of setting out before he had provided himself with a large meat pie and a bottle of wine.

At last everything was ready: Frederick was rejoiced with the idea of being able to leave Paris, and escape from the attractions of Madame Dernange. The poor young man fancied she would regret him: alas! a little travelling was indeed necessary to dissipate such illusions!

But the carriage was waiting, and the postilion was mounted. Frederick pressed the hand of his father to his heart; and M. Ménard, not content with having bowed to the Count six times, got into the vehicle backwards, in order to have the honour of bowing once more. Frederick followed him into the carriage—the postilion cracked his whip—and the travellers started for Italy.

* * * * *

* * * *

For some time not a word was uttered by either the Viscount or the tutor; and the carriage proceeded at a quick rate. M. Ménard at length began by thanking Frederick for the honour he had done him in choosing him for a companion: Frederick made some kind of reply; and then they both admired a few pleasant scenes which met their eyes. The discourse then languished; and Frederick, having called to mind Madame Dernange and some others of his faithless mistresses, was soon wrapped up in a deep reverie;—while M. Ménard proceeded to attack the cold meat pie, with which he had provided himself, and to enter into conversation with the bottle of wine.

"I think we shall divert ourselves immensely," remarked Frederick, awakening from his musings.

"I opine so too," responded M. Ménard, hastening to devour a mouthful. "We have everything we require to ensure our comfort; and if your lordship would taste this pie, which is delicious——"

"No, I thank you, my dear Ménard," said Frederick: "I have no appetite yet awhile."

"As your lordship pleases," observed the tutor.

"I beg of you to drop the *lordship* between us," said Frederick; "and call me by my Christian name, which is far better."

"At the same time," remonstrated Ménard, "when we stop at the hotels upon the road, it is as well that people should know whom they have the honour to receive."

"In order to make us pay three times as much as we otherwise should!" exclaimed Frederick. "I am determined to avoid all those ridiculous ceremonies which do not contribute to the pleasures of travelling."

"You will at least allow me to call you Monsieur de Montreville; as his lordship your father might be annoyed if he knew that you maintained a strict *incognito*."

"Talking of my father," cried Frederick, "how much money did he give you?"

"Eight thousand francs," was the answer;—the sum named being 320*l.* sterling.

"Eight thousand francs! that is not too much," Frederick ejaculated.

"What, my lord!" said the tutor;—"is it not enough for two people, who, in addition, have an excellent carriage and two horses? We are not going to the end of the world; and moreover your father informed me that if we needed a further supply, he would remit it."

"I recollect," said Frederick. "Besides, we must not be extravagant."

"In addition to all that," continued Ménard, "it is very imprudent to carry much money with us. We are going to Italy—a country that is invested by banditti. Between Rome and Naples, especially, the road is fearfully dangerous. When we are once there, we must adopt all kinds of precautions."

Frederick did not reply to these observations. He was thinking of Dubourg, and was astonished at not having heard anything of him. They were already twenty-four miles from Paris; and the road was in excellent order; so that no accident was to be dreaded on Dubourg's account. But as the young Viscount was thus reflecting, the noise of a postilion's whip, coming from behind, announced the advance of another vehicle. Frederick looked out of the carriage window to observe the equipage by which his own was followed; and he perceived a small travelling-chariot drawn by two horses, tearing along at a pace which

must speedily enable it to overtake the one in which he and M. Ménard were seated. A cloud of dust soon enveloped them: but the road was wide, and there seemed no cause for alarm. The chariot however was dashed rudely against the Viscount's carriage; and such was the shock, that the latter upset, hurling M. Ménard into a ditch, where he began to howl most piteously.

The chariot stopped, and an exchange of oaths and abusive epithets took place between the two postilions. Frederick, who was not hurt, hastened to assist Ménard: and the poor tutor, who was more terrified than injured, passed his hand over his body to ascertain if any bones were broken, vowing all the time that the shock would give him an indigestion.

Meanwhile the postilion who drove the chariot that had occasioned the accident, descended from his horse; and after having exchanged a few words with the person inside the vehicle, stepped forward, hat in hand, to address the victims of the disaster. He assured them that "his lordship the Baron Ladislas Potoski, Palatine of Rava and Sandomir, expressed his sincere regrets to the gentlemen whose carriage had been overturned, and requested permission to hasten in person and render any service that lay in his power."

When M. Ménard heard the postilion thus enunciating the names and titles of the traveller whom he drove, he hastened to scramble out of the ditch, and arrange his shirt-frill, which the fall had tumbled.

"Say to your master," replied Frederick, "that we are quite sensible of his kind offers; but we hope that no more serious consequences will arise from the incident."

"But our chaise is smashed," cried M. Ménard, "and we might very well profit by the offer of the Baron Pota—Poto—Potiousky, and beseech his lordship to convey us to the nearest town."

The tutor had scarcely done speaking when the Polish nobleman descended from his chariot, and hastened towards Frederick. As the "foreigner" approached, with his hands upon his hips, and swinging from side to side, Frederick immediately recognised Dubourg in the Baron Potoski: and he was about to give vent to his mirth, when his friend made a sign to enjoin silence, and ran towards him, crying, "Ah! is it possible? What a happy encounter! The Viscount de Montreville, I believe?"

"The same," responded Frederick, assuming an air of extreme politeness: "and, if I mistake not, I have the pleasure to address the Baron of—of——"

"The Baron Potoski," whispered Dubourg.

"The Baron Potoski," added Frederick aloud.

While this recognition was taking place on the brink of the ditch, M. Ménard wearied himself with bows;—at the same time seizing Frederick by the skirt of his coat, to drag him to the middle of the road, which seemed a more suitable spot for the two noblemen's convenience.

"Have I the pleasure of being in the presence of your father?" asked Dubourg, addressing Frederick, and then turning towards the tutor, on whom he bestowed a gracious smile of aristocratic condescension.

"No," replied Frederick: "but he is a second father to me. I must introduce you to M. Menard, who was formerly my tutor."

"M. Ménard!" ejaculated Dubourg, his features assuming an expression of mingled joy and of admiration, as he gazed upon the old tutor as one would have gazed upon Voltaire. "What, is this M. Ménard! I have often heard him spoken of as the most eminent of tutors! How happy I shall be to cultivate his acquaintance."

M. Ménard was entirely overcome by the praises which thus issued from the lips of no less a person than the Palatine of Rava and Sandomir; and he would have rolled into the ditch a second time, in consequence of the numerous steps he took backward as he made his bows, had not Frederick dragged him into the middle of the road. Dubourg relieved the poor tutor from his embarrassment by taking his hand and pressing it with the most cordial warmth.

"You do me honour, my lord," murmured Ménard: then addressing Frederick, he said, "You are acquainted with the Baron Potoski, then?"

"Acquainted with him," cried Frederick, with a smile. "Why—we are intimate friends—I and Dubourg——"

"Dubourg!" echoed Ménard, in astonishment.

"That was the name I was compelled to bear in Paris some time ago," said the pretended Baron, hastily, "when political matters obliged me to preserve a strict *incognito*. The truth is, I was charged with a delicate mission by our Government——"

"Ah! I understand," said Ménard.

"My dear Frederick," continued Dubourg, "pray always call me by that name by which you first knew me: it must ever be dear to an old friend."

M. Ménard took it into his head to inspect the chaise that was upset: and Frederick, profiting by the opportunity, said to Dubourg, "My dear friend, the stratagem you adopted to join me, was somewhat of the most dangerous. You nearly killed me and poor Ménard."

"It was all the fault of my stupid post-boy," responded Dubourg. "I desired him to overturn my chariot just as it was passing your's: but instead of obeying my orders, the rascal preferred upsetting *your* vehicle. This is all the more disagreeable, because I shall be obliged to ask you to make use of my chariot: whereas I reckoned on getting into your's. But never mind: I see that it will not be difficult to impose upon old Ménard. Only do your best to assist me, and support all you hear me say, when you find it necessary; and above all, do not forget that I am the Baron Potoski, Palatine of Rava and Sandomir. You already committed one egregious error, which I was fortunately enabled to rectify: but take care in future, or I shall be obliged to travel without you; and in that case I should not get very far."

At this moment Ménard came forward, and announced that one of the axletrees was broken, which could not be repaired before the morning.

"Well," exclaimed Dubourg, "you must do me the favour to accept of seats in my travelling-carriage. We will stop at the first town, and remain there for the night—during which time the axletree may be mended."

This proposal being agreed to, the travelling party left the postilion of the broken chaise to follow with that vehicle at his leisure; and they jumped into the chariot, which was a miserable old trumpery concern, the lining being patched in several places, and the whole so wretchedly suspended on its springs that it jolted the travellers to pieces.

Frederick could not suppress a smile at the Palatine's vehicle, the interior of which was so dilapidated; but Dubourg hastened to address M. Ménard, who was seated, in a humble manner with his back to the horses, and who had not as yet ventured to do otherwise than to cast one or two furtive looks about him.

"You see," said Dubourg, "a carriage which is older than we are. It belonged to my grandfather; and it was in this very chariot that he saved Stanislas Leckzinski when pursued by his rival Augustus, who was the favourite of the Czar, when Stanislas was devoted to Charles XII. But you know all this better than I do, M. Ménard; for you are a man of learning."

"Ah! my lord," exclaimed the tutor, bowing profoundly; "you flatter me."

"But to return to this carriage," continued Dubourg: "all my family revered it as I do, as an heir-loom. When my father was compelled to fly from Cracow in a moment of political turmoil, this modest-looking vehicle contained property to the value of six millions in specie and precious stones—the remnants of his vast fortune; with which he sought a refuge in Brittany—where you have excellent milk and butter."

Here Frederick—who, when he heard Dubourg talk about the six millions, had bit his lip to suppress a smile—was obliged, at the mention of the milk and butter, to cough in order to subdue a violent inclination to laugh: while M. Ménard gazed upon the old patched lining of the chariot in respectful silence.

"You see, M. Ménard," continued Dubourg, as he wiped his face with a kerchief which he had thrust in his waistcoat pocket to assume a foreign appearance, "one has reason to be proud of a chariot which affords so many honourable reminiscences. I know it is not over new, and the springs might be better; my intendant has more than a hundred times sought to persuade me to have it repaired. But no—I would not permit such a desecration! Where I am now seated, the Princess of Hungary once sat: in your place, M. Ménard, was occupied by King Stanislas:—and I confess that I am very much averse to change this Utrecht velvet which has been in contact with so many illustrious personages."

"I can easily sympathise with your feelings in this matter, my lord," said Ménard, who, ravished at the idea of travelling with two noblemen of distinguished rank, hardly knew whether he was upon his head or his feet—the more especially as a monarch had once occupied his own seat. "This chariot ought to be very dear to you, my lord; and I can assure you that it is one of the easiest and most comfortable——"

At this instant a violent shock threw M. Ménard forward into Frederick's lap: but he quickly regained his proper position. Frederick coughed and put his head out of the window; while M. Ménard, with a low bow, said, "My lord, I beg pardon for my awkwardness."

"Compelled to observe a strict *incognito*," continued Dubourg, pursuing the thread of his narrative, "I travel without any attendants; and I assure you that I am not the worse off on that account. I detest all the retinue, pomp, and ceremony which accompany greatness. When I am on my travels, I throw aside all ostentation: I am now a simple observer of nature. By the bye, my dear Frederick, I have not yet thought of asking you where you are going."

"My dear Baron," returned Frederick, "I have left Paris because I found all the ladies coquettish, or insensible to a sincere passion, or who did not understand my definition of the word *love*.'

"The reason is obvious," rejoined Dubourg: "You do not make love in the nineteenth century according to the established laws of the age. But this is only a temporary disappointment: you are too sentimental and romantic—we must cure you of these follies, Frederick—must we not, M. Ménard?"

"Your lordship may possibly succeed in doing so," said Ménard: "but for myself, I am too humble an individual to attempt such a reformation. At the same time, my lord, we must pardon the inadvertences of youth——"

"Very true," cried Dubourg; "the greatest men had their weak points. Alexander was a drunkard—Anthony dressed himself up as Bacchus to please Cleopatra—Æneas consulted the Sybil at Cumæ—and the Emperor Maximilian died of gourmandizing melons. There is nothing astonishing in the circumstance of Frederick's being too sentimental after all those examples of human weakness."

M. Ménard made a low bow, and felicitated himself once more upon the pleasure of travelling with a nobleman who was so profoundly learned and so complaisant as my Lord Potoski.

"I have no particular destination," said Frederick: "at the same time, I should be much pleased to traverse those countries which have given birth to illustrious men and whence have sprung the geniuses which have outlived generations. It is therefore to Italy that I propose to travel first of all."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Dubourg. "My object in leaving Paris was the same: I am anxious to add to my stock of experience and knowledge. What a charming idea! Suppose we travel together?"

"With pleasure, my dear Baron," returned

Frederick. "Nothing could afford me greater delight."

"How thankful I ought to be!" cried Dubourg: "fortune has indeed favoured me on this occasion. To travel with my friend Frederick, and in the society of the learned M. Ménard, is glorious! We shall mingle our reflections upon the various scenes we visit; and I shall be edified by the observations of my friend, as well as by the deep learning of the great professor Ménard!"

The tutor, puffed with pride, acknowledged this compliment by many low bows: but Dubourg pursued the same theme with such ardour as not to suffer the excellent preceptor to have time to reply.

"How agreeable," he exclaimed, "for friends to travel in each other's society? We shall visit ancient Rome—we shall see superb Genoa: I shall climb up Mount Vesuvius with M. Ménard, and descend into the crater—if there is no danger! We shall visit Switzerland, the country of the immortal Tell—that cradle of political liberty, where we shall be received with hospitality in every house, and shall taste the best sorts of cheese, M. Ménard! Such cheese as they make in Switzerland! I will not however assert that it is equal to the cheese we have in Brittany: for nothing is better than the cheese in Brittany."

Frederick pushed Dubourg with his elbow, to get him out of Brittany, into which he very naturally rambled from time to time. But he took not the hint, and went on to say, "In Switzerland, M. Ménard, it is not an uncommon thing to see a cheese fifteen or twenty years old. The Swiss have a receipt for preserving cheese——"

"It ought to be better than our Roquefort cheese," said M. Ménard, who was always at home when any one spoke of eating.

"Oh! I will answer for *that*," cried Dubourg. "By the side of Swiss cheese, our Roquefort is poor indeed. However, M. Ménard, if you only travel with me, I hope to be enabled to let you taste more than one kind of cheese!"

"Your lordship's kindness," began M. Ménard, "is——"

"Yes," hastily continued Dubourg, "we will view the glaciers—we will ascend St. Gothard and the Riggi mountain—which we must do, by the bye, on all fours; and from their summits we shall behold the finest scenery in the world. We shall then descend into the valleys; and while you, M. Ménard, are gathering herbs, I shall be looking at the pretty peasant-girls gleaning in the fields. The Swiss girls, M. Ménard, wear very short petticoats——"

"Well, my dear tutor," exclaimed Frederick, "what do you think of all these projects?"

How could M. Ménard be otherwise than enchanted? To travel with an individual so noble, so learned, and so affable as the Baron Potoski, appeared a most fortunate adventure; and though the hardness of the cushions and the motion of the travelling-chariot had already inconvenienced him somewhat, he felt sufficiently courageous to achieve a thousand leagues in a vehicle which had been used by King Stanislas and the Princess of Hungary.

"I cannot see anything to prevent us from travelling with his lordship the Baron," said M. Ménard; "and I shall seize the first opportunity to write to the Count de Montreville, to inform him of the happy meeting his son has the good fortune——"

"No—that will never do, M. Ménard!" interrupted Dubourg;—"you must not write a line on the subject to the Count. I have already told you I am travelling *incognito*: and I should not like any one to know in what direction I proceed. The Polish government is anxious to appoint me ambassador to the Sultan; but I do not care about that dignity. The Count de Montreville might inadvertently betray my secret: in a very short time all France would know the road I was taking. It would therefore be much better not to mention the subject."

"I am of the same opinion," said Frederick. "What is the use of telling my father all this? He allows me to go where I choose; and he gave me M. Ménard, not as a Mentor, but as a companion. In travelling with the Baron, I am certain to please my father: but in his joy at hearing that the Baron de Potoski is my friend, there is no doubt that he would betray the *incognito*; and in this case the Baron would be obliged to abandon it."

"True," said Ménard: "I understand. But if——"

Dubourg, seeing that the tutor still entertained some scruples, hastened to take out his horn snuff-box; and presenting it to Frederick with a significant glance, he said, "Do you recognise it, my dear friend? It is the same I once showed you in Paris."

"Certainly I recognise it," answered Frederick, not exactly comprehending Dubourg's drift; while M. Ménard threw a glance of curiosity upon the box, and awaited an explanation with impatience.

"It is a precious relic in my eyes," continued Dubourg, regaling himself with a pinch. "You would never suspect, M. Ménard, to whom this humble-looking box once belonged!"

"No, my lord?" cried the tutor: "to whom, my lord?"

"Humble as it is," proceeded Dubourg, "I would not exchange it for a gold one set round with diamonds. This box belonged to the King of Prussia."

"To the King of Prussia!" ejaculated M. Ménard.

"To Frederick the Great," answered Dubourg, "who, as you well know, was passionately fond of snuff. He possessed a great many boxes, all simple and homely, like everything else which belonged to him. He gave this to my father; and from my father it has descended to me."

"Ah! my lord, if I dared ask to be allowed——"

And M. Ménard held forward his forefinger and thumb, with the utmost respect, to take a pinch from the box which had belonged to the King of Prussia, and which Dubourg presented to him with a condescending affable smile. The tutor took the pinch with all imaginable humility; he rammed the snuff up his nose, vowing it was delicious; and, as the

tears ran down his cheeks in his vain endeavours to sneeze, he fancied that he bore a slight resemblance to the King of Prussia. His head swam dizzily; his imagination was excited with ideas of greatness, and stupified with the effects of the snuff; and, as he attempted to sneeze the third time, he murmured, "Decidedly, I am of your opinion, my lord: it would be altogether useless to write to the Count de Montreville!"

* * * * * *
* * * * *

Night had closed in when our travellers reached a miserable little village, where Dubourg ordered the postilion to stop at the best tavern; but as there was only one in the place, there was no choice. This inn was seldom frequented by any other persons than those who were wayfarers on foot. Frederick was not at all inclined to pass the night in so poor a village: but Dubourg resisted all his arguments with success. The Baron had his own reasons for not proceeding farther with his shabby travelling-chariot; and M. Ménard, who felt the cravings of a keen appetite, and who had left the remnant of his pie in the post-chaise that was upset, supported Dubourg's proposal.

The chariot entered a court-yard knee-deep in manure and dirt. A number of ducks were waddling about in the mud; and several geese walked majestically elsewhere. Three or four obese hogs were poking their noses everywhere, and grunting at the same time; and an old lame horse was drinking at a trough, on the sides of which were perched a dozen fowls. These had the habit of depositing their eggs either in the street, the court-yard, or the ground-floor parlours, between which places there was apparently no difference in their eyes. To complete this domestic picture, let us observe that some rabbits every now and then made their appearance at the hedge of a garden which had been transformed into a warren; but they speedily ran back to their burrows at the howlings of a huge bull-dog which seemed the guardian and chief of all the other animals.

It was with considerable difficulty the chariot passed through an old gateway, the doors of which had not been closed for a long time. On one side the wheels stuck in a deep rut; and on the other they passed over an immense heap of manure, to the indescribable alarm of M. Ménard, who feared that the noble chariot of the Palatine of Rava was about to be upset, and that he should be overturned in it. But his terror was groundless.

The moment the chariot entered the court-yard, the hogs, the rabbits, and the fowls ran away; the ducks quacked—the geese flapped their wings; and the dog hastened to bark at the travellers;—while several labourers and country-girls, who formed the entire population of the hamlet, placed themselves in a convenient spot to stare at the personages who thus arrived in a carriage.

"Where the deuce are they taking us to?" exclaimed Frederick, thrusting his head out of one of the windows: but he quickly drew it in again—for the wheels had stirred up the manure, and an execrable odour assailed his nostrils.

"It is to be sincerely hoped we are not opposite the kitchen," said M. Ménard, applying his handkerchief to his nose.

"Do not be alarmed," cried Dubourg; "we shall be very comfortable here. You know it is wrong to judge by appearances. I have already put up at this tavern, and recollect that they make capital hashes and omelets."

Though it might have appeared singular that the Lord Palatine of Rava and Sandomir should relish such ordinary dishes, M. Menard no longer found the court-yard so very uninviting; and alighting from the chariot after Dubourg, who had just leapt upon a heap of manure, he turned his eyes towards the building to discover which was the kitchen. The landlord now came forward; and without bowing to the travellers, prepared to conduct them in-doors. Accustomed to receive only waggoners and labourers at his house, and these persons not being very nice in matters of etiquette, he had acquired a certain habit of coarse familiarity with all strangers; and the sight of a travelling-chariot did not elicit the least token of respect, though the arrival of such an equipage was of rare occurrence at his hostelry. He was a little man, about fifty years of age, with one leg shorter than the other, and a red nose which flamed with the effects of frequent potations.

"Are you going to stop and drink a draught of wine, gentlemen?" said he, addressing himself to M. Ménard, who was still engaged in his endeavours to find out the kitchen, and to whom the landlord's tone appeared far from respectful.

"Now, then," cried Dubourg, "lead us into your best saloon. We mean to sup and sleep here. Look sharp: let the best of everything be served up for our repast."

"Certainly," said M. Ménard, assuming a patronising air, and slapping the landlord on the shoulder. "Recollect that you have the honour to wait upon his lordship the Viscount Frederick de Montreville—his lordship the Baron Ladislas Potoski, Palatine of Rava and Sandomir—and M. Benedict Ménard, Master of Arts, and a distinguished Bachelor likewise."

"I shall never be able to find room for all those people," said the landlord: while Dubourg in a whisper to Ménard, reproached him for having betrayed his *incognito*, and begged him to be more guarded in future.

"Now, Goton! Goton!" ejaculated the landlord, running up to the edge of the garden. "Make haste and attend to these gentlemen, while I take charge of their horses; and tell your mistress to see about the supper directly."

Goton made her appearance—and a very comely one it was too. She was a tall, well-built girl of about twenty, with large black eyes, and a sun-burnt complexion. Her features were not regular: but her beautiful white teeth and her red pouting lips gave an agreeable expression to her countenance. If instead of a ragged petticoat, a dirty cap, and a bodice of coarsest material, Goton had been apparelled in a dress to set off her buxom shape

—if she had used some almond-paste for her complexion—and if her hair had been well oiled, Mademoiselle Goton would have captivated many a heart even in Pâris.

"Will you follow me, gentlemen?" said the girl, smiling in order to show her white teeth: for Goton knew that she was much prettier when she smiled; and in the humble village as well as in the great city, a woman knows how to display her charms to the best advantage.

The best room at the inn was that where the waggoners, labourers, and peasants were wont to take their meals; and on this occasion the apartment was already occupied by four farmers, who had arrived before our illustrious travellers, and were seated at a table engaged in drinking and talking. The entrance of the three gentlemen made but a small impression upon the farmers; and they continued their discourse as soon as they had satisfied their curiosity by casting a glance at Frederick and his companions.

"I will lay a cloth for you here," said Goton, advancing towards the table.

"No, no," cried Dubourg; "we cannot sup here. We will withdraw to one of the bedchambers."

"But this is the place where people take their meals," said Goton.

"It may be," observed M. Ménard; "but their lordships, the Count and the Ba——at all events, we cannot sup here!"

These words attracted the attention of the farmers, who now contemplated the travellers with attention, and exchanged significant looks among themselves. Ménard, fearful of having irritated them, and suspecting they might create a disturbance, hastened into the passage, where he waited for his companions;—while Dubourg, who was by no means of a peaceful temperament, cast angry glances at the farmers. But Frederick's mind was too much occupied with his reminiscences to pay attention to what was taking place.

"You see, Goton," said one of the farmers, with a mocking laugh, "these gentlemen are too proud to sit down with us."

"No one was speaking to you," cried Dubourg. "Try and hold your tongues; or you will repent your insolence."

"Indeed!" said the farmer. "You want to quarrel, do you?"

"My lord," said M. Ménard, thrusting his head into the room, "do not dispute with those men: they did not mean to insult you, my Lord Baron!"

"Ah! that's a Baron, is it?" cried another of the farmers. "Well, I really took him for a quack-doctor, with his handkerchief in his waistcoat-pocket."

"Did you see their chariot?" exclaimed a third. "It was an old rattle-trap that I would not harness my donkey to, on any account—that I wouldn't!"

"Oh, the wretches! to speak in such terms of the chariot of King Stanislas?" said Ménard, but in so subdued a tone that no one suspected he had even opened his lips.

"Now, you fellows," cried Dubourg, "hold your tongues; or we will teach you with whom you have to deal, in a very short time."

"Come on!" roared the farmers, brandishing their cudgels; "we will teach you something, we will!"

Hitherto Frederick had manifested a profound silence. He now drew forth a pair of pistols; and approaching the farmers, said, very calmly, "Whatever titles we bear, we are men, like you; and can soon prove that we do not want courage. We are not accustomed to use clubs; but here is something that will place you and us upon equal terms. Every one can fire a pistol! Who will accept my challenge? Speak!"

"And here's for the other two!" exclaimed Dubourg, producing a huge pair of horse pistols.

At the sight of the weapons the farmers turned pale, and let their bludgeons fall. Goton gave vent to her alarm in piercing cries: the landlord limped into the room; and M. Ménard, in his haste to hide himself at the end of the passage, ran against the landlady, who was also hurrying towards the scene of disturbance. This female was a very short woman, enormously fat, and as broad as she was long. For some time past her corpulence had so much increased, that it was with the greatest difficulty she could walk about at all; and even then she was obliged to support herself against the walls, as the slightest obstacle would have upset her equilibrium in a moment. This obesity obliged the landlady to be exceedingly sedentary in her habits; which mode of life, so far from diminishing her corpulency, increased it daily, to the indescribable annoyance of the worthy lady herself and her excellent husband, who took five minutes to limp round his wife.

The hostess had caught the shrieks uttered by Goton, and the cries of her husband; and she had decided upon leaving her arm-chair and venturing up the passage which led to the scene of disturbance. But as the passage was exceedingly narrow, the landlady hermetically sealed it up with her obese person: or in other words, she stuck fast between the walls. It was, therefore, impossible for any one to pass along the passage while the landlady was in it,—unless through the unusual medium of leaping over her head, or creeping between her legs. It was against this immense mass of flesh that M. Ménard, to whom the sight of the pistols had restored all the agility of his early youth, precipitated himself in his frenzied haste to escape from the scene of disturbance: but notwithstanding the violence of the concussion, the landlady was immoveable. Jammed in between the walls of the passage, she stood as firm as a rock, crying out in a shrill tone of voice, "Good Lord! what's the matter? who has run up against me?"

Ménard still obeying the first impulse of his terror, and determined to force his way out of the passage, endeavoured to push by the landlady on the right side; and his nose came in violent contact with a shoulder which would have put that of Hercules to shame. He then attempted the other side, and rushed against an arm that would darken a window.

"Oh! where am I? what demoness has me in her power?" cried the poor tutor, who

scarcely understood the real nature of the obstacle which he encountered on every side, and against which he rushed forward, head foremost, like a battering ram, to force a passage.

"What's the matter?" screamed the landlady, louder than before; "and what ails this lunatic?"

Her cries attracted the attention of our travellers; for the farmers had been reduced to silence the instant Frederick and Dubourg displayed their pistols; and it was, therefore, towards the passage that they now directed their attention.

"That's my wife's voice," cried the landlord. "It must be something very extraordinary to have drawn her out of her arm-chair."

Thus speaking, he hastened towards the passage, accompanied by Goton, who carried a candle in her hand. Dubourg and Frederick followed at a little distance, and soon discovered the cause of the disturbance. But the noise of advancing footsteps had increased the alarm of Ménard, who fancied that the farmers were in pursuit; and he made another desperate effort to free himself from the thraldom in which he was held. But the landlady supposing it must be a robber who was using such violent means to force a passage, grasped the poor tutor by the coat-collar, and held him in her powerful clutch till the arrival of her husband, Goton, Frederick, and Dubourg. Goton burst into a fit of laughter; the landlord stood in speechless amazement; Frederick and Dubourg laughed almost as loud as Goton at the ludicrousness of the scene; and M. Ménard implored the succour of his "noble friends" in a voice rendered almost inaudible by terror.

"I have him!" cried the landlady, in a triumphant tone: "the rascal could not escape me—I have him!"

Poor Ménard's countenance had assumed an expression of such lugubriousness, and his eyes were turned in so imploring a manner towards his friends, that they hastened to deliver him from the power of the landlady. But the landlord,—who fancied that M. Ménard had attempted to snatch a kiss from the lips of his wife, and who considered his spouse to be the finest woman in the whole hamlet, where she certainly was the fattest,—precipitated himself upon the unfortunate tutor, and was about to pummel him unmercifully, when his wife satisfied him that Ménard had not been guilty of the slightest deviation from the rules of courtesy.

"Oh! I can assure you he did not attempt to take any liberties with me," exclaimed the hostess, in as soft a tone as she could assume; and her husband at length decided on releasing M. Ménard from his grasp.

But the poor tutor was in a most deplorable condition: he was half dead with terror—his face was scarlet, and his wig was turned all awry.

"Still this is not quite satisfactory," said the host, as he bent a dubious look on M. Ménard; "it is not a usual thing to find an innocent man in the very arms of one's wife."

The tutor gazed around him in speechless alarm; for he knew not what explanation to give the angry landlord. Dubourg, however, hastened to his assistance; and, having guessed the cause of the misunderstanding, succeeded in quieting the suspicions of the landlord. He then desired Goton to conduct himself and his friends to the room where their supper was to be served up: but this order could not be executed until the landlady had thought fit to withdraw her person from the passage. The best accommodation which could be afforded the travellers, consisted of two dirty, miserable rooms, the ceilings of which were supported by large beams; and on these the cats and spiders amused themselves without much interruption. In each room there was a bed of no very inviting appearance, the blue and white curtains resembling the patterns of the salad-bowls generally used in the country. These beds, which were only half-veiled by the draperies, were at least five feet in height.

"The rooms are not over luxurious," observed Frederick, with a smile. "But, when one is on his travels, he must put up with all such little inconveniences: must he not, my dear Ménard?"

"Certainly," replied the tutor. "A night is soon passed—and these beds appear to be very comfortable and soft."

"We shall require a ladder to get into them," said Frederick.

"But I only see two, my lord," observed M. Ménard.

"Oh! you need not trouble yourself about me!" cried Dubourg. "I shall not go to bed all night. I have some very important despatches to write and send off early in the morning, and when I have done, I shall snatch an hour's sleep in an arm-chair."

"But I do not see any, my lord," said the tutor.

"Never mind! A stool will suffice!" responded Dubourg. "A man who has passed many a night in bivouac, upon the open plains, does not distress himself about a bed. But the supper is a long time in making its appearance: I will just step down and see about it."

Dubourg quitted the room; and Frederick placed himself at a window which commanded a view of the country. The moon shone upon the hamlet, throughout which the greatest tranquillity reigned. The young nobleman compared the life of the Parisians with that of the inhabitants of the village; and he reflected, that the moment when the fashionables of the great city were proceeding to theatres or to balls, the peaceful tenants of the hamlet were enjoying the sweets of repose, their dreams undisturbed by ambition, jealousy, and disappointed pride!

While Frederick was thus giving way to his reflections, M. Ménard examined the beds; and ascertained to his great grief that they only consisted of a miserable mattress and a *palliasse* of the thickness of four feet, instead of being soft and comfortable, as he had at first believed.

"What a terrible way these country-people have of arranging a bed!" cried M. Ménard, extending his scrutiny to the sheets; "and I, who thought I should sleep so nicely! These are the most miserable specimens of linen I

GOTON.

No. 22.—The Empress Eugenie.

ever saw—coarse and dirty! And yet his lordship the Baron declares it is an excellent inn! I hope the supper will not correspond with the general aspect of affairs."

In the meantime Dubourg had sought the postilion belonging to his travelling-chariot, and had settled for the hire of the vehicle, with strict injunctions to the man to take his departure at daybreak. Dubourg had but three louis remaining out of the ten that Frederick had lent him; and he was by no means anxious to keep an equipage which he could not pay for. This little affair being accomplished, Dubourg hastened to find Goton, to whom he meant to whisper a word or two, so that the postilion might find no obstacle to his departure at the time enjoined. Goton admired Dubourg, because he had shown so much courage in the quarrel with the farmers; and the fair sex, whether ladies in high life or servants in hotels, always like brave men. But at that moment Goton was employed in the kitchen: she however soon found an opportunity of attending to Dubourg; and as his request was backed by a five franc piece which he put into her hand, she readily promised to suffer the carriage to depart without any interference. This circumstance delighted Dubourg to such a degree that he flung his arms round the pretty servant at the bottom of the stairs, and imprinted a hearty kiss upon her lips:—but as he released her from his embrace, he raised his eyes, and perceived the countenance of M. Ménard peeping over the railings. The tutor, with a candle in his hand, was about to descend to make some inquiries relative to the supper; and he remained stupified upon the landing when he discovered the Palatine of Rava and Sandomir in the arms of a servant-maid!

Dubourg, who never lost his presence of mind, hastened to meet M. Ménard, exclaiming "The Emperor Heliogabalus rewarded him who invented a new dish: and, in like manner do I testify my gratitude to the person who announces the approach of supper!"

M. Ménard was perfectly satisfied with this explanation. He followed Dubourg back to their rooms, while Goton hastened to serve up the repast.

"Let us sit down and enjoy ourselves!" exclaimed Dubourg, who felt more at his ease since he had made an arrangement about the chariot. M. Ménard assented to Dubourg's proposal with a benignant smile; and Frederick, quitting the window, desisted from contemplating the moon for the purpose of attending to terrestrial matters.

"Let us taste this wine," said Dubourg. "Is it your best?"

"The very best," replied Goton; "for we have no other in the house."

"It is rather sour," said M. Ménard, screwing up his mouth. "But let us hope that this hashed fowl will be worthy of us."

Dubourg helped the hash; but the landlord, in the confusion occasioned by the quarrel, had suffered the dish to burn upon the fire; and Goton, whom the farmers were incessantly summoning for more wine, had put the onions in too late, and had forgotten to scrape the bacon. Dubourg did all he could to induce his companions to believe it smelt deliciously: M. Ménard made no reply, because he did not choose to contradict the Baron;—but at every mouthful his face grew longer.

"What kind of hash is this?" cried Frederick, pushing away the plate which Dubourg had filled. "It is composed of rabbits fed on cabbages and raw onions; added to which, a taste as if it had been burnt."

"It is very clear," said M. Ménard, respectfully venturing an opinion, "that it does not quite come up to what M. de Potoski led us to expect—and I hoped it was chicken."

"What is the use of annoying ourselves for a trifle?" said Dubourg. "A cook will make mistakes sometimes: will she not, M. Ménard?"

"My lord," returned the tutor, "a cook should never err."

"And yet it was your fault, M. Ménard," said Dubourg. "Why did you try to kiss the landlady?"

"My lord," answered M. Ménard, "my intentions were as pure as they could be. I merely tried to pass, to get out of the passage."

Goton put an end to this discourse by placing an omelet upon the table.

"Do you like the hash, gentlemen?" she inquired.

"It is not worth a *sou*," answered Frederick.

"It is execrable!" cried M. Ménard.

"My dear," said Dubourg to the pretty servant, "the rabbits in Brittany do not taste of cabbages and onions like this. Ah! it is in Brittany that you have good rabbits. But here you seem to have a bad plan of rearing them."

"His lordship has lived a long time in Brittany, I should suppose?" observed M. Ménard, respectfully stretching forth his hand to take a pinch of snuff in the box which had belonged to the King of Prussia, and which Dubourg presented to him.

"A long time, M. Ménard; and I must confess that my most delightful reminiscences are attached to that part of France. How pure is the air you breathe in Brittany! And then the pasture-lands—the fields—the meadows! You have no idea of the beauty of the woods! Brittany is one large garden, yielding the finest vegetables and fruits. And then the Brittany butter, you know, M. Ménard!"

"And Poland, my lord?" said the tutor.

"Ah! Poland has its merits," exclaimed Dubourg. "Have you ever been in Poland?"

"I have not had that honour," responded M. Ménard.

"Well, then, as you are not acquainted with Poland, I will talk of it often to you," said Dubourg.

"It must be a charming country, my lord!"

"Oh, so interesting! You have doubtless heard of Mount Krapack, to which Mont Blanc is only a little hillock, and Chimborazo contemptible?"

"Is it not continually covered with snow, my lord?"

"Almost always," answered Dubourg. "I

possess a castle on the peak of one of those mountains that form the range called Krapack, and up to which the wild goats alone can climb."

"And how does your lordship manage to get into your castle?" asked Ménard very ingenuously.

"I have had a winding staircase formed in the interior of the mountain. It cost a hundred thousand louis: but it is a superb specimen of architecture, and is admired by all who see it. I hope one day to have the pleasure of your company at my castle on the top of Mount Krapack," added Dubourg. "I will give you some of my Tokay wine, of which I possess a certain species that cost me three louis a bottle, and concerning which you shall favour me with your opinion."

"Ah! my lord, how shall I ever prove my gratitude for all your kindness?" exclaimed Ménard. "But it must be very cold in your castle?"

"In the time of my forefathers it was," answered Dubourg: "thanks, however, to the progress of science, I have discovered a means of rectifying that fault."

"And what did you do, my lord?"

"I established a gasometer underneath the castle," replied Dubourg. "Gas, you know, confers a great deal of heat upon the earth; and it happened that precisely over the pipes communicating with the reservoir of gas, green peas grew in the middle of January. But, my dear Frederick, you are choking! Drink something!"

Frederick had a great deal of difficulty to restrain his mirth, while Dubourg was thus amusing the poor tutor—who, on his side, listened with the greatest reverence and attention to all he heard. Dubourg himself maintained so serious a countenance, that M. Ménard never for a moment suspected the truth of his tales. But all of a sudden the conversation was interrupted by a violent shock, which was experienced by the whole house: and this was succeeded by a cracking noise that seemed to spring from a sudden earthquake.

"Heavens!" cried M. Ménard; "what is that? This house appears to be anything but solid!"

"Are they firing cannon in honour of our arrival in the village, Goton?" demanded Dubourg.

"No, sir," answered the servant: "it's only missus going to bed—that's all."

This explanation excited the laughter of Dubourg and Frederick: but M. Menard was not to be pacified until convinced that the landlady slept on the same floor as himself: for he never would have consented to repose in a room under one occupied by a woman who shook the whole house when she got into bed. He thought it quite enough to remain under the same roof with her at all.

An omelet, mixed with parsley, which Dubourg vainly tried to persuade his friends was tarragon, was now served up. By way of dessert, all that was placed before them was a morsel of infamous cheese, the odour of which was quite sufficient for Frederick; and leaving the table, he was by no means anxious to prolong his sojourn in that hamlet.

M. Ménard thought it right to keep the Baron company; and Dubourg poured him out bumper after bumper of the wine, extolling the cheese at the same time, and declaring that it put him in mind of some that he had eaten in Switzerland—a statement which entirely deprived the old tutor of all inclination to lunch in a Swiss cheese-shop.

"Yes, M. Ménard," said Dubourg, "if you were to go to Gruyere, a little town in Switzerland, celebrated for its cheeses, you would smell the dairies two leagues off. That is the way you know when you are approaching the town. If you were to sleep a night in one of these dairies, you would smell of cheese for a month afterwards. The odour is excellent for consumptive persons. But you must be tired, M. Ménard. I have some important despatches to write, and shall pass the night over them."

"My lord, I could not think of——"

"And why not?" interrupted Dubourg. "Diogenes reposed in his tub in the presence of Alexander."

"You will allow me, then——"

"Oh! certainly," cried Dubourg. "Take off your clothes and get into bed."

The wine, added to the fatigue which M. Ménard had already felt, rendered a little sleep necessary to refresh the worthy tutor. He therefore did not wait to be desired a second time; but passed behind the curtains, and began to undress himself. Meantime Dubourg took a large bundle of papers from his pockets, and pretended to be making notes of their contents; while in reality he waited with impatience the moment when M. Ménard should be asleep in order to hasten the departure of his postilion; for he was fearful that the tutor might awake at an early hour, in which case he should be excessively embarrassed if his chariot had not left the village. This was the motive which prompted him to dismiss the postilion so much earlier than he had otherwise intended. The gates were not shut—Goton alone took care of the premises at night—and she was already in Dubourg's interest.

More than a quarter of an hour had elapsed from the moment when M. Ménard passed behind the curtains; and Dubourg, thinking that he was asleep, was about to leave the room, when a murmur of complaint reached his ears.

"Are you ill, M. Ménard?" inquired Dubourg, approaching the recess in which the bed stood, and gently opening the curtains.

But what was his surprise to see poor M. Ménard, with a large cotton night-cap on his head, standing by the side of the bed, into which he made a thousand futile efforts to climb by the aid of a very low chair which only tantalized without effectually aiding him.

"What, are you not in bed, M. Ménard?" cried Dubourg.

"No, my lord," returned the poor tutor. "For the last ten minutes I have been vainly trying to climb into it. Is it not perfectly shocking?—is it not making fools of people to provide them with beds that touch the ceiling? Every one is not six feet high; and unless you are a giant——"

"Why did you not call me to your assistance, my dear M. Ménard?" exclaimed Dubourg.

"Oh! my lord, I never could have taken such a liberty?" responded M. Ménard.

"You were wrong, my friend," said Dubourg: "for it is impossible to pass the night in practising the way to climb into one's bed."

Then, without waiting for an answer, Dubourg desired M. Ménard to mount upon the chair; and gave him one vigorous push which caused the learned man to roll into his bed with more celerity than conveniently suited his portly person.

"Oh!" cried Dubourg: for the tutor was somewhat heavy.

"I am quite safe now, my lord!" said Ménard.

"That's all right," observed the condescending Palatine of Rava and Sandomir. "Good night."

"A thousand thanks, my lord!" cried Ménard.

Before Dubourg left the room, he took the chair away from the bed-side, in order to make sure that the tutor should not get up during his absence. In five minutes Ménard snored aloud; and Dubourg, satisfied with the result of his plans, seized the light and hastened down stairs into the yard. As he passed the coffee-room, he looked through the window, and saw that two of the farmers were fast asleep upon the table, and that the other two were still drinking, but in a manner which led him to believe it would not be long before they followed the example of their companions. Dubourg hastened to find his postilion; and, putting a five-franc piece into his hand, ordered him to depart at once. In a few moments the horses were attached to the vehicle; and the travelling-chariot of the noble Palatine was soon far away from the hamlet.

"But what will you do for a carriage?" asked Goton, who had joined Dubourg in the court-yard.

"Oh! we have another one that will be here early," replied Dubourg. "But now listen to what I am going to tell you. To-morrow morning at five o'clock you must be up, and ready to assist me——"

"How?" inquired Goton.

"How!" echoed Dubourg. "Why, in crying after the robbers who stole my chariot, to be sure."

"Where are the robbers?" demanded the girl, staring at Dubourg as if she thought he might probably be one.

"Ask no questions, my dear," returned the Palatine: "but do as I bid you."

"If it will amuse you in any way," said Goton, "I will not fail."

Everything was done as Dubourg had directed. At half-past five o'clock, Goton rose, and waited for Dubourg in the coffee-room. He was not long before he made his appearance; and having saluted the servant in the same manner as he had done the night before—only that this time M. Ménard was not a spectator of his politeness—he proceeded to bawl out, "Thieves! thieves!" as loud as he could.

"Thieves! thieves!" cried Dubourg: "help! help! thieves!"

"Where are the thieves?" again asked Goton.

"Never mind!" returned Dubourg: "but make haste and imitate. Thieves! thieves!"

"Thieves!" shouted Goton: and the shrill voice of the girl mingling with that of Dubourg, soon alarmed the whole house.

The landlord hastened down stairs as quick as he could drag his lame leg after him—Frederick rushed from his room—and Ménard, aided by his pupil, descended from his couch. Having slipped on his clothes in all haste, the excellent tutor followed the young nobleman down stairs. Frederick had recognised the voice of Dubourg, and was excited more by curiosity than alarm: for he had no doubt in his own mind that it was another invention of his friend the Baron. Every inmate of the tavern hastened down except the landlady who required a quarter of an hour to get out of bed; and the yard was moreover soon thronged by the inhabitants of the village and the labourers who were proceeding to their daily toil. When Dubourg perceived the excitement he had created, he rushed from the coffee-room into the yard, crying louder than ever, "Thieves! thieves! stop the chariot!"

Every one turned in amazement towards the individual who was thus bawling after a chariot that was not to be seen: when suddenly Goton made her appearance amongst the assembled crowd, exclaiming, "His lordship's carriage has been carried off!"

"What is the matter, my lord?" inquired M. Ménard, gazing in terror around.

"My chariot! my chariot!" roared Dubourg. "Oh! that villain of a postilion! he has run away with my chariot, and the fifty thousand louis that were in the secret coffer under the seat!"

"Alas!" cried the terrified Ménard: "is it really gone?"

"Gone! to be sure it is!" vociferated Dubourg. "The chariot that belonged to my father! the carriage of the Potoskis! It is not the money I regret—but the chariot in which the Princess of Hungary and King Stanislas have ridden! Ah! if you value my happiness, my friends, run after that scoundrel of a postilion—disperse yourselves over the country—a hundred louis to him who brings me back my chariot!"

"A hundred louis to him who brings back the chariot!" shouted Goton; for she had been tutored to echo everything uttered by Dubourg.

"But how came you in the coffee-room with Goton?" asked the landlord.

"Very easily explained," answered Dubourg. "I had flung myself on the floor in M. Ménard's room to take a nap; and half-an-hour ago I heard the noise of horses in the yard. I got up—came down stairs very softly—and found the villain of a postilion harnessing the animals to my chariot. I ran into the coffee-room for assistance, and found Goton clearing away the glasses and bottles which the farmers had used. The postilion was much stronger than me—I had no pistols about me—and the

rascal locked me in the coffee-room, while he scampered off with the chariot."

"All quite true!" said Goton: "and so we shouted for assistance as loud as we could. It was some time before the Baron could force the door open."

"We must go to the mayor at once," said M. Ménard, "and beg him to send an armed force after the robbers."

"He will be very clever if he catches them," thought Dubourg to himself. "My postilion must be in Paris by this time."

"The mayor is the wine-merchant of the village," observed the landlord; "but to get the gendarmes we must send to the next town, which would take at least two hours."

"Tranquillise yourself, M. Ménard," cried Frederick, with a smile. "We have an excellent carriage to replace the Baron's travelling-chariot."

"But the fifty thousand louis, my lord?" cried Ménard.

"It is not the money that vexes me," observed Dubourg: "thank heaven, my means are too great to let me care for such reverses. Besides, I have fifteeen thousand francs left in my pocket-book for the expenses of travelling. But it is my wardrobe I regret—an enormous trunk full of clothes concealed under the chariot."

"My own wardrobe is at your service, my dear friend," said Frederick.

"And mine also, my lord," added M. Ménard, bowing to Dubourg. The tutor then returned to his room to finish dressing himself,—the Baron having promised to lay his complaint before the mayor.

Frederick's postilion soon made his appearance, and announced that the carriage was in readiness. Ménard hastened down stairs again, thanking his stars that they were at last about to leave an inn that had been so fatal to them. Dubourg was delighted at having rid himself of his old chariot; and Frederick was not at all sorry to find himself once more installed in his own carriage, which was much superior to the old chariot of the Potoskis.

Ménard bestowed a few sighs upon the memory of the seat that had been occupied by King Stanislas: but the snuff-box of the King of Prussia remained—and besides this consolation, he had the old Tokay at three louis a bottle in the perspective.

* * * * *

* * * *

Our travellers reached the neighbouring town—where they stopped to breakfast. Ménard could not help admiring the calmness with which his noble companion the Baron supported the twofold loss of his chariot and his money.

"I am a philosopher," said Dubourg, "and pay but little attention to the capricious humour of Fortune. I almost fancy I should prefer a humble grade of life to my exalted position."

"You are not an ordinary man, my dear Baron," said Frederick. "There are so many people who only exhibit their stoicism in the days of their prosperity, like those cowards who boast of their courage when the danger is past."

"I am certainly not ambitious," observed Ménard, "and I know how to suit myself to circumstances: but I confess it requires a great deal of philosophy to support the loss of a good bed and a good table:—and by a *good* bed, I do not mean a *high* one."

In the meantime Dubourg took notice that it was M. Ménard who paid the bills.

"Do not you carry the purse?" said he, in a whisper to Frederick.

"No—it was to Ménard that my father confided the money."

"That is excedingly annoying!" continued Dubourg. "When he sees that I never pay my share, what will he think?"

"Why, then," asked Frederick, "did you say you had still fifteen thousand francs left, when you might so easily have pretended to have lost all?"

"Ah! why—why?" exclaimed Dubourg: "because I am obliged to play the lord, and not suffer your companion to think you pay for me."

"I cannot ask Ménard to hand me over the money," observed Frederick: "it would hurt his feelings."

"Leave it to me," said Dubourg. "I will undertake to make him surrender the bank."

"How?" inquired Frederick.

"You shall see," was the response.

"But if you do get possession of the money," added Frederick, "pray do not play the nobleman to too great an excess. Recollect, we must make it last a long time."

"Do you really think I am as wild as I was at Paris?" asked Dubourg. "No, no, my dear Frederick, I am much altered. I shall never gamble again: I am too happy to travel with you to play any more pranks. You will see that I shall be Mentor the Second."

"Yes—your story of the robbers was a fine beginning!"

"I was obliged to invent it to get rid of that wretched old chariot."

"At all events, my dear friend," said the young Viscount, "do not tell poor Ménard such an immense number of stories. He believes every word you utter, as if it were Gospel; and to avert all suspicion, I assured him I was perfectly well acquainted with your family."

"You acted wisely," returned Dubourg. "I only tell him as much as I think necessary to keep up my rank. You must not forget that I am a Polish nobleman."

"But *he* will, if you talk to him constantly about Brittany cheese and butter."

The travellers were speedily ensconced in the carriage once more. Before they could reach the town where they proposed to sleep, they had to pass through a very thick wood; and Dubourg, who had already arranged his plan, began by turning the conversation to more serious topics than those which had hitherto occupied them; for he well knew that the state of mind in which a person may be under certain circumstances, gives a variety of colouring to those circumstances—and that in the world, as well as upon the stage, any

important event must be prepared and gradually introduced, in order to create a proper effect.

"I know nothing more agreeable than travelling," said Dubourg. "And yet, alas! that pleasure is frequently marred by the reflection that all our projects may be overturned by some untoward event."

"It is the same with every enjoyment in life," said Frederick. "Can you tell me one on which you may reckon for to-morrow."

"The Viscount de Montreville speaks truly," observed Ménard; "we are often led away by deceitful hopes. Many a time have I dined at some first-rate hotel where the soup was shocking."

"A philosopher knows how to support all those little disagreeables," said Dubourg. "But, besides disappointments in love and in pleasure, there are others which all the philosophy in the world cannot stand against. For instance—being attacked and wounded by robbers in a lonely wood."

These words struck terror to the soul of poor Ménard; and when he glanced at Dubourg's countenance to gather some hope to alleviate his fears, he perceived that it wore a sombre and serious expression which was little calculated to inspire him with courage.

"Those casualties to which your lordship alludes," said M. Ménard, after a pause, "are frequently fatal to travellers, I believe? Italy, they say, is a dangerous country. But you, M. de Potoski, who have travelled so much in divers parts of the world—you must know——"

"Beyond all doubt! Italy is swarming with banditti," exclaimed Dubourg. "But the most extraordinary thing about the Italian banditti is, that they only attack travellers in the middle of the day, which is the time when robbers are the only persons who venture out, on account of the scorching sun. However, if there are robbers in Italy, in Germany, and in England, unfortunately there are also plenty in France. It is now as dangerous to travel in France——"

"In France, my lord!" cried Ménard. "I thought the roads were safe in this country."

"Do you never read the newspapers, M. Ménard?" asked Dubourg.

"Very seldom, my lord," was the reply.

"If you did, you would see that the forests of Senart, Bondy, Fontainebleau, and Villers-Cotteretts, are all infested by bandits."

"Alas! alas!" cried the poor tutor, pale as death.

"Unfortunately the scoundrels grow more and more audacious every day," continued Dubourg. "Formerly they contented themselves by robbing you: now they cut your throat;—and you must think yourself very fortunate, if they don't hew you into small pieces."

"The deuce take it!" muttered M. Ménard:—"if I had only known this!"—and he cast anxious looks about him; for the carriage at this moment entered the wood.

"Do not alarm yourself, my dear Ménard," cried Dubourg. "Robbers generally pitch upon the one who carries the money: he pays for all the rest. They tie him to a tree—strip him stark naked, to see that he conceals nothing about his person—and——"

"My lord," interrupted the poor tutor, "what you are saying does not console me at all."

"How so?" cried Dubourg.

"Because I am the purse-bearer," responded Menard.

"Oh! if I had been aware of that, my dear M. Ménard, I should not have spoken so candidly. I thought Frederick had the purse. However, in such cases, one sells one's life dearly. Of course you are armed?"

"I never carry pistols, my lord," answered Ménard.

"And yet it is very often necessary to make use of them," said Dubourg. "At this moment we are passing through a wood in which three of my friends were assassinated—two others cruelly treated——"

"What! in this wood? cried Ménard. "Well, it is very thick and gloomy!"—and he looked anxiously right and left, the darkness of the night, which gradually increased, augmenting his alarm. "Go as quick as you can!" cried he in a trembling voice to the postilion, who, having been instructed by Dubourg, proceeded at a slower pace than before.

Frederick said nothing: he seemed absorbed in deep thought. Dubourg drew his pistols from his pocket—examined them attentively—and threw from time to time a glance of well-assumed apprehension towards the wood.

"The deuce! M. Ménard," said he, after a long pause, during which he drew forth an old pocket-book, the sole contents of which were unpaid tavern bills;—"this is the whole of my ready cash. The fifteen thousand francs that I have left are in this pocket-book. Since you have taken charge of Frederick's money, I think it would not be amiss if you were to act the same part by me. It is useless, as we are travelling the same road together, for two people to pay at the inns where we stop. You can be treasurer for all of us."

With these words, he proffered the pocket-book to Ménard, who contented himself with looking at it while he reflected what course to pursue; and though flattered by this mark of confidence, he did not like to accept the proposition. At that moment a shrill whistle echoed through the wood.

"Ah! what is that?" cried Dubourg, pretending to cast anxious glances around.

"We are perhaps about to be attacked, my lord," said the tutor.

"I am really afraid that such is the case," observed Dubourg.

"And Frederick is asleep," murmured Ménard. "Pray—pray awake him!"

"It is not necessary," returned Dubourg. "We must act, M. Ménard—you and I, you understand!"

Frederick listened in silence to all that was passing, and pretended to sleep soundly.

"Take the pocket-book and the pistols," continued Dubourg; "they are loaded——"

"Keep them, keep them, my lord!" ejaculated the miserable tutor. "I cannot take them! On the contrary, if you would be kind

enough to protect the whole of our property, it would be much better!"

As he spoke, Ménard took from his pocket a bundle of notes, and a purse filled with gold, which he handed to Dubourg in an imploring manner.

"Really, my dear sir," said the latter, "I do not know if I ought to take charge of the money. Frederick might be annoyed——"

"Oh! no, my lord!" interrupted Ménard: "he will be delighted!"

"Here are four men coming, armed with guns!" roared out the postilion.

"Ah! we are all lost!" ejaculated Ménard, white as a sheet.

"Give me your money—quick—quick!" exclaimed Dubourg, taking the purse and the notes.

Ménard concealed himself under the seat—the postilion shouted, swore, and whipped his horses like a madman—and Dubourg, thrusting his head out of the carriage-window, fired his pistols one after another into the air. Frederick pretended to awake up—the vehicle rushed along like the wind—and in a few minutes they were out of the wood.

"We are saved," cried Dubourg, assisting Ménard to rise.

"Indeed, my lord!" said the tutor.

"And we are out of the wood. There is no danger now. But we have had a lucky escape—have we not, Frederick?"

"And the robbers?" asked M. Ménard.

"I killed two of them," returned Dubourg.

"And I saw the other two run away," observed Frederick.

"Ah! my lord!" exclaimed M. Ménard, "what a blessing it is that we fell in with you!"

They soon arrived at the next town; and Dubourg, who was delighted with the success of his scheme, commenced his functions of paymaster, by bestowing a louis on the postilion who had so ably seconded him in carrying it out.

* * * *

* * * * *

Dubourg had never in all his life possessed at a time so large a sum as that which M. Ménard handed over to him. In general, young men about town have no idea of economy; and Dubourg, who was passionately devoted to gambling, pleasure, and good cheer, and who only occupied himself with the present—forgetting the past, and never troubling his head about the future—could not be supposed to have contracted the habit of saving money. Therefore, to possess eight thousand francs—(for, as yet, but little had been spent)—was in Dubourg's eyes a fortune which could never be expended. It is true that this sum did not exactly belong to him; at the same time he was the disburser of the treasury—he was at liberty to act, to order, and to spend, as he chose—and he was certain that no account would be asked of him by those to whom the money pertained. He would not however appropriate to himself a single *sou* of that money; but he did not hesitate to lay it out nobly for those to whom it belonged, and with whom he shared the pleasures or the luxuries it procured.

Dubourg ordered a most sumptuous repast to be served up; and the travellers sat down to the evening meal in a private room,—the best that the hotel could afford.

When supper was placed upon the table, Frederick could not help exclaiming, "My dear friend, are you mad? You have commanded a repast fit for at least ten or a dozen persons."

"My dear Frederick," cried Dubourg, "I am very hungry; and I am sure that M. Ménard is also disposed to do honour to the dishes before him."

"His lordship is perfectly right," said Ménard, whose appetite was sharpened by the night air.

"I will wager anything that the other travellers staying at the inn, are obliged to fast in consequence of your orders, Baron," said Frederick.

"They must eat what they can," exclaimed Dubourg. "I think it is very natural that we should endeavour to-day to make up for the miserable fare we partook of yesterday."

"I am also of the same opinion as his lordship the Baron," said M. Ménard. "We must indemnify ourselves for the wretchedness of last night's supper."

"But——"

"Now, my dear Frederick!" interrupted Dubourg, "do you wish us to live like wolves, and eat our meals at the *table-d'hote* as if we were foot-travellers. We must keep up our rank; and I can assure you that my stomach is by no means disposed——"

"His lordship is right again," said Ménard, interrupting the Baron to solicit the wing of a capon to which he had taken a fancy. "You know, M. Frederick, it was the wish of his lordship the Count that you should sustain your rank upon your travels."

"Yes, my dear friend," said Dubourg, pouring into the glasses the oldest wine which the hotel could produce, "I really think you ought to obey the wishes of your excellent father; and in order to set you a good example, I shall maintain my own *incognito* no longer. I am already sufficiently far away from Paris to render concealment unnecessary. It is all over now—I resume my titles from this moment, and am determined that every one shall treat me with the respect that is my due."

"Ah! Dubourg, Dubourg!" whispered Frederick, "you will get us into some scrape yet!"

But Dubourg paid not the slightest attention to this advice: his brain was turned with liquor—he never felt so happy before. He filled bumper after bumper, while Ménard made a desperate attack upon a succulent dish before him.

"What do you think of my plan, M. Ménard?" demanded Dubourg.

"Your lordship knows that such was always my wish," replied the tutor.

"It is decided, then!" cried Dubourg. "I am Baron, Palatine, *et cetera, et cetera;* and we will challenge any one to gainsay it wherever we may go."

"Your lordship's rank is betrayed by the

elegance of your manners," said Ménard, with a low bow.

"Excellent!" shouted Dubourg; "that is what I call treating one according to his merits. As for Frederick, he is so dull as to be unworthy to sit at our table. A little more of this hare, M. Ménard?"

"With pleasure, my lord!"

"We must be philosophers, M. Ménard—when we can find no better employment. But the best philosophy consists in knowing how to enjoy the good things of this life. Is it not, M. Ménard?"

"Yes, my lord," returned the tutor. "But Juvenal recommended a moderate use of pleasure."

"Perhaps Juvenal had a weak stomach," said Dubourg.

"That was very likely, my lord."

"Another glass of wine, M. Ménard?"

"Certainly, my lord."

"To the health of Anacreon, Epicurus, Horace, and all gourmands!" cried Dubourg.

"We forgot Lucullus, my lord," said Ménard.

"True! another glass for Lucullus!" exclaimed Dubourg.

Through drinking to the memory of the ancients, the two gentlemen lost that of the present; and Dubourg vociferated as he rose from the table, "I defy all the Palatines of Rava, Cracow, and Krapack, to make a better supper."

"Take care what you say!" whispered Frederick.

"Never mind me!" ejaculated Dubourg as loud as he could bawl. "I will answer for everything! M. Ménard is an excellent old fellow whom I esteem and love, and whose suspicions I will quiet with pheasants and truffles."

Fortunately for Dubourg, M. Ménard had but a very vague notion of what was taking place around him. The frequent potations in which he had indulged with his noble companion, operated so powerfully upon him, that he thought it most prudent to retire to his own room. He accordingly rolled from his chair to his bed, supporting himself by the wall as he went along, and wondering whether his couch would be five feet high again. He undressed himself in the most perfect good humour; for he was well satisfied with the manner in which the Baron did the honours of the table, and was no less pleased that he had consigned the purse to such excellent keeping. He knew he himself should never have dared to order so costly a repast; and he foresaw that the Baron, who appeared to be fond of good eating and drinking as much as himself, would continue to entertain the same magnificent ideas of living, especially as he had at length laid aside the *incognito*. In a word, M. Ménard was enchanted with his travelling companion, and fell asleep in the midst of the pleasant reflections which the conduct of Dubourg had originated.

On the following morning, Frederick was desirous of remonstrating a little with Dubourg.

"Will you take the money yourself?" demanded Dubourg. "You are the master to do as you choose. Only I am afraid, that while you are absorbed in your melancholy reflections, you will not think of our dinners; and when one travels for pleasure, eating is not the least essential part of the business."

"You should be more economical," returned the young nobleman.

"Confess the truth, my dear Frederick," exclaimed Dubourg. "Are you not delighted to be in the society of two individuals who amuse and divert you—the one by his gaiety, and the other by the manner in which he devours a partridge?"

"But wherefore have you taken it into your head to play the nobleman before all the world?"

"Because we shall divert ourselves the more," answered Dubourg. "You are a Viscount, and in order to be on equal terms with you, I must make myself at least a Baron."

"You will only spend the money the quicker," said Frederick.

"It will last us a long time yet," returned Dubourg; "and when it is gone, you have a father, and I have an aunt!"

"Yes—I should advise you to reckon upon your aunt," said Frederick.

"You see that your Mentor approves of all I do."

"You make him drunk, and he does not know what he says."

"Fear nothing, my dear Frederick: I will keep things all straight and comfortable."

The three gentlemen pursued their journey; and Frederick's horses were driven along at a furious pace. Ménard was somewhat alarmed by this manner of proceeding: but he said to himself, "Great lords love to travel at a rapid rate;"—and he caught hold of the door in order to retain his balance upon the seat. At all the inns where they stopped they were treated like princes. The best rooms, the best dinners, the oldest wines, were at their service. Ménard was ravished at this mode of living: he fancied that the Baron had joined his fifteen thousand francs to the sum which the Count de Montreville had provided; and he moreover felt convinced that the Palatine was too generous and noble to think of the difference of the two amounts.

In this manner our travellers pursued their journey, till they arrived at Lyons. Hitherto they had only stopped for a short time upon the road to admire a fine prospect here and there, or to rest their horses. But at Lyons it was decided that they should pass a few days. The young Viscount was anxious to visit the suburbs and ramble upon the banks of the Rhone; and his two companions were not sorry at being obliged to remain in a city which possessed almost as many sources of amusement as Paris itself. They stopped at one of the first hotels; and the report of their arrival was soon bruited abroad. The elegant appearance of Frederick—the manners of Dubourg enacting the nobleman—and the care which Ménard took to whisper wherever they went, "This is the Baron Potoski, Palatine of Rava and Sandomir, and that is the young Viscount

No. 23.—The Empress Eugenie.

de Montreville," soon caused a considerable sensation in Lyons. The travellers were moreover very liberal in their mode of living at the hotel; and this was one of the principal recommendations to public attention.

Dubourg hired a splendid suite of apartments on the first floor, and would not think of taking meals at the *table d'hote*. He desired the landlord to supply them with the greatest dainties and the most expensive wines; and Frederick suffered him to have his own way, frequently recommending him to be careful with the purse. But Dubourg invariably replied in a tone of such confidence, that the young Viscount at length desisted from remonstrance. As for M. Ménard, he was more enraptured than ever with the Baron, who was the cause of his leading so agreeable a life. Frederick passed nearly the whole of the day on the banks of the Rhone, and in admiring the beauty of the adjacent scenery. Sometimes he did not return to the hotel till late in the evening, and once or twice not till the next morning. Dubourg—like those liars who at length believe the stories they are in the constant habit of telling, had so identified himself with the personage he pretended to be—that he would have inflicted summary chastisement upon any one who should have dared to question his right to the high-sounding titles he had adopted; and while Frederick was roaming by the side of the river, he amused himself by enacting the nobleman in the city.

With his arm gently supported upon that of M. Ménard,—who wore his hat on the back of his head, the better to see and to be seen, and who also walked with an affectation of ease and indifference which corresponded but badly with the stiffness of his gait,—Dubourg lounged about the town with the old preceptor from morning to dinner-time. The Palatine had purchased an immense cocked-hat, to which he had appended a black feather and a steel loop; and with this perched on the top of his head, he resembled in some respects the Marquises who figure in the plays of Moliere. But the remainder of his costume did not entirely correspond with his hat. Braided coats were no longer in fashion as walking costumes: and so Dubourg contented himself with having silver tassels attached to his Hessian boots, in order to assume a foreign appearance. He left his coat unbuttoned, because a certain negligence in the toilet is not unfrequently the characteristic of titled men; and in order to ogle the ladies with more effect, he wore an immense eye-glass suspended by a red riband to his neck.

The singular attire of Dubourg attracted universal attention. Some took him for an Englishman—others for a Russian—and many for a Prussian: but if any were too curious in their scrutiny of the strange-looking individual, Dubourg cast a terrible glance at them, which soon proved that, whoever he might be, he had no inclination to submit to the slightest rudeness on their part. If any one was, however, desirous of ascertaining the name and rank of the stranger with the black plumes to his cocked-hat, and who walked so gracefully through the streets, with a quizzing-glass to his right eye, it was only necessary to follow him and his companion for a few steps; inasmuch as M. Ménard spoke in a very loud tone of voice, especially when he perceived that they were observed; and on these occasions he never omitted to drag in the words (even neck and shoulders)—"My Lord," or "My Lord Palatine:" and he now and then went so far as to say, "Your Lordship of Rava and Sandomir."

The travellers had been about a week at Lyons; and still Frederick was not yet wearied of roaming amongst the inviting suburbs of the city: but Dubourg began to get tired of playing the nobleman all day long, and rambling through the streets arm-in-arm with M. Ménard. They had visited all the public places of amusement, had been to all the theatres, and all the cafés; and Dubourg had everywhere supported the character of a Polish nobleman—while Ménard filled that of male "toady" without entertaining a suspicion that he was looked upon as such: for the poor tutor was the most credulous and innocent being in existence, and felt himself highly honoured by being allowed to accompany his pupil's noble friend, who was such an adept at quoting a Latin aphorism, and who astounded him with the history of his travels throughout the four quarters of the world.

"My lord," said M. Ménard one day, as they halted on the outskirt of a crowd collected in front of a Punch and Judy Show, "I am astonished at a person—I mean a nobleman of your lordship's good sense and exquisite taste condescending to throw even so much as a glance at such an exhibition."

"M. Ménard," answered Dubourg, "you are a philosopher, and yet you do not think of the moral presented by this spectacle. Outside the curtain there is the happy, laughing, joyous crowd; but depend upon it that within the canvass-walls there is a poverty-stricken family crying for bread."

"Ah! my Lord Palatine, do you think so?" said Ménard, with a sigh.

"I am sure of it!" exclaimed Dubourg, who was purposely talking very loud. "Here, M. Ménard, give this louis to the little girl who is now coming with a tambourine to collect the money."

"Ah, my lord! what goodness!" said M. Ménard, with a bow. "I shall henceforth think Seneca was a fool when he wrote his essay on the Deceitfulness of Riches, since you know how to make such a good use of your great wealth."

The louis was given accordingly—the crowd applauded—the poor family rejoiced—and the tale spread throughout Lyons how a great foreign nobleman went about distributing gold to the necessitous.

Dubourg soon began to torment Frederick to leave Lyons and pursue their journey. But Frederick invariably postponed their departure from day to day, as well as he was able,—till Dubourg one morning received a letter which divested him of all inclination to quit Lyons.

This letter was addressed as follows:—"*To his Lordship the Baron Potoski, Polish Palatine.*"

Dubourg read the superscription three or four times before he broke open the letter.

"Who the deuce can write to me at Lyons?" said he to himself. "Who could have addressed me by this name?"

He asked the landlady to inform him by whom the letter was brought; and the reply was to the effect that a livery-servant was the bearer, and that he had particularly desired it might be delivered to the Baron only. Now, therefore, Dubourg hastened to open the letter, and found that its contents ran as follows:—

"The Marchioness de Versac presents her compliments to the Baron Potoski, and solicits the pleasure of his lordship's company to an evening party, which the Marchioness hopes his lordship will honour with his presence.

"The Marchioness de Versac will be delighted to receive the Baron Potoski to her weekly *soirées* as long as his lordship shall remain at Lyons."

The address of the Marchioness's abode was appended to this letter, which Dubourg perused two or three times, and which exhaled an odour of musk and amber throughout the room.

"The deuce!" said Dubourg to himself; "this is an invitation from a Marchioness! The compliment is certainly flattering! But how could she know that I had adopted the name of Potoski? Ah! I suppose that when people live in a style of magnificence, they are soon known! Besides, since I have dragged that old fool Ménard about the town with me, like a great fat bear, for the last eight days, it would be singular indeed if we had not created some sensation."

Dubourg summoned the landlady once more, and asked her if she was acquainted with Madame de Versac.

"The Marchioness de Versac!" ejaculated the hostess. "I do not know her ladyship personally, my lord—but by reputation, well. Her family is one of the oldest and richest in this city; and I am aware that her ladyship has a country-house on the banks of the Rhone, four leagues from Lyons."

Dubourg was satisfied. He dismissed the landlady, and paced the room backwards and forwards, rubbing his hands, and saying to himself, "Most decidedly I shall accept this invitation. It is an eligible acquaintance to form, and may be beneficial to me. At all events, the party is sure to be an agreeable one: and who knows but that I may meet with some Baroness, or Countess, or Viscountess, who may fall in love with me? I might very well marry a titled lady, and become suddenly enriched by such a connexion. There would be nothing astonishing in that! I am young—not badly looking—my figure is not amiss—I have good eyes and good teeth, as well as curly hair—and perhaps Madame de Versac may have already taken a fancy to me. She has probably seen me in the street!"

Dubourg rang for the landlady once more.

"My good creature," said he, when she made her appearance, "I beg you a thousand pardons for disturbing you so often: but I have certain motives for inquiring if Madame de Versac be married."

"She is still a widow, my lord," replied the landlady. "The Marquis de Versac has been dead about three years."

"Thank you—thank you! that is enough!" cried Dubourg, dismissing his hostess for the third time, and dancing and capering about the apartment like a madman—stopping every now and then, too, to admire himself in the looking-glasses, and exclaiming, "She is a widow! she is a widow! So much the better! a young, lovely, and rich widow—with a splendid country-house—and who writes to me in a certain style of tenderness only repressed by the punctilios of fashion! Oh! there can be no doubt as to her intentions! One would really think that it is a declaration of love! You shall be satisfied with me, delightful woman! I will be all you can wish or anticipate, I promise you! But, by the bye, I forgot to ask if she is pretty! However, it is impossible she can be otherwise. Besides, I don't care much about beauty, when there are estates in question! This evening she shall have an opportunity of judging of the noble stranger! But—Ah! if anything serious should result from this interview, when she comes to know that I am nothing but a humble citizen, instead of a Palatine—Never mind! I am a native of Brittany, and as good as a Polish Baron. Besides, we have not come to explanations yet! Let me begin by captivating her heart! When a woman is in love, she no longer thinks of rank, fortune, titles, and distinctions: love equalizes everything!"

This soliloquy was interrupted by the entrance of Ménard, who walked into the room with as jaunty a step as he could possibly manage. The moment Dubourg descried the worthy preceptor, he hastened towards him, thrust the letter into his hands, and exclaimed, "Read, dear Ménard!" But M. Ménard drew back, because the perfumes of musk and amber affected his head. "I fancy the Marchioness is visible in every word of this beautiful and elegant note. What a delicious odour! Well, my dear Ménard, what do you think of it?" demanded Dubourg.

"I see nothing surprising, my lord," replied the old tutor; "and you ought to be accustomed to receive such letters very frequently, at every place where you stop to rest yourself on your travels."

"Oh! you are perfectly right, my dear Ménard," exclaimed Dubourg. "I do not say that I am actually astonished—I merely observed that this note is very well written."

"Beautifully written, my lord," replied the tutor.

"It shows that the Marchioness knows with whom she has to deal," continued Dubourg.

"Certainly, she must be aware that your lordship is not a common person."

"I mean that it does not resemble those letters which little Delphine used to write to me."

"And who is that Delphine, my lord?"

"Oh! a Countess who lived upon the Boulevard du Temple, and at whose house there used to meet a great number of noblemen like me!"

"Your lordship will doubtless accept this invitation," said M. Ménard.

"To be sure, accept it!" exclaimed Dubourg; "decidedly, I shall! And that I may have as much time to dress as possible, let us dine at once, my dear Menard. Where is Frederick?"

"He has heard of another beautiful view, which he is gone to see," replied Ménard. "He told me that he should not be home till very late this evening, my lord. I believe he intends to leave Lyons to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow! to-morrow! we shall see all about that!" cried Dubourg. "We have plenty of time to travel. Besides—Lyons is a very attractive place, is it not, Ménard?"

"Very, my lord. At the same time, we must travel, you know, in order to——"

"I know—I know that we ought not to leave a city like this without being thoroughly acquainted with it," interrupted Dubourg, impatiently: "and I also know that Frederick cannot be well acquainted with it, because he is always wandering about in the environs. You must persuade him to stay a little longer, M. Ménard."

"I will do all I can," returned the tutor.

Dubourg could not eat a mouthful when the dinner was served up: he was too much occupied in thinking of the party, to have the slightest appetite. When dinner was over Dubourgh bethought himself of his toilet. If he had time, he would have ordered a dress-coat; he was, however, obliged to content himself with one that belonged to Frederick; and this was much too small for him. He was therefore compelled to wear it open.

"Can I go in boots to the house of a Marchioness?" said he to himself. "It will seem as if I did not stand upon much ceremony."

But he had no dress-trousers; and those of Frederick were much too small for him. Ménard might have lent him a pair: but they again would have been too large. He therefore resolved upon going in boots, and consoled himself with the idea that he was a foreigner, a Pole, and a Palatine—and that those reasons would be sufficiently extenuating. Besides, his silver tassels pleased him amazingly.

It was only eight o'clock, when Dubourg had finished dressing himself; and that was full an hour too soon to present himself at the house of the Marchioness. He therefore whiled away the time by walking up and down the apartment, looking at himself in the mirror, studying a thousand graceful attitudes, and practising a variety of smiles, glances, and compliments. He had put the purse, containing the whole of the funds, in his pocket: and not possessing a watch, hesitated for some time whether he should not attach his steel loop to his fob; but a little reflection caused him to renounce this idea, for he was afraid that the chain might be recognised as the one he had usually worn on his hat: so he substituted a scarlet riband to produce the desired effect. At length the clock struck nine; and as this was the hour when he might present himself at the house of the Marchioness, he ordered a hackney-coach round to the door, stepped into it, and was borne away to the address indicated by the perfumed note.

The vehicle stopped in a distant and deserted street, and at the door of a dwelling of no very inviting appearance. For want of a house-porter, a lacquey was posted at the gate, apparently to watch for the arrival of some one; and the moment he saw Dubourg, he hastened to lead him across a narrow court—thence up a staircase, lighted by only two miserable lamps. But Dubourg was so occupied in repeating to himself the compliment which he had prepared to address to the Marchioness, that he did not notice the mean appearance of the premises.

The lacquey opened a door on the first floor and ushered Dubourg into an ante-chamber, which was totally denuded of anything resembling furniture, and the walls of which, though miserably lighted by a single candle, exhibited large stains of oil. But the man-servant hastened to traverse this room; and opening another door conducted Dubourg into a spacious apartment, exclaiming as loud as he could bawl, "My lord, the Baron Potoski!"

At the sound of this name, a general sensation took place in the apartment; and a lady rose and hastened to meet Dubourg, whom she received with the most gracious smiles. Dubough said anything that came into his head: he advanced bowing to the right and to the left, and hastened to throw himself upon a seat near Madame de Versac, whom he then proceeded to survey at his leisure. He now saw that he should indeed have been wrong in forming an opinion in advance relative to the exterior of the lady whom he intended to captivate. She was about five and forty; and in spite of the *rouge* upon her cheeks, the burnt cork upon her eyebrows, and the white powder on her forehead and chin, it was impossible to conceal her real age. She was dressed with elegance; and yet her long robe, with its old-fashioned stomacher, appeared to inconvenience her: her head was overcharged with flowers and ribands; and a threefold necklace of pearls surrounded her yellow neck. Her naked and emaciated shoulders, which the Marchioness was cruel enough to leave exposed, did not mitigate the ugliness of the general portraiture.

But Dubourg did not trouble himself about these trifling imperfections: he remembered all that the landlady had told him, and was determined to find the Marchioness anything but ugly. While she was addressing him in the most complimentary and flattering manner, he hastened to cast a glance around upon the rest of the company and to examine the apartment.

An old lustre, suspended to the ceiling, threw an uncertain kind of light round the room, which was very large, and the tapestry of which had once been handsome before old age had laid its mark upon it as well as on the cheek of the Marchioness. A carpet, which never could have been intended for that room, was spread upon the floor. The furniture was of several kinds: there were blue ottomans and yellow arm-chairs; while the decorations of the sofas were far from corresponding with those articles. As there was no time-piece on the mantel, an enormous

vase full of flowers and a number of candles were substituted instead. Several open card-tables were arranged about the room, the whole appointments of which appeared to Dubourg to be more ancient than even the Marchioness's family itself.

Having examined the room, Dubourg proceeded to cast a glance upon the company. There were only three ladies besides the Marchioness. One, who was upwards of sixty, and whom the rest called the Baroness, was perpetually talking of her estates, her castles, her fortune, and her servants: she spoke of all these matters in so loud a tone of voice that she quite stunned her audience. A young lady was seated near the Baroness. She was very pretty, but very awkward in her manners —only opening her mouth to utter a negative or affirmative when compelled to make some reply to the questions that were put to her. She was called the Viscountess Fairfignan. The third lady was about eight-and-twenty; and her name was Madame de Grandcourt. She was reclining negligently upon an ottoman, and seemed exceedingly fond of coquetting with the gentlemen, upon whom she cast languishing looks from eyes that had once been fine, but which were so sunken and hollow, that it appeared at a little distance as if she had eyebrows all round them.

Seven or eight gentlemen formed the remainder of the company. Each was designated by some title—either Baron, Count, or Chevalier. They were not however very richly attired; nor did their appearance announce anything exceedingly aristocratic. The Chevalier had on a frock-coat, the sleeves of which were so short that they scarcely reached his wrists; and when he wanted to blow his nose, he turned his back upon the company before he ventured to use his handkerchief.

The Count had wristbands of lace torn in several places, and his bosom was ornamented with a shirt-frill on which he had dropped a quantity of snuff. He spread out his hand with the greatest complacency from time to time, to display the rings upon his fingers: but the griminess of that hand formed a singular contrast with the white lace wristbands, and the green, yellow, and red stones of the rings.

The Baron, who wore powder and a long queue (by which he seemed especially incommoded, the unfortunate queue persisting in sticking between his neck and his coat-collar), had on a new coat, and an old pair of nankin trousers. From his watch-pocket there hung a broad red riband, to which were appended a number of old seals and keys. The other gentlemen were attired in an equally scurvy manner: so that Dubourg, astonished at the garb of these individuals, surveyed them with attention, and said to himself, "If my landlady had not given me the most accurate information relative to the Marchioness de Versac, I should fancy that I was in the house of an old-clothes' woman, and in the society of a parcel of decayed swindlers."

The conversation was not however permitted to languish. Every one laughed, chatted, or listened. The Baron Potoski was the object of universal attention: the Marchioness overwhelmed him with her politeness—the old Baroness asked him to pass the ensuing winter at some castle which she had somewhere—the Viscountess de Fairfignan smiled sweetly upon him—and Madame de Grandcourt favoured him with such amorous glances that he scarcely knew how to reply to them,—while the gentlemen applauded everything he said. Dubourg was flattered by the attention thus paid him: for the keenest and shrewdest are always liable to be led astray or hoodwinked through the medium of flattery.

A servant handed round a tray, on which were cakes, liquors, and punch. The whole party, with the exception of Dubourg, fell tooth and nail upon the comestibles: the old Baroness drank like a fish—the Viscountess stuffed herself with buns—and the languishing Madame de Grandcourt swallowed two glasses of punch one after the other, exclaiming in the interval that it was not strong enough.

Dubourg took a glass of punch, and complimented the Marchioness de Versac upon the gaiety of the party.

"Oh! we banish all ceremony!" cried the Marchioness. "Between people of the same rank what is the use of ceremony?"

"What indeed?" cried Dubourg, upon whom the punch began to operate. "Etiquette is a shackle which I am always the first to throw off."

"Ah! my lord, how clever you be!" cried the old Baroness, making a desperate attack upon the punch for the fourth time. "You are a Palatine of the first water, my lord."

"You do me honour, madam," said Dubourg.

"'Tis you who do us honour," whispered the Marchioness de Versac, placing her foot upon that of Dubourg, who turned round, looked at her tenderly, and ventured to squeeze her hand, at which she seemed by no means offended.

"I dislike all ceremony too," said the Viscountess de Fairfignan, who ventured a remark or two since the arrival of the punch and cakes. "I am always dull where there isn't no fun going on."

The "where there isn't no fun going on" of the Viscountess surprised Dubourg to such an extent that he could not conceal a slight grimace; and the Marchioness de Versac, who noticed his astonishment, whispered in his ear, "She is a German, and has much of the accent."

"But are we not going to do anything this evening, my lady?" inquired the Chevalier, drawing down his sleeves to lengthen them as much as possible.

"Ah! indeed," said the Baroness: "let us do something to amuse ourselves."

"Do let us do something!" echoed Madame de Grandcourt, rolling her languishing eyes about in a most amorous manner.

"Perhaps M. de Potoski does not play?" said the Marchioness, turning towards Dubourg.

"Oh! with the greatest pleasure," exclaimed Dubourg.

"In that case I shall request you to place yourselves at the card-tables, gentlemen," said the Marchioness.

The gentlemen sat down to *ecarté;* and the Chevalier proposed dominos to the ladies.

"It would appear that the tastes of the ladies in high life do not much differ from those of simple citizens," said Dubourg to himself.

He was seated at a table with the Count, who was not prevented by his lace-wristbands from shuffling the cards with the utmost skill. The game soon became animated; and a tall silent gentleman, who took his seat near Dubourg, bet largely upon his side, and placed twenty-five louis at a time upon the table; but the louis were carefully rolled up in paper, and the silent gentleman's adversary took his word for the exactitude of the amount, as he consigned the parcels one after another to his pocket—while the silent gentleman, who seemed but little better than a pauper in reference to his attire, manifested not the slightest ill-humour at his continued losses.

"How nobly these gentlemen play!" thought Dubourg to himself: and determined not to be outdone by any other person present, he doubled his stakes—and his money passed rapidly into the hands of his antagonist.

But the punch circulated in abundance: in order to please Madame de Grandcourt, it had been made much stronger; and its effects were soon visible upon the cheeks and in the eyes of all present. The Marchioness de Versac placed herself next to Dubourg, saying, "I am determined to bring M. de Potoski good luck."

"I hope you will succeed in enticing Fortune to favour me," he observed, having already lost more than a thousand francs, which he was determined to win back again.

The Marchioness made no other reply than by placing her foot once more upon his. Every time that Dubourg lost, she pressed his foot more tenderly, and whispered flattering things in his ears—but to which he paid not now the slightest attention.

"I hope I shall see you often, my lord?"

"Yes, my lady. Ten louis more this game!"

"I am in luck to-night," observed the Count. "Every game has hitherto been favourable to me!"

"But you will give the Baron de Potoski his revenge another night, if his ill-fortune should continue, my lord?" cried the Marchioness, addressing herself to the Count.

"*If* my ill-fortune continues!" ejaculated Dubourg: "I should think it does not vary much! Nearly two thousand francs already disappeared!"

"You must come and stop with me at my country-house on the banks of the Rhone, my dear Potoski!" whispered the Marchioness. "I am determined that you shall!"

"Yes, my lady—without doubt!" cried Dubourg. "Always the king on the other side! This is really remarkable."

"We will ramble in my park," murmured the Marchioness.

"Lost again!" ejaculated Dubourg.

"We will inhale the sweet zephyrs of Spring, my dear Potoski," continued the Marchioness.

"I am suffocated here," returned Dubourg.

"Take something, my lord."

"I should like to take back what I lost."

"Do you make a long stay at Lyons?"

"May the deuce take me if I know anything at all about it!" and Dubourg, who had lost three thousand francs, and who, wearied of feeling his foot continually beneath that of the Marchioness, rose abruptly from his chair, and walked up and down the apartment.

Madame de Grandcourt was extended on a sofa in one corner of the room; and a gentleman with moustaches was breathing tender things in her ears. A little farther on, the old Baroness and the Viscountess were playing at dominos. The two ladies were very much flushed: the Baroness had a glass of punch perpetually before her, and she threw anxious glances, every time the Viscountess prepared to play, upon the ten *sous* piece which lay upon the table, and which she was determined not to lose. The Viscountess had found her tongue by eating buns; and every now and then she committed grammatical blunders; which ought to have opened the eyes of Dubourg, if he had not been more than half intoxicated. But he was no longer calm and collected; the loss he had sustained, and the punch he had imbibed, affected his brain. He paced the apartment with uneven steps—looking about him without seeing anything—listening to the polite speeches of the Marchioness without hearing them—passing his hand across his forehead as if he were anxious to collect his ideas, and to depart—and yet turning towards the table where the cards were lying unemployed, and muttering to himself, "I must endeavour to get back my three thousand francs."

He seated himself at one of the tables, on which there was a dice-box, and called upon the Count to play a game of hazard. The Count was conversing in a corner with the shabby gentleman who staked the louis that were never taken from rolls of paper in which they were enveloped.

"My lord, said Dubourg, elevating his voice, "I hope you will not object to give me my revenge at this game; and perhaps Fortune will be more propitious."

"With great pleasure," answered the Count; and pulling down his lace wristbands, he hastened towards the dice-table. At the same moment the ladies all left the apartment as noiselessly as they possibly could: but Dubourg was too much occupied with the prospect of retrieving his losses to notice their abrupt departure.

All the gentlemen now surrounded the table at which the Baron Potoski and his adversary were seated. The Marchioness de Versac returned to the room alone at this moment, and seated herself next to Dubourg. Her complaisance was excessive for a lady of her rank: she also took care to pass Dubourg the dice-box, and even put the dice into it for him with her own hand. Dubourg lost—he knew not what he did—he threw the dice and the box into the middle of the room, and accepted the challenge to a game at *piquet*, which was offered him. He lost again—and every *sou* he possessed passed into the hands of the Count.

Dubourg felt in his pockets—he had not

another franc about him—he had lost everything—and the money was not his own! He could not utter a syllable—he paced the room with hasty steps—and pale, biting his lips, and clenching his fists, he swore terribly. The candles in the lustre began to wax dim: the Count, the Baron, the Chevalier, and the other gentlemen whispered together, and seemed embarrassed at something; and the Marchioness was seated in a corner of the room, for she no longer deemed it necessary to press the Baron Potoski's feet with her own.

At length Dubourg seemed to recover a portion of his senses, and to determine how to act. He hastened to the chair on which he had left his hat—rushed from the room—and closed the door with violence. Having traversed the ante-chamber, where three or four ill-looking men, of whom only one was in livery, were occupied in drinking,—he opened the front-door; and was preparing to descend the stairs, when he perceived that, instead of his own splendid hat, he had taken an old one which was not worth a penny.

"This is rather too bad!" exclaimed Dubourg, regretting his handsome hat, with the steel loop, and the black plume. Not content with having robbed me of my money, they are now determined to rob me of my attire. However, my Lords, Barons, and Counts—we shall soon ascertain the meaning of this!"

Dubourg hastened up-stairs, rang the bell with violence, and waited in vain for the door to be opened. He rang again: he knocked at the door with his hands, and kicked against it with his feet. At length it was opened.

"What do you want?" demanded the fellow in livery, in a rough and brutal tone.

"What do I want!" cried Dubourg; "why, my hat, which your precious Chevalier has taken instead of his own miserable thing, which I would not defile myself by wearing."

"No one has your hat here," returned the valet.

"What! you rascal, do you mean to tell me that I came in this vile hat?" cried Dubourg.

"Hold your tongue!" exclaimed the valet. "If you make so much noise, you will awake the Marchioness."

"Go to the devil with your Marchioness, who lets people squeeze her hand in order that they may lose their money with a better grace," said Dubourg. "I am determined not to leave this house till you have given me back my hat."

"You shall not come in!" cried the valet. "Holloa! here is a gentleman who seems inclined to be quarrelsome."

The three men, whom Dubourg had seen drinking in the ante-chamber with the valet, now came forward. They seized him by the shoulders; and in spite of all the efforts he made to resist, succeeded in mastering him. They carried him down the staircase, pushed him into the street, and shut the wicket in his face,—while he called them every name he could think of.

"The wretches!" cried Dubourg, arranging his coat which in the struggle he had nearly lost, in addition to his hat; "the wretches! What a pleasant party I have been to! I'll pick up stones and break all the windows of the old woman's house! But no—that won't do! Let me tranquillize myself. Perhaps a patrol will pass by!"

Dubourg remained a moment in the street, undecided how to act. It was however late—the street was lonely and dark—and by loitering about he stood a chance of being arrested. He remembered that he was a stranger in Lyons, and had assumed a title which did not belong to him. All these considerations prompted him to put off any attempt at redress till the following morning. In the meantime it was necessary for him to find out the way to his hotel. But how could he present himself before Frederick and Ménard after having lost the money which had been confided to him? He had not a penny remaining; and they already owed a considerable sum to the landlord of the hotel!

Dubourg beat his head and his breast as he walked the streets of Lyons. He at length found himself at the gate of his hotel, and soliloquized in the folowing manner:—"I must console myself somehow or another. Were I to pass the whole night in beating myself in the streets, not a single *sou* would return to my purse the quicker for that. The best thing I can now do is to go to bed. To-morrow I must think of some means to extricate myself from this difficulty."

* * * * *

* * * *

When Frederick returned to the hotel in the evening, he discovered M. Ménard seated alone at table, on which there were the remnants of a roast fowl that had served the worthy tutor as a companion during a portion of the time Dubourg was at the party. Astonished at not finding Dubourg with Ménard, the young Viscount inquired the reason of his absence; and his surprise was still more excited when the tutor assured him that the Baron had been invited to pass the evening at one of the first houses in Lyons.

"Dubourg invited to a party!" cried Frederick, who remembered that his friend was not acquainted with a single person in the city: and he began to tremble lest he had again fallen into some dilemma. He did not however communicate his suspicions to M. Ménard, but merely remarked to the tutor that he was determined to leave Lyons on the following morning.

"His lordship the Baron is no longer anxious to proceed on his travels so rapidly," said M. Ménard.

"It was but this morning that he urged me to hasten our departure," returned Frederick.

"It appears that the invitation which he received has changed his mind," said Ménard.

"The Baron may say what he chooses," cried Frederick: "but he shall not prevent *me* from starting to-morrow."

Ménard made no reply, but hastened to bed, wondering in his own mind at the freedom with which his pupil spoke of a man like the Palatine: and Frederick also sought his chamber, exceedingly anxious in respect to Dubourg.

On the following morning the young Vis-

count and Ménard rose early, and met in the room where they usually partook of their meals. But Dubourg was not there.

"I suppose he has not returned yet," said Frederick.

"I beg your lordship's pardon," observed a servant who was spreading the breakfast upon the table. "His lordship the Baron came in about three o'clock this morning. He was very much fatigued, and went to bed immediately."

"What folly to pass the night out," exclaimed Frederick, "when he knew that we were to depart from Lyons this morning! But where the deuce has he been? Go and tell him that we are waiting for him."

In a few minutes the waiter returned with a message that the Baron was indisposed, and could not leave his bed.

"He got drunk last night, I dare say," thought Frederick; and followed by Ménard, who rubbed his temples and his nose with vinegar as a precautionary measure against the infectious odour of a sick room, he hastened to Dubourg's apartment.

Dubourg was in bed. He had dragged his cotton nightcap over his eyes—he had tied his silk handkerchief round his head, outside the cap—and he had assumed an expression of countenance so truly pitiable, that a stranger would have fancied that he had been at least three months languishing in that couch. Ménard stopped short in the middle of the room, and applied a vinegar-bottle to his nose, while he whispered to Frederick, "Ah, my heavens, how changed his lordship is already!"

"What is the matter with you, my dear friend?" demanded the young Viscount, approaching the bed, and taking the hand of the invalid, who had already employed all known means of working himself up into a fever.

"Alas! my dear friend," cried Dubourg, "I am really very bad!"

"What made you ill?" inquired Frederick.

"Oh! it is an adventure—a series of adventures of a terrible nature—a sort of revolution that has done all this!" cried Dubourg.

"We must fetch a doctor," exclaimed M. Ménard. "I will run to the apothecary:"—and he was about to leave the room to breathe the fresh air, when Dubourg called him back.

"No, no—my dear Ménard," he said in a feeble tone of voice: "I do not like doctors. We have plenty of time to see about the apothecary. Hippocrates observed——"

"For heaven's sake leave Hippocrates alone for the present," interrupted Frederick, who saw that Dubourg was not quite so bad as he wished to appear: "and as you are determined not to have a doctor, at least let us into the secret of this terrible adventure—this revolution—as well as of your illness."

"Yes," said Ménard, again applying the vinegar-bottle to his nose, and seating himself as near the door as possible: "let us see if this illness stands any chance of being infectious."

Dubourg sat up in bed—raised his eyes—groaned deeply three or four times—pulled his cotton night-cap still farther over his face—and commenced his narrative in the most plaintive manner possible.

"The respectable M. Ménard must have told you that I received a billet yesterday from one of the first inhabitants of this city. The landlady assured me that such was the fact: or else, my dear Frederick——"

"Yes—yes: Ménard informed me of all that," interrupted Frederick, annoyed at the delay which Dubourg endeavoured to gain before he arrived at the real truth: "what next?"

"Softly!" cried Dubourg: "I cannot talk so quick as you seem to wish. However, to continue, I ordered a coach to be at the door at nine precisely; and having dressed myself as elegantly as——"

"I saw you had taken one of my coats," remarked Frederick smiling.

"You know I lost all my own wardrobe with my travelling-chariot."

"Well? well?"

"I know not how it was," resumed Dubourg; "but it happened that I put the purse—the purse, you know, which contained all our fortune—together with my pocket-book, in which I had secured the fifteen thousand francs——"

"Ah! this looks bad!" said Frederick to himself; while Ménard, more uneasy still drew his chair nearer to the bed.

"Pray proceed," cried Frederick, aloud.

"Well, my lord?" said the tutor.

"Well, my noble and learned friends," resumed Dubourg, "when I left the gay party—at which I confess I remained rather late—I could not find a coach. I was alone in the street—the street itself was deserted and dark—I did not know my way—and four robbers rushed all of a sudden upon me. Alas! I had no pistols with me: I however defended myself like a lion. But it was in vain! They beat me—rolled me on the ground; and what was much worse—they plundered me of everything I had about me!"

"Heavens!" cried M. Ménard; "and you had the whole of our money with you?"

"The whole!"

"And your own fifteen thousand francs!"

"All—everything! They did not leave me a single *sou:* they robbed me even of the splendid hat I had bought, the loop of which alone cost sixty francs."

"What a terrible misfortune!" cried M. Ménard, who was almost heart-broken at the idea of relinquishing the mode of life to which he had got accustomed.

Frederick said nothing. He did not believe a single syllable that Dubourg had uttered as to the cause of the disappearance of the money. Dubourg saw that his young friend was far from putting implicit confidence in his narrative; and he accordingly endeavoured to persuade him of its truth, by exclaiming, "What fatality! to be attacked—robbed—almost murdered! These things never happen to any one but to me!"

"You are not fortunate in your adventures, my lord," said Ménard, recalling to mind the loss of the travelling-carriage.

"And where did you pass the evening?" asked Frederick at length breaking silence.

No. 24—The Empress Eugenie.

"At the Marchioness de Versac's," answered Dubourg.

"At the Marchioness de Versac's," cried the young Viscount: "that is very singular! I saw her yesterday at her country-seat!"

"You saw her?" exclaimed Dubourg. "What! are you acquainted with her, then?" he added in a voice which was no longer that of a sick man.

"The Marchioness de Versac was a frequent visitress last winter, during her stay in Paris, at my father's soirées," said Frederick. "In the summer-time, she lives at her country-seat near Lyons. I saw her yesterday; and she reproached me for not having before paid my respects to her. She did not intimate her intention of coming to town last evening."

"Ah! what do I hear?" cried Dubourg. "How old is your Marchioness?"

"Twenty-eight. Her town-house at Lyons is on the Place Bellacour," returned Frederick. "But here! stop a moment!" and he rushed from the room.

In a few minutes he returned, bringing with him a beautifully-bound book: it was an *Annual*, and contained many elegant steel engravings. Turning to a picture that represented a lovely woman, reclining upon a sofa, playing with a favourite dog, the young Viscount said, "Look, Dubourg! Here is the veritable Marchioness de Versac!"

"Perdition!" cried Dubourg; "then, after all, my Marchioness was as much a Marchioness as I—as M. Ménard is a Baron! Ass, fool, lunatic that I was, not to have seen through the cheat!"

Dubourg started up in bed, threw himself upon it again, tore his night-cap from his head, dashed it into M. Ménard's face, and rolled himself about like a madman.

"His lordship is mad!" cried the tutor. "I shall certainly go and fetch a doctor now."

He left the room accordingly; and Frederick, who was desirous of learning the truth of the adventure, was not sorry to be alone with Dubourg. But the latter was a long time before he would leave off rolling himself about on the bed, so enraged was he against the sham Barons, Counts, and Chevaliers. At length he dressed himself as quick as he could, swearing all the time that he would immediately search after the Baron with the pigtail and seals, the Chevalier with the short-sleeved coat, and the Count with the wristbands; that he would knock out the old Baroness's teeth, box the ears of the Viscountess Fairfignan; squeeze the Marchioness's hands till her nails were black and blue; and make Madame de Grandcourt's eyes black with a vengeance.

Frederick however at length succeeded in calming him.

"You gambled last night, Dubourg?" said he; "and that was the way our money went."

"Ah! my dear friend," cried Dubourg, "thrash me—kill me! I know that I am a good-for-nothing rascal! But you would have done the same, had you been in my place. Who would not have put confidence in a perfumed billet of that sort? I had already planned a brilliant marriage! When I reached the house of the sham Marchioness, I found myself with persons who talked of their estates, their servants, and their millions, just as I would speak of my hat or my cane. They overwhelmed me with politeness and with punch; and yet I ought to have seen that all this was not right. But how could I help it? Unfortunately, I have never mingled with the best society in Paris, and therefore know nothing about it here. I took all the pressures of the Marchioness's foot for the very height of aristocratic favour, and all the solecisms of the Viscountess for a German accent! Cards were proposed: you know I am passionately fond of gambling;—and I played! They robbed me of everything I had about me—even to my very hat! But we shall see how this will all end—that we shall!"

"Where are you going?" demanded Frederick, stopping Dubourg, who had put on the Chevalier's old hat for want of a better.

"Let me go! let me go!" cried Dubourg. "I must find out these swindlers! Wait for me here!"

Dubourg opened the door, at the moment Ménard was returning with the apothecary's boy laden with soothing potions. Dubourg pushed by the tutor, who in vain endeavoured to stop him; and he ran down the stairs, four steps at a time, while Ménard fell against the doctor's boy and knocked him down, medicine and all.

"We must run after him!" cried Ménard, who fancied that Dubourg was mad: and it was only with the utmost difficulty Frederick could persuade him to send back the doctor's boy, as the Baron was much better.

Meanwhile Dubourg sped to the house of the sham Marchioness, having luckily kept the address. He was now obliged to proceed on foot, and was no longer able to affect the airs of a great lord. The eye-glass would not have corresponded with the old hat, which did not half cover his head. But at that moment he did not trouble himself about his appearance: he only thought of the money. Arrived at the house, which he immediately recognised, he passed into the court-yard—hurried up the staircase—listened—and looked around; but he neither heard nor saw anything to indicate that the Marchioness was still there. He rang the bell at the front door, from which he had been so unceremoniously expelled by the valet and his companions: but no one answered his appeal. He rang again and again—each time louder than before, till at length the bell-wire snapped in twain; and still the door remained fast closed.

"Open! swindlers — wretches — thieves!" cried Dubourg; "or I will fetch the Commissary of Police!"

At length an old woman appeared upon the landing of the floor above; and asked what was the cause of the disturbance which she heard?

"I want to speak to the persons who lodge on this floor," said Dubourg.

"There is no one there now," answered the old woman. "It was let ready-furnished to a lady, who left it early this morning, soon after daybreak."

Dubourg was petrified: he saw that all hope

of getting back his money was futile. He therefore returned slowly and sorrowfully to the hotel, where he appeared before Frederick and Ménard with the most miserable countenance they had ever seen.

"What news?" asked Frederick.

"Ah! my dear friend, they have all bolted!"

"I suspected that this would have been the case."

"Have you reported the robbery to the Commissary of Police, my lord," asked M. Ménard.

"I have done all I possibly could, M. Ménard," replied Dubourg. "But I think we must say good-bye to our money."

"And what are we to do, then?" asked the poor tutor.

"That is just what I am thinking about," said Dubourg. "How much money have you got about you, M. Ménard?"

"Two louis, my lord—no more."

"And you, Frederick?"

"About ten."

"That is not enough to pay the landlord," said Dubourg, "to whom we owe at least twenty."

"What!" exclaimed Frederick; "he is not paid!"

"Do you think it is the custom to make people pay in advance?" cried Dubourg.

"And to have gone on at such a rate!" said the young Viscount.

"One must keep up one's consequence," returned Dubourg. "But what does it signify how much we owe? We may as well have a bill of twenty louis as one, if we cannot pay it."

"And yet we must not think of leaving the hotel before we have settled," observed Frederick.

"Perfectly true," added M. Ménard.

"To get more money, I only see one method," said Dubourg: "and that is to write to the Count de Montreville. He will not allow his son to remain here without means to pursue his travels."

"Write to my father for money!" said Frederick: "and it is but three weeks since we left Paris!"

"What will he think?" moaned M. Ménard. "If his lordship the Baron would only despatch a courier to his steward at Rava or Sandomir——"

"I would do so with pleasure," said Dubourg; "but it is so far to send! It would take at least two long months to get an answer, because at this season the avalanches are so dangerous."

"Avalanches in summer, my lord!" cried Ménard.

"It is in summer that the snow melts," responded Dubourg. "Ah! I only wish it was winter! We should soon receive supplies in that case; as the couriers would perform half the journey by skating."

"Indeed, my lord!"

"Yes. But we cannot wait two months without money in this hotel," continued Dubourgh: "we require an immediate supply."

"My dear Ménard," said Frederick, "you must absolutely write to my father."

"I will announce to him the loss sustained by his lordship the Baron," said Ménard.

"No—no!" cried Dubourg; "it was to you that he entrusted the money—it is you that have been robbed! You must not speak of me in the business. Represent that it is you whom the rascals plundered!"

"Come, my dear Ménard," said Frederick; "write a very touching letter to my father."

"The deuce!" exclaimed M. Ménard; "it is somewhat a difficult task!"

"I will dictate it," cried Dubourg.

"Will your lordship do me that favour?" said the tutor: then, having provided himself with writing materials, and Dubourg dictating, he penned the ensuing lines:—

"My Lord,

"I have the honour to inform you of our safe arrival at Lyons, where I have just been attacked by a gang of robbers, as I was returning to the hotel in the evening; and plundered of everything I possessed. This circumstance has flung us into the utmost trouble, from which I beseech you to relieve us as soon as possible. In other respects, your son is as well in health as Æsculapius himself; and travelling seems to benefit him vastly. He desires me to present his best remembrances.

"I remain, my Lord,
"Your obedient servant,
"BENEDICT MENARD.

Dubourg was very desirous that Frederick should add a few lines to this letter; but the young Viscount had never deceived his father—and he preferred trusting to the note in its present shape, rather than add a direct and positive untruth. The letter was despatched to the post; and now all that remained to be done was to await the reply. Fortunately the landlord did not send in his bill for payment; and this circumstance served to raise the spirits of Frederick, who nevertheless requested his friends not to live so expensively as they had been doing. But Dubourg observed that any change in this respect would only arouse suspicions as to the embarrassed state of their finances; and M. Ménard coincided with the Baron's opinion.

Frederick resumed his rambles: but Dubourg did not drag Ménard about the town as he had formerly done. Having impressed the worthy inhabitants of Lyons with a favourable opinion of his toilet and circumstances—and having played the Palatine in the streets too long to sink into anything of an inferior degree—he did not choose to show himself in the Chevalier's old hat and with a long face: he felt sure that the emptiness of his pocket would be suspected by every one. He therefore passed the whole of his days in moralizing with Ménard, who was however no philosopher; and though the poor tutor listened to the Baron with the deepest respect, because he fancied him to be a learned man—he was no longer so much enchanted at the honour of travelling with him; for he began to suspect that the Polish Palatine was born to be unlucky himself, and to entail the same evil fortune upon his associates.

Ten days elapsed; and a reply was then received from the Count de Montreville. It was addressed to M. Ménard: but Frederick opened the letter with a trembling hand.

"Examine the contents first," suggested Dubourg: "you can read it afterwards."

The letter contained a cheque for six thousand francs upon a banker at Lyons.

"Good!" cried Dubourg; "this will enable us to support the Count's reproaches. Now read what he says."

The Count de Montreville had only written to M. Ménard these few words:—

"I do not believe a single syllable of the story you tell me about the robbers: but I am inclined to overlook my son's first fault, which I hope will teach him a lesson that may be useful in future. I send you a remittance; but you must not always calculate upon a similar indulgence.
"DE MONTREVILLE."

"He does not believe us," observed Frederick with a deep sigh.

"I fear his lordship is angry," added M. Ménard.

"Never mind," cried Dubourg: "his anger will soon pass. In future we shall travel like three little Cupids in a band-box: we will be quiet, steady, and philosophical!—which will not prevent us from living well, because the state of our health requires nourishment—does it not, M. Ménard?"

"Assuredly, my lord," said the tutor.

"But no more lording it now!" cried Dubourg; "I resume my *incognito*."

"What!" exclaimed Ménard: "your lordship——"

"A strict *incognito*," repeated Dubourg. "How do you think we can do otherwise, when we have only six thousand francs in our pockets? We cannot play the nobleman—that is, keep up our rank and dignity upon such a sum."

"But when your lordship has received answers from Rava, Krapack, and Sandomir?"

"Ah! when I do—that will be quite another thing!" ejaculated Dubourg. "But I am afraid it will be some time first! As to this supply, we must let Frederick be treasurer now. He is cold and calculating—such qualities are so essential to a paymaster."

"What a pity!" thought Ménard to himself. "We lived so sumptuously when the Baron paid."

These arrangements being settled, the hotel bill was called for and paid. For three weeks the account amounted to eight hundred and fifty francs—the payment of which made a hole in the remittance: however, during that time the three travellers had been treated like noblemen. Dubourg was sorry that he could not continue the same expensive mode of living: Ménard sighed as he reflected upon the excellent meals that were spread before him when the Baron was paymaster: and Frederick whispered to Dubourg, "My dear friend, in going on at such a rate with our money, we should not have got very far on our travels."

The Viscount's horses were sold; and an arrangement was made with a postmaster to furnish them with others to take them from Lyons to Grenoble.

"These are two halts that cost you dear, my lord," said Ménard to Dubourg: "first a travelling chariot with fifty thousand francs; and now fifteen thousand francs stolen in the streets! Travelling at this pace would ruin even your lordship!"

"I am now at my ease, M. Ménard," responded Dubourg, "and defy any one to rob me. Socrates found his house large enough to receive his friends: and I shall find my purse sufficiently filled, as long as Frederick pays for me."

To this observation M. Ménard made no reply: the simile did not appear to him a happy one.

Instead of pursuing the road to Turin, Frederick followed that which led to Grenoble. He was desirous of visiting the latter town and its environs, especially the Chartreuse, the wild appearance of which astounds and surprises the traveller at the same time. Dubourg was in no hurry to visit Italy: it mattered little to him whither he went; and since his last adventure, he no longer took upon himself to interfere with the arrangements. M. Ménard was always submissive to the desires of his pupil: but at the mention of the word Chartreuse, he could not avoid shuddering—for he was afraid that Frederick might take it into his head to turn anchorite, or lodge in a hermitage—a mode of life to which the worthy tutor had an immense aversion.

As the travellers approached the banks of the Iser, the scenery became more and more picturesque, mountainous, and imposing. The plains were dotted with verdant groves; and a thousand streamlets flowed to the feet of the rocks, where they formed the most beautiful cascades. The views on the banks of the Rhone are alike serious and majestic, and well calculated to lull the mind into those reveries which transport it afar from the din and bustle of great cities to the tranquil allurements of the country.

"How beautiful is this scenery!" exclaimed Frederick. "I find in it a certain charm which captivates my heart as well as my eyes. How delightful it is to walk in the shade of those inviting groves!"

"To dream of Madame Dernange—eh?" whispered Dubourg.

"Oh no—my dear friend," returned Frederick. "I assure you that her image has long been banished from my mind, as well as all those coquettes with whom I was acquainted in Paris."

"What do you think of, then, while you are wandering about in your inviting groves?"

"Alas! I scarcely know, Dubourg. I dream of a being whom I have not yet seen—a beautiful, affectionate, modest, and innocent girl, who knows how to love and to be faithful! It is my worshipped ideal!"

"And I suppose you go to look for her on the banks of the river?" said Dubourg.

"I do look for her: I am waiting till accident shall throw her in my way."

"And if accident should make you wait thirty years or so, you will both of you be a most interesting couple."

"Oh! Dubourg, how annoying are your observations! You have not the slightest idea of love!" exclaimed Frederick.

"My dear Fred, love is a doll which every one dresses up according to his own fantasy: is it not so, M. Ménard?"

"My lord," answered the preceptor, "I cannot reply to the argument."

The travellers stopped at Grenoble, and dismissed the postilion and the horses they had hired. The hotel where they put up was not quite so elegant as the one at Lyons: but they were well fed—there was an abundance of fish, poultry, and excellent wine—and Ménard and Dubourg contrived to make themselves comfortable.

The morning after their arrival, they all three proceeded to visit the Chartreuse. Dubourg, who had resumed his *incognito*, was more pleased with the society of the young Viscount than with that of Ménard; and the tutor himself not liking to be left alone at the inn, decided also upon forming one of the party,—although he was a very bad walker, and Frederick, who wished to see everything, had resolved upon dispensing with a chaise.

The Chartreuse, which they reached after a walk of about four hours, broke upon their view, surrounded by mountains covered with firs, fertile valleys, and beautiful pasture-lands. The road was cut out of a solid rock—a tremendous torrent on the left hand; and the rock itself upwards of sixty feet high, on the right. The traveller there experiences sentiments never felt before—a mixture of admiration and of awe—at the aspect of this wild place. Frederick was indeed lost in wonder: Dubourg looked coolly about him; and Ménard sighed: but the hospitable welcome which the travellers received at the Chartreuse cheered the spirits of the poor tutor, who, while he agreed that the country possessed some splendid views, preferred his own lodgings in the Rue Betisy at Paris, to the most picturesque hermitage of the Chartreuse—where it was necessary to make constant fasts. It was therefore with a great deal of pleasure that Ménard set out on his walk back to Grenoble, notwithstanding the kind proposition of Frederick that they should all sleep at the Chartreuse, in order not to fatigue the tutor. Ménard declared that he was not tired, and that four leagues did not alarm him: they accordingly set forth on their walk after dinner.

They were still three leagues from Grenoble when it was the hour of sunset—for Frederick stopped every moment to admire a valley, a windmill, or a charming landscape, and to point them out to his companions; and on each occasion Ménard seated himself on the grass, and could scarcely be persuaded to resume his walk. A very little exercise fatigued the worthy man: he however kept up his courage as well as he could, and took the liberty of supporting himself upon the arm of the Baron, who was the most good-natured person in the world when he did not give himself the airs of a Palatine.

The sound of village music presently fell upon the ears of Frederick.

"Let us proceed in this direction," said he. "I see the peasants dancing on the green: let us witness this picture of rural happiness."

"With pleasure," said Dubourg. "I should not be surprised to see some pretty girls amongst them."

"At all events we shall be able to obtain refreshments," observed Ménard.

The travellers descended a hill, and soon found themselves in a valley bounded with oak and firs, in which were assembled all the inhabitants of a beautiful village that was seen at a short distance. It was a holiday with the peasants of that neighbourhood, and dancing was the principal amusement they indulged in. A flute, a fiddle, and a tamborine formed all their orchestra: but those instruments were sufficient to mark the time and cheer them in the dance. Pleasure was depicted upon every countenance: the damsels were arrayed in their best apparel; and the peculiar garb of the peasant girls of that part of the country contributed much to enhance their natural beauty. The old people were seated at a little distance, and passed the time in conversing and drinking, while their children danced upon the green.

Ménard seated himself at a table, and called for some refreshment: Dubourg lounged about the green, whispering compliments in the ears of the pretty peasant-girls;—and Frederick, having contemplated the picture for a few minutes, loitered away from the scene, and followed the banks of a little river that meandered under the shade of weeping willows. The sound of the music already fell indistinctly upon his ears, when he thought of returning to his companions: but he stopped—for at a short distance from him was a young girl, seated upon the bank of the river, with her eyes turned towards the valley. She smiled as she gazed upon the peasants dancing in the distance; but in her smile, and in the expression of her eyes, there was something sweetly melancholy, which however appeared to be habitual with her, and not the effect of mere passing emotions. She was scarcely sixteen: her garb betokened poverty; but the gracefulness of her form could not be concealed by the homeliness of her attire. Beautiful curls of light brown hair floated on her neck, and were parted above a pale and open brow; her features were delicate—her mouth wore an expression of amiability and innocence—her eyes, of a dark blue, were languishing and melancholy—and her complexion was clear and beautiful, but very pale.

Frederick stopped to gaze upon that fair young girl: he could not take his eyes off her. Why was she seated on the bank of the river, while her companions enjoyed themselves in the valley?—why did her countenance wear an expression of soft melancholy? Frederick had only seen her for a few minutes; and already did he feel interested in her welfare: he was anxious to know all that regarded her; it seemed to him as if his heart sympathised in the woes of that fair young damsel.

At this moment several peasants passed along the bank of the river in their way to join the dance. Frederick accosted them, pointed to the girl, and inquired who she was, and why she did not mingle in the village sports? The peasants turned round—cast a glance of commiseration upon the object of

his solicitude—and in answer to his question, said, "Oh! sir, that poor creature never dances! It is Sister Anne!"

Frederick, in astonishment, awaited a farther explanation: but the peasants hastened towards the valley, repeating the words, "It is Sister Anne!"

* * * * * *
* * * * *

The peasants passed on: but Frederick lingered in the shade of the willows, which the rays of the setting sun now feebly irradiated. He kept his eyes fixed upon the fair girl, who did not however notice him; for being no longer able to see the dance, she had suffered her head to droop upon her bosom, and only gazed on the stream that flowed at her feet.

What meant the peasants by the words, "It is Sister Anne! the poor creature does not dance!" The tone of pity in which these observations were uttered, forcibly struck the young Viscount. The peasants seemed to feel for the sweet girl, and yet appeared to consider it quite natural that she should not mingle in the sports of her companions. What grief—what sorrow could have banished that fair creature from the scene of mirth? Though a soft melancholy sat on her countenance, she did not seem as if she were a prey to recent woes: on the contrary, she was calm and tranquil: she smiled at the stream which rippled past; and her soul appeared as pure as the water which reflected her image. It struck Frederick that there was something mysterious about this girl; and he longed to ascertain the truth. He therefore advanced gently, and stood close by her side before she raised her eyes.

"Do you not take example from your companions," said Frederick in a tone of softness and kindness, "and mingle in the innocent recreations of the village? The young men and damsels are dancing at a little distance; and you are alone in this spot."

When the sound of Frederick's voice fell upon her ears, the girl turned her head, and made a movement of terror: but his kind tone and look inspired her with confidence; and she contented herself by rising from the bank on which she was seated.

"Have you anything to vex and trouble you?" inquired Frederick: "any concealed sorrow? So young, and to be already acquainted with affliction? Ah! if it were in my power to alleviate your woe, how happy should I be!"

The fair girl cast a sorrowful look upon Frederick—a look in which mournfulness and gratitude were alike expressed. She fixed her beautiful eyes for a moment upon the Viscount—curtsied to him—and was about to depart from the spot where they stood, when he detained her gently by the hand. She appeared surprised, and even alarmed; and hastily withdrew her hand from that of the young man who already pressed it warmly.

"You are about to retire from my sight," said Frederick; "and you do not answer my questions? You will not speak to me?"

The eyes of the girl suddenly became more expressive; a ray of ineffable sweetness and melancholy animated those dark blue orbs; and large tears chased each other down her cheeks.

"You weep! and I am the cause of your sorrow?" cried Frederick, again seizing the girl's hand, while she made significant signs to assure him that he had not awoke the grief which filled her bosom. She smiled too amidst her tears: then suddenly disengaging her hand from Frederick's grasp, gained the recesses of the adjacent wood, and, light as the fawn, disappeared from his sight.

He at first made a motion to follow her: but it was already dark, and he could not see which road she had taken. He returned to the bank of the river, and stopped at the place where he had first seen her. He could not as yet satisfy himself concerning the nature of the emotions which he experienced: but he felt for that young girl a sentiment more tender and far more lively than any that he had ever previously entertained for another woman. In losing sight of her, his heart beat with violence; and it already appeared as if she were in some way identified with his happiness. What grace, what charms did that young girl possess! But why that sorrow and that silence? They called her "Sister Anne:" what was the meaning of this name? She could not belong to any religious order, because her dress was not that of a nun;—and she was evidently her own mistress in the open country. A mystery surrounded her!

"Charming creature!" thought Frederick. "I am determined to discover all that regards thee," he added, as he looked towards the wood in which she had disappeared. "I must see thee again, and soothe thy sorrows! I feel that I already love thee! Yes, I love thee—not as I love those heartless coquettes whose only delight was to deceive me—but as thou deservest to be loved; for in thine eyes I read naught save innocence and candour! Ah! if thou can'st only love me in return, how happy shall I be!"

But it was now dark; and Frederick was obliged to rejoin his friends. He left with regret the weeping willows, amongst which he had discovered Sister Anne; and as he returned to the valley, he said to himself, "I shall see her again—Oh! I must see her once more. But I will not speak of her to Dubourg: he would laugh at me. He thinks all women are alike:—he has no idea of love. Poor girl! I will yet ascertain why she does not mingle in the sports of her companions."

The dance was spirited—the peasants abandoned themselves to the recreation which costs so little; and joy was depicted on every countenance. The songs of those who were drinking mingled with the sounds of the fiddle and the tamborine: the young men pressed the hands of the girls whom they loved; while the young girls smiled upon their lovers, and mothers caressed their children, and old men paid their respects to the bottle. Every one smiled upon the object he loved the most, as if to express thanks for the happiness afforded him.

M. Ménard, who was seated between two individuals famous for the great quantity of

liquor they drank upon these occasions, listened very quietly to the conversation carried on around him, and regaled himself with a cold fowl and a salad: for in the village the ceremonies of great cities are forgotten, and Ménard was never punctilious when it was impolitic to be so:—or, in other words, he never failed to submit to the necessities imposed by the cravings of appetite. Dubourg forgot his assumed titles of nobility, and hastened to join the dance. He selected a pretty brunette, whose large dark eyes, fine teeth, and handsome figure did not fail to captivate her partner. The peasant-girl danced with the gentleman without testifying the slightest timidity: she did not bestow less animation upon the dance; on the contrary—it was she who whispered to her partner, "You do not jump about enough!" Dubourg had thought it right to display his Parisian style of dancing: but in the country the mincing steps of fashion appeared to be nothing more than a lounging walk; and the pretty brunette exclaimed from time to time, "I wish you could dance better than that! What is the use of walking about as if you were afraid of tiring yourself? If you don't know how to behave better than this, I must find another partner."

Dubourg, who did not choose to dispense with the society of the pretty brunette, commenced the most extraordinary antics to amuse her. Menard, who perceived all that passed from the table where he was seated, said to his neighbours, "There—you see the Baron Potoski dancing a Polish fling with your damsels. Look at his lordship! That is the way they dance in Cracow, and on Mount Krapack. How noble, how graceful are all his gestures! What beautiful steps he describes as if quite involuntarily!"

The rustics to whom Ménard addressed himself, did not understand a word of this discourse. But Dubourg's partner was satisfied; and he, perceiving that the pretty brunette was in a good humour, attempted to steal a kiss; whereupon she boxed his ears soundly: for the peasant-girls in the neighbourhood of Grenoble do not resemble those in the vicinity of Paris.

Frederick returned to the green where the peasants were dancing. But he did not now observe the animated picture before him: he fancied that he was again amongst the weeping willows, and that he saw the young damsel on the banks of the river. At length Dubourg approached him. He had quitted the pretty brunette, because the leaps and the flings of the village dance fatigued him, and instead of being recompensed for his exertions by a kiss, he received nothing but boxes on the ears to cool his ardour.

"Where have you been?" said he to Frederick. "You left us at the most interesting period of the evening's amusement."

"I took a walk to a distance," answered Frederick.

"What an intrepid walker you are!" cried Dubourg. "But I think it is now time to return to Grenoble, whence we are still three leagues distant."

They rejoined Ménard, who complimented Dubourg upon the mode in which he danced the Polish fling. Frederick inquired which was the shortest road; and a peasant-boy offered to conduct the gentlemen to Grenoble. But Ménard did not appear equal to the task of walking three leagues; and Dubourg himself was intimidated by the distance. The boy proposed to accommodate the travellers with his cart-horse, on condition they would not make him gallop. The offer was accepted by Dubourg and Ménard with the utmost delight: the latter mounted behind, and Dubourg before; and while the worthy tutor held tight to his companion, Frederick walked by the side—and thus the cavalcade moved on. The moon shone upon the green fields. The weather was magnificent: the woods of pine-trees extended along the road to the left of the travellers; and the hammer of the blacksmith alone broke upon the silence of the night. Occasionally, as they passed a forge, the brilliancy of the furnace outshone the silver light of the moon, and threw a broad glare upon the scene around; and from time to time the voices of the workmen mingled with the monotonous din of the hammer.

"Do you hear the Cyclops working at the thunders of Jupiter?" inquired Dubourg of Ménard.

"Not for all the wealth of Peru would I find myself alone with these fellows in the middle of the night," returned the tutor; and he gave a blow with his heel to the cart-horse—but the animal did not proceed any quicker on that account.

Dubourg and Ménard were a little in the rear of Frederick and the boy; because the cart-horse could not advance very rapidly upon the rocky road. Frederick walked in front, accompanied by the guide, who was about twelve years of age—open-hearted and ingenuous, like the generality of mountaineers.

"What is the name of the village we have just left?" inquired Frederick of the little boy.

"Vizille, sir," was the answer. "It is the prettiest hamlet in the neighbourhood of Grenoble."

"You live there?" asked Frederick.

"I was born there, and have lived in the same cottage since my birth."

"And do you know——"

But before Frederick finished the sentence, he turned to see if his companions could overhear him. They were, however, at least fifty paces in the rear. Dubourg was talking about Brittany to M. Ménard, and explaining to him how the inhabitants of that district lived. Frederick was satisfied he might converse with the guide without the apprehension that Dubourg would overhear him. "Do you know at Vizille a young damsel whom they call Sister Anne?" demanded Frederick.

"Sister Anne! Oh, to be sure, I know her," returned the boy. "She does not live quite in the village: but her hut is not far distant. Poor Sister Anne! there are very few people about here who don't know Sister Anne!"

"You also appear to pity her?" exclaimed Frederick. "Is she unhappy?"

"She must be," responded the boy. "Her history is very touching!"

"Do you know it?" asked the young Viscount.

"Oh! yes, sir: my mother has told it to me a hundred times. Every one knows it at Vizille."

"Tell me that history, my boy," said Frederick: "tell me all you know about Sister Anne."

As Frederick uttered these words, he placed a piece of money in the hand of the boy, who was quite surprised at being remunerated for so simple a thing. Frederick, however, interrupted his expressions of gratitude; and the guide commenced his narrative, which the young Viscount, who walked close by his side in order not to lose a single word, drank in with greedy ears.

It appeared that Sister Anne was the daughter of a lady who was known by the inhabitants of Vizille by the name of Clotilda, and who was not only very beautiful, but also endowed with a kind and sweet disposition. It further appeared that this Clotilda was the daughter of rich parents, and had not been brought up as a country girl. She possessed great talents, and yet chose the humble cottage as a residence with her husband. It was reported that her marriage was entirely a love-match, and that the charming Clotilda had preferred a hut with the husband of her choice to a richer suitor who could have established her in a fine mansion. She and her husband lived for some time very happily in the little village of Vizille. Their first-born child was Sister Anne, who bore a striking resemblance to her mother. Four years after the birth of Anne, the happy couple were blest with another pledge of their affection. This time it was a boy; and the parents were delighted. Little Anne herself shared in the pleasure thus experienced, and was unremitting in her childish attentions to her infant brother. But distress soon overtook that poor and hitherto happy family. A hurricane laid waste their land—they lost their harvest—Clotilda was seized with a sudden illness—and her husband, in order to procure the necessaries to support his wife and little ones, was obliged to enlist as a soldier. He *did* enlist—gave the bounty-money to Clotilda—and departed, having enjoined his wife to take care of his poor children.

The grief attending this separation, for a long time prevented Clotilda from working; and little Anne, during her mother's indisposition, devoted herself entirely to her brother, whom she loved with all her soul. Often and often did her mother say to her, "Take care of your little brother, my dearest Anne. Alas! in a short time you will perhaps be his only support"

A year passed; and during that period Clotilda received many letters from her absent husband. But at last those letters suddenly ceased—and a battle had taken place; for in those times battles were of frequent occurrence with the French armies. The husband of poor Clotilda had been killed in the fight. The tidings of his death were received in the village, but no one had courage enough to break them to the young widow; and Clotilda was in daily expectation of hearing from her husband—when, alas! he had long ceased to exist.

The poor creature went every morning to the top of a neighbouring hill, whence she could perceive the road which her husband must take upon his return. Often did she pass the whole day, seated at the foot of a tree, with her eyes turned towards the road in which she had seen her beloved for the last time. When the peasants espied Clotilda upon the hill, they hastened to console her. They spoke to her of her children: but she answered sorrowfully, "Anne is with her brother, and does not leave him: she will be a second mother to the poor little boy."

And, indeed, the young girl, who was then only seven, already surprised the whole village by her tenderness and attachment to her brother. The poor infant saw no one but Anne during a considerable portion of the day; but he wanted for nothing. His sister Anne took care of him—cradled—rocked—caressed—and played with him, and anticipated his slightest wish. Hence was it that the name of his sister Anne was the first word which the little boy could utter; and on that account the appellation of *Sister Anne* was invariably bestowed upon that model of girlish tenderness and love. She retained it ever afterwards.

One day, according to custom, Clotilda was at her usual place upon the hill; and Sister Anne was alone with her brother in the hut. At the time when her mother was wont to return home for the evening, the children were surprised that she did not make her appearance. The little boy continued to play, casting anxious glances towards the country, exclaiming from time to time, "Mamma does not come back!"

The night came, and Clotilda was still absent. If Anne had been alone, she could have hastened to the village to seek her mother; but she would not leave her brother. Oh! no—she could not leave him—he was the treasure that had been confided to her:—from him she could not find it in her heart to tear herself away! Sister Anne at length resolved upon putting her brother to bed. He was only three years old, and stood in need of rest, while she waited for their mother. Hour after hour passed away; and the anxiety of the poor girl increased every minute. Her eyes were suffused in tears—her bosom heaved—and sobs escaped her lips, as she murmured again and again, "Mamma does not come! She cannot have abandoned us!"

To increase her anxiety and alarm, a terrible storm broke over the village. The thunder rolled with a dreadful noise: Sister Anne was frightened;—she placed her head upon the pillow which supported that of her brother, and called for her mother! Suddenly the thunder fell with a din which echoed throughout the village. Sister Anne, dismayed by the violence of the noise, remained some time unable to open her eyes. But when she at length so far recovered her presence of mind as to look around her, she saw a thick smoke issuing from a corner of the cottage. She almost fainted with alarm, and was nearly suffocated

THE DUMB GIRL.

by the fumes of the smoke, which increased in thickness every moment. Anne ran to the window—the flames circled around the exterior of the hut, and closed the passages with their barriers of fire. Alas! the thunder had fallen upon the roof of the cottage; and on every side were the poor children completely hemmed in.

The little girl only thought of her brother, whom she snatched from his cradle, and rocked in her arms, uttering piercing cries at the same time. Alas! the danger redoubled—she lost all power of attempting another escape—the smoke suffocated her—it was in vain she endeavoured to call for assistance: she could not! But the inhabitants of the village ran to the hut, which they could not however save from the devastating flames. They endeavoured to rescue the children: and after a considerable degree of difficulty succeeded in forcing an entrance to Sister Anne's room. They found her under her mother's bed with her brother in her arms; and she was pressing the dear infant to her bosom in all the anguish of despair. Useless were her endeavours to save that dear brother—the poor child soon ceased to exist! Sister Anne, who had fainted the moment she was brought from the hut, was at length recalled to life: but no one can depict the astonishment and grief which seized on all present at that dreadful scene, when they discovered that the horror she had undergone, and the constitutional revolution she had so suddenly experienced, had deprived her of the use of speech! She opened her mouth—a few unmeaning cries and sounds alone issued from her lips. From that moment the poor girl had never spoken more!

When the little guide arrived at this portion of his narrative, the substance of which we have faithfully detailed in our own language,—Frederick was no longer at a loss to comprehend the cause of that melancholy which was so deeply impressed on the poor girl's countenance.

Sister Anne was dumb; and all that art and skill could do had been tried to restore her to speech, without success. The physicians of that part of the country had gratuitously attended on her; and they declared that the extent of the alarm and the despair which she experienced when her young brother clung to her vainly in the moment of peril, *had deprived her of that faculty which a similar accident could alone restore.* But the poor girl possessed a heart which knew how to feel the misfortunes that had encompassed her; and she was enabled to express by signs the magnitude of her griefs. For many years did she deplore the kind parents and the much-loved brother whom she had lost; for Clotilda had herself succumbed to the weight of her affliction, and was found a corpse at the foot of the tree, on the top of the hill, the same night which had been so fatal to her children!

The storm had deprived Anne of the only asylum which remained to her. But the inhabitants of the village made a subscription to assist the poor girl; and an excellent old woman called Dame Margaret, who inhabited a hut in the wood adjoining the valley, took care of Anne, and adopted her as her daughter. Dame Margaret was very poor; but by the aid of the worthy inhabitants of the village, Anne purchased a cow and some goats.

For some years she seemed incapable of working or of exerting her physical or moral energies. She passed entire days seated upon the bank of the river, or in the wood, without paying the least attention to anything that was said to her. She only knew how to deplore the loss of her parents and her brother. At the time when Frederick first saw her, she was more tranquil and resigned: the lapse of years had soothed her affliction, and she at length became grateful for anything that was done for her. She devoted herself to work, and showed the greatest respect for the excellent Dame Margaret, who was very old, and never left her but at the period of which we are speaking.

In a word, Anne was docile, kind, and open-hearted. She sometimes smiled; but her smiles were ever melancholy and expressive of sorrow. At the sight of a little boy about the age of her brother, she would weep, sigh, and feel as if she were about to faint. She was now sixteen; and although she could not speak, she made herself intelligible by signs: her eyes were not less expressive than her gestures. The peasants understood her perfectly well; and the gossips of Vizille declared that her incapability of speech was the more to be regretted, as the power to unburden her woes would do her so much good!"

"Poor girl!" murmured Frederick, when the boy had brought his narrative to a conclusion. "Yes—her misfortune is indeed to be regretted! How sweet would be her voice, were she able to make use of it! How I should rejoice to hear her speak! But I feel that her defect renders her all the more interesting in my eyes! And you say that she lives in yonder wood?"

"Yes, sir," returned the boy: "it is very easy to find the cottage inhabited by her and Dame Margaret, by following the path that leads to the wood from the thicket of weeping willows. On your left hand there is a barn:—you then descend a little hill, and the hut is before you."

"A thousand thanks, my boy, for all the information you have afforded me," said Frederick.

"But here we are at Grenoble, sir," cried the boy. "You do not require me any longer?"

"No: take this in addition to what I have already given you," returned Frederick.

"If ever you want any one at the village, sir," rejoined the boy, "I hope you will think of me. My name is Julian."

"Good," said Frederick. "I shall not forget."

The two horsemen dismounted from their animal; and the boy took their place. Frederick, whose mind was bent upon all that the guide had told him relative to Sister Anne, walked in silence by the side of his two companions, who entered Grenoble in discussing the manner to dress a duck with olives—a subject which had already occupied them more

than half-an-hour,—Dubourg recapitulating the method adopted in Brittany, and Ménard citing receipts which he had formerly read in some cookery book.

On their return to the inn, they repaired to their respective chambers. But it was not sleep alone which Frederick found when he sought his couch: the image of the young girl haunted his imagination; he thought of her history—of the sorrows she had experienced; and he said to himself, as he sank into slumber, "How tenderly she must have loved her brother! What a heart must she possess! and how devotedly will she love the one who is destined to experience her affection! Oh! what pleasure to inspire such a being with love! what delight to read the secret in those eyes which so well supply the organ she has lost!"

This idea occupied the dreams of Frederick throughout the night. At daybreak he rose; and leaving his friends to enjoy the sweets of that repose which had deserted his own pillow, he hired a horse and hastened along the road to Vizille at full gallop.

Love is the deity who most effectually charms our leisure moments: he annihilates distance, passes over space, and deceives the course of time. A lover is never wearied, even when his passion is not requited. Hopes, plans, and memories, continually cheer the loving heart. Love is the god of all nations and of all classes: he rules in the hut as well as in the palace. Love asserts his empire upon the moss of the wild common, and on the downy bed; and many have not hesitated to assert that the village peasant loves more sincerely than the city lord, or at least that the passion of the former is more natural.

Frederick soon arrived at the valley where he saw the peasants dancing on the previous evening, but which was now as silent as the rest of the country around. Three or four labourers were traversing it in their way to their work; a few peasant girls were occupied here and there in cultivating their little gardens. At Vizille, the enjoyments of the evening did not interfere with the toils of the next morning. The poor creatures still amused themselves in conversing upon the rustic festival which would only return the following year: but the time passed rapidly with them—they had so many means to employ it!

Frederick hastened towards the avenue formed by the weeping willows. He dismounted from his horse, fastened it to a tree, and proceeded along the path which led towards the wood. He observed that the young girl was not on the bank of the river in the spot where he had seen her the previous evening, and he recollected the information the boy had given him concerning the place. He reached the wood, and there everything was calm and tranquil: the dark foliage of the fir-trees formed a thick screen against the beams of the orb of day. At length Frederick found himself upon the grass; he descended a hill—and a small cottage met his eyes. The wood with which the hut was built had decayed in many places; and the roof of the shed seemed ready to fall in. A fence surrounded the garden; and even this barrier was broken in several parts. Frederick's heart sank within him when his eyes surveyed this hut, which seemed to indicate an indigence amounting to almost a privation of the necessaries of life.

"It is there that she dwells!" said he: "it is there that she has lived since the age of seven, in comparative solitude and want! Poor girl! when your admirable devotion, and when the misfortune which resulted from it, rendered you worthy of general adoration, you only found this miserable cabin wherein to deplore your parents and your brother! And you were happy perhaps in being ensured an asylum and a meal!"

Frederick was leaning against a tree, as he contemplated the hovel: his heart was too full to allow him to advance towards it;—he sighed and said to himself, "She is there!"

A few minutes passed, and suddenly the door of the cottage was opened. A girl appeared upon the threshold: it was Sister Anne! The gloomy appearance of the scene, the sombre aspect of the wood, and the poverty of the hut, all disappeared in a moment; the presence of the damsel immediately illuminated the whole! The object whom we love can produce effects which appear to be the offspring of enchantment: she bestows a charm on everything around!

Sister Anne had re-entered the hut: but she soon came out again; and this time she was attended by the four goats which formed her flock. There was a cow in a yard adjoining the little garden: she caressed it as she passed, and seemed to promise to return soon. Then, driving her goats towards the hill where the grass grew in abundance, the fair dumb girl walked gently after them, her head bent upon her bosom, and her eyes cast down. Frederick remained leaning against the tree which almost concealed him from the view of Sister Anne. But not a movement of her's was lost upon him. As she went towards the hill, he followed her at a short distance: he longed to be near her, and to speak to her;—but he was afraid of alarming her by appearing too abruptly. She seemed so timid that he feared her taking to flight again. In a few minutes she seated herself upon the green sward; and taking from her basket a piece of brown bread and some figs, commenced her morning meal. Frederick drew a little nearer: in a moment he was close beside her; and when she turned her head to look for one of her goats, her eyes rested upon the same young gentleman whom she had seen on the preceding evening. She started—but rather in a manner which indicated surprise than alarm; for there was nothing about Frederick to terrify her. Standing before her, but appearing to be embarrassed, his looks were tender and bashful; and his countenance expressed the deep interest with which she had inspired him.

Sister Anne was at first inclined to rise and retire to a little distance: but the young Viscount exclaimed, "Oh! do not avoid me! I should be unhappy indeed, were I to alarm you."

The damsel's lips relaxed into a sweet and animated smile; and gently shaking her head, she intimated that she was not afraid.

"I saw you yesterday on the bank of the river," continued Frederick, approaching nearer still to the beautiful mute, who looked at him for a moment—then smiled to testify her recollection of the meeting, and cast down her eyes as before.

"You recollect me?" continued Frederick. "Oh! never for a moment has your image left my memory! Could I be otherwise than captivated by the sight of such gracefulness of form and such loveliness of feature?"

Sister Anne listened to him with amazement:—all he said was totally new to her. The young Viscount seated himself upon the grass at a short distance from the spot which she occupied. His conduct seemed to surprise the lovely mute—and she again regarded him with a timid glance: but the expression of his countenance speedily reassured her. She cast down her eyes: Frederick nevertheless perceived that she awaited with suspense the moment when he should again address her.

"When I saw you yesterday," he resumed, "I experienced for you the most tender interest: but how has it increased since I learnt your sad history! Alas, poor girl! I am acquainted with your sorrows, and the cause of your woes!"

The countenance of the beautiful dumb maiden assumed an expression of the most acute affliction: a terrible reminiscence appeared to agitate her,—she heaved deep sighs, raised her eyes to heaven, then turned them again towards the earth; and a torrent of tears inundated her cheeks.

Frederick drew near her. He passed his arm gently round her waist, and taking one of her hands, placed it upon his heart.

"I have awakened your sorrows," he said; "but I hope you will pardon me! Oh! why cannot I enable you to forget all your cares? why cannot I make you entirely happy? Poor girl! let me wipe away your tears! From this moment you are no longer alone upon the earth: you have a friend who will never forget you! There exists a heart that will beat in sympathy with your's, as long as you live. Anne—dear girl—let me love you—let me share your troubles and your torments—think of you without ceasing—see you every day! Do not refuse me this favour—or I shall be very, very unhappy!"

Frederick spoke with enthusiastic warmth; his heart glowed with passion, and his voice was softened by the same influence. The young mute at first listened to him with surprise: a sentiment, till that moment unknown, perplexed her; she endeavoured to withdraw her hand—she had not the power: Frederick ceased speaking—and she listened still! In a few moments, the idea of her situation and of her misfortune destroyed the charm which she had experienced. She cast a sorrowful look upon Frederick; and then glancing towards herself more sadly still, she withdrew her own hand, and, repulsing his, seemed to say, as she shook her head, "No—you cannot love me:—I am too unfortunate!"

Frederick understood her meaning; he again pressed the young girl's hand to his heart, pointed to the cottage, and said, "With you I should be happy to dwell in yonder hut!"

At that moment the sound of a little bell fell upon Frederick's ears. It was the signal to announce to Anne that Dame Margaret had risen from her bed. She hastened to collect her goats, and to repair to the hovel.

"Shall you come back?" said Frederick. "Oh! let me see you again to-day!"

She pointed to the sun, the rays of which penetrated the foliage—and then turned her hand towards the earth, slowly casting down her eyes at the same time.

"At sunset you will be on the bank of the river, by the willows!" said Frederick.

Sister Anne made an affirmative sign; then, driving her goats before her, she hastened to the cottage. But as she stood upon the threshold for a moment, she turned her head towards Frederick—smiled sweetly upon him—and disappeared. That smile and that look transported the young nobleman: he was already no stranger in the eyes of Sister Anne! This idea enchanted him; when a man is in love it requires so little to make him happy!

Frederick hastened to the place where he had left his horse. Should he return to Grenoble, and retrace his steps in the evening to the cottage? No—it appeared to him to be more natural to remain at the village, to obtain a repast at the rustic inn, and then loiter for the remainder of the day about the hut where Sister Anne dwelt. Little did it matter to him what his companions might think or say of him! They must accustom themselves to the frequency of his absence; for Frederick felt assured that he should return often to Vizille—or rather that he would not leave it often to retrace his steps to Grenoble. All he loved lived in a little wood near the village:—Sister Anne was already everything to him! He thought not of the future—of his rank—nor of the projects of his father: he saw only her—was resolved to live for her alone! It is true that his love only dated from the previous evening, and that he was but twenty years of age!

In the village, whither he proceeded to rest and refresh himself, Sister Anne was again the subject of his conversation; and every one was delighted to corroborate all he had heard relative to her virtues, her kindness, the mildness of her disposition, and the sensitiveness of her mind: but all the peasants concluded their observations with the same remark.

"The poor creature," said they, "stands a great chance of remaining all her life in that miserable hut: for who would marry a dumb girl?"

Frederick made no reply to this question: but he thought within himself that he preferred the young mute of the wood to all the fine ladies of Paris, with their sumptuous attire, their attractions, and their accomplishments.

The young man was enabled to make a comfortable repast at the village inn. He ordered his horse to be fed, and then retraced his steps to the wood. He again tied his horse to a tree, and proceeded towards the cottage. It was scarcely two o'clock, and several weary hours yet remained till sunset. But Frederick

hoped, by loitering round the hut, to catch a glimpse of Sister Anne; and that would inspire him with patience to wait till the evening. As he drew near the fence which surrounded the little garden, and which was only four feet high, it was easy for him with one glance to embrace the whole extent of Dame Margaret's freehold. The garden was small, but it was laid out to the best advantage: several fruit-trees, a few vines, vegetables, and flowers, mingled together in that narrow space where nature was allowed to follow all her caprices.

Frederick ventured to look over the fence with considerable caution; and he discovered an old woman seated under a fig-tree. She was decrepit with years: but her looks denoted calmness and tranquillity of soul. Frederick contemplated her some time with the deepest respect: she it was who had taken care of Anne and supplied the place of a mother to the young orphan! The countenance of the old woman became suddenly animated; and Sister Anne advanced towards her, bearing a wooden bowl, full of milk, and which she placed upon the old woman's knees. Margaret patted the cheek of the lovely mute, saying, "Thank you, my dear child. Seat yourself here;—you know that I love to see you by me while I eat my homely fare."

Sister Anne sat down upon a little stool at Margaret's feet, and seemed to anticipate her slightest wants. Occasionally she took her old friend's hand, and kissed it with the greatest respect. Frederick remained rooted to the spot: he would have gladly passed hours in the contemplation of that picture. But, at length, the old woman, having terminated her repast, which consisted of milk, bread, and fruits, rose; and aided by Sister Anne, she walked three or four times round the garden. Frederick stooped down to conceal himself, when they passed by him: but he noticed that Anne occasionally cast a furtive glance towards the wood, as if she were looking for some one. If that glance were for him—Oh! how happy should he be! and his heart entertained the secret hope that it was so! He was half-inclined to rush into the garden, and cast himself at the feet of the beautiful mute: the presence of Margaret alone prevented him.

They soon entered the hut once more. Frederick turned from the spot, and went to wander in the wood. Everything recalled the dumb orphan to his mind: every tree, every bush spoke to him of Anne! It was in that wood she had lived upwards of nine years! Her feet had trodden on the turf—and her eyes had looked upon everything that he beheld also!

Frederick descended slowly to the river, and seated himself on the spot where he had seen Sister Anne for the first time. A long interval must elapse before she could join him there: so he took out his pencil and pocket-book, and began to compose. To compose what? verses to Sister Anne! Are not all lovers poets? and are not all poets more eloquent when they are in love? Every one knows the verses which Tibullus wrote upon Delia; Ovid immortalized Julia; and Orpheus enchanted the infernal deities by his song when he descended to the realms to fetch back his Eurydice. Love tuned the lyre of Anacreon—love inspired the verse of Sappho. The charms of Lesbia warmed the heart of Catullus, as the beauties of Cynthia imparted additional sweets to the poems of Propertius. It was to Laura that Petrarch was indebted for a portion of his renown: without her he might have been a poet, but would he have so well depicted the traits of love? Eucharis, Eleonora—to you do we owe the tender elegies of Bertin and the graceful verses of Parny!

The time passes quickly away when we are composing verses to the memory of those of whom we are enamoured. Frederick, bending over his tablets, was writing still, when a slight sound fell upon his ear: he turned his head—Sister Anne was behind him—and she gazed upon his occupation with curiosity. She blushed when her eyes encountered those of Frederick: but Frederick reassured her, and having made her sit by his side, read to her what he had composed. Sister Anne did not comprehend even the meaning of poetry: but in the lines which the young Count read to her, she understood *his* meaning right well. The heart is the key to the understanding in women who are not acquainted with ceremony and fashion: it is the exact contrary with the ladies of high life.

The damsel was already less timid and less reserved in the presence of Frederick. At sixteen, acquaintances are soon formed; and Frederick seemed to her so mild, so kind, and tender! He commiserated her—he felt interested in her; and the poor orphan was quite astonished that there should be another person in the world besides Dame Margaret who experienced the slightest sympathy in her unfriended condition. The inhabitants of the village pitied and condoled with her: but that sentiment is a painful one to the object of it. It was not *that* which she read in the eyes of Frederick: he spoke to her with kindness and tenderness: and she already felt herself less unhappy!

But night approached—and they were still seated on the bank of the river: they had been two hours there without suspecting it. Anne rose, and pointed to the horse which seemed to be waiting for Frederick. Her anxious eyes were then turned towards the village, the wood, and the mountains in the direction of Grenoble, and at length she cast them upon Frederick.

"I am going to Grenoble," said he, "where I am at present residing with two friends, who are perhaps already anxious about me. But I will come back to-morrow,—I will return every day! Can I pass one hour away from you, and be happy?"

Sister Anne smiled, and seemed pleased with these observations. She accompanied the young Viscount to the place where his horse was standing: he pressed her hand to his lips—kissed it passionately—and at length made up his mind to retrace his steps to Grenoble. The beautiful mute walked by his side to the outskirts of the wood, so that she might follow him with her eyes as long as the twilight would permit. It was only when she no longer heard the noise of the horse's hoofs, that she thought

of returning to the hut. Pensive, and astonished at the new sentiment which she experienced, and which she could not exactly understand, the fair mute slowly re-entered the humble cottage.

* * * * * *
* * * * *

"Where the deuce do you come from?" cried Dubourg to Frederick, who made his appearance at the inn just as his two friends were about to sit down to supper.

"I have been wandering about in the neighbourhood," replied Frederick.

"What a mania you have for running about the country!" exclaimed Dubourg. "I hope you are not going to begin over again the life you led at Lyons."

"It is not impossible," was the response.

"Ah! that will be very amusing for us," cried Dubourg. "At Lyons we certainly had something to amuse us. We could vary our pleasures, form acquaintances——"

"Yes—Marchioness de Versac, for example," interrupted Frederick.

"But here," continued Dubourg, "we know the whole town from one end to another. It would not be so bad if we were acquainted with two or three people, and were invited to some of the best houses: but when one has no money, one cannot show himself anywhere. The very embarrassment of one's manners betrays one's poverty at once. If, at every place where we stop, you must know all the trees—all the woods—all the rivers—and all the rocks,—and if it is necessary for you to survey every stream in the neighbourhood, we shall not reach Italy for at least ten years to come, and your life will not be sufficient to become acquainted with only one half of Europe."

"His lordship's observation appears to me very judicious," said M. Ménard. "We do not proceed much quicker than tortoises."

"I could forgive you if you tarried thus at Naples or Florence," resumed Dubourg: "in those cities there are monuments which we never can too fully admire. If you stopped to survey the Colosseum or the Cathedral at Rome, or to ramble on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius, I should not be astonished: but in this part of the world I cannot fancy where you find attractions! It is picturesque and romantic, I confess: but there are thousands of views as good as these on every road we have to travel. Wait till you reach the glaciers of Mont Blanc or the rocks of the Apennines; but do not pass whole days in admiring an old weeping willow on the bank of a miserable stream. You may see trees, and woods, and grass, and fountains anywhere—except in the deserts of Africa; and we are not going to visit them."

"My dear friend," responded Frederick, with a smile, "I have found here what I vainly sought elsewhere, and which in my eyes is worth all the wonders of the world."

Having uttered these words, Frederick retired to his chamber, to enjoy the sweets of repose, without answering Dubourg, who vainly called after him, crying, "But tell us what it is you have found."

"What *can* he have discovered?" said Ménard.

"What *can* he have discovered?" repeated Dubourg.

"I am thinking," observed the erudite tutor.

"Ah! if it were the money they stole from me at Lyons!" ejaculated Dubourg.

"Or your lordship's travelling-chariot?" suggested Ménard.

"My travelling-chariot, indeed!" cried Dubourg. "You must be well aware that it is all eaten up by this time—that is to say, the rascally postilion has sold it, to buy drink with the produce."

"Yes, indeed," said the tutor: "that is by no means unlikely. But what a pity! so venerable a carriage!"

"I wonder what he *can* have discovered!" again exclaimed Dubourg.

"Perhaps he has found out the way to prevent eggs from breaking in a carriage," said M. Ménard.

"Do you really fancy that Frederick bothers his head about such trifles?" cried Dubourg.

"My lord, it is a most important discovery for travellers. A friend of mine gave me the receipt, as well as one to make milk-punch: but I had the misfortune to lose them both when I was moving."

"I see we shall never know what he has found till he chooses to tell us," observed Dubourg.

"I shall go and think of it while I sleep," said the tutor.

"And I shall go and sleep while I think of it," returned Dubourg.

On the following morning at daybreak Frederick returned to Vizille. He hastened to the valley, left his horse to feed in a meadow where the grass was as high as his knees, and turned towards the wood,—where he found Sister Anne with her little flock. A deep blush mantled on the cheeks of the young girl when she caught sight of Frederick, to whom she however extended her hand with an amiable smile. She was already apprehensive that he would not return to her; and her eyes had been incessantly fixed on the path which led from the valley. She had only been acquainted with him for a few hours: but in so pure, so tender, and so susceptible a heart love makes rapid progress. It was love, then, that she felt for the young stranger! Poor girl, we already tremble for thee! But it was natural she should thus yield to the influence of a passion which at her age is identified with all other sentiments; and Frederick was a youth well calculated to inspire such a passion.

"I am somewhat late," said he; "for my horse did not second my own impatience Dearest girl, I am so happy here!—I should like to remain for ever with you!"

Anne gazed upon him for a long time: at length she pointed towards the road which led to Grenoble, and turned her eyes upon the hut, as if to intimate that they ought to be for ever separated!

"Leave this hut—come with me!" cried Frederick; "and we will never part!"

The young girl rose, made a movement of

alarm, and again pointed to the cabin. She then imitated the tottering gait of Dame Margaret, and shook her head violently, while large tears chased each other down her cheeks. Frederick comprehended but too well the firmness with which she had determined never to abandon her old friend.

"Oh! pardon me, pardon me!" said he; "I was very wrong to propose such a thing to you, Anne! I feel it!—your heart can never be guilty of ingratitude. Pardon me! it was love that led me astray!"

The beautiful mute did not bear the slightest animosity against him: she hastened to re-seat herse'f by his side, and smiled sweetly upon her young lover. Her beautiful hair, which floated wildly to the winds, swept across the face of Frederick: and she laughed as she disengaged her long tresses from his countenance. But he had passed one of his arms round her waist, and kept her head against his breast. He exchanged tender glances with the beautiful mute, and pressed his lips to her cheeks. Her sweet breath mingled with the air which he breathed: her pearly teeth were revealed by her smiles:—such moments as those are the happiest that are experienced in the course of our lives!

A part of the day was thus whiled away. Frederick remained in the wood; and Sister Anne brought him fruits and milk in order to retain him constantly with her:—she was already afraid that he would not return if once he left her. Every now and then she hastened into the hut to see if Margaret required her assistance; but the old woman slept the greater part of the day, and Sister Anne was thus enabled to devote herself almost exclusively to her new friend. Towards evening, the young girl was obliged to remain more constantly with her old guardian; and during that time Frederick descended to the bank of the river, where he waited for Sister Anne, and where his pocket-book enabled him to pass an hour away agreeably. When the mute surprised him writing, she heaved a profound sigh, and cast a melancholy glance towards herself, as much as to say, "Alas! I know nothing, and shall never be able to learn!"

"I will be your master," was Frederick's reply: "I will teach you to speak upon paper!"

When night came, the young man tore himself away from Sister Anne:—she accompanied him to the place where he had left his horse; and her eyes seemed to say, "Adieu! till to-morrow!"

A week was thus passed. Every morning Frederick left Grenoble at daybreak; and hastened to Vizille. He stayed the whole day with Sister Anne, and returned to Grenoble at night. Frederick could not live apart from Sister Anne; and on her side the young mute was only happy in his society. Love had captivated her heart before she was even aware of the necessity of resisting it: it had so many charms for her, why should she combat its advances? why should she crush a sentiment that formed her happiness? Frederick was formed to win the heart of the maiden. He told her every moment of the day that he loved her, and that he would love her all his life. She did n't doubt his vows: she knew not that inconstancy exist d. She did not thi k Frederick could deceive her? She abandoned her-elf to the charms of her passion;—her lips could not address him with tender assurances in return; but her ey's betrayed all that passed within, and a single look from her far excelled a thousand spoken vows!

Frederick endeavoured to teach Sister Anne to write; but love invariably interrupted the lessons he gave her. Seated near her—pressing her to his bosom—and being enabled to contemplate at his ease her beautifully soft countenance, and her languishing eyes, he stopped from time to time and forgot all he had to teach her. She looked in his face—she smiled upon him—and the lesson was forgotten. Frederick pressed her to his heart—his imagination was excited; but the innocence of Sister Anne rendered him timid and bashful.

But the most timid and bashful become gradually more intrepid and daring. The habit of seeing each other—of being constantly together—and reciprocally manifesting their tenderness, united them daily more and more in a strict bond of affection. They were always alone in the wood; and the solitude of that wood was dangerous to innocence. Could they long resist the inclinations of their hearts? could they combat against the passion that was devouring them? Frederick dared everything: and Sister Anne surrendered herself to her lover without regret and without remorse—for she imagined it was but natural to obey the promptings and the impulse of the soul!

Frederick intoxicated by his passion, was determined not to absent himself so much from his mistress. The six leagues he was obliged to ride every day, to go and come, between Grenoble and Vizille, robbed him of many moments which he might pass with her.

"No," said he, "I will not thus tear myself away from you. Not an hour—not a minute, will I remain absent more than I can help! Henceforth I will sleep at the inn—or in the wood—upon the green turf near your cottage—so that I may be near you!"

The beautiful mute threw herself into the arms of her lover—bestowed a thousand smiles upon him—imprinted countless kisses on his cheeks, and made signs to convey the extent of the happiness his resolution caused her. He would leave her no more—she should always be with him—always happy as at that moment! Poor girl! you believed that those fond dreams were so easy to be realised!

Thus was it that this amiable child of nature obeyed all the impulses of her own heart; for love requires the tutoring of no art nor study: the heart is the best guide. Sister Anne was, however, frequently anxious to introduce Frederick to Dame Margaret; she could not understand the reason why he shunned her kind guardian. But Frederick invariably represented to her the certainty that Dame Margaret would no longer allow her to wander about at will, if she continued to spend her time with him; and that the

prudent guardian would only enjoin her to shun and avoid her lover in future. These words were sufficient for Si ter Anne: the bare idea of being prevented from seeing, and passing her time with Frederick, was enough to drive the poor girl mad. She felt she would not be able to submit to the cruel mandate; and she therefore resolved on concealing her love from Margaret. Every day the old woman became more and more feeble: she soon ceased to leave her arm-chair even to walk in the garden, and slept throughout the greater part of the day. It was, therefore, easy to conceal the truth from her.

Frederick no longer remembered his friends at Grenoble, and the anxiety they must feel on his account. Nor did he recollect the embarrassment they might experience on account of the want of money, as he carried the purse: nor did he call to mind the circumstance that he had a horse belonging to the landlord of the inn at Grenoble in the stable of the village-tavern. The image of his father never for a moment troubled him: the present was everything—Sister Anne occupied all his thoughts;—he had never known any one who was to be compared to her! Should he ever meet in the world such a combina ion of beauty, grace, innocence, and love? Her misfortune only endeared her the more to him. He was very romantic, and did not treat the sacred passion with the same levity as other young men of his own age were wont to do: his conduct must, therefore appear to us all the less extraordinary. Besides, the young mute was so beautiful! In the first transport of his love, a cabin—a wood—a desert would have been all the same to him, as long as it was shared by Sister Anne. Such is the declaration made by all lovers. But, alas! this dream of bliss is oftimes of such short duration. Did Fredrick prove himself more constant?

* * * * * *
* * * * *

The day after Frederick's first absence, M. Menard, who had risen at an early hour, hastened to Dubourg's apartment, exclaiming with a triumphant air, "I have discovered it, my lord—I am certain I have discovered it!"

"Discovered what?" cried Dubourg: "your receipt to prevent eggs from breaking in a carriage?"

"No, my lord," returned Ménard; "but what it is that so much fascinated my young pupil—that wonder which he passed the whole day in contemplating!"

"Indeed! you have found it out?" exclaimed Dubourg, rubbing his eyes.

"Oh! I would wager anything that I have."

"Make haste and relieve my curiosity, then."

"It is the Castle of Bayard, which must be somewhere in this neighbourhood, in the vale of Gresivaudan," answered the tutor.

"The Castle of Bayard!" said Dubourg: "it is by no means improbable. I will ask him about it at breakfast-time."

The morning's repast was served up; but Frederick did not make his appearance to partake of it. Dubourg summoned one of the waiters, and inquired if the Viscount de Montreville had already left the hotel?

"At daybreak," was the answer. "He took the first horse that was ready, and gallopped away."

"Off again!" cried Dubourg: "perhaps he is going to leave us the whole day together once more!"

"I am certain it is the Castle of Bayard which has turned his head," said M. Ménard.

"I am very much afraid it is something less antique—some more modern marvel," returned Dubourg.

"A church, perhaps?" suggested M. Ménard.

"All conjecture is useless," cried Dubourg, with difficulty suppressing a smile. "However, as we have nothing better to do, let us visit the ruins of this castle, and look for Frederick at the same time. What do you think, M. Ménard?"

"My lord, I am entirely of the same opinion," answered the old tutor. "But perhaps we should do well to provide ourselves with a cold pie or a fowl, as it is probable we shall find nothing to eat at the castle."

"You speak like the Syntax, M. Ménard. Let us furnish ourselves with provisions. It is not very romantic—but it is amazingly prudent."

"It is your lordship who speaks like the Syntax," said M. Ménard, with a bow.

"We are only troubadours, at the present moment, for our own amusement," continued Dubourg, "and however beautiful may be a prospect, or however fine a ruin, we are still possessed of a keen appetite for a dinner. Ah! M. Ménard, we are very far from being sentimental! It is lucky we were not born in the times of Amadis and Aymon."

"It is, indeed, my lord," said Ménard: "for that period boasted of no cooks who could stuff a fowl with truffles, or serve up a tench with wine-sauce."

While Dubourg asked the way to the valley of Gresivaudan, M. Ménard filled his pockets with provisions; and the two travellers set out on their stroll to the castle.

"M. Ménard," said Dubourg, as they reached the outskirt of Grenoble, "do you observe that handsome peasant youth whispering soft things in the ear of that pretty maiden?——"

"Without stockings?" interrogated the tutor.

"Well, yes—without stockings," replied Dubourg. "She understands what love is as well as the grandest duchess in silk hose. She has her spinning-yarn with her—and it is a yarn which the youth is spinning her in return."

M. Ménard, not being acquainted with nautical phrases, did not see the wit of the point, or else did not think it happily turned; and he simply replied, "In Dauphiny, my lord, one beholds scenes which do not strike the view in more civilized districts. There are people working out-of-doors—and there are people praying out-of-doors."

"And presently we will eat out-of-doors, M. Ménard," rejoined Dubourg.

This assurance elicited a smile and a bow from the preceptor; and they continued their

THE EMPRESS EUGENIE'S BOUDOIR.—London: Printed and Published, for Mr. Reynolds, by John Dicks, 7, Wellington Street North.

way, soon reaching the open country. The waiter at the hotel assured them that the distance was only about seven miles: but M. Ménard nevertheless proposed a halt every half-hour. Dubourg invariably accepted the proposition; and on each occasion he took from his pocket a bottle of the best wine the inn at Grenoble could afford—while Ménard spread his provisions on a large sheet of paper upon the grass; and thus did

the two travellers refresh themselves. When Dubourg perceived any fine fruit upon a tree, he climbed up and gathered some to form a dessert. At the same time he cut off one or two of the branches, stuck them in the ground, spread his handkerchief over the top, and thus made a little tent to protect himself and companion from the sun.

"No one would suspect it is a noble Palatine who has done this," said M. Ménard.

"And why not?" asked Dubourg. "The Princess Nausicaa washed her own linen—the daughters of Augustus worked garments for their father—Denis the Younger was a schoolmaster at Corinth—the son of Perseus, King of Macedon, was a carpenter at Rome—and Peter the Great was a joiner in Holland. I do not see why a Polish Baron should not erect a tent in Dauphiny."

M. Ménard, having nothing to reply to those observations, contented himself with bowing, as he murmured to himself, "Opinions differ."

At length the two travellers perceived the Castle of Bayard, of which only four towers remained: but they did *not* find Frederick contemplating the ruined walls.

"Well," cried Dubourg, "do you see the object of our walk?"

"What—the castle, my lord!" said the preceptor.

"No—Frederick," was the response.

"Not yet, my lord," returned Ménard. "But let us sit down at least for five minutes. I am, however, afraid that this will be our last halt: for our provisions are nearly gone, and only a quarter of the bottle of wine remains."

"We shall find a fountain, M. Ménard," replied Dubourg.

"It will not be that of Cana in Galilee, my lord," said the tutor.

"In the meantime let us finish this bottle and eat the rest of our capon," resumed Dubourg. "From this spot we shall have a fine opportunity of surveying the scenery. This valley is charming. Look at those mountains on the right, M. Ménard: they produce a very picturesque effect: they are covered with snow, you perceive, and thus remind me of Mount Krapack. Ah! it is on Mount Krapack that the snows are eternal: at a height of four hundred feet they do not melt."

"I perceive we are disposing of our last wing; and I tremble when I think of our return."

"We will step into some cottage or mill. There are plenty of mills about here."

"Your lordship has some money, then?" inquired M. Ménard.

"Not a *sou*?" was the answer. "And you?"

"Not a *sou*, my lord!" was the rejoinder.

"The devil!" cried Dubourg: "this is annoying! It is too bad of Frederick to abandon us altogether, and take away the purse with him, without giving himself the trouble to ascertain if we are comfortable at the inn! It is true that we can live as we choose at the hotel upon credit: but it is by no means pleasant to be nailed to a particular spot, while Frederick is amusing himself elsewhere."

"It is very true, my lord," said Ménard, "that walking provokes a good appetite."

"This travelling begins to be anything but pleasant to me," continued Dubourg: "and if I were not afraid of my creditors——"

"Your creditors, my lord?" cried the tutor, in amazement.

"I mean that if I had not certain creditors of my Government to satisfy——that is—— But, hush! I see some people who are also come to visit the ruins," exclaimed Dubourg. "I should imagine they live in the neighbourhood; for their dress does not show any signs of a long walk."

M. Ménard looked round, and perceived a gentleman and a lady, who came from the right of the valley, and directed their steps slowly towards the castle. The tutor hastened to conceal the luncheon by thrusting the sheet of paper, the bones, and the bottle into his pocket. He then rejoined Dubourg, who was advancing towards the strangers with a fashionable air and a certain easy lounge which reminded Ménard of the times when Dubourg and he strolled together through the streets of Lyons; and the worthy tutor said to himself, "It would almost appear that his lordship does not intend to preserve his incognito any longer."

On his own part he arranged his shirt-frill, and assumed an important look as he followed his noble friend the Palatine. We should observe that Dubourg had replaced by a plain round hat the old beaver which he had found at the house of the sham Marchioness de Versac; but he had preserved the little silver tassels to his boots; and he had not forgotten his peculiar talent of giving to his countenance the expression of the personage that he was desirous of being taken for. When he was near the gentleman and lady, who were occupied in surveying the ruins, an observer would have sworn that he was some noble stranger, by his manners, his voice, the way in which he rolled his eyes, and his language.

The gentleman and lady, whose acquaintance Dubourg thus seemed desirous of making, were dressed in a style which denoted easy circumstances, but which manifested no little degree of pretension. The gentleman, who was about fifty, wore powder, and carried his hat in his hand, so as not to flatten his hair, which was dressed in a high sugar-loaf fashion. His coat was black; his pantaloons were nankeen; and his hessian boots fell lower than his calf. With his cane he pointed out to his companion the various objects of interest; and his countenance wore an expression of satisfaction and complacency, mingled with an air of importance which he doubtless imagined it necessary to maintain.

The lady, with whom he was walking arm-in-arm, appeared to be about forty. In her youth she must have been handsome; but at this period she was exceedingly anxious to be taken for twenty; and, in spite of her mincing little ways, her missish tone, her curls passed behind her ears, and a figure which she endeavoured to pinch in as much as possible, it was very easy to see that she was not a minor.

Dubourg advanced towards the castle, affect-

ing not to perceive that he was noticed by the strangers, but pretending to continue a conversation which he had already begun with Ménard, and speaking in a tone that might be heard at a distance.

"As I was saying, my dear Ménard, this castle reminds me of the one which belongs to my grandfather in the neighbourhood of Sandomir—the one, you know, in which we sustained the terrible siege that was so sanguinary."

Ménard opened his eyes with astonishment as Dubourg thus addressed him: but he hastened to reply, "Yes, my lord: I recollect perfectly."

"There is a tower," continued Dubourg, "which resembles one that stands on the western side of my castle on Mount Krapack. I almost fancy that I see myself now in that apartment where the Prince of Bulgaria slept, when he paid my father a visit. Ah! Ménard, I hope to be soon able to give you some of that famous Tokay of which I have before spoken."

"The Tokay of three louis a bottle, my lord?"

"The same. It has been upwards of a hundred and twenty-four years in bottle."

The lady and gentleman caught every word thus uttered by Dubourg, who walked slowly towards the castle, which he pretended to be examining with a great deal of attention: but at the same time he took care not to lose sight of the strangers. While he was speaking, the gentleman was attentive: his countenance assumed an expression of respect and awe: he made a sign to his wife—and, pointing towards Dubourg, urged her to quicken her pace, in order to overtake the illustrious stranger. At the foot of one of the towers, the lady and gentleman found themselves close by our two travellers. Dubourg stopped to allow the lady to pass—the gentleman did the same in regard to Dubourg—and even old Ménard was the object of his respect and attention. When these ceremonies were over, a conversation began.

"You are come to visit this part of the country as an *amateur*, I presume, sir?" said the gentleman, approaching Dubourg.

"Yes," returned the latter. "I am travelling for my amusement, with a friend—the Viscount de Montreville, of whom you may have perhaps heard speak; and also with M. Ménard, a highly distinguished professor of the *belles-lettres*, and one of the greatest Greek scholars in the known world. He can, moreover, compose verses extemporaneously—especially at dessert."

The gentleman bowed profoundly to M. Ménard, who opened his eyes as wide as he could in the excess of astonishment at hearing his companion declare he could compose poetry extemporaneously: but he was particularly careful not to contradict the Baron.

"You reside in this part of the country?" said Dubourg, after a pause.

"Yes, sir," answered the lady with a smile. "We live about two leagues off—at Allevard—where my husband bought a beautiful little estate when we gave up business in the wine trade."

The gentleman here nudged his wife, who did not however pay any attention to the hint.

"We only continued in the wine trade," resumed the lady, "to amuse ourselves: for my husband has always enjoyed a considerable private fortune of his own. We must all do something in our youth."

"Most decidedly we must," exclaimed Dubourg: "and I for one admire the wine trade amazingly. Noah cultivated the vine; Gideon, the Hebrew chieftain, threshed his own barley; Saul drove his own oxen; David kept sheep; Cincinnatus tilled the ground; Pope Sextus the Fifth tended on pigs; and Urban the Fourth was a cobbler. I therefore see nothing astonishing in your husband having been a wine-merchant."

"Certainly," said the gentleman, bowing to Dubourg. "I do not apprehend that——" But he did not finish his sentence, and whispered in the ear of his wife, "This nobleman is a great philosopher."

"Since we have retired," continued the lady, "we only associate with the most genteel people in the neighbourhood—the mayor, the magistrates' clerk, the landowners who are electors, and all the first inhabitants of Allevard. We pass a charming life: my husband is almost the lord of the place."

"I think that *I am* looked upon as such," said the gentleman, leaning upon his cane with an air of importance. "It was my own fault if I was not Sub-Prefect long before this: but I should have been obliged to leave Allevard—and I love the town too well. We are so much respected in the place! I have the first society at my table: we cultivate the arts—music especially. Indeed I am learning the violin at this moment. I had an organ sent from Paris: my wife will play upon it soon—she has an excellent ear for music."

"Indeed," exclaimed Dubourg; "talking of good ears, here is M. Ménard who has an admirable one—the finest that I know! As for myself, I can play on any instrument."

"Ah! sir," said the lady, with a mincing air, "what pleasure we should have in hearing you! There are numerous *amateurs* at Allevard. The mayor plays the bassoon, and one of our neighbours is inimitable on the French horn. If you remained a short time longer in these parts, we should be delighted to see you at our house."

The lady accompanied this invitation with a smile; and Dubourg replied to it by an expressive look: while her husband cast down his eyes respectfully—and Ménard glanced towards his companion to ascertain what he was going to say.

"It is by no means unlikely I shall stay at Grenoble for some little time," said Dubourg, when he had terminated a long ogling look at the lady. "The Viscount de Montreville is exceedingly fond of the banks of the Iser; and I am too much attached to him to leave this part of the country without him. We are just like Orestes and Pylades—only that we are never seen together; and though we are expected at the Court of Sardinia, and I have promised to pass the winter at that of Bul-

garia, it is possible, as I observed just now, that our sojourn in this neighbourhood may be prolonged. Is it not so, M. Ménard?"

"I am of your lordship's opinion," responded the tutor.

"How affable he is for a lord!" whispered the lady to her husband.

"It is exactly because he is a lord that he is so affable, my dear," returned the husband, also in a whisper.

"Especially," exclaimed Ménard, who began to give himself airs when he found that he was only talking to a retired wine-merchant, —"as my young pupil, the Viscount de Montreville, is exceedingly romantic."

"Ah! that is just like me—exactly like me!" exclaimed the lady with a sigh, which seemed intended for Dubourg. "I love nothing that is not romantic! I am dotingly fond of ghosts and apparitions—am I not, M. Chambertin?"

M. Chambertin—for that was the name of the excellent couple—replied with a smile, "Oh! yes—my wife is very much attached to spirits."

"If you ever visit Poland, madame," said Dubourg, "I shall expect you to pass a few days at my castle on Mount Krapack. You would see ghosts of all colours. It is, however, an abode much less gay than my palace in Cracow: but it is a castle which I would not sell for two millions; and yet it produces me nothing but snow. But I have my own peculiar reasons for not parting with it,—have I not, M. Ménard?"

"I should think so indeed!" cried Ménard; "a castle in which——"

"Hush, my dear Ménard!" exclaimed Dubourg; "all this does not interest M. and Madame Chambertin."

"I beg your pardon, my lord!" ejaculated M. Chambertin with a low bow: "we are too much honoured to make the acquaintance of a nobleman—for I believe that your lordship is of Polish origin——"

"From my cradle," answered Dubourg, turning round in order to allow M. Ménard the opportunity of mentioning his titles.

"His lordship is the Baron Potoski, Palatine of Rava and Sandomir," whispered the old tutor with an air of awfully solemn importance.

The parade of these high-sounding titles struck the retired wine-merchant with such astonishment that he neither dared advance nor retreat a single step; while Madame Chambertin twisted her mouth into a thousand shapes, and darted a glance at Dubourg which was intended to captivate his heart.

"You came to visit these ruins, I suppose?" said Dubourg, when he had allowed a sufficient length of time to elapse to produce the desired effect by the mention of his titles.

"Yes," replied M. Chambertin. "We have never been here before to-day; and it is so very necessary to be acquainted with the environs of one's own residence. Bayard had a very handsome castle, if we may judge by the ruins: but he was in all respects a very great lord."

"He was a knight—was he not, my dear?" inquired Madame Chambertin affectedly.

"Yes, love," exclaimed Chambertin. "I am also exceedingly fond of antique remains," he continued. "They amuse a person who has had a certain education. Your lordship was doing as we were?"

"We were rather out of temper when we met you just now," said Dubourg: "for we came from Grenoble on foot, being assured at our hotel that the distance was only three miles, and I did not choose to lame my horses in this mountainous region. I was however in hopes of finding some good inn in the neighbourhood, where we might either dine, or at least procure the means of conveyance to the nearest village. I offered as much as six louis to a peasant to lend me a horse: but the churl would not stir a step. Is it not true, M. Ménard?"

"It is very true, my lord," returned the tutor, "that we found neither dinner nor conveyance."

"Oh! my love," said Madame Chambertin to her husband in a whisper; "what an opportunity!"

"I take advantage of it," answered Chambertin: and bowing to Dubourg, he said, "My lord, if I were not afraid of being considered too bold—if it were not disagreeable to you to accept of such a fare as I can proffer you—Madame Chambertin and myself would be delighted to entertain at our table a nobleman of such distinction as yourself, and a professor of the *belles-lettres* so renowned as your friend. My cabriolet is close by, with my man Lunel. In an hour we shall be at Allevard; and this evening my cabriolet shall be at your lordship's service again."

"This is exceedingly kind of you, M. de Chambertin," cried Dubourg with a low bow.

"He called me *de* Chambertin, my love," whispered the retired wine-merchant to his spouse: for it may as well be observed that the preposition *de* is the distinguishing mark of nobility in France.

"I heard him, my dear," was the answer.

"I am almost tempted to accept your invitation," resumed Dubourg: "it will afford me the pleasure of becoming acquainted with some very amiable people. What do you think, my dear Ménard? It will not annoy De Montreville, if we accept this invitation?"

"Most decidedly we can accept it, my lord," answered M. Ménard.

Monsieur and Madame Chambertin were delighted with the honour which they had thus procured for themselves. To be enabled to carry home in triumph to their own house, a great Polish nobleman—a Palatine—an individual who had applied the preposition *de* to their names, and who had cast such tender glances at the lady,—all this was enough to turn the heads of the worthy couple.

"The cabriolet never can hold four," said Madame Chambertin.

"I will take Lunel's little pony," returned her husband: "Lunel himself can stand behind the cabriolet, and if his lordship would have the kindness to——"

"With pleasure," cried the Baron Potoski, anticipating his new friend's request: and offering his arm to the lady, he whispered in

her ear, "All the ruins of the universe should not divert my attention from you."

The party now moved on: Dubourg walked arm-in-arm with Madame Chambertin; Chambertin ran forward to prepare his vehicle for the reception of his illustrious guest; and Ménard followed at a little distance, wondering what they should have for dinner at Allevard. At the turning of the road was seen a cabriolet under the care of a little old man who rather resembled a butler than a "tiger." Close by was an animal, which, from the length of his ears and his height, was readily recognised to be something between the horse and the donkey—in other words, a mule. Madame Chambertin stepped into the vehicle, and was followed by Dubourg and Ménard.

"Give me your mule, Lunel," said M. Chambertin.

"And what am I to do?" demanded the old tiger.

"You must stand behind the cabriolet," was the reply.

"You know, sir, I can't retain my hold," remonstrated the unfortunate Lunel.

"Then you must follow on foot," rejoined M. Chambertin sharply. "What a fool you are, not to know how to stand up behind a cabriolet!"

With these words M. Chambertin urged on the mule, and inflicted upon the poor beast sundry blows with his cane for want of a whip.

"Excuse me if I pass you," exclaimed he to Dubourg: "but I am desirous of reaching Allevard first, in order to prepare everything for your lordship's reception."

"No ceremony with us, M. de Chambertin!" cried Dubourg; and the retired wine-merchant, on hearing himself thus ennobled in name once more, dealt the mule a tremendous blow, and was soon out of sight. Dubourg drove at a rapid rate: but his occupation did not prevent him from paying a few elegant compliments to Madame Chambertin; while Lunel ran behind the vehicle, muttering imprecations against the strangers, who were the cause of his being obliged to surrender his animal.

They arrived at Allevard, which is a pretty little village, intersected by a wide and rapid river which aids the operations of the water-mills and iron-works upon its banks. At the door of a cottage they beheld a beautiful little pony, with a lady's side-saddle; the fair rider was not however to be seen; but a little barefooted boy was holding the animal.

"That is my pony!" exclaimed Madame Chambertin. "I lent it to Mademoiselle Renouard—a young friend of mine—to make her round of charitable visits to-day."

"I am sure *you* must look charming on horseback, madame," replied Dubourg: "and I shall have the honour of sending you a couple of Krapack ponies, which have manes and tails like silk, and eyes like gazelles."

"Oh! my lord—how kind!"—and the lady was of course enchanted.

M. Chambertin's house was soon reached: it stood upon the right hand, a short distance inside the village. It was a beautiful villa, built in a modern style; and had pleasant grounds attached. As they passed up an avenue shaded by lime trees, Dubourg felicitated himself in secret upon this happy encounter, and determined to take advantage of the credulity of his hosts to forward his own views of amusement. On his part, M. Ménard had caught a glimpse of an excellent kitchen; and he could not help thinking that a man, who possessed so eligible an abode, although he was neither Baron nor Palatine, was still an important member of society.

Madame Chambertin conducted her guests into a handsome parlour on the ground-floor, which looked upon a garden behind the house. Everything bore testimony to the wealth, the liberality, and the bad taste of the owners of the mansion. There were two time-pieces upon the mantel, one on a side-table, and another on a work-stand. The furniture was costly and elegant: the wainscot was covered with pictures; and three lustres were suspended to the ceiling.

"This is my summer sitting-room," said Madame Chambertin, in a tone of affected humility. "Had I been aware that I should have had the pleasure of entertaining the Baron Potoski, I should have prepared the large drawing-room for his lordship's reception. We can dance three *quadrilles* there without inconvenience."

"I should be excessively sorry to cause the slightest embarrassment or confusion in your household, madame," returned Dubourg. "This room is delightful: everything recalls to my mind the presiding divinity of the place."

"Oh! my lord," cried Madame Chambertin. "It is true that I myself arranged this apartment. My husband was desirous of placing another time-piece in that corner: but I thought we might do as well without it."

"It would be difficult not to know the hour in your house, madame," said Dubourg with a low bow.

"This carpet is not bad, I hope," continued Madame Chambertin: "but I have a better one in my drawing-room. Your lordship doubtless uses carpets in Poland?"

"Oh! the carpets in Poland are six inches thick," returned Dubourg. "You walk upon them just as you would upon a feather-bed—they give way beneath your feet. But I hope I shall have the honour of sending you a specimen very shortly."

"Ah! my lord!" ejaculated the lady, as if overpowered."

At this moment, M. Chambertin entered the room, followed by all the company he could assemble to meet his illustrious guests. He had only been able to get together four people for the occasion. The first person to whom he had recourse was the retired notary of the village, who was just sitting down to his dinner when M. Chambertin rushed into his room, out of breath and covered with perspiration, to inform him of the illustrious acquaintances he had just formed, and to invite him to join the nobleman and the learned professor at his own dinner table.

No sooner had M. Chambertin thus unburdened his mind, than M. Bidault (such was the name of the retired notary) called his domestic, and ordered her to take away the

wine, to put the pie in the larder, the cold fowl on the kitchen shelf, and the fish in the cellar,—adding, "I am going to dine in the company of a nobleman; keep all this for to-morrow."

And Madame Bidault rushed up to her chamber, crying, "Now, then, Marie—quick! quick! My orange-coloured gown—my best bonnet—my worked lace collar—my gold ear-rings—and my straw-coloured gloves. I cannot appear before a nobleman in this every-day garb!"

M. Chambertin continued his walk, or rather run, in search of guests to meet the Baron Potoski,—as soon as he had requested Monsieur and Madame Bidault not to keep the dinner waiting. After a bustling and confusion which lasted twenty minutes, the excellent couple fancied themselves to be in a proper condition to be introduced to a nobleman. M. Bidault, who had turned poet in a small way since he had retired from business, anticipated a great deal of pleasure from conversing on literary matters with the illustrious professor: and Madame Bidault, who flattered herself that she was the genteelest lady in the place, was delighted at the idea of showing her good breeding to one who would know how to appreciate it.

In the meantime, M. Chambertin hastened to the abode of the mayor: but the mayor was in the country, busy with the cultivation of his farms, and was not expected home till the evening. Chambertin ran to the notary who had succeeded M. Bidault: but he was out hunting, and his wife was engaged in making pickles—an occupation she could not be prevailed upon to quit. But dinner-time was drawing near; and Chambertin was compelled to invite an old apothecary, who, having retired from business in Lyons, had purchased a beautiful house at Allevard. He was not one of the most elegant personages in the world to introduce to a Palatine: but Chambertin had no time to pick and choose his guests;—besides, M. Fondant spoke but little, and was not therefore very likely to commit himself.

M. Chambertin, having not a moment to waste in idle discourse, contented himself with explaining the nature of his business as follows:—

"My dear Fondant, I have invited a great Palatine to my house—a Palatine of Poland—and you must meet him. Come—quick—we are waiting for you. There is moreover a Greek scholar of vast reputation with him. Be quick—lose no time,—they are individuals whom you do not meet every day. We dine in half-an-hour."

And M. Chambertin was again in search of guests. He recollected that he could invite and make sure of his fat friend Frossard, who was the proprietor of all the iron-works on the banks of the river, and one of the richest men in the village. To Frossard's dwelling he accordingly hastened. The corpulent gentleman had just commenced his dinner: he had already dismissed the soup, and had begun an attack upon the fish, when Chambertin, with large drops pouring down his forehead, rushed into the dining-room, exclaiming as loud as he could bawl, "Stop, stop! not another mouthful, Frossard!"

"What's the matter?" cried the fat iron-master, raising his knife and fork in astonishment. "Not a bit more? I can assure you that this fish, and a fowl afterwards, with perhaps a tart or so, will cut but a sorry appearance before I have done."

"Stop! stop!" shouted Chambertin; "you must come and dine with me."

"Not to-day. The invitation is too late."

"You must," persisted Chambertin.

"I have already eaten half my dinner."

"That will go for nothing."

"I am very much afraid it will reckon for a great deal."

"There are two great men—one a nobleman, and the other a professor, *incognito*—at my house," cried M. Chambertin.

"That does not regard me," replied Frossard.

"From Poland—from Cracow!" continued the retired wine-merchant. "A Baron and a Professor!"

"All that will not prevent me from finishing my dinner," said M. Frossard.

"I wish to afford you the honour of dining with them," exclaimed Chambertin.

"My dear friend," said M. Frossard, "as long as I make a good dinner, what matter is it whether I dine with a nobleman or a tradesman?"

"Now, my dear Frossard," said Chambertin, "a little elevation in your ideas!"

"My dinner will be cold."

"You shall taste at my house a splendid hare," said the retired wine-merchant. "I have also a certain pie which came from Strasburgh——"

"The rogue is resolved to tempt me!" cried Frossard.

"And we shall drink my old Pomard, and the Saint Peray you love so much."

"I cannot resist him."

"You will come, then?"

"Yes," replied Frossard; "but not on account of your nobleman and your Greek scholar *incognito*, whom I cannot even understand. The hare and the Pomard are the inducements."

M. Fondant was the first who arrived at Chambertin's house: but as he was naturally timid, and more embarrassed than ever in the presence of the strangers, whom he concluded to be princes from the few words uttered by his host, he remained in the ante-chamber adjoining the apartment where Madame Chambertin and the two gentlemen were seated, and resolved to wait till the arrival of Chambertin, who had been to issue some orders to his cook, hastened to usher in the guests. M. Fondant took care to sneak in behind the rest; and M. Chambertin, opening the door of the summer sitting-room, introduced Madame Bidault and the three gentlemen to the Baron. While the whole party were occupied by the interchange of salutations and bows, M. Frossard, who was not very much addicted to ceremony himself, pushed M. Fondant before him into the presence of Dubourg and

Ménard; and Madame Chambertin, having done the honours of her house, retired to her chamber to change her dress.

"My lord," said M. Chambertin, "I have invited a few guests, who, as well as myself, are highly delighted at the honour your lordship——"

"Indeed," cried Frossard, throwing himself into an armchair, and interrupting his host in the middle of his sentence, "you came just in time; for if I had attacked the fowl, I should not have been prevailed upon to quit it."

"Always facetious—eh, Frossard?" exclaimed M. Bidault, slapping the stout gentleman's back, while Madame Bidault was seated bolt upright in a chair opposite Dubourg, who on his part lounged negligently upon an ottoman, and seemed to contemplate those around him with the air of a sultan glancing benignantly upon his slaves. Ménard, placed at a little distance, admired the healthy appearance of the iron-master, and the respectful demeanour of M. Fondant, who was seated in a window recess in such a manner as to conceal two-thirds of his person behind a curtain.

"If I had expected this honour, my lord," said Chambertin, "I should have arranged a little concert for the evening, to celebrate your arrival in this part of the country. But I hope to fulfil that duty on another occasion."

"Ah! M. de Chambertin," returned Dubourg, "you are really too good. I shall never be able to tear myself away from this neighbourhood. And yet, you know, M. Ménard, that we are expected at the Court of Bulgaria."

At these words Madame Bidault drew herself up with a sensation: M. Chambertin cast a significant glance around him, as much as to say, "I told you what he was!"—and M. Fondant disappeared entirely behind the curtain.

"In the first place," said Dubourg, "this part of the country pleases me vastly; and the amiable society I have now met form additional ties to retain me here for some time."

At this compliment every one rose and made a low bow: there was also an audible and visible movement behind the curtain at the same time.

"I thought I saw M. Fondant here just now," observed the fat Frossard. "What has become of him?"

"I am here," returned a hoarse voice: and the retired apothecary poked his head out between the curtains.

"And what are you doing there, at least a mile off?" cried Frossard. "Draw near us, man! What news from Lyons—eh?"

M. Fondant coloured up to the eyes, because Dubourg and Ménard stared at him. He drew his handkerchief from his pocket, blew his nose—advanced—then retrograded to a chair—and stammered a reply as well as he was able, assuring the company "that it had been a very hot day."

At length Madame Chambertin made her appearance; and her arrival into the apartment introduced a change into the conversation. She had attired herself in a light muslin gown, ornamented with rich blond lace; her hair was arranged in ringlets—a fashion that did not become her; but in her ears she wore a pair of splendid earrings, and round her neck a gorgeous necklace—which little articles rendered her exceedingly captivating in the eyes of Dubourg, who hastened to meet her and squeeze her hand as he conducted her to a seat—to which testimony of admiration she replied by a sigh and a smile.

M. Bidault drew his chair near M. Ménard, whom he understood to be a talented man, and began quoting some select phrases from his law-books and little pieces of poetry borrowed from the top of the pages of an old almanack. M. Ménard, who occasionally aped Dubourg and affected the same air of pretension and self-importance, bestowed a patronising smile upon Bidault, and quoted a Latin sentence: whereupon M. Bidault, who had forgotten Cicero in learning the Five Codes, replied by offering M. Ménard a pinch of snuff.

Lunel, who had arrayed himself in a short jacket cut after the English fashion, now announced that dinner was ready. Every one rose; Dubourg offered his arm to Madame Chambertin; M. Frossard did the same to Madame Bidault; the others followed, M. Fondant again closing the rear. The company proceeded to a very handsome apartment, where a table was spread in the most sumptuous manner. Ménard remarked with peculiar satisfaction that besides the principal dishes, there were four side ones—a circumstance which seemed to promise a good supply of all luxuries. The Baron was placed between Madame Bidault and Madame Chambertin: but it was towards the latter that Dubourg addressed the principal part of his conversation; and the frequent blushes that mantled upon the cheeks of the mistress of the house, might have led an acute observer to suppose that his discourse was unusually interesting. Ménard was seated between M. Bidault and M. Fondant. The former from time to time quoted some verses which he lugged in any-how to suit his own remarks and illustrate his own observations; and the latter contented himself with constantly filling M. Menard's glass; so that the tutor turned more frequently towards the apothecary than the notary.

At the second course, Dubourg, who felt himself "at home," in consequence of having indulged pretty freely in the admirable Pomard of his worthy host, began to hold forth upon his castles and estates, and to talk of Poland and Brittany. He commingled the usages of Brittany with the manners of Cracow, and confounded the productions of his own native region with those of the snow-capped Mount Krapack. But the company, lost in astonishment at the marvels he related, contented themselves with opening their eyes to express their admiration and not to contradict him: The corpulent Frossard declared that the Baron was a man suited to his own taste, because he drank much; and he looked upon Ménard as a most learned man, because the tutor argued upon the method of seasoning every dish that came to table. M. Bidault was delighted to find an opportunity of play-

ing the poet: his wife fancied herself a beauty because Dubourg had assured her that she distantly resembled Mademoiselle Scuderi; M. Fondant was at his ease, because no one paid the slightest attention to him; M. Chambertin was enraptured, because he had a nobleman at his table; and Madame Chambertin cast down her eyes, because this same nobleman whispered tender compliments in her ear.

Towards nine o'clock the company rose from table. The gentlemen had been desirous of following the example of the Baron in respect to the frequency with which the bottle was passed; and the consequence was that the ladies only were steady upon their legs. But in the midst of the Bacchic vapours which assailed them, Dubourg was sufficiently master of himself to recollect that he and Ménard were five leagues from Grenoble, to which place it was about time to return. M. Chambertin proposed to accommodate his guests with rooms for the night: but Dubourg knew full well that if he stayed, he should be obliged to do something to pass away the evening. M. Bidault and the iron-master had already proposed cards; and Dubourg, who with difficulty resisted the temptation of play, felt that he should cut a sorry figure were he to gamble and lose, having no money in his pocket. He therefore resolved upon departing at once, and returning on another occasion to play backgammon with M. Frossard who had already challenged him to a trial of skill; and Dubourg, who considered himself to be invincible at the game, determined to retrieve at Allevard a portion or the whole of what he had lost at Lyons. Ménard felt himself so exceedingly comfortable at M. Chambertin's house, that he would have slept there with the greatest pleasure; and Madame Chambertin was particularly anxious to retain the Palatine. But Dubourg, as we have stated, had strong reasons to necessitate his departure; and M. Chambertin, at length perceiving that all remonstrance was vain, ordered Lunel to prepare the cabriolet to conduct his lordship and M. Ménard to Grenoble.

Dubourg took leave of his hosts, promising to return in the course of a few days and pay them a longer visit; and this assurance calmed their grief at his departure.

"Recollect, my lord," said Chambertin, "that I reckon upon your lordship's promise."

"We shall expect your return with impatience," added Madame Chambertin, with a look that spoke volumes.

Dubourg, in order to reply in an equally intelligent manner to the courteous lady, placed his foot upon what he took for Madame Chambertin's shoe, but which proved to be her husband's boot; and shaking his host affectionately by the hand, he called him his "dear and particular friend *de* Chambertin."

Lunel and the cabriolet were waiting: Dubourg and Ménard accordingly stepped in, and the vehicle proceeded rapidly towards Grenoble. The motion soon sent Ménard to sleep; and Dubourg, not choosing to converse with the lacquey, communed with himself.

"This little adventure promises to afford me a great deal of pleasure," thought he; "and will vary the monotony of our late existence at Grenoble. Those excellent people believe me to be a nobleman: there is no great harm in that; and I really have the appearance of one! Madame Chambertin has taken a considerable fancy to me; and her husband has some excellent wine. That old iron-master is as rich as Crœsus, and seems fond of play. Ah! if I only carried the purse as before! What an opportunity to retrieve all my losses! I am certain he has not the slightest idea of backgammon! A man like him would lose five or six thousand francs without noticing it. But that inconsiderate Frederick, who leaves us without a *sou!* I really must find out what he does with himself all day long. It is my duty to look after him, since poor old Ménard does not dare utter a word of remonstrance. A pretty guardian the Count has given his son!"

They arrived very late at Grenoble; and Dubourg was obliged to awake Ménard in order to get him out of the cabriolet. Old Lunel doffed his cap; and Dubourg, who understood his meaning, mechanically thrust his hands into all his pockets, and felt about for a piece of money to bestow upon the lacquey: but not finding any, he gave him a tap upon the shoulder, saying, "Good night! I am excessively pleased with you."

The old lacquey, who had at least expected a five franc piece, which in any case would have been but a sorry remuneration to emanate from the pocket of a nobleman, turned upon his heel, muttering in a surly tone, "By Jove, the Polish Baron's present is a rich one!"

* * * * * * * * * * *

When Dubourg and Ménard rose on the morning after their visit to Allevard, they found that Frederick had left the inn at an early hour.

"We will wait at home for him this evening," said Dubourg, "and we will speak to him."

"Yes, my lord," returned Ménard: "you shall speak to him."

But we have seen that Frederick remained till a very late hour with Sister Anne up to the time when he determined to stay at Vizille altogether. The distance from Vizille to Grenoble was three leagues; and the horse which Frederick took in the morning at hazard, was not better in the evening; for the animals which are used at country inns are seldom fit to ride. It therefore happened that Frederick was sometimes three hours in returning to Grenoble; for he was never in a hurry when each step carried him farther away from Sister Anne.

Frederick therefore returned to the inn very late at night; and Dubourg, having played at picquet with M. Ménard—that being the only game with which the old tutor was acquainted—ended by falling asleep over the cards; because, as those two gentlemen had *no* money to wager upon the issue, and were therefore obliged to play on credit, the game never grew animated, although Ménard had at his disposal the snuff-box of the King of Prussia, and took

No. 27.—The Empress Eugenie.

a pinch every minute, in order to fancy that he himself bore a certain resemblance to Frederick II. Dubourg gaped, and Ménard proposed to the Baron to retire to bed. They therefore deferred their meditated conference with Frederick till the next day: but the next day passed without their aim being accomplished.

Several days glided away, one after the other, in a similar manner; and the impatience of Dubourg increased. He was anxious to return to Allevard and play backgammon with the iron-master. On his side M. Ménard was also desirous of again tasting the excellent Pomard of M. Chambertin, and sitting next to M. Fondant, who poured out the bumpers so rapidly. But they could not go on foot to Allevard. Dubourg was well aware that they ought to present themselves in a manner calculated to sustain the rank he had assumed; and that he must have money in his pocket if he wished to play at backgammon. M. Ménard did not exactly comprehend the necessity of all this: but as the Baron declared it was indispensable, he soon adopted the same opinion. It was therefore absolutely necessary to see Frederick.

"By Jove!" cried Dubourg, "we will sit up for him this evening; and in order not to fall asleep, we will drink punch all night long, if necessary. What do you think of my scheme, M. Ménard?"

"I am entirely of your advice, my lord," returned the worthy tutor; "provided we have a cake to accompany the punch."

"We will have four," exclaimed Dubourg: "we will play at picquet for them, and Frederick shall pay the expenses."

Evening came—and with it an enormous bowl of punch and a plateful of cakes. The two gentlemen sat down to their cards, and drank frequently in order to keep themselves awake. This constant application to the punch-bowl, however, only served to send them to sleep quicker than ever: and by the time the bowl was finished, and they had each devoured half-a-dozen cakes, they fell with their heads upon the table, Dubourg crying, "It is my deal,"—and Ménard replying, "No, it is mine, my lord."

They awoke at daybreak, very much annoyed that they had fallen asleep. But they concluded that Frederick was still in his own chamber, and consoled themselves with the prospect of seeing him before he went out. Dubourg called after him, and no one answered; he hastened into the yard, and made inquiries concerning his friend.

"He did not return to the inn, last night, sir," answered the hostler.

"Not returned to sleep!" cried Dubourg: "are you sure?"

"Oh! yes, sir; neither he nor the horse."

"The devil!" cried Dubourg; "this is more unaccountable than ever! What can be the meaning of such a prolonged absence?"

He hastened to announce the circumstance to M. Ménard, who, after meditating a quarter of an hour, exclaimed, "What do you think of all this, my lord?"

"The deuce, M. Ménard," returned Dubourg; "it is to you that I ought to put a similar question."

"We must not form a hasty opinion, my lord," said Ménard: "that is my advice."

"I could have done as well without such advice," rejoined Dubourg.

They passed the entire day in waiting for Frederick, who did not however return to Grenoble. Dubourg was anxious on account of his friend; M. Ménard trembled for his pupil; and the inn-keeper would have been excessively alarmed in respect of his horse, had he not possessed the carriage as security.

On the following morning at daybreak, Dubourg presented himself to M. Ménard, exclaiming, "Let us go and find Frederick."

"Yes, let us find him out," returned Ménard.

"In order to find him, we must look for him," cried Dubourg, impatiently.

"That is exactly what I was thinking of," answered Ménard.

"Why don't you get up then, and dress yourself, instead of lying in bed all the morning?" demanded Dubourg.

"I was merely waiting for the announcement of your lordship's plans," answered the tutor.

"Well, my plan is to sally forth at once. Frederick's countenance and appearance are altogether too remarkable not to be noticed in the neighbourhood. He cannot possibly be lost."

"We must hope for the best," said Ménard: "for if he were, what would his father do to me?"

"Get up and dress yourself," cried Dubourg.

The two gentlemen partook of a hasty breakfast: and Dubourg ordered a couple of cart-horses to be saddled for their use. But the landlord did not comply with these directions in the most willing manner possible; for the bill of the three travellers already exceeded the value of their carriage. At length the horses were provided; and Ménard warned his companion that he should only walk his animal—to which announcement Dubourg replied, that when men are setting out on a journey of observation, they did not usually gallop. They asked the waiter which road Frederick usually took: and as they proceeded in the same direction, Dubourg made inquiries of the peasants whom he met, or of those who lived in the vicinity, relative to his friend. Every one had seen the young Viscount, who passed along that road upon horseback at full gallop in the morning, and who returned at night at the slowest possible pace. Dubourg and his companion at length ascertained beyond all doubt that Frederick's invariable destination was Vizille.

"What can he do there?" cried Dubourg.

"He has probably discovered some interesting view," said Ménard.

"Or some interesting face," returned Dubourg.

"What, my lord! you think——"

"Think! to be sure I do!" interrupted Dubourg. "Frederick is not quite such a fool as to pass the whole day in contemplating trees

and mountains. He was anxious to discover a heart that could sympathize with his own—a soul which could love like his—a woman, in short, who knows how to appreciate a pure attachment. Who can tell, then, that he has not found all this in some chubby peasant girl—very modest, very innocent, and very affectionate—whose passion has turned his brain?"

"I should rather be inclined to imagine that he is gone to visit the Chartreuse," said Ménard.

"Remember that Frederick is only twenty years old."

"Remember, likewise, my lord, that he has already been deceived by women, and that he left Paris to avoid them."

"Is that a reason for no longer loving them?" demanded Dubourg. "Besides, M. Ménard, when one avoids a certain thing, it is because he feels he cannot long resist the temptation."

Thus arguing, the two gentlemen arrived at Vizille. They continued their inquiries in the villages: but the inhabitants had been too much occupied with their labours to pay any attention to the young man, who had only dined twice at the inn, because (as we have stated) Sister Anne took care to supply him with fruits and milk in the wood. They had certainly seen the young stranger from time to time: but they were unable to indicate the road he usually took, or to acquaint their questioners with the nature of the business that led him to the village. In short, Dubourg and his companion issued from Vizille without gaining any very satisfactory information.

"All is lost!" cried Ménard. "My pupil has been eaten up by wolves or assassinated by robbers: or else he has tumbled down a precipice in gazing upon a sunset. Poor Frederick! so amiable—so noble in disposition—so talented! All that remains for me to do is to deplore your loss!"

"No, no," cried Dubourg: "Frederick has neither been eaten up by wolves, nor killed by robbers. We must endeavour to find him. But—Ah! here is an animal, which I think can give us the desired information!"

The two travellers, on leaving the village, had descended into the valley, and were at this moment at the commencement of the wood, where the horse, which Frederick had hired, was roaming about amongst the luxuriant grass.

"Why, it is a horse!" cried M. Ménard. "Your lordship surely cannot suppose it will answer any questions?"

"I recognise it to be one I have often seen in the inn-yard at Grenoble," returned Dubourg. "It is the horse which Frederick rides."

"And the animal is alone, without its rider," cried the unhappy tutor. "Everything corroborates my suspicions concerning the miserable end of my pupil! I dare say the horse pitched him over its head into a precipice! Alas, my poor pupil—he is dead! He was doubtless climbing up the mountains at night on horseback—he could not distinguish the road—the beast stumbled—and——"

"I should rather think that Frederick is in this wood, and that he has left his horse for a short time, so that he may be enabled to walk about at his ease," said Dubourg. "Let us do the same in reference to our own animals, and go in search of him. We will tie our horses to these firs."

This proposition being immediately followed out, the two travellers penetrated into the wood,—Ménard holding his handkerchief to his eyes because he fancied he should discover his charge wounded or dead,—and Dubourg walking in front, and staring about him in all directions. In a few minutes Dubourg stopped—called to Ménard with joy depicted upon his countenance—and, pointing towards a grassy bank at a little distance, said, "Look yonder, my dear friend, and see if my presentiments were not well founded. There is the interesting prospect which Frederick comes so far to admire."

M. Ménard followed with his eyes the direction indicated by Dubourg, and perceived his pupil negligently reclining upon the bank, beneath a shady canopy of trees; and holding in his arms a lovely young girl, whose head reposed upon his breast, and whose arms were clasped round his neck.

"You were right, my lord," said Ménard, after a moment of surprise; "it was not the old Chartreuse! This is really something more modern."

"That damsel appears to me to be lovely in the extreme," said Dubourg.

"And to me also, my lord," responded Ménard.

"The sly fellow!" said Dubourg; "I am not astonished he should abandon us all day for this lovely flower which he has discovered in a desert. Do you now think that he shuns the female sex?"

"One could scarcely entertain such an opinion at this moment," answered the tutor.

"Believe me, M. Ménard, that Frederick, although somewhat sentimental, is a man like another. But we must hasten to compliment him upon the excellence of his choice."

"We shall only intrude upon him, my lord."

"The deuce! since he stays here all day long, he has plenty of time to make love."

Dubourg and Ménard drew a little nearer; and the sounds of their footsteps fell upon the ears of Frederick. Sister Anne also raised her eyes; and as soon as she perceived the two strangers, she drew closer to her lover, and concealed her head entirely in his breast, as if she were afraid that some danger menaced him.

"Bravo, my dear Frederick," cried Dubourg, laughing heartily. "Bravo! I now comprehend the motive of your early rising. But, in truth, your conquest is a charming one; and that wild air which characterizes her, only renders her more delightful."

The fair mute looked at Dubourg for a moment—then glanced towards the countenance of her lover—and seemed to demand an explanation of the intrusion. Frederick rose; and Sister Anne followed his example. She would not leave him whom she loved so tenderly:

but she clung to his arm, and cast timid glances towards the two strangers. She appeared to dread the motive of their visit, and fancied that they were come to deprive her of her lover. Frederick, however, reassured her—embraced her tenderly—and prevailed upon her to wait for him in the garden belonging to the hut. Sister Anne with difficulty complied with his request: she dared not leave him: but Frederick promised to return in a few minutes; and she at length retired to the garden, extending her hand as she walked slowly thither, and pointing towards the strangers, as much as to say, "You must not accompany *them!*"

Frederick gazed upon her with tenderness till she was out of sight, and then advanced towards his fellow-travellers.

"Very beautiful! Upon my soul, she is charming!" cried Dubourg.

"If the tones of the voice only correspond with the plumage," said M. Ménard, "she is the rarest bird of this wood."

"What do you seek for here?" demanded Frederick, in an angry manner.

"What do we seek?" repeated Dubourg. "Why, you—you, who abandoned us to our fate—you, who leave us without money at an inn where there is nothing to amuse us—you, who desert us to live in a wood with a peasant girl! It is all very pretty this rural passion of your's: but it ought not to make you forget your friend and your worthy tutor."

Frederick made no reply: he seemed to reflect deeply.

"My lord," said Ménard, in a respectful manner, "every individual is permitted to love. Adam loved Eve—it is true that at one time he could not very well love any one else; Abraham loved Hagar; David loved Bethsheba; Sampson loved Dalilah; and since a man like Sampson yielded to temptation, how could we, who are very far from being Sampsons, resist? At the same time, my lord, there is a medium in all things. You should not be led away by your new attachment, to forget everything that connects you with society, and to descend from the high place you were born to occupy. Indeed, I do not exactly think it was for the purpose of living in a wood that your father sent you to travel; and hence I conclude——"

"My dear Ménard," interrupted Frederick, awakening from his reverie, and not appearing to pay the slightest attention to the erudite discourse of his worthy tutor,—"I have something very important to communicate to my friend the Baron, and which regards him alone. Do me the favour to take a stroll in the valley: we will rejoin you in a few moments."

"My lord, I can refuse you nothing," replied Ménard: "I shall await your presence in the valley with the utmost confidence:"—and M. Ménard issued from the wood, muttering to himself, "My little lecture has produced a good effect. The young man feels that he has done wrong; he will amend his conduct, and return like the prodigal son to Grenoble—where we will order a good meat pie instead of a fatted calf."

The moment the tutor was out of sight, Frederick turned to Dubourg, and exclaimed, "Why did you bring Ménard hither? wherefore follow me into this wood? am I no longer the master of my own actions?"

"In the first place, M. Ménard is not so very formidable," answered Dubourg; "and in the second place, it was highly necessary for us to know what had become of you, since you did not choose to communicate with us. Do you suppose that I could imagine you would convert yourself into an Orlando Furioso, for the love of a young milk-maid?"

"A milk-maid!" exclaimed Frederick. "No, Dubourg—it is a sincere and unquenchable passion. Never have I loved with such fervour! never have I met one more deserving of that love! Ah, Dubourg, if you only knew the disposition of this amiable girl? She is unconscious ot the arts and hypocrisies of the world—her soul is as chaste and pure as her features are lovely. My dear friend, it was not in the brilliant saloons of the capital that I should ever find a woman equal to her!"

"This is a moment of enthusiasm; and I see very well that it is useless to talk reason till a little of it has evaporated. I admit that the girl is very beautiful," continued Dubourg; "and I am willing to agree with Ménard, that she is a rare bird: but what do you intend to do? You cannot pass the remainder of your days in this wood!"

"I will never leave Sister Anne!" cried the young Viscount.

"Well, then," returned Dubourg, "bring your Sister Anne along with us; make a Marchioness of her in the eyes of poor old Ménard, and I will undertake to persuade him of the fact. But, in the name of heaven, leave these old fir-trees, beneath the shades of which you will end by becoming an ourang-outang."

"Leave the wood! No—that cannot be. This young girl has a guardian in yonder hut—an old woman who has taken care of her——"

"Bring the old woman, too; and we will make a Dowager Marchioness of her," interrupted Dubourg.

"Impossible!" cried Frederick impatiently.

"So you have an entire family upon your hands now," remarked Dubourg.

"Leave me, Dubourg: return to Grenoble with Ménard. In a few days I will join you: but at present I cannot leave this wood."

"Return to Grenoble, indeed!" ejaculated Dubourg. "To live in a wood, and talk nonsense all day long to your milk-maid!"

"She is not a woman whom you often meet in this life," answered Frederick. "If you only knew, poor creature——But, no—I will tell you nothing about her: you would not understand the excellence of her heart. Good bye, Dubourg—leave me."

"You are determined—and therefore I consent to leave you," said Dubourg. "I shall take the purse with me. I am better acquainted with mankind than you, and am convinced that in less than a fortnight you will be heartily sick of this kind of life. You will soon come and seek us out in your turn."

"Yes—if Sister Anne will accompany me."

"No—you will come without her, I am sure.

However, in the meantime, make love to her as much as you choose,—in short, to such an extent, that in a fortnight you may be really sick and tired of the pursuit."

Dubourg thrust the purse into his pocket, hastened from the wood, and rejoined Ménard in the valley. The worthy tutor was seated very comfortably between the two horses, looking as if he ruminated as well as they.

"Quick, quick!" cried Dubourg; "to horse! to horse!"

"What do you mean, my lord?" demanded Ménard; "to horse—and I do not see the Viscount?"

"He insisted upon staying with his milk-maid."

"He stays behind, and we return without him?"

"Certainly: for as you and I have no attractions of a similar nature in the wood, we might find a sojourn there somewhat tiresome."

"Really, my lord," remonstrated the tutor, "I do not understand all this."

"Ménard, I am acting like a man who knows the human heart—especially that of young people. If we were to oppose Frederick's wishes, he would only be guilty of some absurdity in order to outwit us. Let us suffer him therefore to follow the dictates of his own passions; and I promise you that in less than a fortnight he will be restored to us wiser than ever. No lover ever yet supported a *tête-à-tête* of three weeks consecutively."

"I really begin to adopt your lordship's way of thinking," said M. Ménard.

"Now, then—to horse! To-morrow we will dine with with our friend Chambertin."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Ménard.

"And I promise you, we will make our entry into the village of Allevard in a manner calculated to cause a sensation."

"Again I am at a loss to understand you, my lord," said Ménard. "But your lordship arranges all these matters so well, that I rely entirely upon your skill and judgment."

M. Ménard, whom the hope of dining with M. Chambertin rendered quite hilarious, thrust his heels (for the first time in his life) into the sides of his horse, and induced the animal to trot after Dubourg.

"It is however a pity," he observed, as they returned to Grenoble, "that my pupil should have formed such a connexion. A woman sometimes leads a man into sad difficulties. Cato declared that wisdom and prudence were incompatible with the mind of the fair sex."

"My dear M. Ménard, I should not at all wonder if Cato had been crossed in love," said Dubourg.

"Saint Bernard calls woman the agent of the Devil," observed M. Ménard.

"But Confucius declares that the soul of woman is the first work of the Almighty," Dubourg answered.

"Agnes Sorel enervated Charles VII," said Ménard.

"And another woman regenerated him," rejoined Dubourg.

"Joan of Naples strangled her husband."

"Joan Hachette saved Beauvais."

"Everything considered, my lord," said Ménard, "I see that the question is fairly balanced."

Thus did the two travellers, while on their road to Grenoble, discuss the merits of woman—a subject which might have engrossed them to all eternity without any satisfactory conclusion: for a certain learned writer has declared there are as many changes in the heart of woman as there are grains of sand on the sea-shore; and this learned writer must have been very persevering indeed to have counted either the changes or the sand.

But let us return to Frederick. He breathed more at his ease when Dubourg was out of sight; and when the sounds of the retreating horses' hoofs fell upon his ears, he exclaimed, like the ancient who had thrown his treasures into the depths of the ocean, "I am now free!" Thenceforth Frederick might devote himself entirely to his passion for the young mute, since he no longer dreaded the intrusions of Ménard and Dubourg. He therefore hastened towards the hut: he thought not of the future—he did not pause to reflect: but he was only twenty years old, and at that age his weakness may be pardoned.

Sister Anne was trembling and unhappy in the garden, awaiting his return. Dame Margaret was asleep; and the poor girl was able to yield herself without restraint to those sentiments which oppressed her. The intrusion of the two strangers, who were acquainted with Frederick, excited fears which every minute became more poignant. To live without her lover, appeared to her impossible. Love was now the principal aliment required by an ingenuous creature whose existence had been too solitary to allow her to become acquainted with any other means of enjoyment in this life. Her affectionate heart had hastened to meet the heart of him who whispered in her ear, "I love thee." In surrendering herself up to her lover, Sister Anne consigned herself, body and soul, to him for ever! Frederick had taught her that happiness still existed for her: her mind had expanded into new life beneath the sunny influence of his smiles. She felt that she still could please; and her heart was devoted to him who taught her the path to so much bliss. What would woman be at the age of sixteen, were she to be compelled to renounce the hope of pleasing? Frederick was everything to Sister Anne; and up to the period of the visit of his friends, the course of her love had been uninterrupted: but there is no kind of earthly felicity that endures for ever; and love is the least prosperous of any. Scarcely had a few days of joy and happiness passed away, when the poor girl found herself condemned to experience the first pangs attendant upon that passion!

At length Frederick returned. Sister Anne did not run—she flew into his arms! Her eyes glanced hastily around—she discovered that they were again alone—and she was once more happy!

"No, my dear girl," said the lover, returning her fervent embrace with equal ardour, "I will never leave thee! Oh! where could I find a lovelier being—a more angelic creature—one more faithful, or more sincere? What matters

the opinions of the world to me? Here I have discovered the secret of happiness!—not even my father himself should tear me from thine arms!"

This vow was ratified by a kiss upon the vermilion lips of the young girl—a vow which they both consecrated by that holy ceremony; and many a time and often during that day, did Frederick repeat the words, "Oh! no—I will never leave thee!"

A week elapsed—and then the days began to glide less rapidly away in the opinion of the young Viscount: the sweet caresses of his mistress were no longer sufficient to employ the weary hours. He felt that he must adopt some means of recreation and diversion; and he could not help agreeing with Dubourg that it was impossible to pass one's whole existence in a wood upon the bank of a river.

Another week elapsed—and Frederick took a little walk *alone*, into the valley. He found that the horse was still grazing near the wood: he mounted it, and rode further into the country. On the following day he told Sister Anne that he should stroll as far as the village in order to procure the provisions which he required, but with which he had dispensed a fortnight back!

A third week elapsed—and he looked often and anxiously in the direction of Grenoble. He was surprised that Dubourg did not return to the wood to see him, and that Ménard had also forgotten him. We are sorry to be obliged to confess that he was secretly annoyed at their absence. Did he no longer love Sister Anne? Oh! yes—Frederick loved her still: but, as Dubourg had very justly observed, love never resists a *tête-a-tête* of three weeks. We will not however anticipate. Let us leave the young Viscount in the society of the fair mute, who loved him as fervently as when she first surrendered herself to his arms: yes—let us leave them together for the present, and return to Dubourg, who was now once more in possession of the purse.

* * * * * * *

* * * * * *

On their return to Grenoble, Dubourg ordered dinner—whereupon the usual fare was served up.

"What do you mean by such a dinner as that?" exclaimed Dubourg. "We require other dishes, and better wines," he added, beginning to make a disturbance now that he had money in his pocket.

The landlord waited upon the two gentlemen, and informed them that their bill already amounted to a large sum; inasmuch as in addition to the expenses incurred by board and lodging, their young companion had lamed all the horses of the inn by making them gallop at a pace they were never accustomed to. Dubourg returned no answer, but took a banknote of five hundred francs from his pocket, and handed it to the landlord with all the calm dignity of insulted grandeur.

The host opened his eyes in astonishment: he endeavoured to mutter a few words in the shape of an apology, and wound up his discourse by declaring that he would make out the bill, but hoped the gentlemen would not leave his house, as he would forthwith supply them with some of the choicest wines in the cellar.

When he was gone, M. Ménard, who had looked as ludicrously amazed as the landlord himself, said to Dubourg, "My lord, have you received remittances from Poland?"

"Certainly I have, M. Ménard!" was the reply. "By Jove, is a man like me to be long without money, I should like to know?"

"But I did not see the messenger arrive," observed the tutor.

"He came while you were asleep. The principal object now in view is to amuse ourselves: we shall no longer be compelled to remain at home all day in a state of ignoble obscurity. And by way of commencement we will call upon our friend Chambertin to-morrow. But in order to ensure a befitting reception, I think it advisable to despatch a messenger forthwith, to announce the honour we intend him. What is your opinion, M. Ménard?"

"I perfectly coincide with your view of the subject, my lord," answered the tutor.

"In that case, hasten and ferret me out a little stable-boy, upon whom we will clap your flannel-jacket and my morning-cap, to give him a foreign appearance. While you find the boy, I will write my despatch."

Ménard went to obey these directions: and while he was thus employed, Dubourg penned the following letter:—

"The Baron Ladislas Potoski, Palatine of Rava and Sandomir, &c., &c., &c., has the honour to inform his honourable friend, Monsieur de Chambertin of Allevard, &c., &c., that his lordship will do himself the pleasure of visiting M. de Chambertin's mansion, accompanied by his learned friend, Professor Menard, to-morrow afternoon.

"The Baron Potoski presents his most respectful compliments to Madame de Chambertin of Allevard."

This epistle was duly folded up, directed, and placed in the hands of the stable-boy, who, in the disguise of a courier, hastened on horseback to deliver it at the proper address. M. and Madame Chambertin were about to retire for the night when the boy arrived at their house. It was half-past nine o'clock; and in the country, when the inhabitants cultivate not the fine arts, music, painting, nor botany, the evenings are very long and tedious. M. Chambertin however played a tune upon his violin, and Madame had spoilt a beautiful song by insisting on singing it: they had then conversed about the Polish nobleman, whom they were grieved at not seeing; and the husband had said to the wife, "I am really astonished; he gave me his word of honour to return and stay with us."

"And I am more astonished still," said the wife to her husband, with a sigh.

The noise caused by the arrival of the messenger fell upon the ears of M. Chambertin, just as he was about to step into the nuptial couch. He stopped—listened—and stood still in his shirt in the middle of the room.

"Come to bed," cried Madame Chambertin: "our servants are there to answer the door."

"But whom can arrive so late?" said M. Chambertin.

At that moment some one knocked at the door of the bed-chamber. It was Lunel, who came to inform his master and mistress that the Baron Potoski's messenger was below. At the mere mention of the name of Potoski, M. Chambertin endeavoured to cut a caper in the middle of the room; but losing his balance, he fell upon the carpet—while Madame Chambertin desired her husband to hand her the looking-glass, in order to arrange her hair. But M. Chambertin did not hear the voice of his wife: he rose from the floor, hastened to put on his dressing-gown, and ran to open the door to receive the messenger of the Baron.

He stepped out upon the landing communicating with the bed-room, and took the letter which the messenger, who had followed Lunel up-stairs, presented. As he read it, his countenance became radiant with joy; he could not contain himself even before his servant and the courier—but exclaimed to his wife, "The Baron will come again! He calls me *De Chambertin of Allevard!* He presents his most respectful compliments to you?"

"Ah! the Baron!" sighed Madame Chambertin: "what an honour he confers upon us!"

"*De* Chambertin—*of Allevard!*" continued the retired wine merchant, laying prodigious emphasis upon the preposition and the local distinction. "Just as if I were lord of the manor—the feudal noble of the place! So I am almost—and, thanks to the Baron, I shall now be so altogether. Do you hear, my love!"

"Certainly! certainly, I hear!" cried Madame Chambertin. "He presents his most respectful compliments to me, you say?"

"Lunel, you will treat this young messenger with all the distinction such a courier deserves," exclaimed M. Chambertin, heedless of his wife's question! "and you, my boy, will have the kindness to inform your noble master that he shall be received with all the honours that he and his learned friend so highly merit."

The messenger at length took his departure; M. Chambertin flung himself into an arm-chair, and Madame Chambertin threw herself back upon the pillow: but the letter which they had just received totally prevented them from thinking of sleep. M. Chambertin re-perused the letter a dozen times: the title of *Allevard* flattered his vanity beyond anything the reader can conceive.

"It is the name of the village," said Madame Chambertin.

"Yes—but in placing it after my name, the Baron ennobles me," replied her husband.

"You know, my dear, that all the world at Paris use the same distinction," returned Madame Chambertin. "Indeed, for the last six months I have been perpetually begging you to call yourself Chambertin of Allevard: but you would not listen to me."

"Now that the Baron has given me the title, my dear," said M. Chambertin, "I shall adopt it for ever. In future I shall always sign my name with the proper distinctions. To-morrow we must give a grand *fête*."

"Of course," rejoined his wife.

"Dinner—ball—concert—fireworks. There have never been any grand displays of fireworks at Allevard; and we will astound the inhabitants with our exhibition. I shall invite all the principal people of the neighbourhood."

"I shall dress my hair in ringlets."

"I shall illuminate the whole place."

"My robe with a long train——"

"The lamps shall be of different colours."

"With a pink sash——"

"Large lamps in the court."

"My bronze shoes——"

"The largest I can find."

"A white scarf——"

"Garlands hung all about."

"My necklace of pearls."

"And a salvo of muskets."

But to return to Grenoble. The host had so managed his bill, that he had just five hundred francs to receive, and nothing to return to Dubourg. Any other but the Baron Ladislas Potoski of Rava and Sandomir would have remonstrated with the landlord at having charged three hundred francs for the injury done to two or three old horses that could not even drag a cart; but his lordship was not accustomed to examine accounts. He therefore contented himself with desiring the landlord to procure him a tilbury for the following day, and to lend him two of his stable-boys to accompany the vehicle as "tigers," or pages. Dubourg then counted his money, and found himself in possession of four thousand five hundred francs—a much larger sum than was necessary to win ten times that amount. He was in great hopes that the iron-master would enable him to recover as much as the Chevalier with the old hat and the Count with the wristbands had plundered him of at Lyons.

On the following day, about noon, Dubourg and Ménard made every preparation for their journey to Allevard, intending to proceed thither so as to be in time for dinner. As the landlord had not been able to find a tilbury throughout the whole town, the two gentlemen were obliged to content themselves with a species of tax-cart, in which there were two boards for seats. On the front seat Dubourg and Ménard placed themselves: and on the second were the two stable-boys, so disguised in old waistcoats and garments chosen at hazard—and with two caps, which, being too large, fell upon their noses—that they really possessed a most foreign appearance. Dubourg expressly commanded them not to open their lips to speak French, nor seem to understand it: he moreover commanded them to converse by means of signs, so as to pass for two little Poles; and the boys promised to obey.

The hour of departure arrived; and Dubourg undertook to drive the vehicle: but notwithstanding he had ordered the landlord to supply him with his two best horses he could not succeed in inducing them to gallop. He was obliged to content himself with a trot—and this a very moderate one; which greatly retarded the hour of their arrival at Allevard. Ménard was afraid that M. Chambertin would dine without them; and Dubourg was very much annoyed at not being able to drive up to his door at full gallop.

It was half-past five o'clock when they caught sight of the village of Allevard at a distance. Dubourg exerted all his power and skill to urge on his horses; and at length they drew near M. Chambertin's house, opposite which there was a large concourse of people.

"Give the horses a poke with your cane," said Dubourg to Ménard; "so that we may at least enter the village at a decent trot."

Ménard stretched out his hand to do as he was desired, and at the same moment a loud "Hurrah!" was heard, with cries of "Here they are! here they are!" These acclamations were immediately succeeded by four musket-shots; and then two cracked violins and a screeching clarionet struck up some air. The horses, terrified by the accumulated din of the shouts, the music and the fire-arms, darted forward at full gallop, and dragged the vehicle upon a bank on the right side, instead of following the proper road.

"Beautiful! excellent!" cried Dubourg, as loud as he could bawl, intending to applaud the music.

"Take care, my lord," exclaimed Ménard," who was afraid of being upset: "our horses are running away with us."

"See how my friend the Baron drives," said M. Chambertin to his guests. "I am sorry I did not order the illumination to commence at two o'clock. You see how his lordship guides the horses along the most intricate parts of the road, to give us a specimen of his skill."

In descending from the bank into the main road the horses redoubled their speed; and at every moment the frail vehicle menaced its occupants with an upset. The wheels rattled over the stones or sank into ruts; Ménard was dreadfully alarmed—the two boys cried—and Dubourg exclaimed, "Hold you tongues, you young monkeys! I ordered you not to speak French. Do no be alarmed—I will be answerable for your safety."

The vehicle proceeded like the wind; and fortunately the animals made direct for the house. But instead of turning into the great gateway, they dashed the cart violently against the wall. The shock was so severe, that Dubourg jumped from his seat, exclaiming, "It is all right!" and the two tigers were thrown to the ground. Ménard alone remained upon his seat, to which he seemed suddenly nailed fast. But no one was hurt. Dubourg rose up with a smile, and hastened to pay his respects to the company, assuring them at the same time that such was the orthodox manner of alighting from a carriage in Poland. Ménard, proud of not having fallen out of the vehicle, advanced towards the assembled multitude, arranging his shirt-frill and assuming an air of importance: and the two pages held their hands to their noses, which they contented themselves with pointing to, when Lunel inquired if they were hurt.

Dubourg received the most hearty welcome. M. Chambertin was in raptures, because the Baron shook hands with him, and called him his "dear friend;" and Madame Chambertin was not less satisfied when the illustrious stranger whispered in her ear, as he squeezed her hand, "You have been the constant subject of my thoughts." In a word, the whole company were highly delighted at being in the society of a great nobleman, who gave himself very few airs, and made every one seem comfortable around him.

M. Chambertin had invited about forty people: all the rich land-owners of the neighbourhood, the mayor, the town-clerk, the notary, the iron-master, and some friends from Paris and Lyons—in short, the *élite* of his acquaintance, had been collected together by M. Chambertin, to meet the Baron. They all placed themselves at table. Dubourg occupied the seat of honour next to Madame Chambertin; and Ménard was overjoyed to find himself once again next to M. Fondant, who did not speak more than on the former occasion, but who was equally assiduous in filling the tutor's glass and passing the choicest dishes.

"I hope," said M. Chambertin, "that h's lordship intends to honour us with his company for some days, as well as the learned M. Ménard."

"Yes," said Dubourg: "I made the necessary arrangements to permit me to pass a few days in this delightful spot. So has my friend, Professor Ménard."

These words were accompanied by a tender glance towards Madame Chambertin; who was obliged to choke herself with the wing of a fowl to stifle a sigh. M. Ménard made a low bow; and M. Chambertin went on to say, "I am only sorry that you have not brought your friend, the Viscount de—the Viscount du—a Viscount, in fine——"

"Oh! he is an original!" cried Dubourg; "he does not love society. I left him with my suite and travelling-carriage, and only brought my two little Poles along with me."

"Ah! they are Poles are they?" said M. Chambertin. "I am sure I thought they were Cossacks."

At this moment Lunel enter the room to inform Dubourg that his two little pages were playing the devil in the kitchen, and would not answer a single question.

"Indeed! I am not surprised at that," cried Dubourg; "they don't understand French."

"Let his lordship's servants do as they like," said Chambertin; "and endeavour to understand their signs."

"Their signs are very pretty," said Lunel to himself: "they put their fingers into all the dishes, lick them, and wipe them upon their breeches."

The gaiety of Dubourg and the appetite of the learned Ménard put the whole company into the best humour possible. They laughed —they chatted—they ate—they drank; and every time Dubourg opened his lips to speak, M. Chambertin cried, "Hush! hush! let us hear what his lordship is going to say."

At dessert, M. Bidault offered to sing a song: but Dubourg had declared that it was no longer fashionable to sing at table; so M. Chambertin desired Bidault to remain quiet, exclaiming, "It is not the e'iquette to sing! what were you thinking of?"

But M. Frossard, the iron-master, did not care for the interdiction of Chambertin: he was in the habit of singing after dinner,

and accordingly commenced a drinking song. Chambertin however requested the company to pass into the concert-room, in the hope that the drinking-song might there be accomplished with less chance of being deemed unfashionable. M. Chambertin had hired a piano and a harp; and an old and a young lady of the party regaled the company with an air which they enriched with thirty-six variations of their own invention. The mayor took his bassoon, the notary a violin; and Chambertin presented a French horn to Dubourg, who had declared that he played on all instruments: but the Baron would not on this occasion join the concert. He however passed the French horn to Ménard, and led the worthy tutor to a desk. Ménard gazed at him with an air of astonishment; but Dubourg said in a whisper, "Blow into the instrument, and do not look like a fool."

No. 28.—The Empress Eugenie.

M. Ménard, who not spared the wine at dinner, took the French horn, and blew into it with all his force, rolling his eyes at the same time as if he were suffocating. The mayor, the notary, and Ménard were requested to commence a trio while Dubourgh beat time: but whenever the horn ought to have sounded, no sound was heard at all, because Ménard blew his instrument without eliciting a note. Dubourg however appeared satisfied, and turning towards the company, exclaimed, "I never heard so sweet a sound! No one would believe it was a horn."

Every one praised the performance; and Ménard, as soon as it was over, said to himself "Well, I know how to play the horn, and never suspected it."

The concert was at length terminated—Dubourg spoke of cards—and tables were accordingly laid out. Backgammon is seldom played

in a drawing-room in France: but Dubourg declared that it was the favourite game at the Court of Poland—and M. Chambertin immediately ordered a backgammon board to be brought, saying at the same time that in less than a week he would have at least four in his drawing-room. Dubourg and the obese Frossard sat down to play, and M. Chambertin looked on, although he understood nothing of the game. Dubourg was exceedingly lucky: he beat his antagonist, and had already won twenty louis, when a violent explosion was heard in the garden.

"The fire-works," was the universal cry, and the company ran into the garden.

"Deuce take the fire-works!" exclaimed Dubourg; "I was just beginning to be lucky."

But all attempts to retain the iron-master were vain: Frossard was desirous of witnessing the display of fire-works; and Dubourg was therefore obliged to follow the example of the rest. As he left the drawing-room, he met Madame Chambertin, who was hastening to see what had detained his lordship away from the fire-works. He offered his arm; and they repaired to the garden together.

"Ah! you were too late to see the Sun!" cried M. Chambertin, as soon as he espied the Baron.

"Yes—but we smelt it," returned Dubourg; "it was uncommonly like the Moon."

"Look at those rockets and those serpents," continued M. Chambertin; "what a perpetual movement!"

"Beautiful!" exclaimed Dubourg.

"Take care! the grand train is about to explode!" cried M. Chambertin.

The grand train exploded, and the whole company applauded the exhibition.

"It is worthy the lord of the manor," said Dubourg.

"I really think I am the lord—very nearly," returned M. Chambertin.

"You are quite, my dear friend," said Dubourg: "I certify the fact."

"When a man of your lordship's consideration tells me so, I cannot in future doubt it," rejoined Chambertin.

But it was now past eleven o'clock; and in the country that is a late hour. All those who resided at a distance ordered their carriages: and those who lived in the village lit their lanterns, which were carried by their servants. They then took leave of M. and Madame Chambertin, congratulating them upon the beauty of the *fête*: and, having respectfully bowed to the Baron, returned to their homes. M. Chambertin, who imagined that his illustrious friend required rest, and seeing that the learned Ménard was asleep in one corner of the ball-room, ordered his servants to conduct the gentlemen to their respective chambers.

The finest apartments in the house, upon the first floor, had been prepared for the Baron Potoski; and a chamber over-head for M. Ménard. Had he not been the companion of a nobleman, and were he nothing but a learned man, it is most probable that the garret would have been his portion—talent being but a small recommendation when unassisted by something more attractive in a worldly point of view. Every one had retired to his own chamber—M. Ménard had already commenced snoring at a tremendous rate—and Dubourg was lying very comfortably in an excellent bed, surrounded by silken curtains with large fringes.

"Well, upon my word, it is really very amusing to play the Baron," said he to himself. "Here is a house in which I receive the greatest attention, and am treated with the most extraordinary politeness. My slightest wishes are anticipated; and everything is done to ensure my comfort. And all this takes place because they believe me to be a Palatine! If I had introduced myself as simple M. Dubourg, of Rennes, I should have been requested to go about my business. And yet another name does not make another man of me. However, every one has his weak points—some more, some less than others. Instead of endeavouring to reform my excellent host and hostess—a process which would certainly redound to my own credit, but which would be somewhat difficult to accomplish—I must continue to humour their foibles. This M. Chambertin is a fool who, having been a wine-merchant two-thirds of his life, is desirous of playing the lord of the manor, and giving himself airs the remaining third. But what matter is his failing to me? He is delighted with the idea of having a Baron in his house; and I am determined to play the Baron as long as this place suits me."

While he was thus musing, Dubourg gradually fell asleep: but he was suddenly startled from his slumbers by a noise which came from the court-yard. Cries, mingled with shouts of laughter, reached his ears; and Dubourg fancied he heard the voices of his two little tigers. He rose—slipped on a pair of trousers and a dressing-gown—and having opened a window which looked upon the yard, saw several domestics assembled round his pages, and old Lunel endeavouring to tear a cold fowl from the hands of one of them, while the other cried and screamed because he was not able to assist his companion.

The two boys, in strict obedience to the orders which they had received from Dubourg, had only replied to the inquiries of the other servants by signs and motions: but Lunel, who filled the responsible situations of butler, valet, and tiger to M. Chambertin, entertained anything but an affectionate feeling for the Polish Baron's followers, as well as for the Baron himself. He remembered the present of a tap on the shoulder which he had received from his lordship the night he drove him and Ménard back to Grenoble; and the signs made by the two little boys only increased his dislike. The urchins had mystified and embarrassed the old domestic by applying their fingers to their noses when he inquired if they were hurt, on their arrival in the car: in short he had fancied—and naturally enough—that they were "taking a sight" at him.

Anxious to wreak his vengeance, Lunel had sent the boys supperless to bed; and having conducted them to a miserable attic, bade

them good night, leaving them in the dark, to their own ruminations. The two boys not being at all anxious to retire to rest, and labouring under the delusion that Lunel would return to bring them some supper, had patiently awaited his arrival for upwards of three hours: but as neither supper nor Lunel appeared, they descended the stairs to seek the larder and supply themselves. Every one had gone to rest, except Lunel, who suspected that the boys would be up to some such manœuvre. Inspired by the cravings of their appetite, they soon discovered the larder, which was near the kitchen. As they could not open the door of the safe, they burst the canvass; and while one seized on a cold fowl, the other took the remnants of a hare. The former had not been touched at dinner and of the latter there was still sufficient to afford the means of making a good repast. Thus armed with provisions, the urchins were preparing to return to their attic, when Lunel suddenly rushed from the kitchen, crying, "Thieves! thieves!" and flourishing a large horsewhip in his hand. The boys ran across the yard towards the staircase leading to their attic: but one fell and hurt his nose against the bones of the hare; and Lunel, pouncing upon the other, endeavoured to wrest the cold fowl from his grasp. A terrible struggle then ensued; and the boy, forgetting that he was a Pole, exclaimed in excellent French, "You shall not have it."

"Ah! you young rogue!" ejaculated Lunel: "you can talk French well enough now. I will teach you to point to your nose another time when I ask you a question."

"I have broken my nose," cried the other boy; "and it is all the fault of that old curmudgeon who sent us to bed without supper."

It was at this moment that Dubourg looked from the window of his apartment. All the servants of the house had assembled in the yard; and M. Chambertin, in his dressing-gown, also made his appearance upon the balcony attached to his sleeping-room.

"What is the meaning of this noise?" demanded M. Chambertin.

"My little Poles, I think!" cried Dubourg.

"Yes—your lordship's little Poles, who speak French at present," returned Lunel sneeringly. "I caught them robbing the larder."

"He did not give us any supper," cried the boys, "but watched for us in that corner with a large whip."

"O wonder—miracle—astonishment!" exclaimed Dubourg; "they understand French! That must be a most extraordinary whip which can teach quicker than the best schoolmaster. Come, my boys, let me hear you speak French; and then you shall have some supper."

"And if you dare molest his lordship's servants again, you old rogue," cried Chambertin to the discomfited Lunel, "I will kick you out of the house."

Lunel retired to his own room, muttering to himself, "They are as much Poles as I am a Turk:"—and the boys hastened to their attic, bearing off in triumph, the one his cold fowl, and the other the remnants of the hare. The other servants withdrew to their different departments; and M. Chambertin and Dubourg retired to their beds. But the latter reflected that it would no longer be prudent for him to retain in his service the two little stable-boys, who might lead him by their tricks into some serious difficulty. He accordingly rose at a very early hour, gave each of them a five-franc piece, and sent them back to Grenoble, to the great joy of Lunel, who did not like people of Polish extraction.

The days and weeks that succeeded the evening on which the *fête* was given, glided away in peace and tranquillity, a few friends dropping in from time to time, to pass the evening with Chambertin and his family, and listen to the tales which it pleased Dubourg to tell them concerning his castles, his estates, his ancestors, and his functions at the Court of Poland. M. Ménard did not open his mouth very often for any other purpose than that of eating and drinking; occasionally, however, he quoted a few extracts from authors; and then the company, who did not understand a word he uttered, regarded him with respectful silence.

Dubourg played backgammon every evening: but he had no opportunity of winning much money; for the obese Frossard was absent, M. Chambertin did not like gambling, and Dubourg began to fear that he should never double his capital. M. Chambertin's birthday was however approaching; and on that occasion there was to be another *fête*, on a more splendid scale than the former one. Some friends were expected from Paris—those friends were represented to be very rich — and Dubourg hoped to turn their arrival to a good account. It was Madame Chambertin herself who had written for them to come: the amiable lady did all in her power to retain the Baron; and every day she said to her husband, "You do not fully appreciate the honour which Lord Potoski does you in staying at your house."

"I assure you, my dear," replied M. Chambertin, "that I am ravished with the honour; and that I would do anything I could to keep him here for ever."

"You are right," returned his wife; "for if he were to leave us, I should be very unhappy. He is not a man whom we meet every day in our lives."

But let us now speak of the birthday. Everything was in movement at the house of M. Chambertin: grand were the preparations for the approaching festival; and the hero of the day was to be the illustrious stranger. M. Chambertin seemed determined to do all he could to do honour to the Polish nobleman; and he was resolved that the whole province should ring with the news of the magnificent *fête*.

The great day arrived; and numerous were the guests assembled at the house of M. Chambertin. Several individuals who were not present on the former occasion, were invited on this; and the banquet was magnificent in the extreme. The choicest luxuries of the season were provided by the lady of the feast—the wines were delicious—and Dubourg took upon himself the task of doing the honours of the table. He had only to call his host "M. de Chambertin of Allevard," and the retired wine-

merchant's head was immediately elevated to the clouds, where his brain was decidedly influenced by the mists.' The Baron whispered from time to time in the ear of Madame Chambertin, "Thrice happy was the day on which I met you!"—and the excellent lady replied to the compliment by a smile and a sigh.

At length the dinner was over; and the ladies retired to the drawing-room, while the gentlemen remained for another half-hour at table to discuss some more wine. Madame Chambertin, with her plumes and her consequential airs, of course became the centre of the group of fair creatures; and while some got out the music-books in the hope that the Baron would presently listen to their playing and waltzing, the lady of the house held forth upon the merits of the illustrious guest. All the ladies agreed that he was everything great and grand; and they likewise came to the conclusion that M. Ménard was a man of wonderful knowledge and excellent appetite.

In the dining-room, the bottle continued to pass: Dubourg rattled away, while M. Ménard gorged himself with the dessert. As for M. Chambertin he had only one subject of regret; and this was that his intimate and particular friend Durosey, whom he expected from Paris, was not yet arrived. Every time the name of Durosey was pronounced, Dubourg said to himself, "I know some one of that name in Paris; but who he was may the deuce take me if I can recollect."

He asked M. Chambertin who this M. Durosey might be, and what profession or trade he carried on at Paris.

"He is a very wealthy merchant," was the answer, "who has retired from business with an income of twenty thousand francs a year."

"Ah! in that case I do not know him," thought Dubourg within himself: "for I never visited a rich merchant."

The company proceeded to the drawing-room, where a wealthy inhabitant of Allevard proposed a game of *écarté* to Dubourg—an offer that was immediately accepted. Almost at the same moment, Lunel entered to inform his master that M. Durosey was just arrived. M. Chambertin, delighted at these tidings, hastened to meet his friend, whom he shortly introduced to the company assembled. Dubourg turned to look at the new-comer: and to his horror and astonishment discovered in M. Durosey, the landlord of that self-same eating-house in Paris where he owed the sum of four hundred francs. Such was the friend whom M. Chambertin so anxiously awaited, and whom, in his wretched vanity, he had represented to be a rich merchant retired from business.

This encounter was exceedingly disagreeable for Dubourg, who did not however lose his presence of mind: and when his friend Chambertin introduced him to Durosey, saying, "This is the Baron Potoski, Palatine of Rava and Sandomir," he bowed and smiled, winked his eyes, and turned his mouth into a thousand shapes, in order to deceive Durosey. But who ever succeeded in imposing thus upon a creditor?

M. Durosey did not immediately recognise Dubourg, who breathed more freely when the retired landlord and wine-merchant hastened to another part of the room together. From time to time, however, he cast an anxious glance round the apartment: and whenever he noticed the eyes of his creditor fixed upon him, he recommenced his grimaces, and gave his neck a certain nervous and convulsive movement, which only attracted the attention of Durosey the more steadily towards him. Dubourg felt uneasy and embarrassed, and could no longer calculate the chances of his game with calmness and precision. He doubled his stakes—lost—and handed over his gold in large sums to his antagonist. A mist passed before his eyes—his brain was oppressed—and he played with a sort of desperation to which he was hitherto a stranger. The individual who won his treasures, gladly tripled and quadrupled the amount of the stakes; and at length the game became so interesting that a portion of the company surrounded the table, on which there were large piles of bank notes and louis. To add to the confusion of Dubourg, M. Durosey seated himself precisely opposite to him; and every time he raised his eyes, he encountered the eagle glance of his creditor. In half-an-hour the entire contents of his purse passed into the pocket of his antagonist; and he rose from the table, declaring that he would hasten to his apartment and fetch more money, as he was determined to have his revenge.

But as he was about to seek his friend Chambertin, from whom he intended to borrow a few thousand francs, in order to retrieve the sum which he had already lost,—for a gambler always hopes to conquer the caprices of fortune, till he finds himself ruined,—M. Durosey, who never lost sight of his debtor, followed him out upon the landing, and addressed him in such a way that it was impossible to avoid the interview.

"How is M. Dubourg?" asked Durosey, with an ironical grin.

"Dubourg! what do you mean by Dubourg?" demanded the Baron Potoski, his mouth and nose performing a thousand remarkable grimaces.

"Oh! I am sure I have the honour to speak to M. Dubourg," returned the creditor, in a loud tone of voice: "but I did not know he was a Polish Baron."

"Silence, my dear Durosey," said Dubourg, alarmed at the man's vehemence, and perceiving that it was impossible to deceive his creditor; "I did not recollect you at first; but now I remember you well. I am delighted to see you."

"And so am I," answered Durosey gruffly. "You seem very well off at present; and as you can afford to lose thousands of francs at *écarté*, I hope you will not refuse to pay me the four hundred——"

"Oh certainly with pleasure! This evening, if you choose, my dear Durosey. When I left Paris, I quite forgot the trifle."

"And yet I called and sent about twenty times to your lodgings, sir," returned Durosey, "when you lived on the fifth floor in the Rue Montmartre, and again in the Rue de——"

"Silence! speak lower," interrupted Dubourg. "Since that period I inherited my estates——"

"Then you will have no objection if I just mention in confidence to our mutual friend Chambertin, that I was acquainted with you in Paris under the name of Dubourg?" demanded Durosey.

"Impossible! you must not touch upon the subject," cried Dubourg.

"It is my duty to an old friend," said Durosey. "But here is Chambertin; and if you are really a Baron——"

Dubourg saw that all was lost. He had not a *sou* in his pockets, and he had encountered a creditor who seemed determined to expose him. He had nothing to hope from Chambertin but to be kicked into the streets as an impostor: he therefore resolved to leave the house immediately. Rushing hastily past Durosey and Chambertin, he flew down stairs, seized his hat—gained the garden—and by the merest accident encountered Ménard, who was returning to the drawing-room.

"Follow me!" cried Dubourg to the old tutor, who gazed upon him with astonishment. "Follow me, I say—and do not utter a word; or we shall both be cut into a thousand pieces."

This intimation gave speed to the legs of the poor tutor; and he followed Dubourg down the gravel-walk which led to a little door opening into the field. Dubourg pushed Ménard out of the premises—locked the door—threw the key into a ditch—and again took to his heels as fast as he could run. Ménard followed him at an equally rapid rate, without precisely understanding the reason of so precipitate a flight, but entertaining vague notions that Chambertin's house must be on fire or beset by banditti.

"Quick, quick, my dear M. Ménard!" ejaculated Dubourg, as they merged into the open country. "We have drunk deep of the cup of pleasure: we must now be more moderate, or else our health will suffer. I am not an advocate for dissipation and excess of enjoyment. We must now say, 'Moderation in all things.'"

"Amen!" cried Ménard, as he ran by the side of Dubourg across the green fields.

* * * * * *

* * * * *

Having performed about a league as if they were running for their lives, poor Ménard, entirely out of breath, declared he could proceed no farther, and fell exhausted upon a bank. Dubourg was also of opinion that they might rest for a few minutes; and he accordingly seated himself by the side of his companion.

"Will you now explain to me, my lord," said Ménard, as soon as he recovered breath, "why we have run away from the house of our friend Chambertin like a couple of robbers? and why we have quitted thus abruptly a place where we were treated with all imaginable politeness, lodged like princes, fed like demigods, and ministered to with every possible attention and respect?"

"My dear Ménard," answered Dubourg; "the jug goes to the well so often that it is at length either broken or refilled, whichever you choose; and in this case, I might have done either one or the other."

"What jug have you broken, my lord?" demanded Ménard. "I really cannot understand your lordship."

"I believe you, Ménard," returned Dubourg; "but I will explain myself in another manner. Did you see that man whom they called Durosey, and who only arrived this evening at Chambertin's house?"

"I did, my lord," answered the preceptor.

"Do you know what he was?"

"I was told he was a retired merchant."

"Yes—in order to deceive me by giving him that title," cried Dubourg. "Did you not remark the sinister expression of his countenance?"

"I noticed that he looked at you very often, my lord," replied Ménard, "and that he seemed to survey your countenance with the greatest attention."

"No wonder!" ejaculated Dubourg. "That man recognised me, M. Ménard: he is nothing more nor less than a spy in disguise, sent after me——"

"Is it possible?" interrupted Ménard.

"It is well known," resumed Dubourg, "that I have at various times and in different Courts of Europe interfered in behalf of the oppressed Greeks, and that I have even armed ships in their cause. In consequence of these circumstances, the Turks have sworn my death. That man was one of their agents, whom I remember to have seen at Constantinople; his presence is always the harbinger of evil to me; and I am convinced that at this moment our friend Chambertin's house is surrounded and hemmed in by his accomplices. They would have run away with me in the middle of the night—and with you too, because they know that you are my companion; and in less than a fortnight, our heads would grace the Castle of Seven Towers, and figure upon spears ornamented with a horse's tail, to represent the power of the Sultan. Tell me, then, if you think I did right to fly from Allevard, or not?"

"Alas! alas!" cried Ménard. "It seems as if I could now run a hundred miles without being fatigued! Let us pursue our journey as quick as we can."

"It is unnecessary now to fatigue ourselves," replied Dubourg. "The villains have lost all traces of us."

"But how did it happen that M. Chambertin received at his house——"

"Alas! my dear Ménard, you are not acquainted with the world as I am," interrupted Dubourg. "This Turk probably effected his purposes through the medium of a dozen of Cachemire shawls, a collection of sweetmeats, a box of bottles containing ottar of roses, and other rich presents. However, I do not accuse Chambertin of wilful deceit. He was perhaps imposed upon. All I can say is, that in the midst of a game of *écarté* I saw a number of queer-looking people in the room; and I immediately resolved upon saving myself by flight."

"You were perfectly right," said M. Ménard. "But what is to become of the chaise-cart?"

"I certainly shall not return to fetch it," answered Dubourg."

"Nor I," rejoined Ménard. "But what will the landlord at Grenoble, to whom it belongs, think of us?"

"He has our own carriage to pay himself withal."

"And how shall we travel in future?"

"Upon our legs apparently. Besides, when a person has not a *sou* in the world, he does not require a carriage, since he cannot pay for the horses."

"What, my lord," exclaimed Ménard; "you have no money left?"

"Not a franc!" answered Dubourg. "I lost all I possessed at *écarté*. The sight of that Turk embarrassed and alarmed me to such an extent, that I played any cards which came first, without reflection or calculation."

"Fortunately my pupil, the Viscount Frederick de Montreville, is in the possession of money," observed Ménard; "and at present we have nothing else to do than to go and look for him."

"How can you calculate upon Frederick having any money left?" demanded Dubourg. "The young man has formed a new acquaintance; and new acquaintances always cost dear, M. Ménard. Frederick is generous, and could refuse his mistress nothing. I am certain that she has already led him into a thousand extravagancies. At that age they do not know the value of money: they dream not of the necessity of economy——"

"But I do not see, my lord, how they could have very well expended so large a sum of money while living in a wood."

"I am certain you do not suspect the worst," cried Dubourg: "I am less confident, I am sorry to say, in the good conduct of Frederick. Young women require a thousand little luxuries and indulgencies which young men cannot refuse. Do not flatter yourself that for the last month they have remained quiet and tranquil in that old hut. And now, since we are in this dilemma, I will frankly confess to you that Frederick made me aware of his intentions of furnishing a house for his mistress!"

"But your lordship of course represented the impropriety of such a step," said Ménard.

"Frederick is old enough to do as he chooses," returned Dubourg. "At all events I will myself go to the wood—alone in the first instance, so as not to annoy him; and if he will listen to reason, I will bring him back with me. In the meantime we must live. How much money do you possess?"

"About thirty francs only," replied Ménard.

"It is but a trifle: however, if we live with economy, we can make it last some time. We must manage our arrangements frugally. Those great dinners only serve to heat the blood: it is very unwholesome to partake of five or six dishes, and drink several kinds of wine every day."

"And yet, my lord, we both improved in appearance at M. Chambertin's," observed M. Ménard.

"Yes—but that constant system of good living would have done us harm in the long run," answered Dubourg. "A little moderation will befit our constitutions wonderfully. The pleasures of Capua enervated the Carthagenians; and the table of M. Chambertin would have produced similar effects upon us—for which I should have been exceedingly sorry. I shall now most decidedly resume my *incognito*."

"This time I am of your advice, my lord: for if those Turks——"

"The same danger will also prevent us from passing through Grenoble, where I might be arrested by my creditor——I mean carried off by those villains. Besides," continued Dubourg, "we should not be well received at our hotel, seeing that we have no money; and I dare swear the landlord will pretend that his vehicle is better than our's. We will, therefore, leave the town on our right hand; and with our thirty francs, we can very well lodge in some little village."

"And what shall we do when we have no more money, my lord?" demanded Ménard.

"Oh! we shall see," cried Dubourg. "It is no use to annoy ourselves beforehand. Frederick must write to his father."

"I am afraid the Count will be angry."

"I will write to my aunt, then."

"To your aunt, my lord?"

"To my intendant, I mean. At all events, we will manage in some way or another. If we were to abandon ourselves to all the misery in the world, we should not be the better for it. Let us therefore take the reverses of fortune quietly! It is beautiful weather—the night is exceedingly fine—and we are no longer fatigued: let us continue our journey. In order to admire a fine country, there is nothing better than walking. Cheer up, my dear Ménard. Since we first met, we have experienced many reverses: but have you ever seen me cast down?"

"Ah! my lord," cried the poor tutor, "every one does not possess your philosophy."

"I will embue you with it," replied Dubourg. "Remember the misfortunes of Marius, Hannibal, and Pompey: think of the poverty of Henry IV, and the sorrows of Margaret of Anjou; call to mind the sufferings of the many people who were a thousand times worse off than we are; and then complain if you have the conscience to do so."

The travellers resumed their walk. But it was a curious spectacle to see Dubourg in full dress, with his shirt-frill and his thin boots, walking with Ménard, who was attired in a pair of silk pantaloons, black stockings, and shoes with buckles, and who, in that costume, was frequently obliged to climb up hills, leap ditches, and walk upon dirty and uneven ground: They had luckily both got their hats, Dubourg having snatched his from a peg in the hall—as he rushed towards the garden—and M. Ménard having put on his to take the stroll from which he was returning when he met Dubourg in the manner before described.

At daybreak they arrived at a little cottage, and desired the peasants to provide them with breakfast. Dubourg ordered an omelet; and

this, with a little sour wine, formed the repast of the two gentlemen who had lately lived upon the most costly luxuries. The breakfast was served up in a room filled with domestic animals which flocked around our two travellers, to the extreme disgust of the unhappy Ménard.

"How comfortable is a humble cottage!" cried Dubourg. "All the splendid apartments in the world do not equal the peasant's abode, where liberty alone reigns uninterrupted."

"No one can deny," said Ménard, chasing away an immense cat which was constantly thrusting its paws into his plate, "that ceremony is altogether abolished from these rustic dwellings, and that every one can do just as he pleases. Ah! now the dog is come to take my bread!"

"Well, my dear Ménard," said Dubourg, "every one must live. In the time of our first parents, those innocent animals shared the repasts of their masters; the lion ate out of the hand, and the tiger climbed up the knees of man."

"I think you will confess, my lord," said Ménard, "that those animals have very much changed in disposition."

"Never mind," cried Dubourg: "I love everything which recalls to memory those ages of primeval innocence. When I see that fowl walking upon our table, and this duck which has just sprawled over my foot, I fancy myself in the Golden Age. It is only when I feel in my pocket that I perceive the illusion."

Unfortunately the eggs, of which the omelet was composed, were not fresh; and the wine was as sour as vinegar. Ménard made a terrible grimace at every mouthful he swallowed and every cup he drank; while Dubourg did all he could to persuade him that both the omelet and the wine were excellent.

"I know of nothing more wholesome than an omelet," said Dubourg: "whithersoever you go, in whatever country it may be, if the inhabitants only have eggs, they can immediately dish up an omelet. It is the food of nature."

"If the eggs were but fresh," said Ménard.

"Well, upon my honour," remarked Dubourg, "this little taste of straw is by no means disagreeable, and might very well serve as a substitute for tarragon. The wine, I will answer for it, cannot do us any harm."

"Nor yet any good," said Ménard. "It is horribly sour."

"A proof that it is genuine," returned Dubourg.

But in spite of all that the Baron Potoski advanced in favour of the repast, the poor tutor found it execrable.

"We must now go and find Frederick," said Ménard, rising from the table.

"He will receive me well," thought Dubourg within himself, "when he knows that in less than a month I have again made away with the purse. What can I do to extricate myself from this dilemma? Besides, what can I ask of him, since he has already given me all he possessed? Perhaps he wants money himself? I could not very well go and read him a long lecture: a sermon would not come well from my lips. Indeed, I really think I must persuade old Ménard to settle down and occupy some corner of the wood with me; and we will turn hermits. I shall then give up cards for ever."

The two travellers followed a circuitous route in order to avoid passing through Grenoble, and stopped at a little village in the neighbourhood. Ménard again spoke of hastening to look for Frederick; and Dubourg, out of patience with the old tutor, declared his intention of repairing to Vizille alone, to obtain some tidings of their young friend. He accordingly left Ménard at the Hamlet—rambled as far as a little wood half a mile distant—threw himself upon the grass—slept there all day—and returned to the tutor in the evening, with his handkerchief to his eyes, and giving vent to the most piteous sighs and moans.

"Well! what has become of him?" demanded Ménard anxiously.

"The ungrateful wretch!" exclaimed Dubourg: "the foolish fellow! the idiot!"

"In the name of mercy, speak, my lord!"

"I suspected he would commit some indiscretion with that young girl," continued Dubourg. "He has gone away with her: they left the wood a fortnight ago!"

"Oh! what will the Count say?" exclaimed the bewildered preceptor. "What shall I tell him when he asks me after his son?"

"You must tell him that he is lost," replied Dubourg.

"Does your lordship think that such a response will satisfy the Count?" demanded Ménard.

"Then you must tell him that he has lost himself," answered Dubourg. "But calm yourself, my dear friend. I promise you we will find the strayed sheep: I possess agents and correspondents at all the Courts in Europe, and will despatch couriers to every one of them the first opportunity."

This promise somewhat tranquillized the importunate tutor; and Dubourg continued his observations.

"Before we think of him, let us reflect a little upon our own condition, which is far from being the most pleasant in the world. It is not in this miserable hamlet that we shall find any means of existence: let us reach the neighbouring town: and pray, my dear Ménard, try and divest yourself of that miserable expression of countenance which will create a sorry opinion concerning us at any inn where we may stop for the night."

The travellers pursued their way; and towards ten o'clock they arrived at a little town about five miles from Grenoble, called Voreppe. Dubourg inquired the way to the best inn, and repaired thither, accompanied by M. Ménard. They entered the coffee-room—Dubourg first, with his head erect, and assuming an air of importance; and Ménard behind him, looking as miserable and downcast as possible. Several other travellers were assembled in the room, and were conversing together while supper was being prepared.

"Will you sup here, gentlemen?" inquired the servant-girl.

"Certainly, we will," answered Dubourg: "we are fond of society—are we not, my dear friend?"

"Yes, my lord—sir," ejaculated Ménard whom a kick from Dubourg's foot reminded him of the *incognito*.

Dubourg listened to the conversation of the other travellers: but the topics of their discourse were far from interesting. The tradesmen spoke of their business; a few inhabitants of the village discussed parochial matters: and in all this Dubourg saw nothing to turn to advantage. Having in vain looked around for another Chambertin to astonish with his titles, he paced the apartment with long strides, rattled a few *sous* which filled his waiscoat pocket, and stopped every now and then to offer Ménard a pinch of snuff; and the old tutor, in spite of his griefs, never ceased to gaze upon the snuff-box of the King of Prussia with the utmost veneration and respect.

Suddenly a little man, about fifty years of age—in a cinnamon-coloured coat, green trousers, and hussar's boots—and whose head was protected by a cap the front of which might have served as an umbrella in case of need—entered the room with horror depicted upon his countenance, and speaking in a very loud tone of voice.

"They will not come—they cannot come! and now my theatre will not open! I am undone—I am ruined—I shall go mad!"

Thus speaking, the little man threw himself upon a seat; and the townspeople, who were present, instantaneously gathered round him.

"What, M. Floridor," said the landlady; "your actors are not arrived?"

"The most useful, the most important characters of my company are wanting!" returned the little man. "The *Genteel Comedian* and the *Father* cannot come; and thus, in one moment, I lose the very two I most require! The *Genteel Comedian* was a native of Cambray, where he had played *Harlequins* and *Clowns* for upwards of twenty years: he was the most remarkable man I ever saw! Such talent! it was only a month ago I saw him play the part of a lover—for lately he plays the *Heroes* as well as the *Clowns*—and never shall I forget my delight upon that occasion! I was really astonished! A splendid figure—a deep sonorous voice—very much like mine—and such gesticulation! In tragedy, too, what eloquence! what fire! what enthusiasm! I actually wept when I saw him murder his wife and eleven small children! As for the *Father*—he also was an invaluable actor. Thirty years ago he was the delight of Beaugency; and I myself saw him at Paris playing to crowded houses. He was an actor capable of everything—kings—fathers—tyrants—banditti—and even old women, if we were very much pushed! He only devoted himself lately to the part of *Father* altogether, because he lost all his teeth—a circumstance which does not however prevent him from holding forth in a swelling tone of voice!"

"And why cannot they come?" asked the andlady.

"Ah! why, indeed?" repeated the unfortunate manager; "because the *Clown* has a dreadful cough and lost his voice; and the *Father*, having had a fight in a wine-shop, has been sent to prison for a fortnight. Such accidents only happen to me! Now that I have taken such pains to fit up the theatre, and convert the mayor's stable into a decent place, all my hopes are suddenly defeated! I really flatter myself that the theatre is now beautiful: no one could ever tell it had been a stable, if the smell of horses was not still there. We have an orchestra—three boxes—and a gallery, all arranged and fitted up in the best possible style, a thousand times superior to the regular theatre at Grenoble. The inhabitants of Voreppe would have been so delighted! There are many very clever people at Voreppe; and though this is the first time there has ever been a theatre in the town, I am certain I should have made a good thing of it. The justice-of-the-peace has already secured one box—he has it *gratis* for himself and family; and the principal inhabitants had all led me to believe they would most likely attend."

M. Floridor stopped a moment to gather breath and wipe the perspiration from his face; while Dubourg, who had not lost a single word of all that had been said, seated himself in one corner of the room, and appeared to be meditating some new project.

"It is really very annoying," said the landlady. "I have had a new gown made for my daughter, to take her to the play the first night."

"Annoying do you call it?" exclaimed M. Floridor, writhing upon his chair like a maniac; "it is enough to reduce one to despair! I would give a hundred francs, with the greatest pleasure, for two actors; and a hundred francs is a sum to which the whole of one night's receipts will not probably amount. But never mind those paltry considerations; I will waive them all, if I can only open the stable—I mean my house!"

These words made a deep impression upon Dubourg, who, however, kept himself aloof, and did not appear to pay the slightest attention to anything that was said.

"Ah!" cried the waiter of the inn, "if I only knew how to act! a hundred francs would be very easily earned!"

"I had engaged my two actors for a month, at the rate of sixty francs a-piece," continued Floridor. "It is very dear: but great talent must be paid liberally."

"Cannot you replace them?" inquired the landlady.

"And by whom?" cried the disconsolate manager. "I have already made a barber into a *Tyrant*, a carpenter's boy into a *Bandit*, a gendarme's wife into a *Princess*, and the cooper's girl into the *Heroine*. They were the only available people I could find in the town; but they already rehearse well—and the carpenter's boy has a splendid voice. As for myself, I can perform in case of need: but as I am also obliged to act the part of prompter, I dare not undertake important characters, to keep me too long upon the stage. I have

secured a little wardrobe which would have excited universal admiration—three Spanish tunics, which the rope-dancer left in pawn at the wine-shop—a barrister's gown to make cloaks—two fur-caps instead of turbans—and some splendid chintz curtains, which I purchased at Grenoble, for ladies' trains. We should have opened to-morrow evening with 'Phædra,' and 'The Village Conjuror.' In 'Phædra,' the carpenter's boy was to have performed *Aricia*, because we have only two women: but he is a good-looking lad, without a beard, and would have appeared well in female attire. The parts of the two confidantes could have been spouted by myself from the prompter's side. We should have played 'The

No. 29.—The Empress Eugenie.

Village Conjuror' without music; but it would have been quite as well. Speaking has as good an effect as singing at times. What success would have greeted us! My *Clown* was to have performed *Hippolytus;* and in *Theseus* my *Father* would have been excellent. The barber would have enacted *Theramenes:* he already knows one-third of his part. But, alas! *Hippolytus* has a dreadful cough—and *Theseus* gets drunk at the wine-shop! What can I do? what can I do? Oh! if some great actor—from Paris, for instance—would just come to Voreppe at this moment! But the hope is vain and ridiculous!"

"Supper is ready, gentlemen," said the servant.

"All this will not prevent you from eating, I hope," observed the landlord to M. Floridor.

"Oh! no," returned the manager: "I sup from habit—but I have no appetite. This untoward event has grieved me more than I can tell."

"But he has not lost his tongue through it," said Ménard in a whisper to Dubourg, as he hastened to seat himself at the table.

To the astonishment of the tutor, Dubourg suddenly stepped up to him, agitated his arms in a surprising manner, and, assuming a majestic attitude, declaimed as follows:—

"Since Fate sends back my friend to greet my sight,
My fortunes seem to wear an aspect bright;
And heav'n has wiped away the glist'ning tear,
Since he—that long-lost friend—rejoined us here!"

Ménard stared at Dubourg, with the most stupid amazement depicted upon his countenance: he at first thought the Baron was mad.

"You have found him," at length exclaimed Ménard. "Whom have you found, my young pupil? is he coming to rejoin us here?"

Dubourg trod upon Ménard's toes, because he noticed that Floridor, instead of sitting down to supper, was gazing upon him with the greatest interest and attention. He accordingly seized hold of the preceptor's arm in a theatrical manner, and declaimed again:—

"And is it thou, whom heaven has thus restored,
To sit beside me at the frugal board;
Thou, who, like me, from Benjamin art sprung,—
My constant comrade when our years were young!"

"Capital! excellent! beautiful!" vociferated the little manager, clapping his hands together, while Ménard glanced around him in the greatest amazement, to look for the descendant of Benjamin whom the Baron Potoski had alluded to: but not seeing any one likely to answer the description, the tutor asked the waiter if *his* ancestors were named Benjamin.

"You are an actor, sir?" said Floridor, advancing towards Dubourg, cap in hand.

"Eh? what? what?" exclaimed Dubourg, pretending to be surprised and annoyed at having been overheard. "I, my dear sir!—I can assure you——But what induces you to imagine I am a performer?" added Dubourg, elevating his voice like the hero of a melodrama.

"What induces me!" ejaculated M. Floridor, taking Dubourg's hand and squeezing it in raptures. "Ah! my dear sir, you betray yourself without suspecting it! But independent of that little declamation, I should have discovered your profession by those noble gestures, that engaging attitude, that majestic bearing! No one, who is not an actor of the first merit, can unite all those qualifications in his own person. You are an actor—a famous actor,—and you cannot deny it!"

"I see," said Dubourg, smiling with an air of modesty, "that it is difficult to conceal anything from you. I and my friend were, however, desirous of preserving the strictest *incognito.*"

"Your friend!" exclaimed Floridor, leaping with joy. "What, your companion also an actor?"

"Of the first order in the tragic style," replied Dubourg; "but equally fine in comedy and farce, as he is in tragedy."

M. Ménard listened to the observations of his illustrious friend like one who hears a language he cannot comprehend. But M. Floridor was in raptures; he seized Dubourg in his arms, and embraced him—he flew to the poor tutor, and embraced him also; and he was about to embrace the landlady as well, if the landlord had not prevented him.

"It is heaven which sends them!" ejaculated Floridor, running about the coffee-room like a madman. "My theatre will open! we will play 'Phædra'—we will draw tears from every eye in Voreppe—we will conclude with 'The Village Conjuror!' Landlord, a bottle of your very best wine. Gentlemen, I hope you will do me the favour to sup with *me* this evening?"

"What does this mean?" said Ménard in a whisper to Dubourg.

"It means that we are two of the most celebrated actors in Poland—that the talkative Floridor will pay for our supper—that he shall also pay us for something else presently—and that you must corroborate all you hear me say. Pray, in mercy's sake, divest yourself of that pitiful air, in the first place?"

"What, my lord," exclaimed Menard; "you do not intend us to turn actors?"

"M. Ménard," answered Dubourg, "actors are gentlemen as well as other people. Roscius was the friend of Sylla—Garrick is buried amongst the Kings of England—Moliere was an actor, and was not the less a very great man; and two of the most illustrious individuals of our own time have been upon the stage."

"But I, my lord, have never played in my life," remonstrated poor Ménard.

"Nor I," returned Dubourg; "and yet I am not alarmed at a trifle."

"And if the audience should discover our ignorance?"

"We will declare it is the Polish way of performing."

"But our friends in Paris?" said Ménard.

"They can never know it; we are *incognito*," was the response.

"I have no memory, and shall not recollect my part," continued Ménard.

"You will be prompted," answered Dubourg.

"But I am very timid, and should never dare to present myself upon a stage."

"When your cheeks are rouged and your eye-brows blackened, you will be as bold as a lion."

"I shall fail most assuredly," persisted Ménard.

"We will demand a high price, and then our very faults will be overlooked," said Dubourg.

"But——"

"Deuce take it, I have already had enough of your *buts*. Remember that all this is only for two or three days: it is moreover a means of amusement which will do us no harm, and will supply us with ready money to enable us to await fresh remittances. Besides, when a man like me—a Polish nobleman—an Elector Palatine—condescends to adopt such measures, I think it very odd that an obscure individual should presume to give himself airs. You will either perform with me, or I shall abandon you to the wrath of the Count de Montreville, whose son you have lost."

"I will perform, my lord," said Ménard, with a huge sigh.

"So much the better!" Dubourg answered.

During this little dialogue, which no one overheard, M. Floridor ran to the barber's house, to inform him that two great actors—whose names he was yet unacquainted with, but who were evidently men of extraordinary talent, since they travelled *incognito*—had just arrived at the Golden Sun Inn, and that he had done all he could to induce them to display their abilities at Voreppe. The barber tossed aside the false front of the town-clerk's wife, which he was occupied in arranging, and hastened to unfold the joyful tidings to all his customers: the customers in their turn repaired to their neighbours—every one ran from house to house—and as the town of Voreppe was not very considerable, the whole place rang with the news of the presence of two great actors before bed-time.

M. Floridor returned to the inn—and supper was served up. Dubourg seated himself by the side of Ménard, in order to have an opportunity of whispering the necessary replies the poor tutor must make to any queries that might be addressed to him; and the manager occupied a chair on Dubourg's right. The other guests paid the most marked respect to Dubourg and Ménard, because they perceived that M. Floridor treated them with the greatest attention, and because in this world we frequently imitate others without precisely knowing wherefore. The little manager talked incessantly; Dubourg from time to time spouted forth anything that came into his head; and Ménard had devoted himself entirely to the dishes before him.

"May I have the honour of being acquainted with the names of those whose talents will probably embellish my theatre?" inquired Floridor.

"We did not wish to be known," answered Dubourg; "but since you treat us in a manner at once kind and respectful, we could not think of remaining strangers to you. We are the two first actors of Cracow, and have solicited permission to travel in France, whose language we are desirous of fully understanding, it being that which is used upon the Polish stage. The consequence is that our theatres are only frequented by the most distinguished people of the country—like the Italian Opera in Paris."

"I understand perfectly," cried M. Floridor: "but what is your style of acting?"

"All styles," answered Dubourg; "from the pantomime to the opera. My friend Wolowitz, whom you see here, is the Fluery of Poland; and I think I may venture to say that I am the Talma. Oh! if you could only see us in 'The Hunters and the Milk Girl!' But here you do not perform operas."

"I beg your pardon," answered Floridor. "We perform operas very frequently—comic operas, without music, it is true, because we have so small an orchestra. But if you would only condescend to afford us a little of your valuable time for a few days——"

"We are very famous in Poland, I can assure you," interrupted Dubourg. "Whenever we play in any place of any note, the audience invariably throw garlands of flowers at us. Do you recollect, Wolowitz, when we were performing the 'Deserter' and the 'Dog of Montargis,' at—at—Smolensk, you enacted the part of the assassin? What a sensation we caused in that city!"

Wolowitz made no answer, because he did not know his name; but Dubourg gave him a few kicks under the table, and Ménard, raising his head, replied, with his mouth full, "Yes, my lord."

"Do you see?" exclaimed Dubourg; "he calls me 'my lord now.' He fancies he is upon the stage!"

Another kick convinced Ménard that he had committed himself; and the poor tutor whispered in Dubourg's ear, "For heaven's sake tell me what my name is. I cannot guess it."

"When the public saw upon the play-bill the names of *Boleslas* and *Wolowitz*," continued Dubourg, looking at Ménard as he uttered the latter appellation, "the theatre was crowded to excess, and we were literally smothered with garlands."

"You shall have plenty of garlands here, too," cried Floridor. "I have already procured a dozen, which I give to my own friends to throw upon the heads of the actors—particularly if the performances go off badly. You shall also have verses, sonnets, and conundrums, written on rose-coloured paper."

"I see you understand the business!" exclaimed Dubourg. "That kind of ceremony flatters the actor and deceives the public."

"Ah! M. Boleslas," said Floridor, "if I could only hope that you would consent, together with your friend, to devote but three days to Voreppe!"

Dubourg declared that both he and Wolowitz had sworn never to perform at any theatre in France, and raised a thousand other difficulties, in order to obtain a high price for his services. Floridor begged him not to refuse the favour so earnestly solicited—and ordered another bottle of wine. Ménard was softened by the supper and the courtesy of the entertainer; and when he rose from table, swore he would perform anything he was asked: but

Dubourg was not to be persuaded so easily. Floridor would not leave him; he was ready to go upon his knees to persuade the great Boleslas to accede to his request.

"I would make a thousand sacrifices to open my theatre with such talent," said he; "and if you will accept a hundred francs—which is an immense sum, when you reflect that I have only a stable for my theatre—I will give it with pleasure."

Dubourg at length consented that himself and friend should perform for a hundred francs, assuring Floridor at the same time that he only yielded to do him a service. The little man was transported: he immediately wrote three bills to stick up in the town on the following morning, in order to inform the public that "Messrs. Boleslas and Wolowitz, the celebrated Polish actors, would honour the theatre with an exhibition of their talent."

"We will open with 'Phædra' and 'The Village Conjuror,'" said Floridor.

"Open with anything you like," returned Dubourg; "it is all the same to us:"—and most assuredly it was.

"Then, that is decided."

"With pleasure. I will play *Phædra*," said Dubourg.

"What, do you perform the parts of women?" demanded Floridor.

"*Hippolytus*, I meant," said Dubourg. "And Wolowitz will make you a magnificent *Theseus*."

"Capital! I only want a *Clown* for 'The Village Conjuror,'" observed Floridor.

"I will take that upon myself. In four days we will perform all these characters."

"Four days! that is a long time!" cried the manager.

"We must rest a little," answered Dubourg.

"Well, then—say four days," exclaimed Floridor. "We will advertise you to-morrow. Have you any dresses?"

"No—since we did not think we should perform."

"I will procure you the best costumes possible."

Floridor bade the two travellers good night; and every one retired to rest, Dubourg laughing in his sleeve at this new adventure—and Ménard consoling himself with the reflection, that since the Baron performed, he could not do wrong in imitating so illustrious an example. But when he awoke on the following morning, the poor tutor could not persuade himself that he was to enact *Theseus*. Dubourg came to him with the part in his hand: for the manager had already sent the book, with the intimation that there would be a rehearsal at mid-day.

"Now," said Dubourg, "cheer up! Your part has only a hundred lines. What is such a trifle to you who have learnt Horace, Virgil, Ovid, and so many other authors by heart?"

"All that is very well," replied Ménard: "but I have passed my life in learning the classics, and I have only three days to study this."

"Never fear—I will answer for everything," said Dubourg. "You know that there is a prompter."

"That will be my principal resource," observed Ménard.

"Provided you know the first few lines, all will go on well."

"Oh! as for the first few lines," exclaimed Ménard triumphantly, "I cannot fail to get them perfect. Listen!"

"Fortune is wearied of the evil done,
And, lady, to your arms, restores your son!"

"Excellent!" exclaimed Dubourg. "You speak like Demosthenes."

"The anathema which comes afterwards embarrasses me," said Ménard.

"Make some awful signs, and the audience will understand you," replied Dubourg.

At twelve o'clock M. Floridor made his appearance to conduct the two gentlemen to the theatre, where the remainder of the company awaited their presence. The aspect of the place to which they entered by a dove-house (now converted into the office for receiving the money) greatly amused Dubourg: while Ménard stumbled over two old barrels, which M. Floridor had placed upon the stage to represent mountains. The company manifested the greatest respect towards the new-comers, who rehearsed with the copies in their hands. Dubourg did not utter a word, without being applauded by the troop: and M. Floridor made himself hoarse by crying, "What talent! what energy!" Ménard was received equally well; and the old tutor, astounded by the applause he elicited from the actors and actresses, persuaded himself that he possessed a latent talent for tragedy.

"Do you take snuff upon the stage?" inquired Floridor of Dubourg.

"Why not?" was the answer. "I am a *King;* and the King of Prussia took snuff in profusion."

"Witness that box," said Ménard, which——"

"In Poland," hastily interrupted Dubourg, "we may do anything upon the stage. That is one of our oldest and most inviolate laws."

"Ah! how fortunate!" cried the gendarme's wife, who played *Phædra*, and dared not take snuff in enacting the princess.

"In that case," observed the carpenter's boy, "I shall be enabled to pop a quid of tobacco into my mouth while I perform *Aricia*, since M. Boleslas has no objection."

"Anything you choose," answered Dubourg. "Men of great talents allow a thousand follies."

Three days passed away in rehearsals! and at length the grand one arrived. Ménard did not know any more of his part than the half-dozen opening lines; but these he could recite without hesitation—and Dubourg had assured him it was all that was necessary. As for Dubourg himself, he was in a most blissful state of ignorance regarding his own part: but this was far from being a source of embarrassment or alarm. On the morning of the eventful day he took care to obtain the payment of his hundred francs in advance, assuring M. Floridor that such was the custom in Poland. The little manager offered no objection! and Dubourg consigned the money to his pocket.

The costumes, which were to serve for *Hippolytus* and *Theseus* were carried to the inn.

"Can we not dress at the theatre?" inquired Dubourg.

"Impossible," replied Floridor. "We have no rooms for the purpose. Every one dresses at his own house; and as the weather is exceedingly fine, you will not be inconvenienced."

"I must walk through the town as *Hippolytus?*"

"The theatre is only ten paces distant: and you can very well perform in boots—for *Hippolytus* is a hunter."

"True," said Dubourg.

"As we have no bows and arrows," observed M. Floridor, "you can make use of this old musket, which I have brought you. The ramrod can represent the arrow."

"Excellent!" returned Dubourg.

"As for the wig, I think you will be pleased," continued Floridor. "You know that *Hippolytus* wore his hair streaming in large curls over his shoulder; and so I have ordered a wig of the time of Louis XIV to be prepared immediately."

The manager disappeared; and Dubourg called Ménard to help him to dress. The tutor's turn to go upon the stage would not arrive till the Third Act; and thus he had ample time to assist his friend. Dubourg kept on his black trousers, because the hundred francs were in the pocket, and he deemed it prudent to retain his money about his person, in case of accident. But over his breeches he was obliged to put on a pair of nankeen pantaloons: he then donned a white tunic, and threw over his shoulder a large cloak covered with rabbit's skins, to represent the hide of a tiger. He then put on his wig—daubed his face with rouge—seized the musket in one hand—took a white kerchief in the other—and proceeded to the theatre, having desired Ménard to hasten and attire himself also, so as not to keep the audience waiting.

The theatre was full—the receipts amounted to more than a hundred francs—and M. Floridor was enraptured. He ran from the stage to the scenes, and from the scenes upon the stage, in full view of the audience,—the curtain, which was suspended to a rod, and drew backward and forward, being somewhat too short for the opening.

Dubourg made his appearance with the perspiration pouring down his cheeks, the cloak being exceedingly heavy, and the wig exceedingly large. The actors however gave a loud shout of acclamation when they saw him approach.

"What a splendid figure!" said they to each other. "How well he looks in *Hippolytus!*"

"I shall play *Phædra* by inspiration," cried the gendarme's wife, darting an amorous glance at Dubourg: but as *Phædra* squinted, and her nose was full of snuff, *Hippolytus* did not return the tender look.

Dubourg hastened to draw aside the curtain and examine the condition of the house. But the moment the audience caught a glimpse of him, an universal scream echoed throughout the place, the ladies having imagined it was a lion that met their eyes. M. Floridor rushed upon the stage, crying, "I was certain you would be enchanted with him!" and he commenced clapping his hands with as much enthusiasm as if he himself was one of the spectators. The whole house then followed his example: and Dubourg, having bowed majestically to the audience, retired behind the scenes. At length everything was ready. *Phædra* was attired in a gown much too large for her about the waist, and too short in the skirts; and on her head she wore a cap of a most peculiar make. *Œnone*, in order to seem a vindictive character, had dressed herself in red and black, and had ornamented her upper lip with a couple of streaks of a burnt cork, because Dubourg had assured her that all women of great minds had a slight moustache. The carpenter's boy, on the other hand, had sacrificed his own moustache the better to enact *Aricia*. He was attired in a coarse cambric-muslin gown, wore a garland of roses in his hair, and imitated as well as he could a female voice, chewing tobacco the whole time.

The barber, who played *Theramenes*, had dressed his own hair in the fashion of Francis I, and was attired in a Spanish costume. The two confidantes were to be personated by M. Floridor,—or rather, their parts were to be spoken by him from the place where he sat as prompter. Every one was present save *Theseus* (M. Ménard); but as his part would not commence till the third act, there was no necessity to wait for him.

"Let us begin," said M. Floridor: "the audience will be getting impatient. *Theseus* will come in time."

"Certainly," returned Dubourg. "It is his dress that detains him. He is the most particular man in the world."

M. Floridor who filled the offices of prompter, treasurer, and stage-manager, stamped with his foot three times upon the stage to announce the commencement of the performance, and then hastened to draw aside the curtain. But the curtain stuck fast in the middle; and two of the spectators were obliged to leap upon the stage and assist the little manager to arrange it properly. M. Floridor, having thus accomplished a difficult task, retired behind the scenes to fill his situation of prompter. When Dubourg appeared upon the stage, the public gave vent to a loud shout, which was not exactly one of admiration. He swung himself majestically backward and forward beneath his immense cloak, and paced the stage with an imposing air. But his enormous wig, the rouge which with the perspiration ran down his cheeks, and the old musket on his shoulder, gave him an extraordinary appearance. The audience, who had ere now caught a glimpse of his head, had moreover imagined from its size that Dubourg was a very tall man: but the cloak weighed him down, and the great height of *Theramenes*, who was gigantic in stature, made him seem even shorter than he really was.

"He is a Pole," said the spectators to each other.

"He is terribly ugly," whispered the ladies.

"But wonderfully clever," observed the gentlemen.

Dubourg rolled his eyes in a most fearful manner to produce a vast deal of effect—while the unfortunate *Theramenes*, whose head touched the ceiling, was obliged to hold himself in a bending posture in order not to carry away upon his hair the spiders' webs which hung to the roof of the stable. Dubourg was anything but timid; and he went through his part with such violence, and with such an unnecessary amount of gesticulation, that before the first scene was terminated, *Theramenes* had received two buffets from *Hippolytus*. At the third, the barber began to grow angry, and muttered between his teeth, "Take care! If you continue in this way, I shall be like a roast apple before I have done." But the audience admired Dubourg's heated manner of performing, and applauded him vociferously every time he terminated a sentence.

The First Act proceeded tolerably well. The spectators however manifested something more than astonishment, when the prompter declaimed from behind the scenes the parts of the two confidantes: but as he did not occupy the attention of the audience for any length of time, this little circumstance was suffered to pass without further notice,—especially as M. Floridor, turning towards the pit, exclaimed "Gentlemen, it is thus that the parts of confidantes are enacted in fourth-rate towns throughout France." But in the meantime *Theseus* did not make his appearance; and M. Floridor became gradually uneasy.

"What can he be doing at the inn?" cried Dubourg. "I suppose his dress delays him?"

"Impossible!" exclaimed the manager. "I gave him a beautiful yellow tunic, and pantaloons of the same stuff. He has also got a yellow turban, which is used for *Mahommed.*"

"*Theseus* then will be all yellow?" said Dubourg.

"Custom has settled the attire you know," was the answer. "But let us commence the Second Act: he must come in the meantime."

The Second Act was begun; but it did not proceed so favourably as the first. *Aricia*, in a moment of tragic fervour, expectorated her quid of tobacco upon the nose of *Hippolytus* (Dubourg), who returned the compliment by bestowing a severe kick upon the carpenter's boy, just as that individual was exclaiming—

> "The rich profusion of your beauties spare,
> Nor waste on one like me such zealous care."

"That will teach you to be more cautious in future," whispered Dubourg.

"If I wasn't a woman, for the time being, I would answer you in another kind of way," returned the carpenter's boy, clenching his fist.

"You had better be quiet," answered Dubourg.

Floridor hastened upon the stage to establish peace between *Hippolytus* and *Aricia*; and when he had succeeded in reconciling them, the performance was continued. A few moments after this dispute, Dubourg, who was upon the stage with *Phædra*, waited for Floridor to prompt him: but M. Florider was also waiting for some one to snuff the candle which stood near him.

"Snuffers! snuffers!" cried M. Floridor to one of the boys whom he had hired to shift the scenes.

"What a fool he is!" exclaimed *Phædra*, stepping up to the place where Floridor was seated: and very coolly taking up the candle, she snuffed it with her finger and thumb. "There, that is the way to do things, when one possesses a little common sense:"—and she handed Floridor the candle.

This little interlude did not please the audience, who were already annoyed at the dispute between *Hippolytus* and the princess: and an *amateur*, who was more critical than the rest, because he had seen plays performed at Grenoble, flung a potato on the stage, and struck *Phædra* on the eye. The gendarme's wife went through her part in tears; and thus terminated the Second Act, in a manner which seemed to menace an approaching storm. Floridor, who ran upon the stage at the conclusion of each Act, now hastened to console *Phædra*, who was determined not to proceed with her part. He endeavoured to console his troop with the assurance that the concluding Acts would put the audience in good humour; and he calculated upon the appearance of *Theseus* for producing the grandest effects: but *Theseus* was not there; and his prolonged absence gave rise to the most alarming conjectures.

"What can have happened?" exclaimed Dubourg: "this unaccountable delay appears ominous. I will go and look after him."

"Pray haste," said Floridor: "for if we keep the audience waiting we may spoil all."

Let us now return to the poor tutor, and inform the reader why he had not made his appearance at the theatre. As soon as Dubourg had left him, he proceeded to attire himself in the yellow costume which M. Floridor had supplied: but this was not a trifling undertaking for a man who, having never been to a ball in his life, and never having put on a masquerading garb, had worn for upwards of thirty years the same sort of dress. Ménard inspected the tunic, the trousers, and the turban; and was a long time before he could persuade himself to put on the theatrical attire, and to apply the rouge-brush to his venerable cheeks. He however recalled to mind Roscius, Garrick, and Moliere, and thus inspired himself with the necessary courage to enter upon his duties. He had promised not to disappoint M. Floridor; the engagement was fairly entered into; and Baron Potoski had set him the example. No means of retreat were therefore open to him. Accordingly, after a great deal of difficulty, he at length succeeded in dressing himself up as *Theseus*. He smiled, admired himself in the glass, and thought he did not look amiss. He even soothed his mind by the reflection that he was about to represent the King of Athens, repeated the first few lines over to himself, and at last rushed from his chamber to proceed to the theatre.

At the same moment a traveller arrived at the inn in his own carriage. The appearance of the stranger and of his equipage announced a wealthy individual; and the landlord accordingly hastened to receive him with the utmost politeness. The traveller, who was a short,

thin individual, considerably advanced in years, and whose countenance wore an expression of severity, inquired, in an authoritative tone of voice, the names of the travellers who had arrived at Voreppe within the few previous days. The host immediately satisfied the stranger, who exclaimed, when he had done speaking, "Ah! I shall never trace them out, I fear."

"Will you take any supper, sir?" inquired the landlord.

"No—I am not hungry," was the reply. "Take care of my horses. I shall probably depart in a short time. Show me to a private room—and let me be alone."

The tone in which these orders were given, did not induce the landlord to venture upon continuing the conversation. He accordingly hastened to conduct the stranger to an apartment: but as were they ascending the stairs, they encountered M. Ménard, who was walking with a majestic air, waving his hands, and repeating in an emphatic tone the lines:—

> "Fortune is wearied of the evil done,
> And, lady, to your arms restores your son!"

The little old gentleman raised his eyes, when the sound of Ménard's voice fell upon his ear—and gazed upon him for a long time in silent astonishment.

"Is it possible?" cried he at length. "M. Ménard—in this costume!"

The tutor looked at the traveller, and remained stupified upon the stairs when he recognised the Count de Montreville, Frederick's father! The nobleman's eyes expressed the full extent of his indignation; and seizing the tutor by the arm, he dragged him into the room, and questioned him in a severe tone of voice.

"What does all this mean, M. Ménard?" said the Count. "And wherefore have you attired yourself in that yellow garb, which makes you look like a felon escaped from the galleys?"

"My lord, yellow is by no means a despicable colour," answered Ménard. "In China, the principal marks of distinction are yellow waistcoats and peacock's feathers."

"Sir!" ejaculated the Count; "let me hear no more about your Chinese; but answer my question. Wherefore are you muffled up in this style?"

"My lord," said the tutor, "the reason is—that—this evening I perform *Theseus!*"

"You perform *Theseus!*" cried the Count.

"Yes, my lord—in 'Phædra,' which is now being performed."

"What, sir!" interrupted the irritated nobleman: "you—a tutor—playing upon a stage!"

"How could I help it, my lord," answered Ménard: "I am the victim of circumstances! Besides—Roscius was the friend of Sylla—Garrick is buried at Westminster—and Moliere——"

"You believe yourself equal to those illustrious men, sir," said the Count. "Was it to play in 'Phædra' that I sent you to travel with my son? was it to dress yourself in Chinese garments, that you undertook the journey? Are you so silly as to imagine that I should be your dupe much longer? Scarcely had you left Paris a fortnight, when you expended the eight thousand francs with which I furnished you."

"We did not expend them, my lord," said Ménard.

"Silence, sir! I looked over that indiscretion, and pardoned it. I sent you a fresh supply; and I learnt that instead of proceeding on your way, you were staying at Grenoble, and that my son was wasting his time in Dauphiny, instead of travelling over Europe."

"The country about here is beautiful, my lord."

"I was determined to ascertain the truth of all that I heard, and immediately left Paris and hastened to Grenoble, where I looked for you in vain. At length, it is in this costume that I find you—and I admit the circumstance surprises me! But my son—where is my son? Is he also engaged to perform this evening?"

"No, my lord," answered Ménard.

"Where is he?" demanded the Count. "Speak!"

"He is lost, my lord," returned the poor tutor.

"Lost!" cried the Count. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, that he has only run away from us, my lord," replied Ménard.

"Recollect, sir, it was to you I entrusted my son!" cried the Count.

"We shall find him again, my lord. The Baron Potoski is going to despatch couriers to every Court in Europe."

"Who is this Baron Potoski?" inquired the Count.

"A Polish nobleman," returned Ménard; "a very clever young man, who is also Palatine of Rava and Sandomir, and who possesses a splendid castle upon the summit of Mount Krapack, which he heats with gas, and which produces him nothing but snow."

"This is too much!" ejaculated M. de Montreville. "I really think your brain is turned, M. Ménard."

"No, my lord; I know what I am saying, and that all I tell you is true," answered the poor tutor. "He has moreover a certain species of Tokay——"

"Where did you find this Baron?"

"On the road near Paris; and, by way of parenthesis, he overturned our carriage, and I rolled into a ditch. But your son recognised an intimate friend in the Baron Potoski, and we rode in the carriage of King Stanislas. I occupied the place where his Majesty himself had been seated; and his lordship the Viscount filled that which the Princess of Hungary formerly used. Since that period we have travelled with the Baron."

The Count de Montreville walked to and fro in the apartment; while Ménard was seated in a corner without daring to move.

"And what has become of this Baron?" demanded the Count, after a long pause.

"He is playing *Hippolytus*, my lord," replied Ménard, "at this very moment. But here he is to answer for himself."

And as Ménard was speaking, Dubourg en-

tered the room crying, "Come, *Theseus!* they are waiting for you to open the Third Act:"—but, turning suddenly round, he saw the Count de Montreville, and remained rooted to the spot.

"I was certain of it!" ejaculated the Count: "it is that wild fellow, Dubourg!"

At these words, M. Ménard opened his eyes in astonishment: and Dubourg contented himself by making a profound bow to Frederick's father.

"Come, M. Ménard, follow me," said the Count. "Take off that costume and let us depart at once."

The poor tutor did not wait to hear the order repeated. One moment sufficed for him to throw aside his tunic and trousers: he put on his usual attire once more—took his hat—and prepared to follow the Count.

"And as for you, sir," said the nobleman to Dubourg, "whose society has been so profitable to my son—remember that if I do not find Frederick, the weight of my anger will fall upon you. Follow me, M. Ménard."

In a few moments the Count and the tutor were seated in the carriage from which the horses had not been unharnessed; and they left the inn to return to Grenoble, where the Count hoped to learn some tidings concerning his son.

In the meantime, Dubourg, who had remained stupified at all that had just taken place, bethought himself of his own position. The audience awaited the appearance of *Theseus*, without whom the performance could not proceed; and the inhabitants of Voreppe did not seem at all inclined to make any allowance for disappointment or delay. On the other hand, he had received the price of the engagement for himself and Ménard in advance: and since Ménard had departed, how could he fulfil his promise? As he was debating in his own mind what plan to adopt, a confused murmur fell upon his ears. He ran to the window, and perceived Floridor, surrounded by the principal portion of the audience, in the street, advancing towards the inn,—all declaring that the two Poles should perform, or they would thrash them soundly.

"They will perform, gentlemen—they will perform!" cried Floridor; "I have paid them in advance."

Dubourg perceived the danger that threatened him. He reflected whether he should return the money—whether he should apologize for himself on account of the abrupt departure of his colleague—or whether he should leave the manager to settle matters with his audience. This last plan appeared to him the best; and without hesitating any longer, he ran to a window which looked into the garden at the back of the house—opened it—jumped out—and fell upon a heap of manure just as Floridor and the crowd entered the inn. He rose, wrapped himself in his cloak, and ran across the fields as if all the inhabitants of Voreppe were at his heels!

In a short time the Count and Ménard arrived at Grenoble, and proceeded to the hotel where the three travellers had formerly resided, and to which the Count ordered the tutor to indicate the way. During the ride from Voreppe, the Count had again questioned Ménard relative to his son, and succeeded in ascertaining, with a great deal of difficulty, that a love-affair had detained him in the neighbourhood of that town. This explanation partially tranquillized the Count, who imagined that his presence would be necessary to restore Frederick to a proper line of conduct.

On their arrival at the inn, Ménard had a dispute with the landlord concerning the chaise cart which had been hired to take the tutor and Dubourg to Chambertin's house at Allevard. The landlord also spoke of the pretended Baron Potoski, after whom, he said, a creditor was in pursuit, with bailiffs to arrest him. Ménard made no reply. He was stupified at the idea of having been deceived so long by one whom he had looked upon as one of the Polish aristocracy. But the Count settled the subject of dispute by paying for the vehicle; and the landlord was satisfied. The two travellers slept at Grenoble, the intention of the Count being to proceed on the following morning to the spot where Ménard had last seen Frederick. But, early the next day—at the moment the Count was preparing for his journey to Vizille—Ménard rushed into his apartment, crying, "Here he is, my lord! The lost sheep is returned—the child has come back to his parent! Let us kill the fatted calf—here is your son!"

It was indeed Frederick who entered the hotel, little suspecting he should meet his father there! The Count hastened down stairs, followed by Ménard—and accosted his son, who cast down his eyes and seemed abashed at being in the presence of his father.

"I find you, at last, sir," said the Count. "I heard of your proceedings, and have seen the companion of your pleasures. I learn that it is to a miserable village—in a wood—that you confine your travels, and that you imagine the acquaintances you have there formed will suffice for your experience in life. I shall not however, reproach you;—I myself am deserving of blame, for having entrusted you with such a guardian as this gentleman here. Let us forget the past, and return to Paris."

These last words pierced like a dagger to the heart of Frederick, who had courageously supported all the reproaches of his father. He was agitated and grieved; and in a tone rendered almost inaudible by deep emotions, stammered out some words which were intended to request the delay of a few days. But the Count pretended not to hear them, and said, "Frederick, I am waiting for you."

The carriage was ready—what could he do? how could he disobey his father? Frederick trembled like a leaf, and hesitated what course to pursue: but the Count took his hand and led him to the carriage, thus leaving him no power to resist. Scarcely had the young man time for reflection before he was already far from Grenoble. He looked from the window of the carriage in the direction of Vizille—heaved a profound sigh—and felt that his eyes were filled with tears as he thought of Sister Anne.

CONSTANCE.

"Alas! poor girl," said he to himself; "what will she think?"

* * * * * *
* * * * *

How is it that the love which lasts a month resembles not the love of a single day—or that the affection of a year is less firm than that of a month? Why do we view with indifference that which we have always near us? and why at length abandon all that we once so strenuously wished to obtain? Is it because everything in this world is finite, as we ourselves are finite—and that man, ever occupied in the search after new pleasures, becomes wearied of old ones? With many, indeed, love itself is only a means of diversion. Yet some will declare, when they have been married three

...ssued. In Weekly Penny Numbers and Monthly Sixpenny Parts

years, that they love their wives as well as they did the first day: others assert that their lovers are as assiduous after an acquaintance of six months as they were when they had only known each other six days; and others will proclaim themselves more devoted towards those whom they love, than ever. We will not deny the assertion: there are exceptions to all rules, and every one may invoke them in favour of himself. Besides, we do not maintain that love flies away: we merely declare that its aspect changes—and that, unfortunately, the colours lose their brilliant appearance as they successively vary, one after another.

Frederick no doubt loved the beautiful mute. He had however lived with her three weeks in the wood, and that mode of existence seemed somewhat monotonous: but the fault of lovers is that they invariably drink too deep of the intoxicating cup of bliss during the first few days of enjoyment. They resemble the gourmand, who seats himself at table with a good appetite, and who on account of eating too fast, surfeits himself before he has half got through his meal.

Sister Anne did not however experience the same feeling. When Frederick was with her, she was as tender and affectionate as ever. But in general, women love more ardently than men; and the poor orphan of our tale was not an ordinary woman either. Frederick was all the world—the whole universe to her! From the day she first knew him, her mind had expanded, her imagination was enlarged, and she had learnt to reflect—to form wishes and hopes—to fear—and to know a thousand sensations which had never before agitated in her heart. Before she was acquainted with love, her life was a dream of which she could give but little account unto herself; and Frederick had awakened her!

When she first saw that he was sorrowful and gloomy, she redoubled her attentions and caresses; she rambled with him in the wood—concealed herself playfully behind a knot of trees—and then, suddenly revealing herself, fell into his arms, while the girlish sport vested her with a thousand new graces and attractions. As soon as old Margaret had retired to rest in the evening, Sister Anne spread fruits, milk, and brown bread upon a table in the garden; and with her own hand did she present to her lover the best of all she could provide—the poor, the artless, the beautiful girl! When he spoke, she listened to him with pleasure; and it was easy to perceive that the accents of Frederick's voice vibrated to her very soul. One evening he commenced a song; and the young orphan—motionless, attentive, and surprised—seemed fearful of losing a single syllable of his song; and when he terminated it, she made him a sign to repeat it. From that moment her greatest pleasure was to hear her lover sing:—Frederick's voice was full of rich masculine melody—and she would gladly have passed the entire day in listening to him. It was thus that Sister Anne endeavoured to captivate him whom she loved. But her's was not the wily stratagem of a coquette:—it was the artless attempt of love to please, whereas in the conduct of a coquette all is delusion, deceit, and hypocrisy.

But, as we have seen, Frederick at length began to take short walks alone in the neighbourhood of Vizille. Sister Anne was at first alarmed: but he, however, speedily returned, and then all her apprehensions vanished. The young Viscount commenced thinking of his father, and of his own future prospects. What would the Count de Montreville say, if he knew that his son was living in a wood with a young peasant girl? Such was the thought which often intruded itself upon the mind of the young man; and the more rapidly the time passed away, the more did the reflection dwell in his memory.

Sometimes he said to himself, "If my father were to see this lovely young girl, he could not prevent himself from liking her!"

But, although Sister Anne might succeed in pleasing the Count de Montreville, would he be induced to consent to her union with his son? Such an idea was ridiculous in the extreme: the Count was by no means romantic;—he was proud, fond of wealth, and well aware that money was the corner-stone of worldly happiness, let moralizers reason as they will. It would have therefore been useless for Frederick to hope that his father would consent to such an alliance.

On the other hand, it was possible to act without the permission of the Count de Montreville: but, in that case, Frederick would have been obliged to renounce fortune and position, and work for his livelihood by the exercise of his talents. In any case, it was necessary to leave the wood: for Frederick was well aware that the dictates of common sense were opposed to the fact of his abandoning the world at the age of twenty. Man is formed for the blessings of social intercourse: and because he has a pretty wife, it is not necessary for him to dwell in the depths of a forest.

From day to day this system of reasoning became more frequently the young man's study; and particularly at those times when he was not with Sister Anne, did those reflections intrude themselves upon his mind. His walks gradually became longer—and the poor girl counted the minutes that he remained absent from her. She ran into the valley to welcome his return—and she pouted her lips, half playfully at him, when he stayed away longer than usual. But she experienced so much pleasure in seeing him again, that her grief speedily changed into sunny smiles; and she forgot all her sorrows as she pressed him to her heaving bosom.

A month thus passed away. Dubourg and Ménard had not returned to see him; and he was vexed and annoyed at their prolonged absence. He knew not that his two fellow-travellers were then living with M. Chambertin, and that while Dubourg played the Baron, and Ménard amused every one with the extent of his appetite, his father was already uneasy concerning him. Indeed, Frederick could not conceive the motives of the indifference of his two friends, especially that of Ménard.

"Some new adventure has befallen them," he said to himself a thousand times a-day: "Dubourg has again been guilty of an indiscretion. I was wrong to entrust him with the funds."

The result of those reflections was always the conviction that it would be necessary for him to repair to Grenoble, in order to ascertain what had become of Dubourg and Ménard. But how could he present himself to them after having assured Dubourg that he had at length found the pure, the amiable, and the unsophisticated being he had so long wished to find—that he intended to abandon a world where naught but hypocrisy and falsehood prevailed—that he would pass the remainder of his life in the wood—and that all the pleasures of Courts and cities were not equivalent to those which he experienced in the humble cottage? His situation was indeed an embarrassing one; and this was the principal reason which deterred Frederick from hastening to Grenoble at once—because a man frequently persists in that which he knows to be a folly, sooner than confess the error of his opinion. Idleness and inactivity were however incompatible with the disposition of the young Viscount. With the most enthusiastic and impassioned mind in the world, one cannot live eternally in the society of a single individual; and the poor mute soon perceived that her lover was occasionally thoughtful and melancholy.

At length, one morning, Frederick, who could restrain his curiosity no longer, said to Sister Anne, "This very day must I go to Grenoble, to see what has become of my friends."

The poor dumb girl, as if she were struck by a sudden stroke of adversity, remained motionless for a moment in the presence of her lover; and her bosom heaved convulsively, while tears flowed from her beauteous blue eyes. Her hands were extended towards the road to Grenoble; and then she pointed to herself, as much as to say, "Can you quit me thus?"

In order to retain her lover near her, the poor girl was unable to employ those touching and tender appeals—those pathetic prayers which it is so difficult for man to resist. Alas! the powers of speech were denied her: but her gestures were so expressive, her eyes so eloquent—it was only necessary to gaze upon her countenance to understand all that was passing in her mind.

"I will return," said Frederick,—"I will return; and never will I love another than you!"

These words contributed to soothe the mind of Sister Anne; for she could not for a moment doubt the promises of her lover. She was thoroughly ignorant of the world; and she had no reason to disbelieve the young Viscount. Alas! how sad is the lesson taught by a too intimate acquaintance with human nature: the first blessings it destroys, are the fond illusions of the heart!

How sorrowfully passed away the hour which Frederick spent with Sister Anne before he left her to repair to Grenoble! Although she felt confident of his speedy return, the idea of his departure was distracting to that impassioned soul which in loving him had tasted the springs of a happiness that she had fondly deemed eternal. Frederick did everything he could to console her: but in giving fresh evidence of his love, a man only renders himself beloved the more—and this is the least rational means of robbing the moment of separation of any of its thousand pangs. Yet it is the one which we employ more frequently than any other!

The morning itself appeared cloudy and sombre to the poor dumb girl! Can that day, which separates us from those we love, be regarded as fine and auspicious? Frederick ascended a hill which lay in his path to Grenoble, holding the hand of his mistress. When he reached the summit, he renewed all his vows and promises of continued affection—bade adieu to Sister Anne in the most affectionate manner—and at length disappeared from the view of her who loved him so devotedly and so sincerely. But, Oh! what a weight was now suddenly felt by the heart of the young girl! Frederick was no longer there: she however remained on the top of that hill; and her eyes wandered in the direction which he was pursuing! Suddenly she started—a groan escaped her bosom—and she fell upon her knees at the foot of an old oak tree near which Frederick had bidden her farewell! She kissed the tree with respect. Poor girl! it was the one beneath which her deceased mother had sat to watch the return of a fond husband! She remembered the place; and joining her hands together, implored heaven to bless her, and supplicated her mother to look down upon her from on high!

Previous to her acquaintance with Frederick, Sister Anne had frequently repaired to the old oak beneath the shades of which the unhappy Clotilda had breathed her last: but never had she been thither in company with Frederick. On the fatal morning of his departure, they had however taken that road, because it was the shortest one to the town of Grenoble; and for some time Sister Anne was too deeply absorbed in her grief to notice the locality. Poor girl! what thoughts were thine that day! Thou didst remember thine unhappy mother; and thou didst say to thyself, "Alas! shall *I* be condemned to the same fate to which *she* succumbed?"

Sister Anne was at length obliged to return to the cabin for fear old Margaret should require anything. She slowly descended the hill, and frequently did she turn round to contemplate the oak, sighing bitterly. It was there that she parted with her lover: like her mother, it was thither that she hastened each day to watch for his arrival!

She returned to the hut; she saw her goats once more; she resumed her labours and her accustomed occupations. But everything was changed in her eyes: the wood seemed dull and gloomy to her; and grief made her its prey. Her garden had no more charms for her—the cottage was sad and lonely. Frederick had embellished everything around; and Frederick was no longer there! Before she

became acquainted with him, her eyes had lingered with pleasure upon all that she now regarded with indifference; and yet none of those objects had changed! She had lost her peace of mind—and she saw not things as she once had seen them!

Frederick had not intimated how long he should remain absent; and Sister Anne cherished the hope of seeing him shortly return. Alas! she knew not that he had found his father at Grenoble, and that the Count de Montreville had carried him back to Paris! Every morning did she proceed to the hill with her goats; and thence did she watch with feverish anxiety the road to Grenoble. She looked for Frederick as poor Clotilda had sought her own husband many years previously! With a stick did the dumb orphan amuse herself by tracing the name of her lover upon the earth: this was all he had been enabled to teach her; but she had so often practised the lesson, that she had at length succeeded in being able to write the word legibly.

Several days passed away, and still Frederick came not. Sister Anne was always in hope that he would return; for she could not imagine that her lover would break his word; and every morning, as she repaired to the hill, she said to herself, "Doubtless I shall return to the wood with him to-day!" Vain and delusive hope! She was condemned to seek the cottage alone—that cottage whence peace and rest took flight when love entered its walls.

But a novel sentiment now agitated her soul. Sister Anne carried in her bosom a pledge of love for Frederick! She was in a way to become a mother:—and for some time she was unable to account for the change which she remarked in her appearance. In the simplicity of her heart, she did not at first suspect that she was destined to be a parent; but at length the truth broke, like a ray of divine revelation, upon her mind. It was then that a joy, hitherto unknown, possessed her soul; and she gave herself up to the delicious hope. She would have a child—the child of Frederick; and it seemed to her as if he would love it even more than she! This idea transported her! To be be a mother—what happiness, and particularly what pleasure to announce the fact to Frederick! The young girl ran about the woods like a wild thing; and in her delight she performed a thousand antics. She gazed at her image in the fountain, and in the stream; she was already proud of the certainty of becoming a mother! Poor child! all thine actions announced the innocence and purity of thy soul! Happy wast thou when thou couldst enjoy the new sentiment which had arisen in thy mind! That one at least was eternal!

But the time passed away, and Frederick did not return! Sister Anne was certain of becoming a mother; and yet she could not announce the joyous tidings to her lover! Alas! happiness in this world is invariably mingled with sorrow; and that of the young girl was poisoned by the uneasiness which she experienced in respect to Frederick. Every day the old oak was the witness of her sighs and of her tears.

One day, while passing through the valley, the poor girl picked up a little book which some traveller had doubtless dropped by accident; and on opening it, she beheld a picture representing a beautiful woman, with a child in her arms, in the midst of a forest. An indescribable emotion grew up within Sister Anne's bosom, for she saw that the woman of the picture was unhappy and was lifting up her earnest eyes imploringly to heaven: so that the poor girl at length began to identify herself with the heroine of that scene. Already in imagination she clasped her own child in her arms: already she felt as if it were needful to invoke heaven's blessings on the babe! But, Ah! would *she* also become a wanderer in the forests, like poor Genoveva of Brabant, whose tale was told in the book which had thus fallen into Sister Anne's possession!*

* * * * * *

* * * * *

We must now return to Dubourg, whom we

---

* The tale is thus told in *Reynolds's Miscellany*, Vol. XI:—"Genoveva of Brabant was a young and beautiful woman, says the account which has been handed down through many generations, and wife to Count Siegfried, a noble baron, whose castle stood in the country which lies between those two shining rivers, the Rhine and the Rhone. He had scarcely been married to her two months, however, when he was called away from her whom he so dearly loved, to join the Emperor in beating back the Saracens, who were making themselves formidable by their conquests. Scarcely had Count Siegfried departed, when Golo, the steward, who had been left in command of the castle, assumed all the airs and authority of a master and even made infamous proposals to Genoveva herself; and upon being repulsed with the utmost abhorrence by the Countess, to revenge himself, he sent word secretly to the Count that his wife had dishonoured him. An immediate order for her execution from the too credulous and infuriated husband was the consequence. She was accordingly taken from the dungeon, in which she had been confined for many months, together with her little son, to whom she had given birth in darkness and cold, and led by two of the retainers to the depths of a great forest, some distance from the castle. And here the soldiers would have taken the young child from Genoveva, before killing her; but she implored so piteously, and so clasped it with all the energy of maternal love, that,—as with the ruffian in the story of the 'Babes in the Wood,'—pity triumphed in their savage breasts, and they determined not to kill her, and to leave her the child, on condition that she promised never to come again out of the wood. And thus she was left in the wide forest, with her poor naked infant, to die. The artist has chosen this moment for his picture. She is sitting down at the foot of a great tree, the agony of despair dwelling in her countenance. Wandering in search of some shelter, she at length reached a great cave: here at last was a covering for her head; but, alas, she was without food or water. But God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb; and as she looked round in the agony of hunger, the trailing stem of a gourd seemed as if it were creeping towards her; and her ear became aware of the trickling waters of a fountain. Then suddenly the dry leaves in the neighbourhood of the cave began to rustle, and presently a slender-limbed little doe came trotting up to her, and nestled by her side; the doe readily gave up its milk for 'Little Sorrowful,' for so was the child called by its mother. Genoveva and her boy remained in the forest for seven years—the bitter cold of winter compensated by

left running across the country, in order to escape from Floridor and the audience; and let us not forget that in the precipitation of his flight, he had not had time to change his costume. His head was still adorned with the immense wig which fell in large curls upon his neck and shoulders; and his body was enveloped in the cloak covered over with rabbit-skins.

He ran for about an hour—passing over meadows — leaping ditches—walking in the corn, floundering in ploughed fields, jumping hedges—and hastening onwards without precisely knowing what direction he was pursuing. The reader will be kind enough to remember that this memorable flight took place in the evening: it was therefore soon quite dark; and, as it rained, the moon failed to shine upon the course of the traveller.

At length Dubourg stopped and listened: but nothing fell upon his ears to cause him to apprehend pursuit. The most profound silence pevailed around. He endeavoured to ascertain where he was: he was no longer in fear of being overtaken; and he felt the necessity of resting for a short time. These events took place in the month of September, when the evenings are apt to be chilly: and Dubourg was by no means inclined to pass the night in the open air, exposed to the cold and rain. It was true that his wig was better than a hat, and his cloak than an umbrella; but in the course of a few hours they would be wet through; and he knew that he should feel excessively uncomfortable, were that the case. It was therefore necessary to discover a lodging for the night.

He felt that he was walking amongst plants and vegetables. He advanced—a high hedge opposed his passage: but the cloak protected him against the thorns. He accordingly forced his way through the hedge, in which he however stuck a little at first, and where he eventually left a few of his rabbit-skins and two curls from his wig: but he at length arrived safely on the opposite side; and the flower-pots, rows of box, and beds of vegetables amongst which he found himself, made him aware that he was in a garden. He proceeded cautiously onward, extending his arms to feel his way; and at length he came in contact with a wall. A little more research convinced him that he was in an outhouse or stable; he was beneath a roof, and his feet stumbled over some bundles of straw upon the ground.

"Capital!" said Dubourg to himself; "I have found all I require to enable me to pass a comfortable night. I am here, protected against the inclemency of the weather; suppose I stretch myself upon this straw, envelop myself well in my cloak, and enjoy a good sleep! To-morrow I can reflect upon my position."

Dubourg was soon fast asleep; but not before he had once more felicitated himself upon having discovered the hospitable barn, beneath the roof of which he had found a place of refuge. This barn, as Dubourg had concluded, was situate at the bottom of a garden; and the garden itself belonged to a little cottage, inhabited by a labourer named Bertrand, who precisely seven years previous to these events had married a pretty girl, also resident in the same hamlet. The handsome Claudine, as she was called, was buxom and well made: and the marriage had been blessed by two fat childran, who were adored by their parents, and spoilt by their relations.

In the country, the inhabitants rise at an early hour; and thus Fanfan and Maria, the labourer's two children—one of whom was five and the other four years old—having made a hearty breakfast of bread-and-milk, hastened into the garden according to custom, to play with each other. In a few minutes they passed by the barn, and what did they see there? If the reader can call to mind Azor in "Beauty and the Beast," he will have an idea of the appearance of Dubourg,—who was almost entirely concealed by a profusion of curls of a reddish colour, that fell on his breast: while his body was covered with a cloak, which, if it did not precisely resemble a tiger, bore a great likeness to some wild animal; and thus the alarm of the two children can be easily conceived.

Little Maria, as soon as she descried the immense mass, let fall her bread and butter: the little boy opened his mouth, which he could not close again, because he was overcome with terror;—and then they both set up a dreadful scream together.

"Oh! brother, do you see that?" cried Maria, at length recovering a little from her alarm, and getting as close as she could to Fanfan, while she pointed towards the straw.

"What an ugly monster!" said Fanfan, running behind his sister: and then the two children renewed their cries, and ran towards the house. But their screams did not awake

---

the splendour of the summer, and all the beauties which nature so prodigally displays at that glad season. The little child grew strong and beautiful, and blessed its mother's ear by whispering her name; but Genoveva wasted fast away under the burden of her great sorrow, that her husband thought of her with shame. In the meantime, the Count Siegfried returned from the wars, and the villany of Golo the false steward was discovered. The remorse of the noble Count for his too hasty order for his Genoveva's death was slowly consuming him, when a faithful friend, by way of diverting him from his melancholy, induced him to join a great hunting party. As the Count rode along in the forest he started a young doe, and following its track he was at last led to a cavern. The doe is the same faithful one that had nourished Genoveva and her child;—and in the two human beings clad in sheepskin, he beheld his wife and child. They were restored amid the rejoicing of the people to the castle-home from which they had been so cruelly banished, the little doe accompanying them; and so good was the lady to the inhabitants, that after her death she was reverenced as a saint; and for nearly a hundred years afterwards, hoary-headed men prided themselves on being able to say—'When I was a little child I was taken to see Genoveva.' The principal events of this story, according to all accounts, are founded upon facts, which have been moulded into a poetic form by their passage through many generations of dreamy Germans, until in our later times comes the artist with his pencil, and embodies them all in a charming picture. How singularly some simple facts, such as these, running their course through ages, gather fresh delights at every step, and at last burst into perfect beauty under the inspiring touch of the painter, poet, and musician!"

Dubourg, because the fatigues of the preceding day had rocked him into a sound sleep.

Bertrand was about to proceed to the fields which he was employed in cultivating, when the two children ran up to him, crying, and making the most incomprehensible grimaces and signs.

"What is the matter?" he demanded: "speak, rogues—speak!"

The children were so alarmed that they could not reply to their father's question for some time.

"There—there—in the barn!" they at length cried, both at the same moment; "on the straw—a black head with a red mane! It is much larger than our donkey and twice as ugly!"

"Do you understand them, Claudine?" asked the labourer of his wife.

"They seem to be speaking of a monster," was the reply.

"Which way could it have got into the garden?" said Bertrand. "Perhaps it is neighbour Gervais's bull, or Dame Catherine's donkey."

"No, papa—it is all gray and red," exclaimed the children. "Oh! you don't know how horrible it is!"

"What can it be?" repeated Bertrand.

"Has it got a tail?" asked Claudine.

"I don't know, mamma. The monster is asleep,—and we ran away as hard as we could."

"You must go and see what it is," said Claudine to her husband.

"Yes—yes," returned Bertrand: "we must go and see what it is."

But Bertrand was not the bravest man in existence; and he already experienced a terror for which he could scarcely account: he accordingly hastened to arm himself, by way of precaution, with his musket, which was loaded with salt. Claudine seized a broom—the children took each a stick—and thus they proceeded towards the barn. The children walked first; because, though they were afraid of the monster, still children of that age love anything extraordinary, and curiosity frequently predominates over fear. Bertrand kept by the side of his wife, who, on her part, pushed him forward as well as she was able. The nearer they drew to the barn, the more slowly did they advance; and the parents desired their children not to make a noise, it being much better to view the monster asleep than awake. At length they were close by the little out-house; and the children whispered, "There it is! there it is!" Bertrand and Claudine stretched out their necks to catch a glimpse of the object of alarm: they dared not advance—the husband grew pale, and sneaked behind his wife—and she made a sign to the children not to advance any farther.

"Let us go and procure assistance," said Bertrand.

"Suppose you fire?" suggested Claudine.

"My gun is only charged with salt," returned the labourer. "It would not kill the monster; and if we awoke it, it might rush upon us and tear us to pieces."

"True!" said Claudine: "you must not fire. Let us go to the village and procure assistance. Come, children!"

Bertrand was already in advance of his family in the retreat towards the house: he ran as if the monster were in pursuit of him, and hastened to the village, which was only a hundred yards from the cottage, and where he was speedily rejoined by Claudine. They both spread the tidings that a monster was in their garden; and as fear invariably magnifies objects, the monster which they had seen was represented to be larger than a bull. The story flew from mouth to mouth; and each time it was told, the size of the subject of it was exaggerated,—every one connecting it with his own ideas of magnitude; so that from being as large as a bull, it soon grew to a camel, and thence to an elephant, where the exaggeration stopped, because the tale-tellers knew of no larger animal.

One thing appeared to be certain—and this was that there was a monster in Bertrand's garden. These tidings soon threw the whole village into an uproar. The inhabitants assembled together, and consulted each other; the women went to fetch their husbands from their work; and mothers ordered their children into the houses with strict injunctions not to leave them. Some hastened to the mayor, who was an excellent country-farmer, and who declared that he knew no more of monsters than the other inhabitants of the village. There was however a person residing in that village, whose name was Latouche. He had been a custom-house officer in Paris, and was reputed to be a marvellously clever and cunning fellow. The people accordingly now sought for Latouche: and to him was the matter relative to the monster confided. He listened with a solemn expression of countenance. He passed his hand under his chin, asked a thousand questions relative to the most minute details, appeared to reflect a long time, and at length exclaimed, "We must go and see what it is."

"Right! right!" ejaculated the crowd: "let us go and see what the monster is."

"Directly I have seen him," said Latouche, "I will tell you what it is, and to which class the animal belongs. I ought to know something about these things, having been apprenticed to a herbalist, and possessing a cousin who was under-porter at the Museum of Natural History in Paris."

The multitude prepared to follow the gallant Latouche to Bertrand's garden. Every one armed himself with something; the very women laid hold of pickaxes or spades, in case the monster should turn out to be dangerous. The mayor joined the armament; and Latouche, who was the only one that possessed a musket in a decent state of repair—Bertrand's gun being incompetent to stand anything but salt—undertook the command of the multitude and directed all its operations. They issued from the village; men, women, boys, and girls advanced while they discussed the subject of the expedition. But the nearer they drew to Bertrand's house, the less eager were they to chatter; and in the course of a

very short time, the utmost silence of tongues prevailed. They marched forward in a very close column: and every one endeavoured to gather courage from the countenance of his neighbour.

Latouche marched in front with his musket upon his shoulder, and looking as solemn as if he were leading an army to surprise the enemy. As they drew near the dreaded spot, Bertrand uttered a loud cry, and hastened to conceal himself behind a stone, exclaiming, "There it is! there it is!" The multitude accordingly looked in the direction of the cottage, and made a simultaneous retrograde movement, Latouche throwing himself into the centre of the battalion: but as no noise was heard, the squadron advanced again, and looking towards the hedge, perceived a large tortoise-shell cat, which had alarmed Bertrand, lying beneath a bush.

"The deuce, Bertrand!" cried Latouche, hastening to resume his former station in front of the armament; "do you know that you are a dreadful coward, and that it is shameful at your age to show such weakness!"

"Perfectly true," exclaimed Claudine; "and I very often reproach him for the same thing."

"To cry out because a cat ran into the hedge!" exclaimed Latouche.

"I saw something creeping along, M. Latouche," said Bertand; "and I thought——"

"Perhaps it is for a similar trifle he has roused the whole village," interrupted Latouche.

"Oh! no—it is not a trifle!" ejaculated Bertrand: "you will see that it is not! We are now close to the barn; and if you will enter the garden by this little door, you will be there in a minute."

"No—no," cried Latouche: "let us force an entrance by way of the house, so as to examine the animal at a distance; that is the regular plan of military operations."

The advice of Latouche was adopted without a dissentient voice. The multitude passed through Bertrand's house into the garden; but as they approached the barn, the most courageous grew pale, and many women would advance no farther—while Latouche, who resembled those people that sing in a moment of alarm in order to conceal their terror, issued prudential directions on all sides, and managed to retain his situation in front of the battalion no longer.

"There it is! there it is!" said some of the peasants; and with their fingers they pointed towards Dubourg who was still in the same position, because he was sound asleep. Alarm was depicted upon every countenance, but curiosity also prevailed: every one stretched out his neck, leant forward, or supported himself upon his companion. Latouche immediately ordered a halt; and on all sides were heard the opinions of the peasants.

"Ah! how ugly it is! what a terrible object! what a head!"

"What a body!" exclaimed another.

"He has got no eyes," said some.

"Nor any claws," cried Latouche. "But don't make a noise—we might awake the monster. Wait till I have examined it. Have any of you heard speak of the famous monster that laid waste Gevaudan?"

"No," returned the multitude.

"Well, this animal resembles the monster of Gevaudan," continued Latouche. "No one can see his legs, because, in imitation of the Turks, he crosses them under his body: his eyes are turned towards the straw,—which is very lucky for us, as the eyes of these monsters often flash forth a mortal poison. The more I look at that hair and that mane, the more I am convinced it is a sea-lion, come from Normandy."

"A sea-lion!" exclaimed the peasants: "is it dangerous?"

"Dangerous!" repeated Latouche. "It eats up a man like an oyster!"

"O!" cried the trembling Bertrand; "what shall we do to take it?"

"It is perhaps dead," said Claudine; "for since this morning it has never changed its position."

"Dead!" exclaimed Latouche. "How shall we discover whether he is dead or not?"

"You might fire upon him," suggested the mayor.

"That is very dangerous," answered Latouche. "The ball not unfrequently rebounds from the skins of these animals."

"Aim at his ear," cried the mayor.

"I must see where the ear is in order to do that."

"Never mind," continued the mayor; "we must take this animal dead or alive. You can fire, and we will form a rampart with our pitchforks and axes round you; so that if the monster rush upon us, we will receive it well."

The mayor's speech inspired the multitude with courage, and a circle was immediately formed round the valorous Latouche; who, although but little relishing the part he was about to perform, prepared to fire. He placed the barrel of his musket between two sturdy peasants—arranged the butt to his liking against his shoulder—took aim for at least five minutes—and at length pulled the trigger: but the powder flashed in the pan—which was a very fortunate circumstance for Dubourg, who was not aware of the danger he had just escaped.

The mayor was excessively annoyed; Latouche would not load again; and the peasants refused to rush upon the monster and attack it with their pitchforks. Suddenly the sleeper turned upon his straw, and yawned aloud, to the great alarm of the spectators, who mistook the sound for the roar of a lion. The bravest of the multitude threw down their arms and drew back; and a general panic seized upon the armament. In this terror, they pushed each other about in all directions to force a passage out of the garden—Latouche climbed into a tree—the mayor was knocked down by Bertrand—the most active leaped over the hedge—and the clumsy portion of the troop fell down as they endeavoured to run away.

In the meantime Dubourg awoke from his prolonged slumbers. He rubbed his eyes, took off his wig, which prevented him from seeing anything clearly, and then laid aside his cloak which almost suffocated him. He rose, and

was astonished at the loud cries which fell upon his ears: he listened—and a noise, which he little suspected to have been created by himself, for a moment filled him with apprehension that M. Floridor had discovered his hiding-place. He ran out of the barn, and suddenly stopped short, astonished at the picture which met his eyes. There was indeed enough to make him marvel: a host of men, women, and children, were either flying in all directions, or lying stretched upon the ground; and Dubourg said to himself, when the strange spectacle met his eyes, "The inhabitants of this part of the country have a strange method of receiving a traveller."

The bravest of the village armament no longer hearing the noise which they had fancied to be the roaring of a lion, at length ventured to turn their heads and gaze in the direction of the barn. To their surprise they saw an individual, whose appearance had nothing alarming about it, now that he was divested of the wig which had at first so disguised him.

"Who is this man?" cried the peasants; "and where does he come from?"

At these words, the rest plucked up the remnants of their courage, and turned round to ascertain the position of affairs. In a very few moments Dubourg became the object of universal attention and curiosity; and,—having politely assisted Claudine, who had fallen down, to rise,—he replied to the questions of the mayor in the following manner.

"I am a poor devil—although an honest man—who being caught last night in the storm, took the liberty of sleeping in the little barn upon the bundles of straw, where I slumbered without once awaking, till the present moment, whereby I hope I have offended no one."

"You slept in that barn?" cried the mayor.

"Certainly I did," answered Dubourg.

"And you were not devoured by the monster?" inquired Bertrand.

"What monster?" demanded Dubourg.

"The monster with the red mane and hide, that was lying upon the same straw as yourself."

Dubourg turned round, and glancing towards the barn, perceived his cloak and wig. Yielding to a violent inclination to laugh, because he immediately guessed the cause of the alarm which had prevailed around, he was some time before he could answer any more queries; and the peasants themselves, as soon as they heard the sounds of merriment, bade adieu to all fear. Those who were running away, turned back, and they that were at a distance, now drew near the barn. In a few minutes, all apprehension was banished; and an explanation of the cause of the late terror was anxiously awaited. Dubourg, perceiving that it remained for him to clear up the mystery, returned into the barn, took his cloak in one hand, his wig in the other, and advancing towards the peasants, exclaimed, "My friends, this is the monster which doubtless terrified you. I abandon it to your wrath."

With these words, he threw the theatrical garments upon the grass; and the peasants, stepping forward and touching them, at length joined in a long shout of laughter with Dubourg, crying, "What! it was that wig which frightened us! What fools we were!"

Latouche leaped down from the pear-tree into which he had clambered; and addressing himself to Bertrand, exclaimed, "I told you that you were as great a coward as ever lived, and now we have proof of it. What made you come and disturb us with this long story about a monster—you, who would readily mistake a mouse for a bull?"

"I think this mouse also frightened you a little," replied Bertrand; "for you ran up the tree like a cat, and knocked down Claudine as you went along."

"Hold your tongue," cried Latouche, whom Bertrand's answer had made as red as a peony: "hold your tongue. I only jumped up into the tree to take a better aim at the monster."

"And you left your musket upon the ground," rejoined Bertrand.

"Accidentally," retorted Latouche.

"Come, come," exclaimed Dubourg: "it was I who caused all this disturbance. The bravest man in existence would have been alarmed at a being clad in that cloak and wig; and heroes in battle do not always like to combat a wild beast. Indeed, M. Latouche must be a brave man to have dared take aim at such a monster as I must have appeared in that hideous garb."

This cunning speech flattered the vanity of all present, and Latouche recovered his good humour.

"This stranger expresses himself very well," said he to his companions. "He is evidently a learned man."

In the present state of matters, it would have been a very easy thing for Dubourg to have again passed himself off as a baron: but since his adventures at the house of the credulous and confiding Chambertin, he did not deem it any longer prudent to play the nobleman. On the contrary, the moment the mayor asked him to explain the cause of his appearance in the singular garb which had originated such terror, he immediately forged a story about a band of robbers who had attacked and plundered him of all he possessed, and in order to stifle his cries had almost suffocated him with the wig. Dubourg moreover declared that the ruffians had enveloped him in the cloak with the view of transporting him to their cavern, when the sounds of horse's hoofs had alarmed them, and they ran away across the country with the utmost speed, leaving him in possession of the wig and cloak.

This tale created in the breasts of the peasants a deep interest in Dubourg's favour; and they found him a most amiable person since they were no longer afraid of his appearance. The mayor immediately took down the depositions concerning the robbery; and Latouche exclaimed, "For the last two years I have asserted that there are robbers in this neighbourhood. Two days ago I lost three fowls; and they did not walk away by themselves. We must institute a strict search, and I will put myself at your head, my friends: you know that I am capable of leading an army, if

necessary. We will commence our operations immediately after the gendarmes have scoured the country first, in obedience to the orders of his worship, the mayor."

In the meantime the peasants flocked round Dubourg, and made him a thousand kind offers, for they naturally supposed that he must be in want of refreshment. They actually disputed amongst themselves who should lodge and feed him; and every peasant offered him a waistcoat, or a coat to replace the cloak, a hat instead of the wig, and his house as long as the stranger chose to inhabit it. But Dubourg gave the preference to Bertrand, because Claudine was of an amiable and kind disposition, and he knew he should be comfortable at the cottage. Bertrand's wife was greatly flattered by the honour thus conferred upon her: she curtseyed to the stranger in a most respectful manner, and invited him forthwith to partake of the best breakfast she could provide for him.

The mayor, as the chief person in the place, had the supreme felicity of offering an excellent jacket to the stranger instead of the one which the robbers had deprived him of; and in return for this instance of generosity, Dubourg begged the mayor to accept of the famous cloak in order to make an excellent counterpane for the winter. M. Latouche obtained the wig in consideration of the important services he rendered the community in the midst of their alarms. At length the crowd dispersed; the labourers proceeded to their work—the women and children to their cottages. Bertrand recommended the stranger to the good offices of his wife, and also repaired to the site of his own toils, while Claudine conducted Dubourg to the house. She was active, obliging, and kind in her disposition; and did

everything she could to render the unfortunate stranger comfortable. On his part Dubourg was as amusing and facetious as ever, being desirous of wiping away the evil impression his appearance in the village had at first originated.

Dubourg was treated by the worthy peasants in the most hospitable manner; and he was not sorry to pass a short time with those excellent people, who endeavoured to the utmost of their power to make him forget his pretended misfortunes. At night he related to them the most marvellous tales, to which they listened with the liveliest attention. A man, who can talk for hours upon matters of interest to the peasants, is an object of the greatest veneration and delight; and Dubourg was looked upon as a treasure. When M. Latouche was present, Dubourg mingled a few Latin words with his discourse, and Latouche turning to the assembled group, exclaimed, "All that is perfectly true, my dear friends; he has just taken his oath to the veracity of his statements in German."

A fortnight elapsed, and Dubourg, wearied of recounting day after day his stories to the peasants, was resolved to leave the village and hasten to ascertain what had befallen his companions. He retained in his pocket the hundred francs he had earned by playing *Hippolytus;* and with that sum he was enabled to sally forth without disguising himself as a monster. In spite of all that Claudine did to dissuade him from his purpose of leaving the cottage so soon, he was determined to depart; and having called to pay a visit of thanks to the mayor, Latouche, and those inhabitants from whom he had received any civility, he set out upon his travels, but not before he had expressed his gratitude to Bertrand and Claudine, who wept when they saw him depart. With a large stick in his hand, a hat with an immense brim upon his head, and a supply of provisions in his pockets, he commenced his journey, saying to himself as he walked along, "Those who saw me play the nobleman, will not know me now; and that is exactly what I want."

Dubourg however thought it prudent not to pass through Voreppe, where it was possible he might encounter M. Floridor, or a member of the little manager's troop. He was not more anxious to visit Grenoble; as M. Durosey might still be staying in the neighbourhour, and the eyes of a creditor are difficult to deceive. It was therefore by way of Vizille that Dubourg journeyed, it being there that he hoped to find Frederick—or at least to hear of him.

He walked joyfully along the road, singing a cheerful song from time to time, and occasionally seating himself upon the grass to partake of the provisions with which Claudine had supplied him,—for women think of everything! Dubourg blessed the foresight of the good-natured peasants; and as he drank a long stoup from the bottle of wine which Claudine had placed amongst the good things, he said, "Let us drink to the health of the fair sex! How could I ever be unhappy so long as I am the object of their most tender solicitude? Here is to the health of Claudine, Madame Chambertin, and a host of others, whose excellent cookery I have been enabled to appreciate!"

When his wine was gone, he drank the same toast in a cup of water; for Dubourg was a philosopher, and could put up with anything. Besides, he had money, and might have purchased more wine: that was one of the reasons why water was tolerable. At sunset he entered Vizille, saying to himself, "If the Count de Montreville has learnt through Ménard the love-affair of his son Frederick, he has doubtless been to fetch him from the wood—and I shall not find him: but I shall see the pretty girl—and she will tell me what has taken place."

Dubourg did not know that the poor girl was dumb. He passed through the valley—entered the wood—looked about him—called for Frederick—saw nobody—and was going to give up the search, when he perceived the cottage. He stepped into the garden, hastened to the hut, and only found old Margaret who was dozing in her arm-chair. He left the cottage, astonished at not seeing the girl; and he began to suspect that the history which he had forged for the behoof of Ménard, had probably been verified, and that Frederick had in reality run away with Sister Anne. He was about to repair to the village to endeavour to ascertain what had become of her, when he met her slowly pacing along the road which traversed the wood. The poor girl's countenance wore an expression of such deep sorrow, and on all her features there was so profound a melancholy, that Dubourg was affected by her appearance. He contemplated her for some moments, and thought that her sorrow must have been caused by Frederick.

"Alas! poor creature," said he, "my young friend has done all this. He is gone—and you are left behind! Better had it been for you if you had never seen him!"

At that moment Sister Anne heard the sound of footsteps near her. She raised her eyes; and perceiving some one nigh, ran towards him with the speed of lightning; and when she confronted Dubourg, her countenance, which had been lighted up with hope for a moment, assumed an expression of the most deplorable sorrow. She shook her head, and made a motion to intimate that it was not Frederick. But Dubourg spoke to her: she recognised his voice—she examined his features with attention;—and joy animated her countenance once more. It was a friend of Frederick's whom she saw before her! it was he who had visited the wood on a former occasion! and now he was doubtless come to announce Frederick's speedy return. She drew closer to him—her eyes seemed to read his inmost thoughts—she waited in silence for him to explain the object of his mission—and Dubourg, himself a prey to astonishment and suspense, asked her what had become of Frederick?

The name of Frederick made her start. She indicated the road he had taken, counted upon her fingers the number of days he had been absent, and appeared to ask in return some

tidings of her lover. At length these signs enabled Dubourg to comprehend the sorrowful position of Sister Anne; and he endeavoured to do all he could to console her. But for her there was no consolation—no joy without Frederick.

"Poor girl," said Dubourg: "Frederick was right when he declared that she did not resemble the women whom he had hitherto known in the world! But to leave her in this wood—Oh! it was too bad! Such beauty—such gracefulness, such charms, to live in a cottage, when they might adorn a palace! I am really inclined to carry her with me to Paris! Why did you not accompany Frederick?" said he to Sister Anne: "what keeps you in this horrible place? Come with me: we will find Frederick once more; and if we do not, be assured that I will confide you to the care of people who will not use you amiss!"

Sister Anne looked at Dubourg with astonishment. She scarcely seemed to comprehend him: but when he spoke of taking her away from the wood, she retreated a few steps, pointed towards the cabin, and made him understand that she could not leave the person who dwelt in that hut. Oh! had it not been for Dame Margaret, with what joy she would have followed Dubourg: for she believed that he would have conducted her eventually to her lover. But to abandon her who had taken care of her from her early years—who had behaved to her with the kindness of a mother and who was now bowed down by old age and infirmity,—such an idea could not for a moment attain any degree of stability in the mind of the poor dumb girl! She was incapable of acting with such ingratitude towards Dame Margaret!

"Well, then," said Dubourg, "remain in this wood, poor child: and may you be restored to the happiness and gaiety of which Frederick has deprived you!"

The eyes of Sister Anne seemed to question him anew.

"Yes—yes," continued Dubourg, "he will return—I am certain he will return! You will see him once more: dry your tears! In a short time he will be here to console you!"

These words imparted a ray of delight to the melancholy countenance of the afflicted girl: she smiled her gratitude to Dubourg for the consolation he had proffered her; and then gracefully wishing him adieu by a sign of her head and a wave of her hands, she hastened to the presence of Dame Margaret.

Dubourg left the wood; and in spite of his recklessness and habitual gaiety of disposition he did not sing any more as he traversed the valley in order to regain the road. His heart was oppressed by sorrow, caused by the woes of the poor mute, to whom he had communicated hopes which he himself never expected to be realized. This was the first time in his life he had thus given way to his emotions; and as he walked along, he murmured to himself, "Poor girl! you are indeed deeply to be deplored!"

But at length the recollection of his own peculiar situation restored him to his usual good humour. He exchanged his jacket and hat for a more seemly attire, at the house of an old clothes-vender, and struck into the road to Lyons, from which city he intended to proceed by the diligence to Paris, where he was in hopes of meeting his two travelling companions.

* * * * *

The Count de Montreville's travelling-carriage proceeded as quick as a pair of excellent horses could bear it along: for the nobleman was anxious to place as great a distance between Grenoble and his son in as short a time as possible. The journey was performed in silence by the three occupants of the carriage. The Count pondered on the means of destroying the reminiscence of his passion in the mind of his son: Frederick thought only of Sister Anne; and Ménard revolved in his memory the numerous lies which the false Baron Potoski had told him. The Count did not address a single word of reproach to Frederick: he seemed to have forgotten every cause of anger against his son; and Ménard, who dreaded the severe looks of M. de Montreville, because he knew that his conduct had not been exemplary, began to breathe more freely, and to gaze about him with less restraint than when he first entered the vehicle.

They at length arrived in Paris. Before the Count dismissed M. Ménard, Frederick sought an opportunity of conversing with his old tutor, and asked him what had become of Dubourg? Ménard maintained silence for a moment, and bit his lips like one who did not know whether he ought to be angry or not. At length he replied in a tone which he endeavoured to render as ironical as possible, "It is of the Baron Potoski, doubtless, that you desire some tidings?"

"The Baron—Dubourg—or whatever other name you choose to call him," cried Frederick impatiently.

"Indeed, my lord," returned Ménard, "I might bestow a somewhat awkward name upon him for all the stories he thought fit to tell me! To say that he was a Palatine!"

"Let us forget all that, my dear Ménard."

"And the snuff-box of the King of Prussia!"

"It was only a joke," said Frederick.

"But it was the old Tokay of three louis a bottle on which I calculated," proceeded the tutor.

"You must remember that I more or less authorized the imposition," said the young Viscount.

"That is the only thing which induces me to forgive Dubourg," responded M. Ménard. "Besides, if he were not so dreadfully wild, and so terribly addicted to gambling, he would not be a bad kind of a fellow. He is clever—he is well acquainted with the classics——"

"But what has become of him? where did you leave him?"

"I left him as *Hippolytus*, coming to fetch me to perform *Theseus*."

As Frederick did not understand the meaning of this reply, Ménard explained to him the whole of their adventures at the little town of Voreppe; and Frederick, instead of laughing at the drollery of the anecdotes, remembered only

that Dubourg had been left in a state of great embarrassment, and that it might be some time before they should meet. The truth is, that the young Viscount was exceedingly anxious to send Dubourg to Sister Anne, to console her for his absence and assure her that he loved her still. The Count de Montreville dismissed Ménard with a handsome remuneration—not for the manner in which he had taken care of his son, but for the time he had lost in travelling. Ménard bade adieu to his young pupil, with the hope that Frederick would not forget him, in case he was anxious of undertaking another journey round the world.

Some days elapsed since the return of Frederick to Paris; and the image of the poor dumb girl haunted his mind by day and by night. He fancied he saw her in the wood awaiting his return, and heart-broken at his prolonged absence. Every idea augmented his grief, and rendered more fervid the desire he experienced to see her again. But what could he do? He dared not leave his father—he was without money—and for the first time the intendant refused him a supply, by order of the Count, who was afraid that his son might make use of it to recommence his travels; and he did not choose to stand the chance of losing him again. Each day Frederick formed the most ridiculous projects. He was desirous of setting out on foot, and hastening to rejoin his beautiful mistress: and he thought seriously of concealing himself with her in the depths of a forest, and abandoning Paris for ever. But Sister Anne could not leave Dame Margaret; it would, therefore, have been necessary to remain in the wood at Vizille: but there his father could find him out—for Ménard had told him all! What was he to do! Write? Alas! the poor girl knew not how to read: she only knew the way to love; and that is but little in the age in which we live!

Frederick entered but seldom into that society which had long ago displeased him. In vain had the beautiful Madame Dernange recommenced her coquettish frivolities and intrigues to drag him to her feet: he heeded neither her loveliness nor her smiles; and she was deeply mortified by his indifference. But Frederick could be duped no longer: he was now in love in reality. He saw the shallowness of that affection which is entertained by the fashionable ladies of Paris, and the falsity of those passions which are mistaken for love.

The Count treated his son with coldness: but he never touched upon the adventures in Dauphiny. He studiously avoided the subject; and when Frederick, who was desirous of ascertaining the sentiments of his father on that head, ventured to make an observation relative to his sojourn at Grenoble, the suburbs, and the lovely village of Vizille, a severe look from the Count closed his lips, and did not permit him to continue the conversation. Frederick called at every lodging which he knew Dubourg had ever occupied in Paris: but at none of these had any tidings been heard of him. He then went to Ménard, and requested him to do all he could to discover Dubourg's residence, under the impression that he might have returned to Paris, but did not dare present himself in the Rue de Provence, for fear of encountering M. de Montreville.

"And if I find him?" said M. Ménard.

"Send him to me immediately," answered Frederick.

"Send him to you!" ejaculated Ménard: "not for the world! Your father did not treat him with much civility when he saw him playing *Hippolytus*. It is true that his costume did not fit him very well——"

"You will tell him to write to me, then," said Frederick. "He can make an appointment with me elsewhere, if afraid of coming to the house. Am I to have spies placed upon my actions? Ah! M. Ménard, I can restrain myself no longer: every day increases my misery! I must see her—or at all events I must be satisfied that she is well and happy?"

"That who is well and happy?" demanded Ménard.

"She whom I adore!" cried Frederick: "she whom I was obliged to abandon in the most disgraceful manner, to accompany you and my father to Paris."

"Ah! I understand," said the old tutor; "the little girl of the woods. M. Dubourg told me that you had purchased furniture for her and carried her off."

"Would to heaven I had done so!" exclaimed the young Viscount; "I should now be near her. Ah! my dear Ménard, if you were another kind of man——But you are good, and you are attached to me! Oh, you would overwhelm me with joy if you would only hasten to Vizille, to see Sister Anne, and tell her that I love her more than ever."

"I am very sorry, my lord," answered Ménard; "but I cannot comply with your request. I dare not go and tell her that, nor anything else. I should be far from justified in aiding a connexion of which your father does not approve: he has already had too good grounds to complain of my negligence. I am very much attached to you, it is true; and that is the exact reason why I will not assist you in any of your designs with reference to that girl. Your father knows perfectly well what he is doing: it was time for him to fetch us home:—we were all playing the most ridiculous pranks—and I worse than any. His presence established a proper *equilibrium*: he snatched you away from the vortex of temptation—and you are afflicted at his parental severity, instead of consoling yourself with the reflection that it was the best thing he could do for you."

Frederick returned home, to think of Sister Anne, and devise some method of seeing or communicating with her. Had he known that she stood a chance of becoming a mother—had he been aware that she carried in her bosom a pledge of their mutual affections—nothing would have retained him at Paris. He would have hastened to Vizille—he would have dared all the indignation of his father! But he was ignorant of that circumstance; and he remained at home, resolving every day to depart on the following morning.

One day the Count sent to desire his son to join him in the library; and Frederick hastened

into the presence of his father, with a cloud upon the brow and a tear in the eye.

"You no longer visit nor receive your friends," said M. de Montreville. "Your travels seem to have made you a misanthrope."

Frederick remained silent—the best course to be adopted in such a situation!

"I wish you to accompany me this evening to a certain house," continued the Count. "I am anxious to introduce you to a companion-in-arms of my youthful days. General de Valmont has long resided on his own estates, and is now come to pass a short time in Paris. He is desirous of seeing you; and I promised to introduce you."

Frederick bowed; and in the evening he attired himself in a suitable costume to accompany his father to General de Valmont's abode. He had often heard the General spoken of as an old friend of his father, and was by no means astonished that his lordship should wish to introduce him to the venerable officer. As they proceeded to the house of General de Valmont, the Count de Montreville was more amiable in his manners towards his son than he lately had been; and Frederick on his part endeavoured to appear less gloomy. The carriage stopped at the door of the General's dwelling—the Count and his son announced themselves to the attendants—and M. de Valmont hastened to meet them. The General's countenance produced a favourable impression upon Frederick's mind; and his manners were frank and gentlemanly. He hastened to embrace his old friend, shook Frederick's hand with warmth, and appeared delighted to see them both.

After the first compliments of an interview had passed, the General invited his friends into an adjoining room, saying to the Count as he led the way, "You have introduced me to your heir: I must do the same by you. You are surprised when I allude to my family—I who am an old bachelor; but although the young lady you are about to see, is not so closely related to me as Frederick is to you, I can assure you that she is not the less dear."

As he uttered these words, the General introduced his guests into another room, where a young lady was seated at a piano: but at the entrance of the visitors she rose hastily.

"Constance," said the General, "these are my friends, the Count de Montreville and his son. My lord, let me introduce my niece to you—my daughter, indeed—for I love her as if I were her father."

Constance bowed to the two gentlemen; and Frederick gazed upon her with admiration: he could not indeed do otherwise than find her charming. As for the Count, a smile of satisfaction appeared upon his lips. We really believe that the old nobleman had heard of Mademoiselle Constance, and that he had his own project in conducting his son to the General's house!

Constance possessed a most elegant figure; and her demeanour was so unaffected and modest, a misanthrope would have found it impossible not to admire her. Her hair was brown—her complexion clear: her large blue eyes, shaded by long black lashes, were soft and melting: her countenance was expressive of amiability and innocence;—her lips were of a rich red—her teeth white as pearls. Her form was most symmetrical; and all her movements were fraught with an unpremeditated grace. So far from seeking to please with her beauty, she seemed desirous of escaping from that incense which was kindled by her loveliness.

The two old soldiers began to converse upon their battles and the exploits of their early years; and at the age of sixty, the chapter which contains the history of youth is generally a long one. Frederick was therefore obliged to discourse with Constance; and though his heart was sorrowful, still he did not choose to intrude his griefs upon a lovely young lady:—he therefore endeavoured to forget them for a moment, and not let the General's niece believe that he was of a reserved disposition. The conversation of Mademoiselle Constance was sprightly and entertaining, without any pretension: every word she uttered, betokened a mind which had been richly but carefully endowed with the most brilliant accomplishments. She moreover evinced a strong love of the fine arts, and expressed her opinions with a reserve and a modesty which bore ample testimony to the innocence and ingenuousness of her disposition. She was not a young lady who knows everything—argues upon everything—and contradicts everything—like those of whom we have such numbers in Paris, and who are called "juvenile prodigies," because they chatter for two or three hours together with the most astonishing assurance, and because it is customary to admire anything that issues from a pretty mouth, although in reality it may be devoid of common sense. Heaven defend you from "prodiges," reader—especially if they are women! There is nothing so charming as simplicity, modesty, and natural talent which knows how to amuse or instruct without being assuming; and to those qualities do we return with renewed zest. They do not disgust friends and acquaintances by creating jealousies and envies: but they possess a secret spell which draws crowds around them, and which is not to be found in the conversation of the "prodigy," or the "blue-stocking."

The young people discoursed upon painting, music, and the country. Suddenly the General turned round to his niece, and said, "Sing us one of your charming songs, Constance. Seat yourself at the piano, and the Viscount de Montreville will have the kindness to turn the leaves of your music."

Constance did not suffer herself to be implored a dozen times before she would comply with her uncle's request: she hastened at once to the piano, and sang while she accompanied her own words on the instrument with great taste and skill. Her voice was sweet and full of expression: it was not very strong, but Constance knew how to moderate it to the size of the apartment: and her audience were not tired of listening to her. Frederick paid the greatest attention to the charming girl: for

never had he before heard a voice which pleased him so much. Constance sang several airs; and at length her uncle said, "That is enough, my dear child: we will not abuse your kindness. You are obedient to my most trivial wishes, and do not require to be solicited a thousand times to sing a few lines. There are some whom you can scarcely get to sing at all!"

The Count and his son united their applauses to those of General de Valmont, and returned their thanks to Constance, who received their compliments with a blush. Two hours had already glided rapidly away; and the Count de Montreville rose to depart.

"I shall return your visit in a few days," said the old General to his friend. "I have just purchased a country-house a little way from Paris for Mademoiselle, who drives me mad with her green fields and her birds. I hope that you and your son will come and stay there with us before the winter entirely sets in."

The Count promised to accede to his friend's wishes, and stepped into his carriage, followed by Frederick, to whom he did not utter a single word relative to the beautiful niece of General de Valmont. The charms of Constance were capable of producing a greater effect than all the eulogies of the Count. Frederick himself made no observation: he was now thinking of the poor dumb girl of the wood,—for during the previous two hours he had entirely forgotten her! Two hours! that as yet was nothing: but Sister Anne did not forget her lover for one moment!

Three days after this visit, General de Valmont and his niece were invited to dine at the Count de Montreville's hotel; and a large party was assembled to meet them. When he learnt that he was to see Mademoiselle de Valmont once more, Frederick experienced a certain emotion which he attributed to the necessity of being compelled to conceal his sorrow. Was that the real cause?

The General, as usual, was gay, jovial, and talkative: his niece was beautiful, modest, and retiring, as when Frederick had last seen her. In a large assembly, it is much more easy to be alone with any particular person than at a small party; and Frederick invariably managed to seat himself next to Constance. He thought that he did this from mere motives of politeness, and because he felt it incumbent upon him to pay the greatest attention to the General's niece: but he could not conceal from himself the conviction that of all the ladies in the room, Constance was the one best calculated to please him. With her he felt he could converse without being obliged to reflect upon everything he was about to utter. From her own lips never issued stale epigrams nor worn-out witticisms: nor did she make any comments on the attire of other ladies. She did not pass them in review for the purpose of criticising them—a mode of amusement so prevalent in all circles, and in all nations. With her the young Viscount was more at his ease than in the society of any other: it seemed as if he had been acquainted with her a long, long time; she smiled so sweetly when he hastened to seat himself by her side; and her voice was so soft and tender, and her eyes so expressive, that it was very natural for him to prefer her conversation to that of all other ladies whom he knew. Even when he remained silent, he experienced a secret charm in her presence which he could scarcely define.

Frederick, though he endeavoured to subdue his grief in the society of Constance, still could not divest himself entirely of a certain melancholy expression of countenance, which rather became him, and which was well adapted to touch a female heart. Whenever he appeared pre-occupied and silent, Constance glanced upon him with interest; and her eyes seemed to say, "You are not happy!" Then, when she next spoke, her tone of voice would be softer, and her manners more affectionate: it frequently struck him, that, without being acquainted with them, she actually shared his griefs, or that she endeavoured to make him forget them.

Several ladies exhibited their talents on the piano and the harp: but Frederick only listened with attention to Mademoiselle de Valmont. She sung but one air—and that air was sung so well! And as she was thus occupied, Frederick was enabled to examine her features more attentively than he yet had done. Whether it were a coincidence, or whether it were an illusion of the heart, he found in the countenance of Constance much that reminded him of Sister Anne, particularly the same ingenuous candour—the same softness of expression; and it struck him that if the poor orphan could speak, she would have a voice equally tender and expressive. When Frederick was listening to Constance, he persuaded himself that it was Sister Anne who was speaking; and his eyes were filled with tears. Full of this idea and finding every moment some new likeness to the unfortunate dumb girl in the person of Mademoiselle de Valmont, he could not take his eyes off the General's beautiful niece: and when she finished singing, and Frederick was again seated by her side, the looks which he cast upon her, were glances of tenderness. Constance perceived the change, and cast down her eyes, while a deep blush overspread her countenance: but if Frederick, as he gazed upon her thus tenderly, really thought he saw the poor mute, should he not have informed Constance that she herself was not precisely the object of his tenderness? and as he made no such avowal, had not Constance the right to imagine that the son of the Count de Montreville did not view her with indifference?

The evening passed rapidly away for Frederick. The General and his niece, when they took their departure, expressed their intention of repairing on the following morning to their country residence, whither the General invited the Count de Montreville and his son to pass a few days. When Constance had disappeared, Frederick again found himself alone in the midst of the brilliant society which filled his father's mansion; and as soon as he could now tear himself away, he hastened to his own apartment to think of—Constance? Oh! no—of Sister Anne! The poor dumb orphan

always filled his imagination: but was it his fault if the image of Mademoiselle de Valmont were occasionally blended with that of Sister Anne? An affectionate heart finds the image of her it loves reflected everywhere: it sees that image where it is not; it loves another who recals that image to the recollection; and thus is it as dangerous to put confidence in the sentimental youth as in the reckless rake!

Several days passed away, and Frederick received no intelligence of Dubourg, who, he therefore concluded, had not yet returned to Paris. The young Viscount was still sorrowful and pensive: but his melancholy was less poignant. The reminiscence of Sister Anne drew frequent sighs from his bosom: he longed to see her once more: but he had ceased to form any of those extravagant projects which, on his return to Paris, had at first seemed so easy to execute. He was anxious to ensure the happiness of Sister Anne, and place her in a situation of permanent comfort: but he reflected upon the future, and felt more certain than ever that his father would never consent to his union with her.

"What should we do?" said he sometimes to himself: "what would be the result of the alliance? We could not live out the remainder of our existence in a wood? Man is formed for society; and Sister Anne could not be introduced into the circles that I move in—for the poor girl is ignorant of everything which it is indispensable for her to know."

Poor girl! wherefore did he not make these reflections when he saw you for the first time upon the bank of the river? But you then appeared to him to be eminently beautiful, humble and uneducated as you were: and your very ignorance rendered you a thousand times more inviting to his eyes: and now—— But, let us stop here! Sensitive individuals are not a whit better than the rest of the world!

One morning the Count proposed to his son to pay a visit to the General's country-house. Frederick was always ready to obey his father's orders; but upon this occasion he hastened to wait upon him with an unusual alacrity. He also devoted more than ordinary attention to his dress.

"Although I do not seek to please," said Frederick to himself, "I must not actually terrify people."

The Count remarked the slightest actions of his son, and now felt a secret satisfaction at Frederick's behaviour: but he did not suffer it to be perceived, nor did he mention the name of Mademoiselle de Valmont during the drive to the General's house, which was situate in the neighbourhood of Montmorenci, and at which the guests arrived shortly after twelve o'clock. As he alighted from the carriage, Frederick experienced a certain palpitation of the heart, which he attributed to the pleasure of seeing a person whose features recalled to mind the countenance of her he loved. He was indeed much affected; and as he entered the house, his eyes glanced round in search of Mademoiselle de Valmont. But they only encountered the General, who received him and his father with the utmost cordiality.

"You must stay a few days with us," he said: "I insist upon it, and am determined not to let you run away in a hurry. We will chat, and laugh, and shoot, and play cards in the evening: my niece shall regale us with music and singing; and we will pass away the time as merrily as possible."

Frederick looked round for that niece whom he did not see; and as the General had already commenced the history of one of his campaigns which was likely to be a long one, he ventured to inquire after Mademoiselle de Valmont.

"She is doubtless in the garden," said the General, "at her aviary—or with her flowers. Go and seek her, Frederick. It is your business to make yourself agreeable to the ladies. At your age a pretty face would have made me run from Paris to Montmorenci."

Frederick profited by this permission, and hastened into the garden, which appeared very beautiful, and in which he sought Mademoiselle Constance in every direction. He went to the aviary, and she was not there: he accordingly threaded a long walk, shaded by laburnum trees—at the end of which the path ascended a slight acclivity leading to a species of terrace, whence a beautiful landscape met the eye. Upon this terrace Constance was seated. On her knees she held a portfolio, and was amusing herself with sketching the adjacent country, particularly a delicious valley upon which the terrace looked. She did not hear Frederick approach, because she was so deeply occupied with her drawing: nor did she see him, because her back was turned to the gravel-walk he had just threaded.

"You are endowed with every talent," said Frederick to Constance.

The young lady raised her head; and when she perceived the son of the Count de Montreville approaching, a sentiment of pleasure beamed in her eyes, and her bosom palpitated with delight. She laid aside her drawing materials, and rose to receive Frederick.

"Pray continue your labours," he said. "I am not come to interrupt your studies: on the contrary, I should be delighted to share them. Your uncle has invited us to stay some days with him; and I sincerely hope my presence will not change your habits."

"And——shall you really do us the pleasure of staying with us a short time?" inquired Constance, in a trembling tone of voice.

"The pleasure is experienced by us," answered Frederick. "I do not think my father will refuse his old friend anything he asks of him. Besides, he also feels himself so comfortable in this house."

"I am afraid," said Constance, "that you, who have not the same motives to be pleased with a country residence, may soon miss the pleasures of Paris. We see but little society here: you will be dull."

"You think very badly of me," returned Frederick, "if you suppose that I could be dull in your presence."

"Ah! I beg your pardon," said Constance, "I was afraid that——But if really fond of painting, music, and the charms of a country life, you will probably be able to amuse yourself."

Frederick made no answer to this observation: he gazed attentively upon Constance, and his heart was oppressed by a thousand conflicting emotions. He saw in her an image of one who was dear, very dear to him: he fancied for a moment that he was in the wood upon the banks of the river of Vizille: a sombre cloud passed over his countenance, and a profound sigh escaped his breast. It was not till some time had elapsed, that he awoke from his reverie, and said, "Yes—I am very fond of the country."

Mademoiselle de Valmont looked at him with astonishment, and smiled: then, observing that he said nothing more, she resumed her sketch and continued her occupation of drawing the valley: but the presence of Frederick caused a species of embarrassment—her hand trembled as it guided the pencil—and she scarcely knew what she was doing. The young Viscount continued to gaze upon her in silence. He admired the gracefulness and the beauty of her form, and the tranquil and modest character of her demeanour: and he said to himself, "If sister Anne had received a good education, she would be like Constance! She would possess the same manners and the same talents: she would speak in the same language."

And he began to reflect that education, so far from being destructive to the natural graces of women, invests them with additional attractions.

The conversation languished between the two young people, for Frederick was a frequent prey to abstracted moods: the time however passed quickly away, and they seemed as if they were happy in each other's society. Frederick would have gladly passed the entire day by the side of Constance, to admire her, and compare her with Sister Anne. She herself perceived that he contemplated her countenance attentively from time to time: but Frederick's eyes were so soft, and there was in them an expression so melting and so tender, that no woman could be angry at finding herself the object of their attention.

The appearance of the two old friends on the terrace snatched the young couple from that situation in which they both were happy, without avowing the fact to themselves. The General was showing the Count all the beauties of his garden, and the terrace was one of them. The Count was very much satisfied with all he saw—especially the embarrassment and confusion he read in his son's countenance when he and his old friend interrupted the *tête-à-tête*. The General did not notice all this: he was not so acute an observer as M. de Montreville.

"Constance," said the General, "here are two guests who are going to pay us a long visit. Endeavour to do the honours of the house so well, that they shall not have an excuse to leave it in a hurry."

"I will do my best to retain them," answered Constance with a blush.

"Mademoiselle," said the Count, "it is sufficient to see you, to be spell-bound to your uncle's residence."

Frederick said nothing, but glanced towards Constance, who on her part had cast a furtive look at him, to ascertain if he thought the same as his father. After dinner, two of the neighbours called upon the General. One was a great billiard-player, who could not sleep if he did not have a game in the course of the day; and the other, who was much younger and who had been in the army, did not spare his anecdotes of wars and campaigns, which he interwove with compliments in honour of Mademoiselle de Valmont. Frederick allowed those gentlemen to play at billiards by themselves, while he remained in conversation with Constance, or listened to her as she played upon her piano.

"Do not punish yourself to keep me company," said she. "Remember that we are not in Paris, and you need stand on no ceremony."

"If my company be not intrusive," answered Frederick, "I prefer remaining with you."

Constance smiled; and it was easy to perceive that his society was anything but disagreeable to her. In the country, and especially at the General's house, the most perfect absence of all cold formality prevailed. During the day, every one occupied himself as he chose. The Count and his friend walked into the fields together, and Frederick stayed with Constance. They passed the principal portion of their time in the garden, and profited by the few fine days which the approach of winter enabled them to enjoy.

"The cold weather comes on apace," said Constance one fine morning; "and in a very short time I must bid adieu to my trees, my flowers, and my birds. But I shall see them again: the farewell is not for ever!"

"You will not return, then, to your uncle's estate in the south of France?" said Frederick, inquiringly.

"Oh! no—we both love this little spot much better," answered Constance. "He purchased it for me, and will allow me to reside here seven or eight months out of the year. In the winter we shall return to Paris. My uncle is so kind to me! He does all he can to please me! he loves me so much!"

"And who could help——"

The young Viscount did not complete his sentence: he stopped, as if annoyed that he had commenced it; and Constance cast down her eyes in mingled confusion and astonishment, and said nothing; but she had begun to grow accustomed to the eccentricities of the young man. Sometimes, when Frederick had remained for a long time without saying a word, and appeared sad and unhappy, she was tempted to inquire into the cause of his afflictions; but she dared not;—she held her peace, and sighed, without knowing wherefore. Melancholy makes rapid progress in the minds of two young people of opposite sexes; and those hours of silence are frequently more dangerous than a conversation of which gallantry would be the principal support. A more tender intimacy was however each day established between Constance and Frederick; and scarcely had a week elapsed, when that reserve and that tone of fulsome compliment, which is never the tone of love or friendship, were totally banished from their manners. The Count spoke of returning to Paris: and Frederick was surprised that he

had not thought of it before, so rapidly had passed the week of their stay at Montmorenci. When he reflected upon the pleasure he experienced in the society of Constance, he felt vexed with himself; saying mentally, "No—I have not forgotten Sister Anne: it is always she whom I behold in Constance—it is of her that I think when I contemplate the features of Mademoiselle de Valmont—it is with her that I seem to be, when I experience those delightful moments in the society of Constance!"

And it was probably also while thinking of Sister Anne, that the young Viscount, the day before his return to Paris with his father—when seated in the garden with Constance—took her hand and held it for a long time in his own. Constance did not withdraw it: she seemed

deeply affected, and cast down her eyes. Frederick remained silent; but he pressed the hand he held in his own very tenderly; and, almost involuntarily, Constance pressed his in return. Frederick then experienced a fresh pang; he released the hand of Mademoiselle de Valmont, retreated rapidly a few paces. Constance raised her head, perceived his agitation, smiled sweetly upon him, and said, "You depart to-morrow."

Frederick advanced towards her and stammered a reply.

"Oh! yes," said he, "I must return to Paris to-morrow; it is absolutely necessary, and I ought to have returned some days ago. But —yet—Oh! yes, it is she—it is always she whom I behold! I should like to stay with you for ever—I am so happy with you! But, pardon me, Mademoiselle: I scarcely know what I say!"

Constance did not exactly comprehend all the young Viscount said to her: but lovers do not always know what they are talking about; and she pardoned him with pleasure, because she felt convinced in own her mind that Frederick loved her, and a declaration of love invariably seems well expressed, inasmuch as the eyes speak more eloquently than the tongue.

The Count took his son back to Paris, and did not once allude to Constance. His lordship was a skilful tactician, and knew full well what he was doing. In a few days Frederick suggested the propriety of profiting by the last few days of the season in order to pay another visit to General de Valmont's country residence. He longed to see Constance once more, because—in her he beheld poor Sister Anne!

* * * * *

The reader will remember that we left Dubourg upon the road to Lyons; but on this occasion he no longer travelled as a Polish nobleman. He journeyed humbly on foot—with a cane, which he balanced as if he were only taking a short walk, and as if he lived in the neighbourhood. He had no bundle to carry, because his entire wardrobe was on his back—a circumstance for which he did not fail to congratulate himself. He observed those regions where he had lately been held as a great man; he passed by the abode of M. Chambertin, and made a bow to the hospitable dwelling. He also bestowed a sigh—upon Madame Chambertin? No—but upon the old Pomard which was in the cellar!

He, however, passed rapidly by the house; for he was afraid of being recognised by Durosey, whose presence had caused all his miseries: but as he was turning the corner of a lane which led into the high road, he found himself suddenly face to face with Lunel, who was hastening homeward, and leading a donkey laden with a variety of articles which the old valet had been to purchase at Grenoble. Dubourg hastened to slouch his hat over his eyes and to walk with his head down, for he was not very anxious to be recognised by M. Chambertin's old attendant. But as he advanced in this manner, he stumbled against the unfortunate donkey, and nearly knocked it over.

"You can't see, you fool!" exclaimed Lunel. "The road is wide enough, and yet you must needs run against my donkey!"

The word "fool," enraged Dubourg. He had never liked the old domestic; for Lunel had only waited upon him with a sulkiness which vexed him and Ménard during their stay with M. Chambertin; and Dubourg did not now forget the thrashing which had been bestowed upon his two little Poles, when those delectable youths were sent supperless to bed. He therefore turned suddenly round and applied three hard blows with his stick upon Lunel's back; and the old servant roared out, "Thieves! robbers! help, help, help!" as loud as he could bawl.

The motion which Dubourg had made in order to bestow this punishment on the malefactor, had caused his hat to fall towards the back of his head; and Lunel at once caught sight of his features and recognised them.

"Ah! the miserable Palatine, who can't pay his debts!" cried Lunel. "The false Baron who has a castle on the top of an inaccessible mountain and eats his green peas in the middle of winter! By jingo, he is not so elegant and sleek now as he used to be!"

"Hold your tongue, you rascal!" exclaimed Dubourg, raising his stick once more over Lunel's head.

"Why do you thrash me?" demanded Lunel.

"I only give you what you bestowed upon my followers," replied Dubourg. "I have owed you this for a long, long time."

"Your followers!" exclaimed Lunel: "they were fine fellows, indeed—your followers! And this is my reward, because my master harboured you for a month, with your learned friend who ate as much as six ordinary men?"

"If I did your master the honour of staying a month with him, you rascal, what is that to you?" exclaimed Dubourg.

"Oh! a splendid honour you did him!" cried Lunel, ironically.

"Take care, or I shall commence my little chastisement again," said Dubourg, keeping his cane still over the servant's head—a circumstance which induced the old valet to moderate his anger. He accordingly held his peace, and looked round in quest of his donkey; but the animal had disappeared during the dispute, and had wandered into the thickets which bordered the road.

"What has become of my donkey? where is my donkey?" shouted the old servant, gazing around on every side.

"How can I tell?" exclaimed Dubourg. "Look for your donkey yourself, and let me continue my journey. You will do me the favour to present my best compliments to your master and mistress, and assure them that if ever they happen to visit Paris once more, the Palatine of Rava and Sandomir will be most happy to see them!"

Lunel did not listen to Dubourg: he was running about in all directions, crying out, "Madelon! Madelon! where are you?"

Dubourg pursued his journey, and was soon out of sight of old Lunel. About half-an-hour after they had thus separated, and while Dubourg was yet laughing at the adventure, he

found himself at the extremity of a road which led into the plain, when he perceived the donkey about twenty paces in front of him, trotting comfortably along, with his panniers on his back, pursuing the paths which best suited his fancy, and stopping from time to time to devour a thistle or nibble at a bunch of grass.

"Egad! this is a most singular adventure!" said Dubourg to himself, as he advanced towards Madelon: "is it possible that this animal is sent to me by Providence? But let me be wary how I meddle with him! The law is not always pleased with those who receive gifts from Providence. It was not however I who turned this donkey away from its direct road: nor is it my fault if it left its master. At all events, the first thing I must do is to endeavour to restore it to its rightful owner!"

Dubourg returned a little way back into the wood which he had just left, and began to bawl as loud as he could, "Lunel! Lunel! Come and fetch your donkey — you great donkey yourself!"

No one answered — Dubourg's cries were useless. Fatigued with calling after Lunel, he returned towards the donkey, saying to himself, "I have done all I can in the matter, and have put a nice salve upon my conscience. I cannot walk back nearly half a league—nor will I call upon my friend Chambertin, who is no longer my friend! Let me see, however, what this donkey carries on its back—although it is not very probable that the objects are exceedingly valuable."

Dubourg commenced his inventory of the two panniers, which were covered with a grey cloth; and in one he found a great quantity of phials and little boxes.

"Oh! oh!" said Dubourg: "this is an apothecary's shop which I have got hold of now! But here is a long list—ah! it is the bill with the receipt! This will make me acquainted with the names of the various articles! '*Madame Chambertin bought of Comfit Colcynth, Chemist and Druggist, Grenoble.*' Let us examine the list! Opiate for the teeth—salve for the gums—three pots of fine rouge—almond paste—Macassar oil — bear's grease—essence to soften the skin—vinegar-rouge for the evening—and vegetable blue to make veins with! Well, upon my soul," continued Dubourg, "this is a most singular list! But let me see how it goes on. Opening pills—emollient pills —and soothing lozenges. What next? Two pounds of the best chocolate! Ah! this is much better! And now we have a long catalogue of things for M. Chambertin: namely, three hundred cautery pease. Ah! the rogue—that accounts for his ruddy complexion! Three bottles of Bareges' water—salve for corns—ointment for pimples—mint lozenges—astringent pills and tonic lozenges! This is all! let us examine the other basket!"

He found in the first place, a small box containing a wig, which Madame Chambertin doubtless wore of a morning before her own hair was dressed. A little farther on, was a wooden block for the wig when it was not in use; then came a pair of long jack-boots; and lastly some buckskin gloves.

"Well," exclaimed Dubourg, when his examination was finished, "I shall not return to Allevard for a few pill-boxes and phials. The Chambertins can easily wait a few days for a fresh supply of these precious articles! I shall take immediate possession of the whole cargo —though at the moment I do not exactly know what I am going to do with these drugs. Ah! what an excellent idea! Hurrah! I have discovered a means to turn this store to a good account, and travel without having recourse to my purse, which is far from being too well filled. Besides, who can say that I shall not make my fortune? Courage! the die is cast! I have been a Baron, a Palatine, an Actor, and even a Monster without suspecting it: I may as well turn Charlatan! It is the easiest and most lucrative profession now in vogue, if a man does but possess a little impudence, a little oratorical power, and a little wit—and all those are my characteristics! I am now, then, a Charlatan! and who is not a Charlatan in this world? Every one plays that part in his own peculiar style—Ministers with place-hunters, speculators with capitalists, and rogues with fools; men about town with the women, coquettes with their lovers, debtors with their creditors, authors with their readers, booksellers with their purchasers—and tradesmen with all the world. I am one of those who cure all diseases, and who can even prevent and anticipate them! In a word, I am a second Cagliostre—I have no confederate—I act openly: I have discovered a thousand secrets of which one alone is sufficient to make a man's fortune —and I sell pills a penny a-piece, because I am a philanthropist."

Thoroughly decided to put this new scheme into execution, Dubourg conducted the donkey into a neighbouring thicket, where he began by taking off his Palatine's boots, which were very much the worse for wear, and throwing them into the wood. He put on his jack boots in their place; and these ascended to the middle of the thigh, so that it was impossible to recognise the Baron Potoski in the quack-doctor, or Charlatan. He put on the curly brown wig which had been destined for Madame Chambertin; and took the precaution of tying the longest locks in the form of a Prussian *queue*, or tail, behind. He then daubed his face over with rouge, and applied a white powder to his forehead and chin. These arrangements being terminated, he mounted on the hinder-quarters of the donkey, retaining before him the two panniers which carried his itinerant shop; and having urged his courser into a gallop, through the medium of the stick that served him as a riding-whip, he resumed his journey.

The singular aspect of Dubourg—his countenance shaded by fine brown locks—the long tail which fell over his back—his great boots, which he was obliged to hold in such a manner that his legs might not rub against the two baskets—and his majestic seat upon the donkey, attracted the notice of all whom he met. When he arrived at the first village, the inhabitants called each other to see him, and stood upon the thresholds of their doors to look at him as he passed by—while the little

children followed him with shouts and cries. Dubourg, bowing right and left with an air of kindness and affability, began to declaim in a loud voice and in the following manner :—

"My friends, are any of you ill ?—are you afflicted with bad feet, or have you the ear-ache ? Are you annoyed by unpleasant dreams, or do you suffer in your sleep ? Are you wounded, deaf, blind, deprived of one eye, dumb, or paralytic ? Draw near—seize this opportunity ! I am the great physician—the great doctor—the great operator ! Come and profit by the occasion of my visit to these parts. I shall not return for thirty years ; and then it is probable that I may not find you all alive ! Come, my friends—I cure everything ! I do not, however, draw teeth ; but I possess a certain liquid which makes them drop out—and that is much better !"

Country people are naturally credulous ; and those, to whom Dubourg addressed himself, drew near, took off their hats, bowed respectfully, and commenced the recital of their ailments. When these histories were brought to a conclusion, Dubourg had recourse to his baskets, and distributed his drugs at hazard, selling them however with an air of confidence, and guaranteeing their good effects. He gave almond-paste to a nurse—lozenges to a man with a fever—corn-salve to another who had a cold—Macassar oil for an asthma—bear's grease for an inflammation of the chest—and vinegar-rouge for the stomach-ache. Having thus exercised his ingenuity, he gave Madelon a blow with his stick, and galloped away from the village. But scarcely was he half a league distant from his patients, when the poor devils began to experience the effects of his treatment. One held his stomach—another was attacked with a nausea—a third had a violent headache—and a fourth could not endure the taste of the remedy he had swallowed. A few ran after the Charlatan, whom they all called a cheat and a swindler. But Dubourg did not suffer himself to be captured. He had taken the precaution of distributing his drugs in very small quantities, and thus no dangerous results were to be dreaded.

Dubourg took great care not to attempt the cure of any one in those places where he stopped to refresh himself or to sleep. Having in this manner completed about thirty-six leagues in a fortnight,—because the great Charlatan, frequently finding himself compelled to stop in order to dispose of his drugs, only advanced at a gentle trot,—Dubourg arrived at a large farm-house. For some time previously he had sold little or nothing ; for the nearer he approached the capital, the less credulous were the people with whom he had to deal. His fortune was not increased, and he regularly expended at night all he earned during the day : indeed, when the receipts were very large, he regaled himself with an extra bottle of wine, being too well pleased to have his own private resources untouched.

The appearance of the farm-house invited Dubourg to stop at the door ; and he was immediately surrounded by a crowd of male and female dependants. Some of the girls purchased salves and pills for the fever, and all other maladies ; and the men provided themselves with mint lozenges as remedies for the toothache : but they all stared with open mouth at the block, on which the wig was intended to be placed, because Dubourg assured them that it invariably spoke when a storm came on. The farmer himself was at work in the fields ; but his aunt was at home ; and she believed in witches, dreams, ghosts, and talismans. She therefore hastened to consult Dubourg, because for the three previous nights she had always gone to sleep upon her back, and awoke on her stomach,—a circumstance fraught with alarm and surprise to the worthy old soul.

"I will supply you with something to prevent you from changing your position," said Dubourg. "These lozenges were given to me by an inhabitant of the coast of Guinea who sometimes slept eight days right off, without awaking, on his left side. But if you take these lozenges with moderation, you will pass an excellent night, and have the most delicious dreams—so delicious, indeed, that you will not like to awake. Another recommendation which those lozenges possess, is, that they who swallow them can dream of any one they choose, if they only take the precaution of walking round their night-caps before they step into bed."

"Oh ! make haste and give me some of your precious lozenges !" cried the old lady. "I will eat one every evening ; and this night I am determined to dream of my first husband, who was an excellent man, and not a drunkard like the second. I will also walk round my night-cap—I will not forget !"

Dubourg gave the old woman a box of strong aperient lozenges, and received a considerable sum of money as his recompense. The credulous aunt moreover insisted upon spreading a luncheon for him in a room on the ground-floor, to which he did ample justice—while she, in her haste to dream of her first husband, retired to her bed-room, swallowed a lozenge, walked round her night-cap, and stepped into bed to await the arrival of the charming vision.

While Dubourg and the aunt were thus severally occupied, the farmer returned and inquired to whom the donkey at the door belonged. A servant informed him that it was the property of a great physician who had just arrived. The farmer asked who this great physician was ; and was assured in reply that no one knew anything about him, but that he was most likely a sorcerer, as he wore his hair curled all over his shoulders like a woman, had immense boots upon his legs, and possessed a wooden head that spoke in bad weather. The farmer was unfortunately one of those men who did not believe anything about charms, talismans, and magic. He would only put credence in his own eyes and ears ; and, in a word, belonged to a race of beings who are the ruin of the occult sciences. He was therefore put out of all patience by the explanations of his dependants, and inquired whither the great physician was gone. A female servant replied that he had accompanied her mistress into the house. The farmer accordingly sought his aunt in every direction, and at length found her in bed in her own room.

"Ah! my dear nephew, what have you done?" exclaimed the old lady. "You have troubled my slumbers at the most critical moment! I caught a glimpse of my first husband, just as you entered the room. Leave me—or you will prevent the lozenge from taking effect."

"Nonsense!" cried the farmer; "shall you soon have done talking about your lozenges and your rubbish? Where is the sorcerer? Perhaps he is stealing my rabbits?"

"What an idea!" exclaimed the aunt. "He is at this monent lunching off the game-pie in the front parlour!"

"Eating my game-pie, that I intended for my dinner!" ejaculated the farmer: "we shall see how much he has left."

And with these words the farmer seized a broom-handle, rushed down stairs, and, falling upon Dubourg, began to belabour his back and shoulders with the utmost vigour and celerity. Dubourg was taken by so sudden a surprise, that he scarcely knew how to act: he accordingly adopted the most prudent of all measures, and made a precipitate retreat, just as the labourers and other dependants about the farm-house had provided themselves with sticks and clubs to imitate their master's example. Abandoning his donkey to its fate, he retreated as hastily as he could run, thus leaving to the mercy of the farmer all his drugs and medicaments — an occurrence that was lucky enough for the inhabitants of those towns or villages which he had yet to traverse on his way to Paris.

* * * * *

* * * *

Dubourg at length arrived in Paris, after having taken nearly five weeks to perform a hundred and ten leagues: but that was not much, if we consider the wonderful cures he performed on the way. When he left the farm, where his last instance of professional sagacity was so shamefully rewarded, he threw away his wig with the long tail and curls, because it gathered a host of little boys at his heels. He arrived in Paris somewhat dirty, a little shabby, and not very rich in purse; and hastened to the house in which he had formerly lodged, and with the portress of which he had left a pair of trousers. This portress was an excellent woman, who was very fond of wild young men, because they are invariably more generous than sedate people. At the same time that the portress handed him his trousers, she gave him a large sealed parcel, which Dubourg received with fear and trembling, for he imagined it must contain a quantity of writs and summonses: but as for seizures, those he did not dread!"

He broke the seal of the packet, and perused a letter which he found inside. Joy beamed upon his countenance: but suddenly repressing that ray of delight, he began making a series of most horrible grimaces, as if he thought it necessary to weep; until not being able to squeeze out a single tear, he gave up the attempt.

"My dear Madame Benoit," said Dubourg to the portress, "you know that I possessed a most respectable aunt in Brittany—an aunt, who was worth a thousand mothers, and who used to supply me with money?"

"I have heard you mention her, sir," answered Madame Benoit.

"Madame Benoit," resumed Dubourg, "she is no more! That respectable old lady is as dead as a hammer."

"What a misfortune!" exclaimed the portress.

"And I am her sole heir and executor," added Dubourg. "It is not a large fortune which she has left me: but it is enough to live respectably upon, particularly when one is as sedate and philosophic as——"

"And what did she die of, sir?"

"Oh! as for that, I will tell you all about it another time," answered Dubourg. "Her lawyer expects me in Brittany; and I must set off immediately."

"During your absence, sir," said the portress, "your friend, the Viscount Frederick de Montreville, has sent to inquire after you several times."

"I shall see him when I come back," answered Dubourg. "My inheritance requires my presence; and I cannot neglect that affair. My own business must be attended to in preference to the business of others. Good bye, Madame Benoit. But, wait—I will make you a present of this pair of unmentionables for the good news you had in store for me: you can make a jacket of them for your husband. As for me, I shall depart just as I returned—except that this time I shall not trudge on foot."

Dubourg hastened to the coach-office, and secured a place: he had just money enough left to pay the fare. It is true that he only possessed five francs to purchase food during the journey: but he consoled himself with the idea that a little temperance in his habits would benefit his health, and that he would make up for it as soon as he had entered into possession of his inheritance. On arriving in Brittany, he found that the old aunt had left him all her property; for she believed him to be married and the father of a numerous family. The income of that property was only sixteen hundred francs a-year:* with such a revenue he could not afford to play the Baron—but he might live comfortably and respectably, if he were economical and steady. Those were not however the qualities of Dubourg; he however swore a solemn oath not to mortgage his property nor anticipate the produce;—and he kept his word.

"Sir," said the lawyer to him, when all the papers and documents were duly signed, "your deceased aunt desired me to impress upon your mind the necessity of living economically, of being kind to your wife, and bringing up your twins in an honourable manner."

"Depend upon the fidelity with which I shall fulfil all the old lady's wishes," returned Dubourg, endeavouring to squeeze out a tear. "I live with my wife like a turtle-dove; and my twins already love each other like Castor and Pollux."

Dubourg sold his defunct aunt's furniture

* 64l sterling.

and personal effects, so as to realize a sum of ready money. The business detained him upwards of two months in Brittany; and it was only at the expiration of this period that he returned to Paris, attired in deep black from head to foot. His first care was to settle the claims of all his creditors; and he endeavoured to retain that air of seriousness and sedateness which he had put on since the death of his aunt. He was undecided whether to write to Frederick, or to call upon him at his father's mansion. One evening, as he entered a café, he saw M. Ménard seated at a table and watching two gentleman who were deeply occupied in a game of chess. Dubourg tapped him gently on the shoulder: M. Ménard turned round—and, recognising his former travelling-companion, was doubtful in what way he should receive him.

"It is no other than M. Ménard whom I have the pleasure of meeting," said Dubourg, with a smile.

"It is I myself, my—Monsieur de—Monsieur du—upon my soul I scarcely know what to call you!"—and the preceptor laughed as if he had uttered something vastly witty.

"What, M. Ménard," exclaimed Dubourg; "are you still angry?"

"Really, sir, I have a right to be somewhat vexed," answered Ménard, "after all those stories which you told me. But if in future I ever believe one word you say——"

"Come, M. Ménard," interrupted Dubourg, "leave all rancour and animosity to our enemies."

"Oh! I know that you are very good-natured yourself," cried M. Ménard, softening a little. "But that castle on Mount Krapack! and then to make me play *Theseus!*"

"You will not refuse a cup of coffee and a glass of liqueur?" said Dubourg.

"Since you wish it, certainly not," replied the tutor: and as he followed Dubourg to one of the tables, he said to himself, "This fellow possesses a certain way about him which no one can resist: it is impossible to remain long angry with him:"—then, on being seated at the table, he added aloud, "But where do you come from all of a sudden? The Viscount has been looking after you for a long time: he is exceedingly desirous of seeing you."

"I returned only a few days ago from my own native place in Brittany," answered Dubourg.

"Ah! you are a native of Brittany, are you?" cried Ménard. "I am no longer surprised that you constantly mingled descriptions of Brittany with those of Poland. And then that milk and butter which you were constantly boasting of!"

"Oh! the milk and butter are excellent in Brittany, M. Ménard!" exclaimed Dubourg.

"But what have you been doing in Brittany?" asked the tutor.

"I have just inherited a pretty little fortune left me by my aunt," said Dubourg.

"I will wager anything it is not true!" cried Ménard.

"Do you not see that I am in mourning!" said Dubourg.

"That proves nothing," returned Ménard. "You also dressed yourself up as a Polish nobleman, when we walked arm-in-arm at Lyons. Ah! when I think of those times——"

"Do you also recollect the splendid dinners you had when travelling with me?" demanded Dubourg.

"Certainly — certainly," cried the tutor; "you are an excellent hand at ordering a dinner. But poor Chambertin! to have made him believe that he was entertaining an illustrious personage!"

"I am as good a man as if I were really the Baron Potoski," said Dubourg.

"And to make him give you dinners in the most sumptuous style——"

"Where you also managed to play a very good part."

"I was your accomplice without suspecting it," said Ménard. "But do you know that you were compromising me, and that it was not proper?"

"A small glass of punch, M. Ménard—what should you say?"

"I am fearful it would do me harm!"

"They shall make it very weak."

"Well—since it will be weak!"

"Waiter! punch!" cried Dubourg.

"Because, my dear friend," resumed Ménard, "you must recollect that I am a little older than you, and that those follies which are pardonable in a young man are reprehensible to a degree in an old one."

"You speak like Cicero," said Dubourg: "at the same time allow me to inform you that Cato learned to dance at the age of sixty."

"Are you very sure of that?" inquired Ménard.

"I did not see him," rejoined Dubourg. "But *our* follies were really not so bad! You do not drink."

"I am perfectly well aware that we did no harm to any one," said Ménard; "and—— But this punch is very good—very good, indeed! Still, it was rather too bad to make me run across the fields for your pretended Turk!"

"I frankly confess that he was a creditor," said Dubourg; "and I only appeal to your good sense—are not creditors Turks in the eyes of their poor debtors? Drink!"

"It is perfectly true that creditors are Turks," said the old tutor, applying himself to his glass. "But, believe me, my dear Dubourg, that you possess every qualification to make an excellent member of society; you are acquainted with the best authors—with the classics—with history, and a variety of matters. Take my advice, leave off your wild ways, become steady and settled——"

"I am, I can assure you, M. Ménard," interrupted Dubourg. "Oh! I have given up play—I am a gourmand no longer—and I indulge in no kind of excesses. But we do not drink."

"Your health, my dear friend," said Ménard.

"I have given up all kinds of deceit and lies——"

"So much the better. But where did you get that beautiful ring?" asked Ménard.

"It was an emerald that belonged to the Sultan," returned Dubourg.

"I am delighted to see that you have left off telling stories," continued Ménard, after a short pause; "one has no confidence in a story-teller—and your falsehoods especially made me look like a fool!"

"Oh! not quite, I assure you," returned Dubourg.

"That ring is certainly magnificent!" remarked Ménard.

"One glass more," said Dubourg.

"You really are an excellent fellow!" cried the old tutor; "and I am delighted with this opportunity of renewing our former intimacy, my dear friend——indeed, I may call you my *very* dear friend."

The liqueur and the punch produced a most powerful effect upon M. Ménard: and he left Dubourg in the most perfect good humour, calling him his dear friend over and over again, assuring him that he might visit Frederick when he chose, and declaring that the Count de Montreville was by no means angry with him, and would receive him very kindly.

The morning after this scene Dubourg repaired to the house of the Count de Montreville, and met Frederick, who was just returning from the abode of General de Valmont, with whose niece he now passed the greater portion of time. No longer requiring the presence of his father to introduce him to the General's house, Frederick was a frequent visitor there; and the old soldier invariably treated him as his own son. Every day he discovered some excuse for calling upon Constance; he however endeavoured to persuade himself that love had nothing to do with the sentiment he experienced for Mademoiselle de Valmont, and that pure friendship was the disinterested cause of his visits. He still thought of Sister Anne—but not with the same ardour as before; nor with the same tenderness which he had formerly felt for the beautiful orphan. And yet he would not admit this change of sentiment to himself: on the contrary, he felt convinced, that if he again saw her, he should be overjoyed to clasp her in his arms.

But it was not Sister Anne whom he saw—it was Constance!—Constance, who every day was more tender and affectionate to him—Constance who experienced so much pleasure when he seated himself by her side, and who did not attempt to conceal it — Constance, between whom and him there already reigned so sweet an intimacy! When Mademoiselle de Valmont was some days without seeing Frederick, she reproached him — but reproached him mildly for his absence; and acknowledged that she was dull without him: but all this was done in so innocent and diffident a manner that Frederick was deeply touched by her conduct. Never had he mentioned one word of love to her;—indeed, he himself would not admit that he loved her: he fancied his heart was still devoted to Sister Anne. But it is not necessary to speak, in order to communicate the sentiments of the soul; and situated as Constance was, what young lady would not consider herself to be beloved?

When he perceived Dubourg, Frederick gave evident tokens of surprise, and even of embarrassment. The meeting between the two friends was however most cordial.

"Here I am," said Dubourg: "I have only been a week in Paris."

"Oh! I thought you were absent," cried Frederick. "But why are you in mourning?"

"Ah! my dear friend—my poor aunt—is—no more!" and Dubourg took his handkerchief from his pocket, and blew his nose three or four times.

"Now, Dubourg, leave off blowing your nose," said Frederick: "you know that you are not crying."

"It is all the same—she was an excellent woman," said Dubourg, "and has left me sixteen hundred francs a-year."

"You can live very well upon that," returned Frederick; "but take care and do not gamble your income away."

"What are you talking about?" exclaimed Dubourg. "The very sight of a card produces the effect of medicine upon me. But you, on your part—have you nothing to say about your love affairs? To speak the real truth, I do not think you look so very bad for a disconsolate lover!"

"I——Oh!——Since that day," stammered Frederick, "when my father came so summarily to fetch me away from Grenoble where I went to see what had become of you, I have never seen the poor girl of the wood: we left that part of the country in such haste! From that moment, my father has scarcely trusted me out of his sight. I cannot write, because no one would read my letters to her; and I know not how to communicate with her!"

"I will tell you some news about her, then," said Dubourg.

"You have seen her?" ejaculated Frederick.

"Oh! it is now a long time ago—about a fortnight after your departure, that I saw her," answered Dubourg.

"What was she doing? where was she?" cried Frederick, eagerly.

"Where was she?" repeated Dubourg: "always in that solitary wood—or else roaming up and down the road by which she doubtless hoped to see you return. What did she?—she wept bitterly; and that, I think, is now her only resource."

"She wept?" cried Frederick.

"Yes—she wept," answered Dubourg; "and I confess that I was afflicted at her sorrow."

"Poor girl! But you saw her—you spoke to her? What did you say to her?"

"She saw me: she even recognised me, although she had only met me once before. You had not told me that she was dumb: but I soon understood her signs. She counted upon her fingers the number of days you had been absent, and asked me by a sign whether you would soon return. I replied in the affirmative."

"Oh! you were right — very right, Dubourg!" exclaimed Frederick.

"Yes: but I gave her that hope three months ago."

"True," returned Frederick: "and up to this moment I have not been able to——"

"To be brief," interrupted Dubourg, "I left her as soon as I had buoyed her up with that hope in which I did not myself believe: I had nothing but hope to give her; and that hope must have long since been dead."

Such was the substance of Dubourg's tale; and Frederick remained for some moments silent and melancholy—yes, and full of remorse.

"If you only knew, Dubourg, what a surprising adventure has befallen me!" cried Frederick, after a long pause.

"If you were to tell it, I should know it," returned Dubourg: "that is very certain!"

"It is really inconceivable," continued Frederick. "On my return to Paris, I found Sister Anne!"

"You found her here?" exclaimed Dubourg.

"Yes—but in another woman," answered Frederick; in the niece of General de Valmont, an old friend of my father's. Oh! my dear Dubourg, it is an astonishing coincidence: but never did a more perfect resemblance meet my view!"

"Ah! now I begin to understand!" observed Dubourg, drily.

"If you were to see Constance—that is the name of the General's niece—you yourself would be as much surprised as I—not at once—but after a few minutes' survey of her countenance."

"And as you were surprised after a while?" said Dubourg, very coolly.

"Her eyes, with their soft and tender expression," continued Frederick, "are the same as those of Sister Anne! Her hair is brown—her forehead is noble and open—her complexion is equally beautiful. Constance is however less pale than Sister Anne: and her eyes are probably somewhat darker. But there is the same expression of features——"

"I am now surprised myself," interrupted Dubourg: "but it is that the niece of a General should so perfectly resemble a poor peasant girl."

"There is certainly that difference which results from education, position, and a knowledge of the usages of the world," returned the young Viscount. "In the first place, Constance is a little taller—her figure is faultless—she is well made—and so is Sister Anne: but Constance has acquired that gracefulness which can never belong to one who lives in a wood."

"Ah! you have found that out now?" said Dubourg, ironically.

"And Constance," resumed Frederick, "has such a sweet—such an enchanting voice, it penetrates into the very soul! Would you believe, my dear Dubourg, that when I listen to her, I fancy it is the voice of the poor orphan which I hear? and I feel convinced that if Sister Anne could speak, her tones would be as soft and dulcet as those of Constance. The result is, I am deeply affected whenever Constance sings."

"I do not know whether that circumstance would greatly please Sister Anne," said Dubourg.

"It is impossible not to feel these emotions," answered Frederick. "But, tell me—is not this resemblance a most remarkable coincidence?"

"Very remarkable," returned Dubourg: "only I am inclined to fancy that the likeness would not be very striking in my eyes. I am now no longer astonished that you leave Sister Anne in the wood at Vizille: you have found her here again—you see her every day—and you even hear her voice, which is a pleasure you would not be able to have with her. You can now contemplate her at your ease; and here she has attractions and graces which she did not possess in the wood. This is very convenient! I am delighted that everything suits your mind so well; and I perfectly understand that it is no longer necessary for you to think of the poor creature who is afar off, in her miserable cabin, or on the top of the hill, looking for your return—since you have found another close at hand, who is more charming and polished."

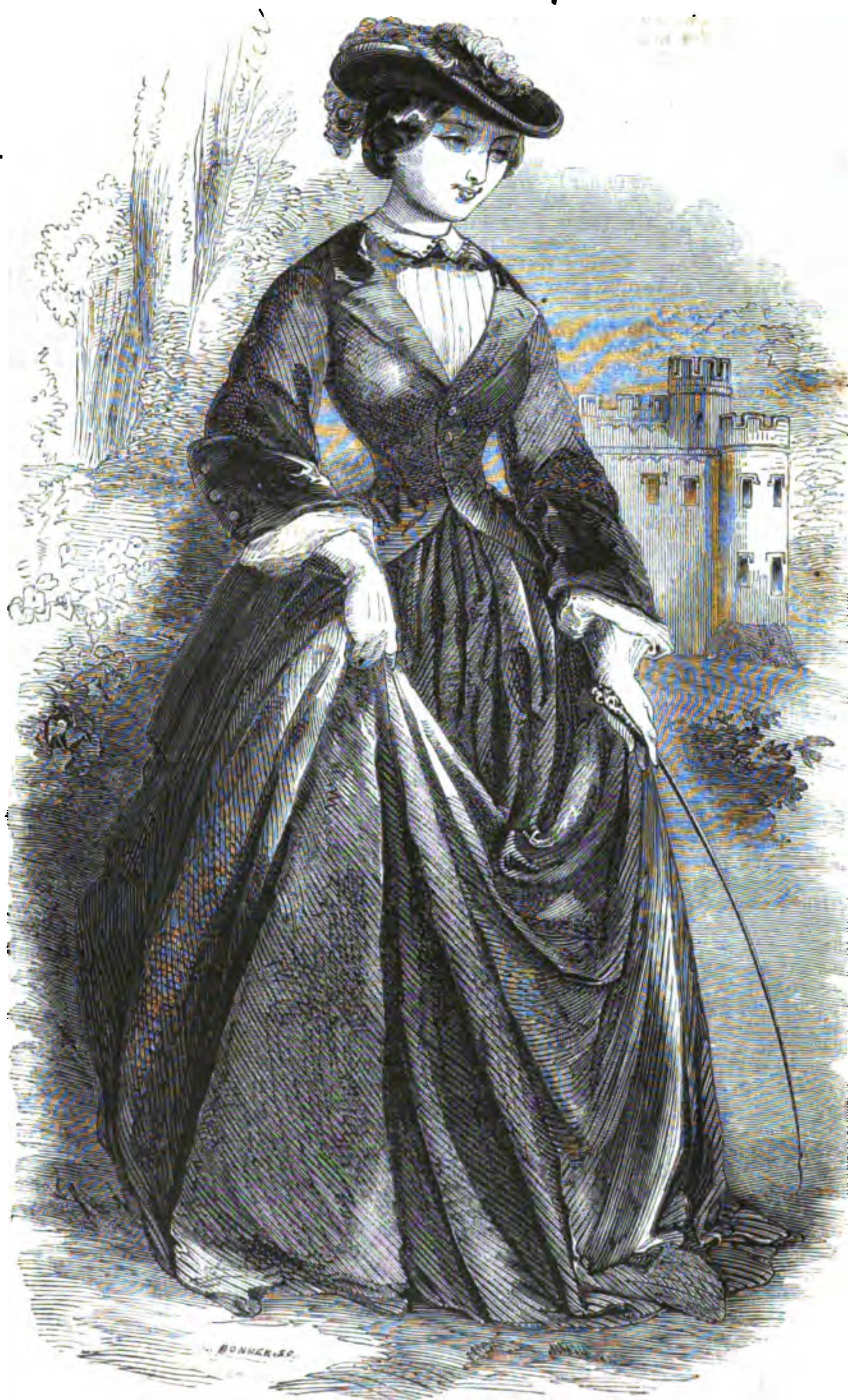
There was an irony mingled with a tone of reproach in Dubourg's speech which made Frederick hang down his head and blush.

"No," said the young man, in a voice almost suffocated by his emotion,—"no, Dubourg—I will not abandon Sister Anne. I will go and find her out—I will see her once more: I have not forgotten her—I think of her every day! Is it my fault if I perceive a resemblance between her and another?—or is it not, on the contrary, a proof that I am always thinking of her? It is surprising to what an extent Mademoiselle de Valmont resembles Sister Anne—save the slight difference I mentioned just now! She is so amiable, so affectionate in disposition! and her voice touches me so deeply! Oh! I should like you to see Constance!"

Dubourg made no reply: and for some moments the two friends preserved a profound silence, which was at length however broken by Dubourg, who said, "I confess, Frederick, that I am sorry I saw the poor girl again—so sad, so miserable—and expecting you so anxiously!"

"Why are you sorry?" asked the young Viscount.

"Why!" echoed Dubourg, who really possessed an excellent heart: "why? Because I think I see her still; and, in spite of my habitual levity and indifference, the thought afflicts me! I am but a wild fellow—a rake—and lately a gambler: but I prefer my manner of making love to yours. With your sentimentality—which according to your account never ends, but which *does* end just like any other sentiment—you beguile the young hearts of inexperienced girls, who yield to your dismal sighs and your romantic language, and who are afterwards left to weep and deplore your infidelity! I am only acquainted with dress-makers, servant-girls, milliners, or women of that rank: and we have no sentiment. They deceive me—I deceive them—we deceive each other: all this is not concealed, but is jointly agreed upon, as it were. We do not rend each other's souls—we do not weep and sigh—and if angry words arise between us, who cares? I admit that some of the fair ones to whom I allude, are not the very essence of virtue: but when we are not in search of a wife, it is useless to deceive women who only know the name of



ANOTHER PORTRAIT OF CONSTANCE.

No. 33.—The Empress Eugenie.

love through having met with it in a novel, where the passion is painted very beautifully, perhaps—but not with a great deal of truth. No—I think we are not justified in inspiring love, in winning the affections of a young heart, and in abandoning, after a moment of enjoyment, the victim of our treachery to despair and wretchedness."

"Why do you tell me all this?" cried Frederick. "I love Sister Anne still, and am incapable of being faithless to her! Was it my fault if my father brought me back to Paris in such haste? or am I to blame if since that period it has been impossible for me to return to Vizille? You cannot think that I would desert her for ever? I will see her again—she is always dear to me!"

"Do not tell me these stories, Frederick," exclaimed Dubourg; "would you endeavour to make me believe that my nose is aquiline? I am too old to be deceived in this way, and can read your heart far better than you yourself. You no longer love Sister Anne——"

"Dubourg!" cried Frederick.

"You no longer love her," persisted Dubourg: "but you love this beautiful Constance, who so much resembles the poor dumb girl, except that she is a little taller, has darker eyes, a better complexion, a more graceful form, the faculty of speech, and all the elegancies of rank and fashion."

"No, Dubourg—no. I declare before my God that I still love Sister Anne. I do not look upon Constance in any light than as a sister: and never has one word, indicative of love, issued from my lips."

"This state of forbearance will not long continue," returned Dubourg. "Oh! you may raise your eyes to heaven—I tell you that you love Mademoiselle Constance! But I do not say that you are guilty of a crime: it is very natural. Constance is beautiful—you say she pleases you—and you are attached to her! I do not blame you for this: but I blame you for having sought out that poor girl in the depths of her wood, where she resided afar from the rest of the world—innocent, artless, and unknown—and where she yielded herself up to you, and believed all you told her, because she knew not that vice and deception existed! You inspired her with an exalted sentiment—and you have lowered her to the depths of distress, in a place where she has nothing to console her!"

"Oh! Dubourg—Dubourg!" exclaimed Frederick, sobbing.

"Had you seduced her, and departed immediately," continued Dubourg, "the evil would have been great—but not so great as it is at present. She would not have had time to love you enough to deplore you so much as she now does. But you carry everything to an extreme—you abandon your friends to live in the wood, in order to be always near her,—for a month or more you never leave her,—you drink milk and eat fruits with her—and you would even have lived upon roots, could you have got nothing else, as long as you were enabled to talk of love to her! How could all this do otherwise than turn the poor creature's head? She became so accustomed to your society, that the sudden loss of it nearly killed her: she only lived, breathed, and existed with and for you! She imagined that this state of existence was to endure for ever: and one morning you leave her, and all is over! What resource has she but to weep? And I saw her—and I regret that I saw her: for she was pale, in tears, and with her hair dishevelled! She seemed occupied with one idea—one sentiment; and every minute she turned her watery eyes towards the road by which you had departed! At night she doubtless passes the weary hours in weeping again! She has not even the last consolation which is left to the unfortunate—that of pouring forth her griefs into the bosom of a friend! All this you have caused, Frederick; and it is not the finest chapter in the history of your life! You would moreover have avoided it all, had you not given way to those romantic ideas which I always blamed."

Frederick made no answer: he appeared to be wrapped up in a deep and mournful reverie.

"My dear friend," said Dubourg, taking his hand, "I have told you what I think; and you would be wrong to be angry with me. Besides, all that one says to a lover, will not prevent him from having his own way. I know you will not marry Sister Anne. By Jove! if one were obliged to marry all one's mistresses, I should have as many wives as the Sultan himself! I was merely observing that her situation deeply afflicted me. But we will not talk any more on this point. I am not the less your friend—and you may dispose of me as you will. Adieu! I am going to dine for thirty-two sous; because when one has only sixteen hundred francs a year, and is desirous of keeping his capital, he must not frequent the first hotels and taverns."

Dubourg took his leave; and Frederick remained a prey to the most bitter reflections. In spite of himself, Dubourg had enlightened him as to the real state of his mind; and though he still endeavoured to dissuade himself from the belief, he could not help acknowledging that he was no longer the same tender, impassioned, and devoted lover towards Sister Anne that he formerly had been! It is difficult to persuade ourselves that we are in the wrong. Even when we *do* admit our error, we still find an extenuation to colour our conduct: and we say to ourselves, "How could we do otherwise?" It is, especially in the affairs of love, that we reason thus; and the last sentiment being always the stronger, is sure to conquer the former one.

Frederick, with the view of justifying himself to his own conscience, said, "I will hasten to visit Sister Anne again, and will not let her pass all her life in that miserable cabin, away from society. I will purchase for her a beautiful little house, with a garden, cows, and flocks; and I will surround her with everything that can occupy her mind. I will supply her with a servant of her own age, whose presence will be a solace to her. She shall dwell in that house with her old friend Margaret; and nothing shall be wanting to make her comfortable. The view of the surrounding country, the inhabitants of the environs, and

the care of her flocks, will dissipate her melancholy. I can see her from time to time, and she may yet be happy!"

Happy without Frederick! No—*that* Sister Anne could never be! A competency—the possession of the most boundless wealth—nothing could recompense her for the loss of her lover: for Sister Anne had not been brought up in Paris—and she would not have believed that diamonds, handsome attire, and gaudy equipagés were ever preferred to the tranquillity of the soul, or that a fault was to be repaired by gold! A few months before, and Frederick would not have reasoned thus: but as he now understood the world in another sense, he imagined that Sister Anne would think like him. We are apt to judge the hearts of others by our own.

For some days, the young Viscount, tormented by all that Dubourg had told him, was haunted by the image of Sister Anne; and even in the society of Constance, his melancholy, which had appeared to have entirely vanished, was more profound than ever. The General returned to Paris with his niece; and Frederick could now see Constance every day:—but it was with fear and trembling that he sought her presence. Mademoiselle de Valmont, astonished at his manner, dared not however inquire the cause: but when she fixed her eyes upon Frederick, those blue orbs spoke for her, and betrayed the deep interest she experienced in his secret grief, and her desire to become acquainted with it. Meanwhile, he himself, being most anxious to be relieved from his solicitude in respect to Sister Anne, often besought Dubourg to proceed to Vizille and see the poor mute, for the purpose of consoling her:—but Dubourg strenuously resisted all the supplications of his friend.

"I cannot go," said he: "I have seen her once, and that is enough! I would not gaze upon her pale cheeks again for worlds: I should be wretched for six weeks afterwards—I who knew not what grief was before I first saw her! Besides, my presence would not console her: she would not believe anything I might tell her, because I have already deceived her once. My journey into Dauphiny would therefore be useless, and would not mend her position."

Having failed in his attempt to induce Dubourg to undertake the journey to Vizille, Frederick resolved upon soliciting his father to grant him leave of absence for a fortnight. But it was not until after a considerable degree of hesitation that he adopted this measure: remorse however penetrated deeply into his soul—he was incessantly haunted by the pale and weeping image of the poor dumb girl—and he fancied that he should be more calm and tranquil when he had seen her once again! For some time past the Count had treated his son with the utmost tenderness: for the old nobleman flattered himself that Frederick had forgotten the young woman who had so strongly captivated him during his stay in Dauphiny, and that his love for Mademoiselle de Valmont would totally efface the former passion. The Count had put off that coolness of manner with which he had treated Frederick on their return to Paris: he hoped to see his matrimonial scheme speedily accomplished; and felt persuaded that the General would not throw any obstacle in the way. It was, therefore, with unfeigned surprise he heard his son's request for a fortnight's leave of absence. His brows contracted—his manners became suddenly changed—and Frederick, who was in the habit of trembling before his father, waited for a reply in silent anxiety.

"Where do you wish to go?" demanded the Count, after a long pause.

Frederick endeavoured to mutter some pretext for his absence.

"Do not invent any stories," cried the Count, interrupting him sharply: "I do not like hypocrisy or deceit. You wish to return to a woman who seduced you from the path of propriety during your travels, and for whom I know that you committed a thousand foolish excesses. I do not hesitate to confess that I hoped you had forgotten her: I imagined she was far from your memory—I do not say from your heart, because the heart has but little to do with such amours."

"Ah! my dear father," cried Frederick, "if you were only acquainted with her whom——"

"Silence!" exclaimed the Count. "You cannot think of espousing this young girl; and yet it is possible that you may have certain wrongs to repair! I do not know her—and it may be, that you are more culpable than I had imagined! Perhaps she whom you have seduced, is now cast abroad into the world, without friends or relations, and is compelled to exist in poverty and disgrace. If gold can repair the evil, or at least mitigate its effects, be assured, Frederick, that I will not spare it. But it is *I*, sir—and not you—who will undertake the fulfilment of that duty."

"You, father!" cried Frederick, in astonishment.

"Yes—I myself," returned the Count; "and I shall not fail to accomplish the task in a suitable manner. You cannot leave Paris at present. Besides," added the Count, after a moment's reflection, "your presence here is indispensable. The General is about to bestow his niece upon a young Colonel who is expected every day—and you must be present at the marriage."

"Constance going to be married!" ejaculated Frederick; and his countenance underwent a sudden change. The melancholy expression which it had previously worn, was now succeeded by such looks of jealous rage, that the most indifferent observer would have noticed the difference. His voice was changed; and as he questioned his father, he seemed as if he were awaiting an answer that must decide his life or death.

"Yes," said the Count, pretending not to notice the emotions of his son,—"the General has consented to the union of his niece with the Colonel. I see nothing surprising in such an event."

"And this Colonel is expected soon?" said Frederick. "Do you know him? is he good-looking? and do you think that Mademoiselle de Valmont loves him?"

"You cannot suppose, Frederick, that I am in the confidence of Mademoiselle de Valmont," returned the Count. "She has doubtless met the Colonel in the circles which she frequents: and I believe he is a young man of about seven or eight-and-twenty."

"Handsome?" inquired Frederick.

"Oh! handsome or ugly," cried the Count, "a man of honour is always a desirable match for a young lady."

"And this marriage is decided upon?" pursued Frederick.

"It appears to be resolved upon," was the father's cold response.

"And yet Mademoiselle de Valmont never mentioned the subject to me," said Frederick.

"She would scarcely allude to a matter which no well-bred young lady ever talks of," remarked the Count.

"True—I had no right—that is, I could not have expected—at the same time, I thought——"

"It is probable," said the Count, affecting a tone of indifference, "that the General has not as yet broached his intentions to his niece."

"And it is for this marriage that I must remain in Paris?" said Frederick, hurriedly.

"Certainly," replied M. de Montreville. "The General has been all his life accustomed to the habits of the camp or of barracks, and is perfectly unacquainted with the thousand little things which he must provide for the ceremony—all the various purchases he must make—the choice of suitable equipages, and so forth; and he requires your advice: for a young man is able to——"

"He does me a great honour," interrupted Frederick, somewhat ironically. "I am really very proud at having been thought worthy of assisting General de Valmont with my advice."

"I therefore repeat, Frederick, my wish that you will not think of leaving Paris at this moment," said the Count.

This injunction was now totally unnecessary. The Count departed to call upon his old friend, with whom he was desirous of conversing in private: and Frederick remained fixed to the spot in silent grief and astonishment, long after his father had left the room. Poor Sister Anne! your image no longer occupied his mind! Pale, agitated, and breathing with difficulty, Frederick at length began to pace the apartment in a manner which indicated the profound shock his mind had just experienced. He sighed—clasped his hands together with convulsive force—and then beat his forehead and his breast, as if grief were to be assuaged by these ravings. Such was the state in which Dubourg found him; for Frederick had communicated his projected journey to Vizille to his friend, and Dubourg had now come to bid him farewell previous to his departure.

"What is the matter with you, Frederick?" demanded Dubourg: "what has happened to you? Your countenance is entirely changed! Will you have the kindness to speak, instead of walking up and down like a madman, and dashing your hands about in that rabid style?"

"Who would have thought it? who could have imagined it?" cried Frederick, throwing himself into an arm-chair. "Oh! woman, woman!"

"Woman again!" ejaculated Dubourg. "Well—I am now less uneasy than I was at first."

"With a countenance so open—eyes so soft—and a disposition so sweet—to conceal so much perfidy!" continued Frederick. "She ought to have told me that she loved another! To receive me so well—to pretend to be so delighted to see me—Oh! it is too bad!"

"Decidedly it is too bad," said Dubourg. "But of whom are you speaking?"

"Of Mademoiselle de Valmont—of that Constance who is so beautiful—so amiable!"

"Oh! yes—and who resembles Sister Anne."

"Would you believe it, my dear friend," cried Frederick, "that she is going to be married to a young Colonel with whom I am not acquainted—whom she loves, perhaps—whom I have never seen—and who is expected in a few days?"

"Mademoiselle de Valmont going to be married!" exclaimed Dubourg.

"Yes," answered Frederick.

"Well, and how does her marriage affect you?" demanded Dubourg. "You do not love her—you look upon her as a sister—you have never breathed a word of love in her ears—you are only as a brother or a friend to her! Do you not recollect telling me all this a month ago?"

"No—I do not love her," answered Frederick: "but as we were together, she ought not to have kept anything secret from me. I was at least worthy of her confidence."

"And you doubtless saw her every day?" said his friend.

"She might have hinted the approaching change in her condition!" continued Frederick, vehemently: "she might have suffered me to perceive that she was engaged! O Constance, I never would have believed this of you!"

"Then you do not intend to go to Dauphiny?" said Dubourg. "Frederick! Frederick!. Where the devil are you running to?"

Doubourg called after his friend: but the young Viscount hastened out of the room, precipitated himself down stairs, and proceeded to the General's house with the rapidity of lightning.

"It becomes him well to accuse the women of perfidy," said Dubourg to himself, as he walked leisurely back to his own lodgings. "I will change my dress and hasten to dinner! I don't know how it is, but I am already in debt to the landlord of the place where I dine; and it is only the middle of the quarter."

Frederick arrived at the General's house without having any particular project, and without knowing what he was to say, or what he was to do. He entered the mansion, where he was accustomed to be seen by the domestics, traversed several apartments, and arrived at that in which Constance was usually seated. She was there upon this occasion, occupied at her piano; and when Frederick saw that she was calm and unruffled as was her wont, he remained motionless for a moment at the door,

unable to utter a word. Constance turned her head when she heard some one enter the room, and smiled as soon as her eyes encountered those of Frederick, the half wild, half melancholy expression of whose countenance did not immediately strike her.

"Is it you, sir?" said she, in a semi-comic voice. "So much the better! You are an excellent musician, and you must assist me in studying this new air."

The young nobleman did not make any answer: he continued to gaze upon Constance; and she being habituated to his eccentric manners and to his frequent abstraction, did not at first observe his disquietude: but seeing that he remained at a distance, she turned towards him once more; and this time his emotions did not escape her.

"What is the matter with you?" said she, in a soothing tone of voice: "you seem agitated?"

"Oh! nothing is the matter, Mademoiselle," replied Frederick. "What could afflict *me?*"

"It is true that you have never been in the habit of communicating your sorrows to me," rejoined Constance, with a reproachful accent.

Frederick slowly drew a chair near the General's niece, and seated himself beside her, endeavouring at the same time to read in her eyes what was passing in her mind. He had never looked at her in that manner before; and Constance, blushing deeply, hung down her head.

"You are afraid that I shall guess what is passing in your mind," said Frederick, in a tone of irony which he assumed to conceal his affliction.

"I!" exclaimed Constance: "I am really at a loss to comprehend your lordship's meaning. Why should I fear to allow my secret thoughts to be read by you?"

"Oh! certainly—you can take high ground, if you choose," said Frederick. "I am also aware, Mademoiselle, that I have no right to control your heart."

"Good heavens!" cried the young lady; "you really alarm me! Your agitation is not concealed by that unnatural coolness which you assume!"

"Alarm you!" exclaimed Frederick. "O Constance, you love another, and you ask what is the matter with me?"

Mademoiselle de Valmont was too much astonished to make an immediate reply. Frederick had never before called her by her Christian name; and those words—"You love another,"—conveyed the same meaning as if he had said, "You only ought to love me!" A pleasing emotion agitated the soul of Constance—her heart palpitated violently—an expression of delight beamed in her beautiful eyes—and her voice was more tender than ever, when she at length addressed herself to Frederick.

"I love another!" said she: "what do you mean by that accusation? Explain yourself, M. Frederick—I do not understand you!"

The amiable girl had only understood one thing, which was, that Frederick did not choose her to love another; and that wish was sufficient to show her that she was loved herself! For some time previous to this indirect declaration, she was in hopes that she had inspired Frederick with a tender sentiment; but hitherto he had never uttered one syllable which could be construed into an avowal. Even now, when she knew that she was beloved, she was anxious to be positively assured of the pleasing truth in those still more pleasing words "I love thee!" But Frederick still maintained a stubborn silence, and profound sighs escaped his breast.

"Do you intend to speak to me to-day!" said Constance. "What is the cause of this unusual agitation? what have I done to merit your reproaches? Explain yourself—pray explain yourself?"

The voice of the General's niece had something so tender and so soft in its tones, as she pronounced these words, that Frederick could not prevent himself from gazing upon her countenance once more; and doubtless the eyes of Mademoiselle de Valmont expressed the same sentiments as her voice: for he imbibed intoxicating draughts of love from those fountains of the soul—and suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! how wretched I am!"

"You wretched, Frederick!" cried Constance: "and why?"

"You are going to be married," was the answer.

"This is the first time I have heard of it!" she responded.

"Oh! you cannot conceal it any longer from me, Mademoiselle!" returned the young Viscount: "I know all! Your intended husband will return in a few days—he is a Colonel—and you love him!"

"What do you say?" ejaculated Constance, in the most unfeigned astonishment: "a Colonel—and I love him. Oh! this is too much to tell me in jest! But what is his name?"

"His name!" repeated Frederick. "Oh! I forgot to ask his name. You can however tell me his name, unless you really mean to pretend that you are not acquainted with him."

"There are several Colonels amongst the visitors of my uncle: but——"

"Ah! now you will not deny it any longer!"

"And who told you, my lord, that I was about to be married?" demanded Constance.

"Some one who is tolerably well informed," answered Frederick. "It was my father—and his informant was your uncle."

"My uncle! I am at a loss to conceive——"

"You pretend not to understand me," interrupted Frederick: "but you doubtless await the arrival of your future husband with impatience."

Constance seemed to meditate for some time; and at last she answered in a tone which she endeavoured to render as cold as possible, "Really, M. de Montreville, I am surprised at all you have just told me: but even, supposing that I was about to be married, I do not see how it could affect you. I should even imagine that it must be perfectly indifferent to you whether——"

"Oh! you imagine that it cannot affect me,

Mademoiselle!" interrupted Frederick. "Most certainly, I have no right—that is, it cannot matter to me——"

"Why, then, do you put all these questions to me, my lord?" asked Constance.

"Why? Ah! Constance—you are going to be married; and you love this Colonel perhaps?"

"And if I did love him or any one else, would *that* affect you also?"

Constance was determined to push him to extremities, and to compel him to avow his sentiments. Frederick could not contain himself—his heart would no longer preserve the secret.

"Yes," said he, "I love you—I adore you—and I shall die if you espouse another!"

"He loves me!" murmured Constance. "Well—it is fortunate that I have at length succeeded in wresting the secret from you! I thought you would never divulge it,"—and the beautiful girl extended her hand to her lover, who fell upon his knees, and covered it with kisses; while Constance said to him tenderly, "Ah! Frederick, I love you in return, and shall never love any one else. Why did you not make this avowal sooner—an avowal that has rendered me so happy, and for which I have been so long waiting? My uncle loves me, and would not force my inclinations in this respect. If it be true that he has formed any project of marriage for me—although I have never as yet heard him speak a syllable about it—I shall desire him to renounce it at once, as I will espouse none but you. You possess my heart, and you shall have my hand. I feel confident he will not refuse my request. He loves you also, Frederick; and who could help liking you? You are wrong to conceal your sorrows from me—you should make me your confidant. For a long time I have read a portion of your heart: ought you not also to read somewhat of mine?"

Frederick made no answer otherwise than by promises of love: his head was turned—the avowal of Constance's love had troubled his brain—and it was only with a considerable degree of difficulty that Mademoiselle de Valmont succeeded in calming him. They walked out on the terrace in the spacious garden; and there Frederick, overcome by the rapture of his emotions, knelt at her feet and implored her to receive the homage of his heart. She blushed and murmured an affirmative. They did not separate till he had again heard her protest she would never espouse any other but him; and then he issued from the General's mansion in a far different state of mind than when he entered it. The certainty that he was beloved by Constance had in one moment changed all his resolutions; and in the fervour of his joy, Sister Anne was entirely forgotten. He did not even remember his remorse. Like those invalids, who, in the height of their fever, no longer experience the slightest pain, Frederick exclaimed every moment, "Dubourg was quite right—I love Constance—I adore her! I will henceforth love her alone!"

Two days after this declaration, the Count de Montreville, who was now perfectly well convinced that his son no longer dreamt of leaving Constance, departed in his travelling-carriage for Dauphiny, accompanied by one domestic only, besides the postilions.

* * * * * *
* * * * *

We will now return to Sister Anne, whom we left anxiously expecting Frederick's return, and whom we shall find still awaiting the arrival of him who came not! But the trees had lost their green foliage—the fields no longer offered to the eye the emerald aspect of verdure—the grass was dead in the valley—the willows were leafless upon the banks of the river. The feet of the village peasant now trod upon those leaves which a few weeks previously had shaded his head and embellished his garden. He trampled upon the gaudy vesture of summer, which the approach of the wintry season blighted and destoyed: and thus does everything succumb to the principles of decomposition and regeneration. Other foliage will succeed that which has just fallen; and the man who treads it under foot will also return to dust, whence will spring up thousands of other animate beings. He fancies himself important, because his own race is longer than the existence of the green leaves: but when centuries shall have dispersed his ashes, what will he have left behind him more than those very leaves which the wind scatters on every side.

The autumnal season inclines the mind to melancholy, and encourages reveries, contemplative moods, and abstractions—not in the breast of the citizen whom the cares of commerce or of wealth retain in the vortex of the busy world—but in that of the inhabitant of the country who has leisure each day to contemplate the change which takes place in nature. He cannot, without emotion, behold the woods, whose trees, black and impoverished, wear mourning for the death of spring. Beneath their shady canopy he had reposed in the heat of the summer's day; and now he perceives nothing save dried and withered branches. The forest, deprived of its thick foliage, is less sombre than in July, and the rays of the sun penetrate with ease into its deepest recesses. But that light so far from embellishing it, robs it of its principal charm; and we regret the long vistas and the silent avenues in which it is so delightful to ramble in the society of those we love!

Poor Sister Anne, however, only noticed the change of the season, because it made her the more fully appreciate the length of time that Frederick had been away. She could no longer count the days of his absence—they were now too numerous. Still hope had not entirely abandoned her heart—she was not able to bring her mind to believe that her lover had quitted her for ever; and it was only when she reflected that Frederick might be dead that the blackest despair seized upon her soul. When that idea obtained any degree of stability in her imagination, life no longer seemed tolerable to her. Could she continue to exist in this world without the hope of meeting Frederick once again? Often—oh! often was she anxious to bid adieu to the sor-

rows of existence; but she was in the way to become a mother, and that thought chained her to life. Something told her that she must live for her child!

For a long time the poor orphan had not been to the village. An old shepherd, who passed through the wood every morning, was in the habit of depositing at the foot of a tree the brown bread necessary for the inmates of their cabin; and in exchange he invariably found a large jug full of milk. That bread, together with milk and eggs, composed the only food of Sister Anne and Dame Margaret in the cold season. As soon as the dumb orphan had finished her meal, and supplied her guardian with all she required, she drove her goats to the hill, and seated herself at the foot of the oak-tree. In spite of the cold, which now began to be very severe, the poor girl did not omit visiting that spot one single day. Clad in an old woollen cloak, she braved the rigour of the season, and enveloped herself in the garment which scarcely protected her against the glacial chill; and her goats, finding nothing to nibble upon the summit of the hill, crouched down at her feet. Alas! poor orphan—her features, pinched by cold and changed by suffering, presented but too faithful a picture of poverty and grief!

Often and often had the snow, falling in large flakes, formed upon her a complete cloak of dazzling whiteness, scarcely permitting any part of the young girl's person to be seen. The traveller, as he had passed over the hill, saw only the head of the poor mute, who kept her eyes constantly bent upon the road leading to Grenoble. But reckless of the cold, she did not perceive that her teeth chattered, that her frame was stiff, and that her whole body shivered from head to foot: she did not feel the inclemency of the weather—a single sentiment absorbed her attention, and the acuteness of her sorrow deadened all physical suffering. When the shades of night precluded the possibility of watching the road any longer, she rose—looked around her—and seemed astonished that she was enveloped in snow. She shook her cloak, caressed her goats, and returned gently down the hill. She repaired to the hut, conversed a little with Dame Margaret, and then threw herself upon her solitary couch. No longer was that couch the scene of blissful repose or of a sweet dream: for a long time she had not slept, and her visions had been gloomy. The countenance of her lover was constantly present to her imagination! If she could only have communicated her sorrows to a friend, she would have felt relief. She would have called to Frederick, had she possessed the faculty of speech: and she fancied that the accents of her voice would have reached his ears. Poor girl! heaven had deprived her of that precious organ. Tears were her portion—ever tears! Tears were all that remained to her!

From day to day Sister Anne perceived that her old guardian's health was rapidly failing. For a long time Dame Margaret had not left the hut; and now she could with difficulty walk from her bed to her chair, and from her chair back to her bed. Dame Margaret was seventy-three years of age: her youth had been active and laborious—her old age was tranquil. Exempt from all maladies, she did not suffer physical pain: old age alone diminished her energies and prostrated her capacities. She was dying away like a lamp, having cast a gentle light around: she had not glittered brightly—but she had been useful in her humble sphere—and that was preferable.

The instant appointed by nature was drawing near, and Margaret was not destined to behold another spring. Sister Anne redoubled her attention to her old friend: and now the affectionate girl, observing that Margaret's intellects were nearly gone, gave up her diurnal watchings upon the mountain, in order to be constantly with her. This was the greatest sacrifice she could possibly make; and the excellent Margaret, touched by her devotion, smiled upon her adopted child, and called her by her name. That was all her tottering reason could remember or accomplish! But one morning, when Sister Anne, according to custom, hastened to Margaret's bed-side to see how she had passed the night, the old woman did not answer—nor did she stretch forth her trembling hand to receive the poor girl. Her eyes were closed—never again to open! Sister Anne, alarmed at this silence and immutability, seized the hand of her adopted mother: but it was cold and inanimate. Vainly did she endeavour to warm it in her own: she impressed a kiss upon the brow of Margaret—and no smile was her recompense. The young girl remained stupefied by the side of the bed in which the departed one lay. She contemplated the venerable features of her who had taken care of her infancy—of her *only friend*, who was now also snatched from her! Margaret seemed to sleep: the serenity of her countenance bore witness to the tranquillity of her mind in the hour of dissolution. Sister Anne, standing by the side of the bed, and leaning over the corpse, could not tear herself away from that scene of death. Her grief was calm—but it was not the less profound: her eyes had no tears—but their expression was only the more heartrending.

Sister Anne passed a portion of the day by the side of the inanimate remains of the departed Margaret; and it was only with considerable reluctance she tore herself away. She however knew that it was necessary to render the supreme duties to the corpse, and to conduct it to its last home: but she was alone, without succour, and without advice. She was therefore compelled to repair to the village to seek counsel and assistance. She hastened from the hut, traversed the wood, and gained the valley of Vizille. As she walked along, she bowed, as was her custom, to those peasant-girls whom she encountered in her way, and whom she knew; but to her surprise they turned away their heads, or cast upon her a look of contempt. Instead of stopping, as they had been wont, to say a kind word to Sister Anne, they seemed anxious to avoid any intercourse with her. The young men of Vizille glanced upon her, smiled amongst themselves, and pointed to her with their fingers: but upon the countenances of all did she look in vain

for that sympathy and condoling expression which she had been used to encounter.

"What is the cause of this change?" thought the poor orphan within herself. "Every one seems to avoid me! Is it because I am more unhappy than ever—because I have now lost my adopted mother—and because Frederick has abandoned me?"

She did not know that those indications of her love—which the world calls weakness, but of which she was proud—were in the eyes of the peasants a proof of shame. In the village the inhabitants are more severe than in the city: innocence is there esteemed more highly—because it is often the only treasure the poor peasants possess. The people of Vizille were particularly strict in this respect; and a girl, who had been guilty of a fault, became the object of universal contempt, as long as her seducer did not repair the evil in the face of heaven. They would have perhaps done well to have shown a little more pity to the poor mute, who, living in the depths of a wood, was ignorant of the usages of the world, and knew not that obedience to the dictates of the heart frequently constitutes a crime. But those peasants did not reason on the subject; they behaved as they were accustomed to do—and often this mode of conduct is purely mechanical. They had manifested a great deal of interest in the welfare of Sister Anne, as long as she was as innocent as she was unfortunate: but now that she bore the proof of her weakness, they repulsed her from their doors without first ascertaining if she were not more unhappy than ever.

The young mute entered the village, without being able to comprehend the behaviour of the inhabitants. She was at a loss to imagine wherefore the girls avoided her presence and deigned not to reply to her questions; and she was alarmed when she perceived their parents look at her with severity and contempt. She knocked at the door of a little cottage, the inmates of which were friends of the deceased Margaret: but the woman, who opened the door, made a motion expressive of surprise, and turned her away from the threshold. Sister Anne made signs to explain the motives of her visit, and the loss she had experienced: the woman of the house gave no reply—and Sister Anne was repulsed rudely into the street, where several of the inhabitants were assembled.

"How dare you present yourself at Vizille in this state?" said an old man to Sister Anne: "how could you venture amongst us, and attempt to penetrate into our houses. You carry about with you the proofs of your shame, which you ought to have concealed in yonder wood, but which you come to display to our wives and daughters. Is it that they may admire your fine conduct? is it that they may profit by so excellent a lesson? Depart, daughter of Clotilda! you ought to die with shame! Return to the hut—fly with your seducer—and do not come here, amongst our wives and daughters!"

Sister Anne did not comprehend how she could be guilty for having loved. She gazed upon the inhabitants of the village with surprise—she raised her suppliant hands towards them—she endeavoured to make them understand that she was asking nothing for herself: but the peasants would not comprehend her signs: they repulsed her, and retreated to their houses. A few accompanied her to the outskirts of the village, and only left her when they had enjoined her not to return amongst them. The poor girl was suffocated with her tears. To be treated thus, because she had loved Frederick! This was the sentiment which however supported her courage: it was for him that she was martyrized with these humiliations; and she would support a thousand more rather than not possess his love. She regained her hut with tears in her eyes. It was night;—the most profound silence reigned throughout the wood, and in the solitary dwelling which was left to her. She was now alone upon the wide face of the earth! Inaccessible, however, to vain alarms and to those superstitious fears which even great minds experience by the bedside of death, Sister Anne drew near the couch on which the corpse reposed; and throwing herself upon her knees, she stretched out her arms to her inanimate friend, and seemed to say, "Oh! *you* would not have repulsed me, my more than mother, even had I presented myself as a guilty thing before you! You would have had pity upon me; but your extreme age and your enfeebled sight did not permit you to notice my situation. Nevertheless—you would have pardoned me; and those strangers drove me from them!"

Is it by driving the guilty to despair that we open the gates of repentance? No, no: society is wrong in this respect! Sister Anne passed the whole night by the side of Margaret's death-bed. She prayed for the deceased from the bottom of her soul—she besought her to look down upon and protect her still—and during the whole night, the image of Frederick did not once intrude upon her pious occupation.

On the following morning, at day-break, Sister Anne went into the wood to await the arrival of the old shepherd who exchanged his bread for her milk. He did not keep her at her post long before he made his appearance. He was a man of about sixty years of age, still strong and robust, who had passed the greater portion of his life in the forests; and, like Sister Anne, he was a stranger to all that took place in the village, which seemed a world to the inhabitant of a wood. The young girl took him by the hand, and made a sign to implore him to follow her into the cottage—a tacit request, which the old shepherd immediately obeyed. She led the man to the bed upon which the corpse lay: but he merely shook his head without appearing to be at all affected by the sight. The habits of a wild kind of life render us indifferent to the misfortunes of others. Sister Anne, however, made certain signs to him which it was impossible to misunderstand; and the old shepherd consented to perform the service which she required of him. The young mute now conducted him into the garden, and pointed to the fig-tree beneath which old Margaret had been accustomed to seat herself: it was there that her adopted mother had intimated her wish to

GENERAL DE VALMONT'S COUNTRY SEAT.

be interred. The old shepherd soon hollowed the humble grave—the remains of the excellent female were deposited in it—the earth was thrown in once more—and Sister Anne placed a cross upon the spot! That was the only monument which she had it in her power to provide for the memory of the deceased: she however watered it plentifully with her tears. How many magnificent mausoleums are there upon which no tear has ever been shed!

The shepherd departed—Sister Anne was again alone—alone, and for ever! She then felt more than she had yet done, the great loss she had sustained. Margaret, in her life-time, spoke but little, and she had lately slumbered incessantly in her arm-chair. But she had been *there*; and then the poor orphan no longer felt herself abandoned by the whole world. One being now could alone console her: but *he* did not return—and each day destroyed the little hope which still sustained her sinking courage. Sister Anne could not have borne up against such a complication of ills, had she not felt heaven would soon give her something to soothe her pangs. Her bosom contained a being the birth of which was anxiously looked forward as a source of consolation. And for that being how deeply she had suffered! She was despised and shunned by all her acquaintances—she could find in the village neither succour nor sympathy: but the being, for which she suffered all this, would cause her to forget her sorrows! Is it not just that we should find some indemnity for our sufferings even in their very source?

Days passed, and the lapse of time seemed to have changed into a grateful reminiscence that acute grief which Sister Anne experienced for the loss of Dame Margaret. But that same Time, which can calm the regrets of friendship, does not soften the pangs of love. The image of Frederick was now more than ever present to the memory of the poor dumb girl; for she had nothing to abstract her attention from this one object of her thoughts. She had not a friend to console her; and when the palpitations of her bosom reminded her that she would shortly be a mother, was it not natural that she should desire the presence of the father of her child.

While Frederick was with Sister Anne, he had fequently spoken to her of Paris—the city of his birth. In the course of those days when they were both seated together upon the banks of the river, he often gave his mistress a glowing description of the great city, painted the pleasures of the mighty Babylon in vivid colours, and depicted the enjoyments of the capital in all their charming hues to her imagination. The poor girl did not always understand what he said to her: but she listened with the most profound attention, demonstrating her astonishment by the most singular signs, and expressing her wonder in a thousand strange but endearing ways. This occupation had amused Frederick at those periods when he was somewhat weary of always talking about his love. There are some people who doubt the existence of such weariness; but they forget that whatsoever perpetually engages our attention soon loses all its value. Every word uttered by Frederick at the time remained deeply impressed upon the memory of Sister Anne; and each day did she now think more seriously upon all he had told her.

"He is doubtless in that great city of Paris, of which he spoke to me so often, and where he was born," thought Sister Anne. "Perhaps his father prevents him from returning to see me? But if I could only rejoin him—if I could but throw myself into his arms—Oh! I am very certain he would be pleased to see me! And then he might keep me constantly with him—I should never leave him again—and I should be so happy! But how shall I find out this Paris?"

Every day the desire to go and look for her lover became more settled in the mind of the affectionate girl:—she could not persuade herself that Frederick had forgotten her, and imagined that if he did not return to her arms, it was because he was forcibly kept away from her! Since the death of Dame Margaret, Sister Anne had nothing to keep her in the wood. In the state in which she found herself, deprived of an organ so necessary, her hut doubtless appeared preferable to the dangers, the fatigues, and the difficulties which would beset her during the journey she was so anxious to undertake: but a woman, who loves sincerely, knows neither dangers nor difficulties; she braves everything, sustained by the hope of once more beholding the object of her tenderness. Thus was it that Sister Anne, although a stranger on the face of the earth—unable to make known her wants or her wishes—and bearing in her bosom the fruit of her love, determined upon quitting the only asylum she possessed, and sallying forth in quest of Frederick. She resolved to dare all perils, support every species of misery, and endure privations of all kinds; and even though she should expend whole years in the search, it would seem to her that every step she took was bringing her nearer to him she set out to find!

Her resolution being once taken, she only thought of the means of putting her plan into execution; at the same time she did not choose to leave her cabin and Margaret's grave without a protector. It was again to the old shepherd that she addressed herself; and one morning she conducted him into her hut, pointed to a little parcel which contained her clothes and which she slung over her back, in order to intimate to him that she was about to commence a journey, and then made him sit down in the old arm-chair. Her signs seemed to say to him—"Stay here; this cottage is now your's. I only recommend to your care the fig-tree which overshadows the grave of my adopted mother, and these poor animals which have so long been my companions and the means of my subsistence."

The old shepherd understood all Sister Anne communicated to him by his signs; and, though the hut was in his eyes a palace—and though he now found himself, by Sister Anne's gift, much richer than he ever yet had been—he still endeavoured to turn the young girl from a

project which appeared to him senseless in the extreme.

"Whither will you go, poor child?" cried the good old man. "You leave your cottage in the state in which you are? In two months perhaps you will be a mother—and you set out on a long journey! Who will attend to your wants—you, who cannot ask for what you need? Who will receive you—who will aid you? How will you inquire your way? Consider—you are about to take a bold step! At least reflect a little longer!"

Sister Anne was decided; and nothing could shake her resolution. She made a sign to express her firmness, and to show that all remonstrance was useless: then raising her eyes to heaven, she seemed to add, "God will protect me! he will have mercy upom me!"

The old shepherd would still have retained the poor orphan.

"And money," said he, "my dear child—have you any money? because you cannot travel a hundred yards without it. I know *that*, although I have lived but little elsewhere than in woods myself. I have no money to give you—and yet you might sell your cottage and all that is in it for something!"

Sister Anne smiled, and drew from her bosom a little bag of brown cloth, whence she extracted four pieces of gold, and showed them to the shepherd: they were Dame Margaret's treasure! Some time before her death, the poor old woman had desired her adopted daughter to search a particular place beneath her bed, in a corner of the hut. Sister Anne did as she was ordered, and discovered the little bag, rolled up and tied carefully with a piece of string.

"Take this, my dear child," Margaret had said; "it is for you. Those four gold coins are the fruits of my earnings and of my labours. It was for you that I hoarded money, to enable you to purchase a more numerous flock when I am gone to another world."

At the aspect of the four pieces of gold, the old shepherd was overwhelmed with astonishment: for he himself also imagined that such a sum was sufficient to carry Sister Anne all over the earth.

"Go then, my dear child," said the old man, "and I will take care of your hut for you. But whenever you return, I shall surrender it into your hands."

Sister Anne smiled faintly upon the worthy shepherd; and casting a last look upon her cottage, sallied forth with her bundle of clothes in her hand.

As she traversed the garden, she dropped a tear upon the grave of Margaret. Her goats gathered round her, and seemed to wait for to lead them, according to custom, to the mountain. Sister Anne caressed them amidst her sobs: they had lately been her only companions, and a secret voice seemed to whisper to her, "You will never see them more!"

As she passed through the wood, what reminiscences crowded upon her mind! There was the place in which she and Frederick had so often sat; a little farther on was the stream on whose bank they had seen each other for the first time, and where he had declared his love! Those scenes appeared to be still animated by his presence; and it was with considerable difficulty the poor girl tore herself away. But in order to support her courage, she thought within herself, "I am going to find him; and perhaps we shall return together!"

She hastened to the hill, and prostrated herself at the foot of the tree beneath the shade of which her mother, Clotilda, had breathed her last; and there she implored that sainted parent to look down from heaven above, to protect and guide her safely on her journey! She then descended the hill, and gained the road which led to Grenoble, and in which she would fain have discovered the imprint of her lover's footsteps.

* * * * * *

* * * * *

From early dawn the young mute was upon her journey. The weather was fine, but cold: the fields were deserted—the peasants walked through them with hasty steps—and the labourers were hurrying homeward to their little cottages, to seek the comforts of their fireside, and warm themselves by the blazing logs which they brought from the forest. The sight of a cheerful fire enlivens the long winter evenings; and the poor mendicant, who passes through the village, stops and looks with as envious eye at that inviting flame which in seen through the windows of the huts, too happy if he himself can find a few bundles of straw whereon to stretch his weary limbs during the long, cold night!

Sister Anne had scarcely been four hours on the road, and already was she astonished at the novelty of everything she saw: for her experiences were hitherto limited to her hut, the wood, the village of Vizille, and the mountain. She now stopped with surprise before a forge, a windmill, or a country-house, which seemed to her a castle. Everything was new to her. But how should she direct her steps in that world which appeared so vast—how should she find the city she could not name—how should she even discover the road she was to take? Occasionally these thoughts depressed her spirits and diminished her courage; she stopped, gazed sorrowfully around her, thought of Frederick, and resumed her walk. Towards the middle of the day she sat down on the bank of a stream to rest herself and to drink of the water; and she beheld a picture which brought tears into her eyes. A handsome boy was driving before him three or four cows and some goats: he had his little brother on his back and led his little sister by the hand, as he crossed the stream;—and how kind he was to them! how cheerfully and encouragingly he spoke! his voice was so harmonious, it reminded the poor mute of Frederick!

Wiping away her tears, she continued her route, and presently she halted in a little hamlet, knocked at a peasant's door, and was admitted into the house by a young woman who was surrounded by her children; while an old crone maintained an excellent fire by feeding it with the dried branches she had collected in the adjacent woods.

"What do you want, my good woman?"

asked the young mother in a kind tone of voice.

Sister Anne contemplated the picture which was presented to her view, and could not withdraw her eyes from a little baby that was lying in the lap of its mother. An expression of joy irradiated the poor mute's countenance; and she seemed to think within herself at the moment, that *she* also would soon become a mother, and that she would lavish her kindest cares upon the being whose birth she anticipated with so much pleasure.

"Tell us what you want," said the old woman, without moving away from the fire.

"Look, mother, how pale she is, and how she seems to suffer!" exclaimed the young woman. "So young—about to have a strong claim upon your sympathies—and thus to travel on foot, and in the cold! But perhaps you are on the way to rejoin your husband?"

Sister Anne sighed; and seeing that an answer was expected, she made signs to indicate her inability to return one.

"O, mother, she is dumb!" exclaimed the young woman: "poor creature!"

"Dumb!" echoed the old crone: "what, my dear, you cannot speak? Oh! how I pity you! Dumb! are you deaf also?"

The gestures of Sister Anne showed that she possessed the faculty of hearing.

"Ah! that is fortunate, indeed!" resumed the old woman, drawing near the young traveller, while the elder children regarded Sister Anne with curiosity—probably under the impression that a mute was something different from other people. "It is by an accident, then, my dear, that you are dumb? Was it the result of a long illness? Perhaps it is not incurable."

"Mother," said the young woman, "let us first give this poor creature all that she wants to refresh herself: and we can question her afterwards."

The peasants invited Sister Anne to seat herself before the fire; one of the children took her bundle, while the old woman placed food upon the table and encouraged the poor orphan to eat and drink with the kindest expressions of welcome and sympathy. Sister Anne, deeply affected by the attention that was paid her, demonstrated her gratitude by gestures so plaintive and touching, that the inmates of the cottage shed tears.

"It is not everywhere the same as at Vizille," thought Sister Anne. "Here, so far from driving me rudely away, they treat me kindly, and strive to console my afflictions. The world is not so bad as I feared to find it!"

This reception reassured the courage of the young girl, who could not however find signs sufficient to reply to all the questions of the old grandmother; the peasants however believed that she was on her way to her husband.

"Are you going to join him at Grenoble?" asked the old woman.

Sister Anne made a sign to indicate an affirmative; and the peasants congratulated her upon being so near the end of her journey. Having rested several hours beneath that hospitable roof, Sister Anne resumed her walk; but before she left the cottage, she took from her little bag one of her pieces of gold, and presented it to the young woman who had admitted her into the dwelling where she had been so kindly treated.

"Keep it, keep it, my dear child," said the young mother; "we expected no reward for what we have been able to do for you. You are so much to be pitied, being deprived of the power of speech, that you ought to be lodged and fed for nothing wherever you go. But unfortunately all the world do not think as we; and you will meet with many a hard heart in your path through this life. You are going to Grenoble:—your money will be necessary there, and no one will refuse it."

Sister Anne testified her gratitude to the young woman as well as she was able. She embraced her tenderly—kissed the little baby—bade adieu to the grandmother and the children—and resumed her journey, having been shown the direct road to Grenoble. But the poor young girl could not make very rapid progress. Her condition, the sedentary habits to which she had been accustomed, and the bundle of clothes which she carried, compelled her to stop often and rest by the wayside. She would then seat herself on a stone, a tree that had been felled, or on the bank of a stream, and wait till she sufficiently recovered to pursue her journey. From time to time, as she thus rested her weary limbs, other travellers passed along the road. Those who were in carriages, did not glance towards her; they who were on horseback, deigned to fling a look upon her; and those who, like herself, were on foot, stopped and addressed a few words to her. But as they received no reply, they pursued their way—one imagining that she was an idiot—another cursing her impertinence for not answering—and a third supposing that pride closed her mouth. Sister Anne gazed upon the travellers with an air of astonishment, and cast down her eyes when any of them spoke rudely to her because she did not answer their questions. The result of all this was still the same—she found no friend, and proceeded on her journey alone!

Towards the close of the day, Sister Anne, who had not deviated from the road which had been pointed out to her by the hospitable peasants, arrived at Grenoble. The aspect of a large town produced a fresh surprise, which augmented every instant as she advanced in those streets where she saw individuals attired in a much more elegant manner than the inhabitants of Vizille. Everything bewildered and embarassed her; and she walked onwards with trembling steps. The large houses, the fine shops, the constant bustle of people hastening to and fro, the noise of the vehicles, and the singular expression of countenance with which every one gazed upon her as she passed,—all this increased her confusion. Poor girl! what would have been her sentiments were she in Paris instead of at Grenoble?

But it was night-time—and she felt the necessity of seeking an asylum. Sister Anne did not dare knock at any door; the houses appeared too handsome to receive a poor wanderer such as she was. For a long time she

roamed about those streets, with which she was not acquainted, till she was overcome with fatigue; and then only did she make up her mind to knock at the door of a house near which she stood. The unfortunate girl did not know what an inn was: she thought that by paying for everything she had, she could obtain refuge anywhere.

We said that she at length resolved to knock at the door of a house. The gate was opened; and an old tailor, who acted as porter, inquired her business. The young girl looked at him in a sorrowful manner, and made signs to explain her wants; but the porter, without paying any attention to her gestures, contented himself with repeating the question. Receiving no reply, he rushed from his lodge, seized her by the arm, and pushed her rudely into the street, exclaiming, "Oh! you will not say what you want! Well—in that case, you cannot be admitted into these premises!" And he banged the door in her face.

This reception was far from encouraging; and large tears rolled down the cheeks of the poor orphan, as she again roamed up and down the streets of Grenoble. But in a few moments she collected fresh courage, and hastened to knock at another door. There she was treated as a mendicant, and ordered to go about her business. She could support this harsh behaviour no longer; violent sobs agitated her bosom, and nearly suffocated her; and she seated herself upon a stone at the corner of a large carriage-gate. In a few moments the gate opened; and an old couple, enveloped in costly cloaks and pelisses, issued from the house, preceded by a domestic bearing a lantern. As they passed by Sister Anne, they ordered her to quit the stone which belonged to their mansion—calling her a mendicant—an idle wretch—and even by a worse name, and menacing her with a prison unless she obeyed them immediately. Sister Anne rose with difficulty from her cold seat, and dragged her weariness and her misery a little farther on; while the old couple walked leisurely away in another direction, rejoicing at what they had done, and determined to complain of the audacity of beggars and poor people at the party to which they were going.

The young girl, overcome with fatigue, and ignorant where to seek an asylum, yielded to all the violence of her grief. The manner in which she had been treated at Grenoble, gave her but a sorrowful opinion of large towns; and yet she felt the necessity of pursuing her search after a lodging for the night. At length she perceived a house that was lighted with several lamps—the great gates were open—and many people were running backwards and forwards in the court-yard. She took one of her pieces of gold in her hand, and held it forth as she presented herself at the porter's lodge. This time she was not repulsed: it was an hotel in which she now found herself—and the sight of the gold coin ensured her a favourable reception.

When the landlady perceived that the poor girl could not speak, she thought it necessary to talk enough for them both; and as she led Sister Anne into a little room, where there was an excellent bed, she commenced a long history of the admirable manner in which her house was kept, the beauty of its situation, and the moderation of her charges. From time to time she stopped to inquire whither her guest was going, whence she had come, and what she was: then, as if suddenly recollecting Sister Anne's inability to answer her, she exclaimed, "But how stupid I am! I keep asking you a thousand questions, and you cannot reply to one of them!"

She then continued her eulogium of her hotel, and wound up her discourse by exclaiming, "What a dreadful misfortune! I do not understand your signs, my dear child—I cannot make out one of them! But never mind—I will send you up some supper in a minute! Ah! if my nephew was here—he, who understands mathematics so well! Your signs would soon be explained then! But he has left me, poor boy, and is now engaged at the telegraph at Lyons!"

At length the landlady withdrew; and Sister Anne, after having eaten a mouthful of food, resigned herself to that repose of which she stood so deeply in need. Alas! let us hope that happy dreams for a short time at least, enabled her to forget the sad reality of her sorrows!

As she had heard the landlady declare "that she was at the best hotel in Grenoble," she was now acquainted with the name of the town in which she found herself, and which she recollected to have heard Frederick mention frequently. This circumstance determined her not to leave Grenoble till she had ascertained, by some means or other, whether her lover was still there; and in the morning, having succeeded in making her hostess understand that she was desirous of passing another night at the hotel, she sallied forth to roam about the town, which to her appeared to be immense. As she walked through the streets, she looked up at every window, and examined every house with attention. If Frederick were to see her, she fancied that he would immediately call her or run after her. Sometimes she stopped, thinking that she perceived his figure amongst the crowds which passed her: but, alas! she full soon discovered her error! Thus did she spend the entire day, and only returned at night to the inn when the shades of darkness precluded the possibility of continuing her search.

"You have been through our town," said the landlady to Sister Anne, "and have no doubt found it very beautiful. But it does not come up to Lyons in that respect: and Lyons itself is not half so fine as Paris."

At the word Paris, the young traveller made a sign expressive of delight; and squeezing the arm of the hostess, appeared to intimate that it was to Paris she wished to proceed. But the landlady did not comprehend her.

"You are going to Lyons, I dare say," observed the hostess, after a momentary pause. "It is not very far distant—about twelve good leagues, not more! You cannot however go very quick in your present state: but in three or four days at most you will be able to reach that city."

Sister Anne sought her chamber with a sor-

rowful heart. How could she ever find her way to Paris, if she were not even able to indicate that it was her destination? This reflection filled her with despair; but she had implored her sainted mother on high to guide and protect her upon her journey; and she now prayed to that parent once more. Hope then shed a gleam upon her soul:—without hope what would become of the unfortunate?

On the following morning the young girl prepared to leave the inn. The landlady presented her bill, which was totally unintelligible to Sister Anne: but she tendered a piece of gold, and little change was restored to her. The inhabitants of towns require to be paid for every bow and every curtsey that they make. The landlady had been very polite to Sister Anne; and therefore the orphan's bill was rather an exorbitant one. She inquired the road to Lyons; and behold her now again on her journey, with her bundle in her hand. Was it not however likely that she would lose her way during so long a walk, and amongst the bye-roads and the thickets of that mountainous part? She confided in Providence and put her trust in heaven!

Sister Anne accomplished as great a distance as she was able during that day. At night, being overcome with fatigue, she solicited an asylum at a farm-house, and was allowed to sleep in the hay-loft. But as long as she was protected against the cold blasts and sleet of the night, she did not grieve at being compelled to slumber upon straw; and the weariness of her frame soon wooed the presence of sleep. On the following morning, she was presented with a breakfast of milk and brown bread; and the inmates of the farm refused all remuneration for the hospitality they had offered her. Thus no farther inroads were made upon her purse; and she began to perceive the necessity of economizing her resources, as they were the only talismans she possessed to obtain an asylum where kindness would not afford one. But hospitality is now becoming a rare virtue! The most humane think that they do much for the poor traveller, when they supply him with a piece of bread and occasional alms; they seldom receive him beneath their roof. Gone are those times when men deemed themselves honoured by the opportunity of affording an asylum to the way-worn stranger, without inquiring his rank, his fortune, or his name, and of admitting him to share their repast, their seat by the fire, and their bed! Civilization introduces strange customs together with its improvements. We have become proud, and will now share nothing! But on the other hand, we have hundreds of friends who condescend to sit at our tables, drink our wines, and, when they leave our houses, tell a thousand scandalous tales concerning us: but this is done through excess of attachment, and on account of the dread that we might harbour kinder friends than themselves.

Towards the middle of the second day after her departure from Grenoble, Sister Anne, lost in her reveries and meditations, did not perceive that she had strayed from the direct road which had been pointed out to her; and it was only when she felt the necessity of resting herself that she cast anxious looks around, in search of some village, which, according to the information she had received at the farm-house, ought not now to be far distant. The spot in which she found herself, was deserted and gloomy: not a house met her longing eyes. She ascended an eminence, and saw nothing before her save an immense forest of fir-trees. On her left hand a vast torrent, encumbered with masses of ice, rolled into a deep ravine and lost itself in the thickets at the bottom; on her right, hills and barren rocks met her eyes—but no habitation. The young girl began to be afraid that she had wandered from the direct path, and remained for some time undecided what course to pursue. But the roads appeared too bad both on the right and left, to afford her a hope that she was near the one which led straight to Lyons: she was however unwilling to retrace her steps, and accordingly made up her mind to pursue the path which ran towards the forest. Having walked for another half-hour, she found herself at the entrance of the vast congress of fir-trees, which time hath not bent, and the branches of which, though denuded by the cold, seemed still to dare the rage of the elements and the fury of the storm.

The forest was intersected by a fine road; and Sister Anne did not hesitate to follow it. She was allured by the trace of horse's hoofs and wheels, to hope that this road would conduct her to some neighbouring town, or to the village which had been mentioned to her; and she did not abandon herself to the excess of her fatigue, but journeyed on in expectation of reaching an asylum before night-fall. Not a soul met or passed her in that deserted road, which, bordered on either side by the forest, wore a gloomy and sombre appearance that communicated a portion of its own sadness to the mind of the traveller. The poor mute, whose eyes in vain sought the termination of that lone path, saw nothing but fir-trees; and not a vestige of either village or habitation broke upon her sight. Her heart began to sink within her, and her courage to fail, when the shades of night enveloped her in their gloom; and at length her eyes were no longer able to pierce the darkness around her. In a short time she was compelled to yield to the fatigues which oppressed her; and, with tears in her eyes, she felt that she could not advance another step. She was therefore obliged to make up her mind to pass the night in the forest. It was not fear which oppressed the heart of the young girl: she knew not what robbers were—there never had been any in her wood, nor at Vizille. But it was the cold that alarmed her—it was the necessity of spending a whole night, in her situation, without a roof to protect her head from the winds and the sleet. But she had no resource; and having eaten some bread and nuts which she had purchased in the last town she passed through, she enveloped herself as well as she was able in her cloak—and, laying her head upon her bundle of clothes, anxiously awaited that sleep which her weariness did not fail to send to her temporary relief.

It was midnight when Sister Anne awoke: and the moon, which shone above her head and irradiated the road on the edge of which she was sleeping, fell brightly upon the singular picture that met her eyes. Four men surrounded her. They were all clad like the poorest wood-cutters: their garments consisted of old jackets, immense trousers supported by leathern belts, and large hats slouching over their faces, which, when Sister Anne was enabled to catch a glimpse of them, neither wore an expression of kindness nor humanity. Their hair, flowing in disorder over their shoulders, their long beards, and their moustaches, added to the ferocity of their appearance. Each had a musket; and their belts were provided with hunting knives and pistols.

Two of these men were leaning over Sister Anne: and a third, with his lantern in his hand, was examining the features of the poor girl: while the fourth seemed to be listening to ascertain that the road was quiet. The sight of these individuals thus occupied around her, filled the poor girl with an indescribable feeling of alarm; and though entirely ignorant of the peril which menaced her, she experienced a dread for which she could not account, and closed her eyes in order not to meet the terrible looks that were fixed upon her.

"What the deuce have we found here?" said one of the robbers, who was leaning over Sister Anne. "I do not think it is worth while to waste our precious time in searching her clothes for the contents of her pocket."

"And why not?" cried he who held the lantern. "Any trifle she may have, will be more acceptable than nothing at all. She has a bundle of things under her head."

"Some few clothes which can be of no use to us," said another. "Don't you see she is a peasant-girl who works in the fields?"

"Is she dead, or does she only sleep?" cried the first speaker. "Push her a little, Leroux: or shall we pass the whole night in contemplating her features?"

"I think we have nothing better to do," said he who was called Leroux. "The road is still quiet—is it not Jacques?"

Jacques was the robber who kept watch: and when his comrade thus addressed him, he turned, approached the group which surrounded Sister Anne, and exclaimed, "Perdition! the night will again be a bad one!"

"Not altogether," said Leroux, who still continued to contemplate the poor girl's countenance. "She is very pretty!"

It was at this moment that Sister Anne opened her eyes once more, and resolved upon imploring the pity of the individuals who surrounded her, and the meaning of whose observations she had not understood, because she was unaware of their profession.

"Look, Leroux!" cried he who held the lantern; "she has awoke."

"And beautiful eyes she has too," exclaimed Leroux. "I should like to know what she will say to us."

Sister Anne gazed in a suppliant manner upon the robbers; and, joining her hands together, seemed to implore their pity.

"Oh! fear nothing!" cried Leroux: "we will not hurt you. But where do you come from? which way are you going? and why do you sleep in the forest?"

Sister Anne, who took the robbers for wood-cutters, endeavoured to make them understand that she had wandered out of the direct road.

"Why—this is a woman, and she will not speak!" ejaculated one of the thieves. "What can be the meaning of such a prodigy? Is it fear that makes you dumb? Speak!"

Sister Anne rose, and made signs to intimate that she was deprived of the powers of utterance.

"What kind of a woman is this?" said the robber who had last spoken, while Leroux approached the lantern towards the young girl's countenance: and in a short time they observed that she would soon become a parent.

"Leave the poor thing alone," cried Jacques. "She is a deaf and dumb girl, and it would be a shame to do her any injury."

"Deaf and dumb!" exclaimed Leroux, whose eyes beamed with unnatural fire. "Why—this woman is a treasure! She is very pretty—look at her eyes and her teeth! I should not be at all sorry to make her my wife."

"You are not in earnest, Leroux?" said Jacques.

"Never more so!" returned the robber thus addressed. "A deaf and dumb girl is the very thing to suit one in our profession!"

Sister Anne, trembling and alarmed, did not altogether understand the conversation which took place between the robbers; and fearful, when she perceived their indecision, that they would not grant her the asylum of which she stood so deeply in need, as the cold had benumbed all her limbs—she took her treasure from her bosom, being well aware that money will frequently conquer a thousand difficulties. The poor girl presented a piece of gold to the robbers, in a suppliant manner, and with tears in her eyes.

"Oh! she has money about her!" exclaimed the villain who held the lantern; "well—that is not so bad; and now she offers us some of it. The deuce! you may as well entrust us with it all, my dear!"

As he uttered these words, he snatched the little purse from her hands, and the robbers began to examine its contents with the utmost avidity; while the poor orphan remained horror-stricken upon the spot when her only resources were thus wrested from her.

"Three pieces of gold!" cried Jacques; and the countenances of the robbers expressed a ferocious joy. "It is more than we have seen for this last week."

"I told you that the girl was worth something in one way or another," exclaimed Leroux. "Come along, comrades! Let us carry the beauty to our retreat, and hasten to enjoy ourselves."

As he uttered these words, the robber seized Sister Anne by the arm and dragged her into the middle of the forest. Jacques took charge of the bundle—Pierre carried the lantern as before—and Frank, as the fourth bandit was called, brought up the rear. Sister Anne walked quietly in the midst of the banditti, not comprehending the horrors of her situation,

and imagining that the four men were leading her to their abode where she should meet their wives and children. Still the fierce countenances of those individuals, their abrupt and unceremonious manners, the weapons which they carried, and the singularity of their conversation, inspired the poor girl with a terror of which she was not the mistress. Frequently, in order to reassure her sinking courage, she cast a timid glance around, in the vain anticipation of seeing sympathy and pity depicted upon their countenances; but when she raised her eyes, she encountered those of Leroux devouringly fixed upon her. The features of that man were not calculated to inspire the young prisoner with confidence; his hair was grizzly and red—his eyes were of a light grey, rolling perpetually with a strange vivacity in their sockets—his mouth, which was invariably curled with a savage smile, was surmounted by a thick mustachio of the same colour as his hair—and a large scar, extending from his nose to the bottom of his left ear, gave a terrible expression to his countenance. This man, with one of his arms passed round the body of the young mute, supported as he conducted her through the mazes of the forest—while the other banditti, by their air and discourse, increased the terror of Sister Anne every moment.

The robbers inhabited a cabin situate in the thickest part of the forest. During the daytime they passed for poor wood-cutters; and their weapons were then concealed in a cave which they had hollowed beneath their dwelling. But at night, they armed themselves to the teeth, sallied forth upon the road, and attacked travellers, when they felt themselves to be sufficiently numerous.

Sister Anne was surprised by the length of the way which led to their abode—and much more so at the thickness of the forest through which they were obliged to pass. After an hour's progress the robbers conducted her into a hollow, from the depth of which emanated a light that belonged to a cottage. The robbers whistled several times; and a woman soon made her appearance at the door. The sight of a being of her own sex for a moment reassured Sister Anne: but as soon as she espied the countenance of her who stood upon the threshold of the door, she felt her heart sink within her. The aspect of the robbers' female companion was, indeed, far from calculated to inspire the poor orphan with either confidence or hope. She was of an elevated stature, and so thin that her bones seemed ready to start through her skin—for flesh she had none. Her features, which were sharp and angular, wore an expression of such cold cruelty that an observer would have imagined she was actually passionless. Her complexion was livid: a red kerchief was tied round her head; and a few rags but ill concealed her miserable body.

"We are returned, Christine," cried the robbers, as they drew near to the cabin. "We have captured a prize, and have brought you a companion with whom you will not quarrel."

At these words, Christine seized the lantern from the hands of the robber who carried it, and held the light to the face of Sister Anne. Having long and attentively examined the countenance of the orphan girl, she cried, in a hoarse tone of voice, "What is the meaning of this freak? Who is she?"

"A woman," answered Jacques, "as you might very well perceive, if you used your eyes: and a rare kind of woman she is too. She is deaf and dumb!"

"Deaf and dumb!" exclaimed Christine: "a fine treasure, indeed! What do you intend to do with her?"

"That is no business of your's," returned Leroux, in a tone of voice so rough that it awoke the echoes in the forest. "I have brought this woman here to be my own companion—mistress—or wife, whichever you like best: she pleases me, and that is sufficient. Don't take it into your head to ill-treat her, or I will hang you up to the highest tree."

Christine did not appear to be alarmed by this threat. She continued to look upon Sister Anne with a sinister expression on her hideous countenance: and perceiving her situation, an ironical smile curled her withered lips, as she murmured between her teeth, "You are at least sure to be a father soon."

A blow, which caused the female companion of the robbers to reel back several paces, was the only answer made by Leroux to this observation: but in a moment the horrible woman rushed on her assailant, and was about to take dire vengeance upon him for his brutal conduct, when Pierre threw himself between them, crying, "Now then, that's enough of useless and dangerous play! We must not let the new-comer see that disorder reigns amongst us. Hasten, Christine, and prepare the supper; we are as hungry as wolves."

During this altercation between the robbers and their female companion, the unfortunate mute experienced a sentiment of horror—a feeling of apprehension and alarm, to which she had till then been a total stranger. The sight of that woman, the discourse of the men, whose ferocity was no longer concealed from her—the aspect of that frightful retreat in the depths of the forest—all united to inspire her with an idea of the dangers that surrounded her. But what could she do?—what must become of her. She would have given worlds to be afar from that den, even though the cold of the night air were to be her portion. But escape seemed for the moment impossible. The men did not restore her treasure to her: they had even possessed themselves of her bundle. Had they forgotten to return her property? She could scarcely indulge the hope; and every moment her terror was augmented by some fresh cause of alarm. Her whole frame trembled—her teeth chattered—and her knees shook beneath her.

"See," said Leroux, supporting her into the cabin,—"see what the old wretch of a Christine has done! She has frightened my little beauty to death. Let us put her close to the fire, and she will be warm."

The robbers entered the hut, which was divided into two compartments. The first was the room in which the inhabitants of that dreadful den were accustomed to live; and in one corner were the bundles of straw upon

No. 35.—The Empress Eugenie.

which they reposed. A large fire, burning in the grate, threw out a great heat into this room, which was the larger and the better of the two. The other was a small chamber without a fire-place, but with a window looking into the forest; and it was there that Christine slept, and that provisions and heaps of wood were kept ready for consumption.

When Sister Anne entered that abode, dirty, and blackened with smoke,—when she observed the straw in the corner, the arms suspended on the walls, and the immense fire which was burning in the grate, and in front of which were hung large pieces of meat to roast for the supper of the robbers,—she lost all power of stirring another step; and Leroux was obliged to carry her before the fire, crying, "She will soon recover! Let us warm her thoroughly; and supper will help to revive her."

"Fool! you speak as if she could understand you," exclaimed Jacques.

"I certainly forgot she was deaf and dumb," answered Leroux: "at the same time I was not addressing myself to her."

"And how do you know that she is deaf and dumb, Jacques?" demanded Frank. "She may feign to be so. Perhaps she is only dumb!"

"In that case she would have lost her tongue by having it cut off," said Leroux: "but not a morsel of it has been cut off. Therefore as she cannot speak, it must be because she is deaf. You do not understand all this, comrades: but I, who have travelled, am not so ignorant as you—and I know that deaf and dumb people are only dumb because they have not been able to hear sounds, to learn to utter them. Besides, if you look at that girl—you will see that she does not hear a word we are saying."

From the moment she had set foot in the hut, Sister Anne, overcome with terror, suffering, and fatigue, appeared insensible to all that was passing around her. She however, overheard the conversation of the four robbers; and when she understood that they supposed her to be deaf as well as dumb, a secret presentiment inspired her with the resolution not to correct their error. She well knew that if they continued to hold the same opinion, they would talk without reserve in her presence; and she might thus gather from their projects and designs an idea of what she had to hope or to fear, and whether she should be enabled to effect her escape. This determination strengthened her tottering courage; and she endeavoured to conceal the emotions produced by the conversation of the robbers.

The brigands laid aside their arms, and while they waited until supper was served up, they discoursed upon their exploits. The poor girl discovered with horror that she was in the midst of ruffians capable of every crime. But it was in the excess of her despair that she gathered courage; and being now acquainted with the immensity of the perils which surrounded her, she was well aware it was only by stratagem and address that she could hope to avert them. If death menaced her alone, she would not have feared it: but she was anxious to preserve the existence of the innocent being she bore in her bosom. Maternal love has engendered acts of heroism; and it was this sublime sentiment which sustained Sister Anne, and enabled her to support the terrors of her situation.

Christine prepared a table in the middle of the room, and covered it with dishes, glasses, and bottles. The robbers seated themselves around it, and gave themselves up to brutal revelry as they ate their meal. Sister Anne remained seated before the fire. Leroux placed upon the table near her some bread, meat, and wine; she thanked him with a gesture, and endeavoured to partake of a small portion, in order to recover strength and conceal her alarm.

"I will wager," said Leroux to his companions, as he pointed to Sister Anne, "that she is as docile as a lamb, and that I shall be able to do anything with her that I choose."

"Do not trust in a soft countenance," said Christine, as she seated herself near the robbers. "It is with that seeming amiability you men are invariably deceived: but faces are deceptive."

"Your's is not," returned Leroux; "for any one could tell that you were the sister of Satan."

This joke called forth a burst of laughter on the part of the robbers. They filled and emptied their glasses in rapid succession: the deeper they drank, the more they talked,—the hideous Christine kept them company,—and Leroux, who was occupied with gazing upon Sister Anne, alone retained a portion of his calmness and sobriety.

"I wonder where this girl could have come from?" said one of the robbers. "She does not seem as if she had worked in the fields: her hands are too delicate for that."

"It is some girl who has been seduced," cried Jacques. "Her lover has left her, and she is running about the country to find him. This is the history of all young girls who listen to young men."

Sister Anne cautiously wiped away her tears: for, alas! the robber was not far wrong in his supposition.

"If I had a daughter who suffered herself to be led astray," cried Christine, "I would strangle her with my own hands."

"Do you hear that?" exclaimed Jacques. "It is a pity you have no children, Christine: they would certainly be angels of beauty."

"Let that young woman be whatever she may," said Leroux, "she shall not leave this place. And you Christine, take care not to insult her; or remember what I promised you ere now."

"I don't care a rush for your threats," answered Christine. "You would do much better to console her; for I really think she is crying. Give her a kiss, Leroux."

"And we also," ejaculated the other robbers, heated by the fumes of wine: "we will also endeavour to console her. Let us each kiss the pretty creature's tears away: the occupation will enliven her."

As they uttered these words, Leroux's three companions rose to approach Sister Anne; but

Leroux placed himself between them and the poor orphan; and, taking a pistol in each hand, stopped his companions, exclaiming at the same time in a formidable tone of voice, "Do not touch her! I will kill the first who dares to molest her! The girl is mine: it was I who found her in the wood, when you were passing her by without taking the slightest notice of her:—it was I who made up my mind to bring her here:—and it was I who offered to take her as my mistress. He, who lays a hand upon her, shall die!"

These words terrified the robbers. They knew that their companion was not to be trifled with, and that the threat would soon be put into execution. They therefore pretended to laugh at the jealousy of Leroux; while Sister Anne, whom this scene had stupified with horror, retreated into a corner of the room, and fell upon her knees to implore the ruffians for mercy. Leroux approached, and endeavoured to tranquillize her: not fearing any farther attempts at molestation on the part of his comrades, he led her into the adjoining room, and having pointed to an old bed, made a sign to her to retire to rest. Sister Anne was now alone in that little chamber where there was no light: but the partition, which was clumsily built, permitted her to distinguish through a crevice all that was passing in the adjacent room. Though she had thrown herself upon the bed ere Leroux left the chamber, she rose the moment he had retired; and, applying her ear to the partition, listened to the conversation of the robbers, who were laughing, drinking, and singing as before. Oh! if during their orgie she could only have made her escape! She felt about her—reached the window, which looked upon the forest—and then a ray of hope stole into the recesses of her heart. The room was level with the ground outside; and she might easily venture to leap forth. But suddenly her hands encountered strong bars of iron which opposed her passage. Poor girl! she experienced an agony of disappointment and despair more terrible than all the sufferings she had previously endured. At the moment when liberty seemed to greet her once again, her last hope vanished! Not to be able to leave that horrible den, was to die the most terrible of deaths! She fell exhausted upon the couch, and endeavoured to stifle with her hands the bitter, bitter sobs which escaped her bosom!

* * * * * *
* * * * *

Thus passed away that long and dreary night. The robbers fell asleep before the fire; and, fortunately for their young prisoner, their infamous female companion did the same. Otherwise Christine would have shared the same couch with Sister Anne; but the poor girl spent the dull hours in listening at the partition, trembling at the slightest noise which came from the adjoining room, and praying heaven to send her speedy succour.

At daybreak the robbers awoke—concealed their weapons, and those which were suspended to the walls, in the hole beneath the hut—and then hastened to the forest to commence their ostensible occupation of wood-cutters. Before he left the hut, Leroux sought Sister Anne, smiled upon her, and murmured between his teeth, "To-night I shall claim you as my wife, my dear!"

The robber did not suppose that Sister Anne heard the syllables he uttered: alas! the poor creature understood them but too well. She should then be obliged to receive his horrible caresses! It was with the greatest difficulty that she restrained her indignation: but he left her as soon as he had assured himself that she was still there, and quitted the hut, having ordered Christine to take care of the young woman.

When Sister Anne was alone with the companion of the robbers, she was compelled to support the ill-humour of that hideous wretch, who, jealous of her presence, endeavoured to avenge herself by treating the poor orphan in the most cruel manner; for she was very sure that she would not be betrayed. The hag laughed at Sister Anne's signs and tears; and the miserable girl made up her mind to die if she could not speedily leave that horrible den. At night, the four robbers returned. They ate a mouthful of food; and then, with the exception of Leroux, armed themselves, and prepared to issue forth upon their nocturnal expedition.

"Don't you intend to go with us this evening?" asked Jacques.

"Not directly," answered Leroux. "I will join you presently: in the meantime I intend to pass an agreeable hour or two in the society of my little deaf and dumb girl."

As he uttered these words, a horrible expression marked the eyes of the robber: and he smiled diabolically at his intended victim.

"Well," exclaimed Pierre, "we will excuse you for once: but in future you must not make business subservient to love."

"And if a postchaise happened to pass by," said Jacques sullenly, "we should not be numerous enough to attack it."

"It is not probable that such an adventure will arrive the very night I am absent," returned Leroux. "Besides, I promised to join you in a couple of hours, or so."

"Do just as you like," cried Frank; "and if any good prize falls into our hands in the meantime, you must not expect to have your share."

"That is but just, comrades," exclaimed Leroux.

The robbers, with the exception of Leroux, departed; but not before they had bestowed equivocal smiles upon Sister Anne, who scarcely, however, comprehended the full extent of the danger which menaced her. Perceiving, however, that Leroux did not follow his companions, she felt herself trembling from head to foot; and her eyes were cast upon Christine to implore assistance even from that woman. But the hag looked at her in the same sneering way as the three robbers; and having exchanged significant glances with Leroux, retired into the little chamber, the door of which she closed violently. Sister Anne made a movement to follow Christine; but when she found that this resource was denied her, she fell upon the straw in a state border-

ing upon distraction. A convulsive shudder seized upon her frame—for she was now alone with the robber.

Leroux seated himself by the side of the blazing fire, and lighted his pipe. He smoked it for some minutes, and only desisted from his occupation from time to time to drink, or cast flaming glances upon Sister Anne, who was trembling with affright upon the straw in the corner, where she remained seated so as to be as far from the ruffian as possible.

"On my soul, she is sweetly pretty!" cried the villain from time to time, as he darted the most expressive glances upon the poor girl: "beautiful eyes—and fine white teeth! And those idiots who did not take notice of all these charms. No, no, my dear—I will not surrender you to my companions: we do not often find such prizes as you."

These words, which the robber spoke aloud, increased the terror of the lovely mute; but nothing could equal the extent of her alarm, when Leroux made a sign for her to approach him. She however pretended not to perceive the tacit command, and cast down her eyes. Leroux rose and advanced towards her: Sister Anne breathed with difficulty. The brigand patted her cheek—she started up to escape from the horrid familiarity: but he retained her by force, passed his arms round her waist, and drew her head towards his own countenance. The unfortunate girl placed her hands before her eyes, in order not to gaze upon those of the bandit.

"One would think she was afraid!" cried Leroux, suffering a terrible shout of laughter to escape him. "Really, my dear, this is ridiculous: and all I ask is a kiss upon those ruby lips of yours!"

As he uttered these words, he drew the poor mute still nearer to him, and endeavoured to imprint a kiss upon Sister Anne's mouth: but the young girl, feeling her courage revive, repulsed him with violence. Profiting by the surprise into which the suddenness of the movement had thrown the robber, she ran into the opposite corner of the room, drawing the table on which the robbers had supped, as a rampart before her. Leroux advanced to Sister Anne, and with a single kick of his foot, sent the table to the farther end of the room,—exclaiming, "What! you intend to resist me, do you?"—and he gazed upon his intended victim in astonishment: then suddenly laughing aloud once more, cried, "This is really too ridiculous!"

With these words he seized the arms of the poor dumb girl, who in vain endeavoured to resist the brutal attacks of the ruffian, and dragged her once more towards the straw in the opposite corner. But at that instant, some one knocked violently at the door of the cabin.

"The deuce take those who come to annoy us at this moment!" cried Leroux. "My companions do it on purpose; but I will not open the door."

An unknown voice now fell upon the ears of the inmates of the cottage, crying, "Open the door! Save me—for God's sake, save me! You shall be well rewarded!"

This voice was not that of one of the robbers. Leroux was stupefied—he listened with affright—and Sister Anne, falling upon her knees, returned thanks to heaven for this unlooked-for aid. At the same moment Christine issued from the adjoining chamber, and hastened to Leroux with anxiety depicted upon her countenance.

"Some one calls—do you hear?" she cried. "It is a strange voice."

"Hear? certainly I hear!" returned Leroux. "But make haste and ascertain through the window if it's one man only."

"Yes—he is alone," answered Christine, as soon as she had obeyed the robber's orders.

"In that case, we may open the door," said Leroux. "But let us be prudent, till our friends return."

Having replaced the table in the middle of the room Leroux resumed his pipe, seated himself before the fire, and composed his countenance as well as he was able, while Christine opened the door, and admitted the stranger. The individual, who thus claimed refuge and safety at the hands of the robber, was an elderly person, of distinguished appearance. His dress seemed to indicate that he was wealthy; and his manners betokened an elevated rank. But he was without a hat—his garments were in disorder—and the pallor of his countenance bore testimony to the alarm which had seized upon him. He threw himself into the hut, and only appeared to breathe freely as soon as the door was again closed.

"A thousand pardons for thus disturbing you, my worthy people," said he, addressing himself to Leroux and Christine. "I have doubtless troubled your repose; but in affording me an asylum, you have saved my life."

"How is that, sir?" inquired Leroux, hastily.

"I have just been attacked by banditti," answered the stranger, "in the road which runs through the forest. I was in my carriage, with my servant; and the postilion was driving as rapidly as he could in the darkness of the night. The brigands suddenly rushed from the thickets of the wood; and, stopping the horses, fired upon the postilion, who fell dead at their feet. The banditti made me alight from the carriage, as well as my servant, and one of the robbers jumped in to search it. It was at that moment I was enabled to profit by an opportunity when the eyes of the two others were not upon me, and save myself by flight. I ran into the recesses of the forest, and followed the thickest avenues I could discover. At length I espied a light in the window of your cottage, and ventured to knock at the door."

"You did well, sir," said Leroux, exchanging significant glances with Christine. "Sit down before the fire, and warm yourself."

"You are very good," said the stranger, taking a chair in the chimney-corner. "But what can have become of my unfortunate domestic? what have they done with him? has he also been made their victim?"

"It is to be hoped not," returned Leroux. "Having plundered him of all he possessed, they would probably suffer him to escape.

They only killed the postilion to compel him to stop! I know the custom of those robbers well: carriages are so often attacked in this dreadful forest!"

"I ought not to have taken this road—it was not the most direct one for me," said the stranger; "but I was anxious to become acquainted with this part of the country."

"And did the villains rob you, sir?" inquired Leroux.

"No, thank God!" returned the stranger. "They were about to do so, when I ran away from them. I have preserved my pocket-book and purse."

"That is fortunate," said Leroux, glancing towards Christine. "You must endeavour to console yourself, sir, and forget this adventure. We will treat you as well as we are able; for you cannot think of leaving the hut till daybreak at least: it would be the height of imprudence to do so."

"It was not my intention," answered the stranger; "that is, provided you will permit me to remain here for a few hours."

"With the greatest pleasure!" cried Leroux. "Now, Christine, prepare somewhat for our guest's supper."

During this conversation, Sister Anne had not ceased to examine the stranger, whose countenance, though severe, inspired her with interest and respect. She shuddered when she reflected that he had only escaped one danger to fall into another. Being now acquainted with the infamous characters of the tenants of the hut, she trembled for the traveller; and her looks, constantly turned towards him, seemed calculated to make him aware of the perils that threatened his life. But as yet the stranger had not perceived the young girl, who was now again seated upon the straw in one corner of the room. Scarcely recovered from the terror which he had experienced in the forest, he drew his chair towards the fire, and did not immediately glance around him.

"It is really fortunate that the robbers did not pursue you," said Leroux, presenting a glass of wine to his guest.

"The principal cause of my safety, I think," answered the stranger, "was that the sounds of horses' hoofs were heard just as one of the robbers began to examine my carriage."

"Ah! you heard the sounds of horses' hoofs," cried Leroux, sitting uneasily upon his chair.

"I thought so at least,—but I was so agitated," replied the stranger. "The noise might have proceeded from other robbers, or from the gendarmes who are probably in pursuit of the banditti."

"That is very probable," murmured Leroux.

"I was a soldier a long time ago," observed the traveller, "and have seen many a bloody fight. But I frankly confess that I do not like meeting with robbers. Valour is often useless against such wretches as they. Besides, I had no fire-arms with me."

"Ah! you had no arms?" said Leroux.

"My pistols were in the carriage, it is true," returned the stranger: "but I had forgotten to load them."

Leroux appeared to reflect. Since the stranger had told him that he had heard the sounds of horses' hoofs upon the road in the forest, he had lost all calmness and ease.

"You are a wood-cutter, I suppose," said the stranger.

"Yes, sir," answered Leroux; "and this is my wife," he added, pointing to Christine, who was arranging the materials for supper upon the table.

"And you are not afraid, in the midst of this forest?" asked the traveller.

"Of what need we be afraid, sir? We are not rich enough to tempt banditti to visit us, and men do not murder for amusement. Now, Christine, hasten with the supper: the gentleman will be glad to repose himself a little after the meal."

"Oh! do not hurry yourself, my good woman," said the stranger, who, being now more calm and tranquil, ventured to look about him; and while he examined the room in which he found himself, he at length perceived Sister Anne seated upon the straw, with her eyes fixed upon him in a manner which at once struck him by the singularity of their expression. The stranger considered for some time the pale and sickly countenance of the young girl, and seemed astonished at the extraordinary way in which she gazed upon him.

"Who is this female?" said he to Christine. "I did not remark her at first."

"Oh! she is nothing very particular," returned the hag, in a dry and laconic tone.

"Is she not your daughter?" asked the traveller.

"No, sir," replied Leroux. "She is a poor girl, deaf and dumb, whom we found in the forest, and received into our hut from motives of pity. She is on the point of becoming a mother; and her helpless situation excited my sympathy."

"The action does you honour," cried the stranger. "Unfortunate girl, so young, and yet so beautiful! Could you not learn whence she came, whither she is going, or the name of her parents?"

"She is deaf and dumb, sir, answered Leroux, "and it would therefore be folly to question her. Indeed, I am very much mistaken, if she's not also an idiot: I shall however keep her here."

As these words fell upon her ears, Sister Anne rose and advanced gently towards the stranger, whom she continued to regard with a look of pity and compassion.

"What is she doing now?" cried Leroux. "I was all along sure she was mad. Lead her into the other room, Christine: it is time for her to go to bed."

Christine drove the poor girl rudely before her into the adjoining chamber: and it was only with the deepest reluctance that Sister Anne could be induced to obey the hag. She did not like to lose sight of the traveller, in whose welfare she already experienced the most lively interest. She was however under the necessity of obeying: and she walked slowly into the room, still keeping her eyes upon the stranger, and continuing to regard him till the door of communication between the two chambers closed upon her. Christine

had followed Sister Anne into the little room. The hag hastened to look out of the window, and seemed uneasy that the three robbers did not return. The poor mute threw herself upon the miserable bed—not to court repose, but to ponder upon the best means of saving the stranger by making him aware of the terrible dangers which menaced his days, if he remained in the cabin. But how could she obtain access to him once more? and even if she were to succeed so far, how could she render herself intelligible? At that moment Leroux entered the little chamber, closed the door with precaution, and approaching Christine, commenced the following dialogue, not a word of which was lost upon Sister Anne, whom they both believed to be deaf as well as dumb.

"Do you not hear them coming!" inquired Leroux, uneasily.

"No—I hear nothing," was the answer, as uneasily given.

"It is very strange," returned the robber. "Since this gentleman arrived, what can they have been doing in the forest?"

"I can't conjecture," answered Christine.

"Ever since the stranger spoke of horses and gendarmes," resumed the bandit, "I have been quite uneasy, for fear our comrades should be arrested."

"They cannot have betrayed us?" whispered Christine. "Do you think they have?"

"No, no! But listen," said Leroux. "As soon as this stranger has had his supper, and is asleep, I will hasten to look for our comrades. If they're still in the forest, I know where to find them. If they have been arrested or have saved themselves by flight, we will profit by the slumber of the stranger to rid ourselves of him; and with what he has got about him, we can manage to place ourselves beyond the reach of danger, when once we have left the forest."

"Admirably arranged!" said Christine. "Give the traveller his supper, wait till he is asleep, and you can then leave the hut. In the meantime, I will rest a little; for I am too weary to remain awake any longer."

"Do so," returned Leroux; "and when I want your assistance, I will arouse you."

Leroux hastened to rejoin the stranger in the front room; and the hideous Christine threw herself upon the bed by the side of Sister Anne, who was compelled to support the contiguity of a woman that could resolve upon the commission of a murder with the most revolting coolness. But the poor girl did not move: she had overheard the entire dialogue of those monsters—she had not lost a syllable of their projects; and she still hoped to save the life of the stranger. One fear only oppressed her—and this was connected with the probable return of the three banditti; in which case all would be lost, and she must either see the unfortunate stranger perish before her, or die with him.

Scarcely had Christine thrown herself upon the bed, when she fell into a deep sleep. Sister Anne then rose gently from the couch, and applied her eyes to the crevice in the partition, to watch the motions of Leroux. The stranger was eating his supper in the greatest apparent confidence; and Leroux endeavoured to keep him company. But every moment he listened with anxiety to ascertain if any unusual noise issued from the forest; and he seemed excessively anxious for the traveller to retire to rest.

Sister Anne was enabled to consider at her ease the features of the elderly gentleman; and the more she gazed upon his countenance, the more lively became the feeling of interest which did not only seem to spring from the situation in which they both found themselves placed, but from some other cause as well—though what it was the poor mute could not comprehend. At the least noise caused by the wind, which agitated the trees or blew down some of the dried branches, she experienced fresh alarms; for she thought she heard the robbers returning from the forest; while, on the contrary, a savage joy was depicted upon the features of Leroux, who hastened to the door, with the hope that he should welcome his comrades.

"Do you expect any one?" inquired the stranger.

"No, sir—no," answered the bandit. "I was merely afraid that the robbers might have pursued you. But there is no apprehension now to be entertained that they have traced your steps: you may therefore sleep in peace."

"I shall lie down till day-break," said the traveller; "and then you will probably have the kindness to conduct me to the nearest village."

"With the greatest pleasure, sir," returned Leroux. "But I will not prevent you from retiring to rest; you have still some hours to enjoy a little slumber, before day-break. This is the only bed which I can offer you—the straw is however fresh. I am sorry I cannot provide you with better accommodation—but we are so poor!"

"Oh! I shall be very comfortable!" exclaimed the stranger; "do not distress yourself on my account."

As he uttered these words, the traveller hastened to stretch himself upon the straw, where he sought repose; and Leroux remained seated before the fire. But from time to time he turned his head to see if the stranger was yet asleep. The young mute kept her eyes constantly attached to the crevice in the partition; and while she watched the movements of the robber, she prayed to heaven that Christine might not awake. At length the traveller appeared to sleep; and Leroux hastened to seize his pistols which were in the hole beneath the floor of the hut,—the opening of that cavern being closed by a trap-door, under a heap of straw. Sister Anne shuddered. If the robber were to fall suddenly upon the old man, and assassinate him, what would have been her feelings! But, no;—as soon as he had closed the aperture, he went quietly out of the cottage, muttering to himself, "I must now go to the usual meeting-place; and if I don't find my comrades there, I shall return to the cottage again."

Leroux closed the hut-door cautiously, and disappeared. The time was now arrived for the dumb girl to act; and not a moment was to be lost. She armed herself with all her

courage, and stole softly out of the inner chamber, walking upon tiptoe for fear of awakening Christine. She then closed the door of communication between the two rooms; and double-locked it to prevent the hag from interfering with her plans, in case she should awake. The flame of the fire that still burnt in the grate, lighted the room in which the stranger slept. Sister Anne advanced towards him, seized him by the arms and shook him violently. The gentleman awoke: and perceived that young girl, whose features expressed such deep anxiety, hanging over him. He was about to speak: but she placed her finger upon her mouth; and looking round her with a glance full of significant terror, made signs to conjure him to keep the most profound silence. The traveller rose, and awaited in suspense an explanation of this mysterious scene.

Sister Anne hastened to the hole—raised the trap-door—seized a piece of burning wood from the fire-place to light the interior—and, having beckoned the stranger to approach the spot, pointed to the arms, the blood-stained garments, and the numerous weapons that filled the recess.

The stranger shuddered from head to foot,—whispering in a low under-tone, "Great God! am I in the haunt of the brigands who attacked me?"

Sister Anne made a sign expressive of an affirmative; and advancing towards the straw, succeeded in explaining to him that the villain Leroux would have returned to assassinate him while he slept. The traveller hastened to possess himself of a pair of loaded pistols which he found in the hole, observing, "At all events, I will sell my life dearly! But you, poor girl—what will become of you?"

Sister Anne did not suffer him to lose another moment, she flew to the door of the hut—opened it—made a sign to him to leave the horrible den without an instant's delay—and intimated that she would accompany him. At that moment the hideous Christine, who had heard a noise, which awoke her, rose and endeavoured to rush out of her bed-room: but finding herself locked in, she called to Leroux—ran to the window which looked into the forest—and perceived the stranger and Sister Anne hastening away from the hut.

"Perdition! they have fled!" exclaimed the hag, endeavouring to dash through the bars which protected the window of the bed-room.

The stranger aimed one of his pistols at Christine: but Sister Anne made him understand that the report of fire-arms would only attract the notice of the robbers. The gentleman at once saw that she was right; and, leaving the horrible female to fulminate her impotent curses against them as she chose, they were soon far away from the den of the banditti. Having wandered for more than an hour in the thickest parts of the forest—trembling at the slightest noise, and fearful of encountering Leroux and his companions—the fugitives heard the din of horses' hoofs upon the hard road near.

"It must be the gandarmerie, sent to arrest the robbers!" ejaculated the stranger.

They accordingly hastened in the direction whence the sounds seemed to proceed: and in a few moments a man rushed past them, pursued by a gendarme on horseback. Another individual, who was also mounted, came up at the same moment to the spot where the stranger and Sister Anne were standing:—and this person proved to be the gentleman's valet.

"Thank God! here is my master!" cried he: "the robbers have not assassinated him."

The stranger pointed out to the gendarme the retreat of the banditti: then, mounting another horse which his servant had brought with him, he took Sister Anne upon the croupe, and the little party left the forest at a smart trot. During the ride, the gentleman did not cease to thank his liberatrix, who on her part poured forth her gratitude to heaven for this sudden and unexpected deliverance. The servant informed his master, that shortly after his flight from the scene of his attack, the patrol had made its appearance. The brigands offered the most desperate resistance, and two of them were killed upon the spot. The valet then possessed himself of the two horses which the robbers had already detached from the vehicle; and mounting one, and leading the other, he joined the gendarmes to beat the forest in search of his master. Sister Anne noticed that the domestic addressed his master as "my lord," and "your lordship;" but she did not rightly understand the meaning of these distinctions.

Past dangers are soon forgotten. The travellers speedily arrived at a large village: and the nobleman ordered his domestic to knock at the door of a farm-house, where the party were at once received with the utmost kindness. Immediate attention was paid to the poor dumb girl. The terrible situation in which she had been placed within the two previous days—the dangers from which she had just escaped—the courageous efforts she had been compelled to make during that awful night—all these events and circumstances had overwhelmed the mind and body of the unfortunate girl, who could no longer sustain herself upon her legs. She was carried to an excellent bed; and the inmates of the farm, as soon as they learnt the position of Sister Anne, and all that she had done to save the life of the traveller, manifested towards her the most tender interest. The nobleman himself did not retire to rest before he was assured that she wanted for nothing.

On the following morning, the carriage, which had been found in the forest, was brought to the farm-house; and the nobleman was now enabled to depart as soon as he chose. But Sister Anne was a prey to a burning fever; and he did not feel himself justified in leaving the farm, until he was convinced that the poor girl's life was beyond danger. The first surgeon in the neighbourhood was sent for; and the nobleman poured forth his gold with the most munificent hand, in order to secure to the dumb girl all that she required in her perilous situation. He passed a considerable portion of the day in her room, and joined his attentions to those of the inhabit-

ants of the farm-house. Sister Anne perceived that she was the object of the nobleman's liveliest solicitude: and her heart was deeply touched by his kindness. In spite of the pains which she suffered, she seized his hands in both her own, and pressed them in the most grateful and fervid manner.

"Poor girl!" said the nobleman, deeply affected; "I will not leave you, till I am assured that your life is out of danger. If I could convey you with me in the carriage, to the place of your destination, I should do so with pleasure! But let me know what I can do for you? I see that you hear me, and that you are only deprived of speech: perhaps you can write?"

Sister Anne shook her head; then in a moment she seemed to be smitten by a sudden reminisence, and made a sign to ask for writing materials. The old nobleman hastened to comply with her request; but she could not use the pen: He then presented her with a piece of chalk; when, rising in bed, she leaned towards the table—and after a considerable degree of difficulty, succeeded in tracing upon the white boards the name of "FREDERICK!" Having thus accomplished a difficult task, she sank back, shook her head, and seemed to intimate that this was all she knew!

The nobleman was greatly surprised when he read the name which Sister Anne had written upon the table. He appeared to meditate for some moments, and his eyes turned towards her with an expression of the deepest interest:—but the poor orphan perceived that his countenance wore at the time an air of severity which she could not define.

"And your own name?" he said, after a pause: "cannot you write *that* also?"

Sister Anne shook her head, and again traced the word "FREDERICK" upon the table. The old nobleman appeared deeply agitated throughout the remainder of the day; and whenever his glances were turned towards Sister Anne, he fell into a long and profound reverie.

For nearly a week the state of the poor orphan was such that her life was despaired of: and the nobleman would not leave the farm-house. But at the expiration of this period, she appeared so much better, that the surgeon was enabled to pronounce her out of danger: he however declared at the same time that she was in an exceedingly weak state, and that it would be highly imprudent for her to leave the farm before she had become a mother. When she learnt these tidings, the eyes of Sister Anne were filled with tears. She was fearful of becoming a charge to the inhabitants of the farm-house who had treated her so kindly:—but the nobleman comprehending the subject of her alarm, hastened to console her.

"I have made every arrangement calculated to ensure your comfort," he said in a kind tone of voice. "You must remain here till your health be altogether restored; and if nothing compels you to proceed elsewhere, you may remain with the inmates of this house as long as you think fit. They are already attached to you—I have provided them with money, and left my address in order that they may apply to me for more as they require it—and I have every reason to believe you may be happy here."

Sister Anne shook her head mournfully, and indicated by signs that her journey would be a very long one, when she again commenced it. The nobleman who had already given the inhabitants of the farm a considerable sum of money on account of Sister Anne, placed a purse full of gold in the hands of the young orphan. She was however inclined to refuse the gift, not knowing how to testify her gratitude sufficiently.

"You do not even owe me thanks, my dear child," said his lordship. "Recollect that you saved my life, and that so long as I exist in this world, you shall be the object of my care. Take this paper also—it contains my address; and if ever you stand in need of a friend, apply to me. I will not fail to protect you."

Sister Anne received the precious document, which she placed in the purse that the nobleman had given to her; while he, having looked tenderly upon her, deposited a kiss upon her forehead: then, in order to escape from the expressions of her heartfelt gratitude, he hastened from the room—stepped into his carriage—and departed; but not before he had amply remunerated the inmates of the hospitable dwelling for their attention towards himself.

The nobleman was gone; and Sister Anne lamented his absence for a long time. Her heart was touched by his kindness to an extent for which she could not account; and she already united his image with that of Frederick in her memory. But the friendship and regard she experienced for the former did not impair the tender affection she nourished for the latter.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Frederick did not pass a single day without seeing Constance de Valmont. From the moment when the two lovers avowed their mutual affection, that sentiment appeared to increase all the more rapidly. The young lady loved with a sincerity which did not attempt to conceal its emotions:—she was proud of the attachment with which she had inspired Frederick, and all her happiness now consisted in sharing his love. The young Viscount himself, more ardent, more impetuous, and more enthusiastic in his passion, yielded to the full force of it: but in loving Constance, he was not altogether happy. He was compelled to seek a thousand resources to divert his mind from the contemplation of the past, and to banish the image which intruded upon his memory. He resembled those individuals who do not dare to glance behind them for fear of encountering subjects of alarm.

Yes—Frederick did all he could to chase away those reminiscences which carried him back to a very recent epoch. He was anxious to devote himself entirely to Constance; he felt that in future *she alone* ought to occupy his thoughts, and he knew that it was useless to sigh for one whom he had abandoned! Such was the conviction he endeavoured to impress upon his own mind: but in spite of

himself—and even in the very lap of luxury—there lingered at the bottom of his heart something which reproached him for the evil he had done. He was not one of those individuals into whose breasts you may look in vain for a soul!

The Count de Montreville had already been absent for about a fortnight. Frederick was ignorant of the motive of his father's journey: he however suspected it—but did not feel any inclination on his part to profit by that absence and hasten to Vizille. Could he now leave Constance for even a single day? Although she had eased his mind somewhat in respect to the marriage concerning which his father had alarmed him, Frederick nevertheless besought Constance to question her uncle in reference to that project. Constance did not much like to broach the subject to the General: but, at

length overcome by the solicitations of her lover, she made up her mind to address her venerable relative on the important matter. She accordingly repaired one morning to the library, where the General was seated at the time; and approached him with a blush upon her cheeks, and embarrassment in her manners.

"My dear uncle," said Constance, casting down her eyes, "I am informed that you have meditated certain projects in reference to myself?"

The General regarded his beautiful niece with a smile, and endeavoured to assume a serious countenance, as he answered her question: but the attempt altogether was an ineffectual one.

"Who told you, my dear," said he, "that I had meditated any plans concerning you?"

"My dear uncle, it was the Viscount de

Montreville who told me so," answered Constance.

"Ah! the Viscount—eh?" exclaimed the General. "And what are these projects, Constance?"

"You ought to be aware of them better than I, uncle," returned the young lady.

"True, true!" cried General de Valmont. "You are right: I *have* contemplated certain plans, which——"

"Affect me?" inquired Constance, in a tone of voice that was almost inaudible.

"Yes. Look," continued the General, pointing towards a picture suspended to the wall; "is not that subject a pretty one? You see it is a new picture: I bought it yesterday—it only came home just now," and Jacques, alluding to one of the footmen, "hung it up for me."

The subject was that of a German wedding-party,—the betrothed couple, accompanied by their friends, proceeding to church in a large boat or barge, which seemed to float slowly on the bosom of the placid river.

"Dear me, uncle—how strange you are today!" exclaimed Constance, blushing and trembling. "What has the picture to do with me? Do the thoughts it inspires in your mind refer to—*to*——"

"Yes," replied the General: "they relate to your marriage."

"To my marriage!" ejaculated Mademoiselle de Valmont. "Is it possible? Ah! my dear uncle——"

And the amiable girl raised her eyes, which were filled with tears, in a suppliant manner to her venerable relative's countenance.

"Do not distress yourself, my love!" cried the General, taking the hand of his niece. "You do not think I would make you unhappy by this marriage-project? But perhaps you do not wish to change your condition?"

"I do not say *that*, my dear uncle," returned Constance, now considerably reassured.

"Then why do you alarm yourself the moment I speak of marriage?" demanded the veteran soldier.

"Because, my dear uncle," stammered Constance, "I do not wish,—that is, I should not like——"

"You do not wish—you would not like!" cried the old General. "Why the deuce do women never speak in plain language? and why could not you tell me at once that you were determined to espouse no one but Frederick?"

"Ah! my dear uncle, you know——" and stopping short, Constance hung down her beautiful head, blushing deeply.

"I must have been blind not to have perceived your attachment," interrupted the General. "And that fine young nobleman who takes it into his head to fall in love with my niece—and who sighs, and moans, and is so desperately dull—instead of coming boldly forward and demanding her hand!"

"What, my dear uncle," cried Constance, now radiant with joy, "will you really permit——"

"Have I ever been in the habit of refusing you anything?" demanded the General, with a smile.

"And my marriage with this Colonel?" said Constance.

"Was all a story invented by my old friend—I scarcely know why," answered General de Valmont. "However, he begged me not to contradict it, and I was obliged to comply with his request, though I do not understand the meaning of all those mysteries: for it seems to me, that when a young man and a young woman love each other, there is no need of countermarching, echelonging, and deploying, in order to conduct them to the altar. But do not tell all this to Frederick, or else his father would be angry with me. However, as soon as his lordship returns,—and I expect him every day,—I will put an end to these stories, and have you both married at once; or else Frederick will make himself ill by sighing."

Constance embraced her uncle and retired from the library, still more charming in appearance than ever, on account of the good tidings she had to communicate to her lover, who speedily returned to the house and inquired, with ill-concealed anxiety, what was the nature of the General's decision. Constance endeavoured to dissemble her joy. The woman who loves the most is not sorry to find an opportunity of tantalizing her lover: for in the torments which he experiences, she discovers fresh proofs of attachment.

"Well," cried Frederick, with impatience, "you do not answer me? And yet you have spoken to your uncle about this pretended marriage. Is it really true that he has conceived the project——"

"Of marrying me to some one?" said Constance. "Yes—such is his design."

"I was not deceived!" cried the young Viscount with a vehemence which made Constance tremble. "My father then told me truly! But you shall not be taken away from me! No—by heaven you shall not!"

"Calm yourself, my dear Frederick," returned Constance: "calm yourself!"

"Calm myself, indeed! when you are going to be married!" exclaimed the young man. "Constance, if your uncle intends to play the tyrant, I shall run away with you! We will go to the other end of the world, to avoid all pursuit. You alone will suffice to make me happy! This very night we will depart! What? you laugh at my despair!"

"Ah! Frederick, how violent you are!" said Constance, caressingly.

"I suppose you will now give me a lesson upon the necessity of patience," cried Frederick. "It appears that this marriage does not afflict you very much! This is the way in which you love me!"

"Unkind!" ejaculated Constance, "thus to reproach me! Ah, my dear Frederick, because my love is more tranquil than yours, do you think it is less sincere?"

"But this marriage which your uncle projects?" said Frederick.

"And if it were to you that he intends to marry me?" whispered Constance.

The countenance of Frederick became suddenly animated with an expression of joy; and Constance placed her finger upon his lip, saying, "Hush! silence, my dear Frederick!

My uncle desired me not to mention the subject to you: but can I see you in suspense, and not relieve you?"

"Oh! Constance—is it possible?" cried Frederick. "What happiness awaits us! Your uncle is the best man in existence! Let me hasten to throw myself at his feet!"

"No, indeed," exclaimed Constance: "not for me to be scolded by him? But I shall never succeed in teaching you to curb the violence of your temper! Sit down there, next to me!"

"But when shall I be able to tell him that I love you?" inquired Frederick.

"When your father returns, which will not be long," answered Constance. "Do you know if he be gone far?"

"I cannot guess—that is, I do not think—at least I am not sure,"—stammered Frederick: "but—but——"

"You are now pensive and thoughtful again," interrupted Constance.

"Not I, I can assure you," returned Frederick.

"So long as we were not certain as to the result of our attachment, Frederick," said Constance seriously, "I did not appear to notice your melancholy and abstracted moods, and those moments of sorrow which frequently seize upon you. But, recollect, sir—that I will not allow these gloomy fits any longer," added the young lady, assuming a gayer tone. "Is it possible that you can possess any secret griefs which you dare not avow to your Constance?"

"No, dear girl," answered Frederick.

"Promise me that you will tell me everything," continued Mademoiselle de Valmont; "promise me that there shall be no secret between us—that I shall enjoy all your confidence! We are soon to be united for ever, and such reciprocity of sentiment is but fair."

"Yes, my dear Constance, I promise you," replied the young Viscount: "I will tell you all my thoughts!"

Frederick deceived the lovely girl a little at that moment: but the untruth was pardonable—and a more implicit confidence would have caused anything but pleasure to Constance, who was persuaded that her lover was devotedly attached to her. Indeed, in spite of her innocence, the tranquillity of her disposition, and her candour, she was too deeply enamoured of him not to experience a certain sentiment of jealousy—a sentiment which, in the minds of all women, is invariably the companion of the most sincere affection.

The Count de Montreville returned to Paris after an absence of nearly a month. Under any other circumstances Frederick would have been surprised by the length of a journey which might have been terminated in a fortnight; but in the society of Constance, he did not think of such unimportant matters. When he however saw his father once again, all the reminiscences of Dauphiny returned with fresh vigour to his imagination; and he stood overwhelmed with embarrassment in the presence of the Count, not daring to question him. On his part the Count was considerably changed in manner since his journey. He was frequently abstracted, and plunged in pensive moods; and when he encountered his son, he seemed to dread the necessity of an explanation. At length Frederick ventured to question his father; and, contrary to his expectations, the Count no longer assumed that severity of countenance which he had been in the habit of adopting when his son touched upon the subject.

"You have been in Dauphiny, my lord?" said Frederick: "you have been to Vizille?" he added more tremulously.

"Yes," returned the Count: "I visited that village—and also the wood in which you dwelt so long!"

"And you saw—the—young girl?" said Frederick, with considerable hesitation.

"No, I did not see her," replied the Count. "She had left her cottage some few days before my arrival; and an old shepherd alone occupied it."

"What! Sister Anne had left the cottage!" exclaimed Frederick. "Is it possible? And what has become of Dame Margaret?"

"The old woman has been dead for some time!"

"Sister Anne left her home!" repeated Frederick. "Poor girl! what can have become of her? In her situation, what could she do to make herself understood? Oh! the unfortunate creature!"

"What do you mean?" demanded the Count, fixing his eyes intently upon his son, and regarding him with the deepest interest and attention: "what is the situation of the young girl? why is she so much to be pitied? Speak, Frederick!"

"Father," responded the young man solemnly, "from the age of seven, Sister Anne has lost the use of her speech! A terrible event—a sudden fright—deprived her of the powers of utterance!"

"Great God!" exclaimed the Count, deeply affected by what he had just heard; "it is she! I was convinced of it!"

But Frederick did not hear the last words which had fallen from the lips of his father. He was absorbed in contemplating the position of Sister Anne, whom he depicted to himself wandering about in the midst of woods and fields—without means—without assistance—spurned and neglected by all—expelled from the huts at which she presented herself—and everywhere a prey to distress and misfortune! He remembered that all this was his work; and that if he had not endeavoured to inspire the poor girl with a violent passion, she would have dwelt tranquilly and happily in the depth of her own wood,—not desiring to indulge in the pleasures of the world, because she was not acquainted with them,—nor dreaming of any other kind of existence than the one which she there led. At that moment the deepest remorse filled the breast of Frederick; and he reproached himself bitterly for his conduct to one of whom he had ceased to be enamoured, but who was ever dear to him!

For a long time the Count and his son were each wrapped up in the most profound reverie—aye, and as painful as it was profound for each!

"Do not alarm yourself relative to the situation of that young person," said the Count de Montreville, at length breaking that long silence: "I found her at length!"

"You found her again, my lord!" exclaimed Frederick. "Oh! is it possible that I hear aright?"

"Yes—at a farm-house, in the neighbourhood of Grenoble," answered the Count; "where I left her, and where I made such arrangements that henceforth she can want for nothing!"

"But how did you recognise her? how did you know that it was she?" demanded Frederick, with all the eagerness of suspense.

"Her misfortune—her youth—everything interested me in her favour," returned the Count; "and a secret presentiment told me that she was the individual for whom I sought. I now no longer doubt it, since you have assured me that she is dumb! But I repeat, do not distress yourself on her behalf: I have left her with kind and benevolent friends who love her, and will be attentive to her; and I shall take care henceforth that she wants for nothing."

The Count was particularly cautious not to divulge all that had occurred to himself in the forest, nor to allude to the depth of his obligation to Sister Anne. Were Frederick to know that the poor dumb girl had saved his father's life, his affection would all in a moment receive a fresh impulse. Nor was the Count desirous that Frederick should be informed of Sister Anne's real situation; the idea that he would soon be a father was sufficient to derange all the matrimonial plans which his lordship had formed in reference to Mademoiselle de Valmont. For, though the Count was now deeply interested in the welfare of Sister Anne, and of the child which she was destined to have, he was not the less solicitous to see his son united to the niece of his old friend; and in order not to interrupt the progress of Frederick's new attachment, everything relative to Sister Anne's peculiar position was scrupulously withheld from him. We should add, that on his arrival in Paris, the Count had expressly ordered his man-servant to refrain from mentioning the adventures in the forest, as well as any particulars connected with the young person whom they had left at the farm.

The assurance which his father had given him that Sister Anne was surrounded by kind friends, and henceforth beyond the dangers of want, materially tranquillized the mind of Frederick. Remorse in matters of love lasts but a short time; and the new sentiment invariably presents itself to banish the reminiscences of the old one. In the society of Constance the young Viscount forgot the poor dumb orphan of the wood; and while he breathed fresh vows of love in the ears of his intended bride, he ceased to remember those which he had whispered to Sister Anne.

The return of the Count de Montreville was the signal for the marriage of the young couple. Frederick desired the speedy union—Constance hoped that it would not be delayed—and the old General insisted upon its celebration, because he did not wish to see the lovers both sighing for too long a time. Indeed, no obstacle seemed to present itself to this marriage. The day was accordingly named; and the General determined to dance at the celebration of the bridal of his niece, though he had never before danced in his whole life. The Count was also desirous of saluting Constance by the endearing name of daughter; and the lovers were as anxious to secure their own happiness as lovers in such cases usually are. Entirely occupied with his prospects of future bliss, Frederick was no longer subject to those intermittent fits of melancholy and despondency which had before so much alarmed Constance; and if a sigh occasionally escaped his bosom, a look from Constance immediately banished those recollections of former times! Mademoiselle de Valmont was so amiable; the certainty of approaching happiness rendered her so superlatively beautiful, that it was impossible not to love her!

At length arrived the auspicious day which smiled upon the bridal of the Viscount Frederick de Montreville and Mademoiselle Constance de Valmont. The Count was so delighted, that he allowed his son to invite all the guests he thought proper; and Frederick knew no more intimate and better friend than Dubourg, who, in the midst of all his follies, had frequently demonstrated proofs of a real attachment towards him. Besides, since Dubourg had inherited his aunt's fortune, he had become much more sedate. It was true that towards the end of the quarter he was invariably short of money; but he did not mortgage his capital, and he had substituted dominoes for *ecarté*—because at the former game there was much less chance of gambling to excess. The venerable preceptor Ménard was not forgotten. He was devotedly attached to Frederick; and although he had been somewhat too indulgent to his young pupil during their travels, the Count had forgiven the little peccadilloes of which they were guilty, because the worthy tutor had invariably manifested the best intentions. As for his *penchant* for good living, that was excusable for more reasons than one.

Four bridesmaids were chosen to attend upon the beauteous bride; and they were lovely creatures, whose portraits were subsequently taken, all on the same canvass, by an eminent artist, and may still be seen at the Montreville mansion in Paris. Two are represented with light hair, and two with dark hair; and their countenances bespeak innocence and virgin candour.

As for the bride herself, the beauteous Constance,—she was attired with taste and elegance; but no one thought of gazing upon her raiment—for the charms of her person attracted every eye. The happiness which filled her bosom, added a thousand graces to her bewitching countenance. The gentlemen admired her with enthusiasm, which respect and delicacy alone repressed; and the ladies did the same—though, on their parts, they scrutinised her dress with a single glance, and would have informed each other, had it been necessary, how many plaits her robe had, and the exact position of each separate pin. As

for ourselves, we do not pretend to be so minute. We therefore pass on to observe, that Frederick was overjoyed with the prospects of happiness which lay before him. He did not lose sight of Constance during the whole evening; and that was the most efficient plan to keep at a distance any unpleasant recollection. The young Viscount was himself the subject of admiration amongst the ladies present. His countenance was both noble and amiable; and while the gentlemen admired Constance, the fair sex did not deplore the fate of the young bride in being united to Frederick.

The General and the Count experienced the most lively satisfaction at the marriage of the two lovers. The former was more turbulent and noisy in his mirth than M. de Montreville; but the latter smiled upon every one present, and for the first time in his life embraced his son with the most unfeigned delight.

M. Ménard was attired with precision and care; and he maintained a serious expression of countenance till dinner was announced. As for Dubourg,—enchanted at being present at the marriage of his friend, and anxious to re-establish himself in the favour of the Count, he assumed so sedate a countenance throughout the whole day, that he had the air of an anchorite, and appeared anxious to walk in so solemn a manner, that a stranger would have imagined he was sixty years old. Whenever the Count approached the spot where he stood with other friends, he began to talk upon the delusive pleasures of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the calm and serene repose of a retired life, and the rewards which awaited the just in a future state. Dubourg carried this absurdity to so great an excess, that the General could not help observing it to Frederick.

"What a strange fellow is your friend Dubourg!" exclaimed the veteran. "Does he pass all his time amongst the tombstones? I accosted him just now to hold a little conversation with him, and he began quoting passages from a sermon. He is really very gay for a wedding party."

Frederick hastened to implore Dubourg to resume his natural vivacity and indulge in his usual flow of good spirits; but all his remonstrances were vain; Dubourg felt persuaded that his sedate demeanour and sober appearance enchanted M. de Montreville, and no power on earth could induce him to relinquish them.

A magnificent banquet was prepared in the Count's mansion, whence it was arranged that the newly-married couple should proceed to the General's house in the evening. The old officer was most partial to his estates in the south of France; and he therefore resolved upon giving up the principal portion of his Paris abode to the young Viscount and the beautiful bride.

Marriages in high life are not celebrated with that gaiety which distinguishes the weddings of private citizens; and it is this very gaiety which indemnifies the citizens for not being born in a more exalted sphere. We do not, however, mean it to be inferred that the marriage of Frederick and Constance was not gay. A proper amount of mirth prevailed at the dinner-table. M. Ménard attacked the various dishes with the same ardour which he had manifested at the house of M. Chambertin; but Dubourg scarcely ate a morsel. He refused almost everything that was presented to him, and partook only of the most simple fare. It was even impossible to induce him to take a glass of champagne.

"I never indulge in those heating wines," said he, with the most imperturbable gravity.

The Count de Montreville looked at him with astonishment: and Ménard, who was seated near him, exclaimed, "And yet I have seen you drink champagne tolerably often! Say that you are ill, and that will be a better excuse!"

"Your friend is dreadfully temperate," said the General to Frederick: "it is evidently an anchorite whom you have introduced to us."

After dinner, the guests repaired to the ball-rooms, and dancing commenced. The newly-married couple gave themselves up to the delights of the *quadrille;* for no wedding would terminate happily without a dance. But Dubourg would not indulge in this recreation. He contented himself with walking stiffly about the rooms, holding up his head as if he had a stiff neck, and never even stopping for a moment as he passed the *ecarté* tables.

"You do not play at cards, M. Dubourg," said the Count de Montreville, with a smile.

"No, my lord," replied Dubourg; "I have entirely given up cards, and like nothing but chess. It is the only game that suits me, or that ought to be played by sedate people.

"And you do not dance," continued the Count.

"Never!" said Dubourg. "I like nothing but the minuet—that noble dance, in which you can display a graceful attitude with such ease! It is a pity that the minuet is no longer in fashion."

"Really, M. Dubourg," exclaimed the Count, "you are greatly changed. Some time ago, you were rather wild, I think."

"Ah! my lord, those times are passed," returned Dubourg. "I become sedate as I grow older."

"Grow older!" cried the Count, now laughing outright. "Why—it was not so very long ago that you were performing *Hippolytus*, and that you persuaded poor old Ménard to act *Theseus*."

"My lord," answered Dubourg seriously, "a considerable change has taken place in me since that period. I love nothing now but study, serious occupations, and particularly the sciences."

The Count left Dubourg with a smile; and Dubourg felt satisfied that his lordship was delighted with the sedateness of his conduct. The evening passed rapidly away — M. Ménard returned to his lodgings in the Rue Betisy, thinking as he walked home of all the delicacies he had partaken of at the Count's mansion— and Dubourg was no sooner outside the gates of the palatial abode than he ran, leapt, and jumped like a madman, or like a schoolboy escaped from the jurisdiction of a severe master. But what of Frederick and Constance? Oh! they were indeed happy. The bridegroom

handed his lovely bride into the carriage that waited for them; and they were soon conducted to the mansion of the General.

* * * * * *

* * * * *

Sister Anne continued to reside at the farm-house where the Count de Montreville had left her: for the reader has doubtless been long aware that the nobleman whom she saved at the robbers' hut, was none other than Frederick's father. The Count was returning from Vizille, whither he had been to obtain some tidings of the young girl whom his son had abandoned: but he had only found the shepherd at the cottage in the wood; and the old man was ignorant of the direction which Sister Anne had taken, when she left the place. To all the other questions which M. de Montreville put to him, his only reply was, "She is gone—she would not stay here—I know not where she bent her steps."

When he left the wood, the Count searched the environs of Grenoble—but vainly—in order to discover his son's victim: and it was on his way back to Lyons, that his carriage was attacked in the forest, as already related.

But to proceed with the thread of our narrative. Sister Anne, in spite of her inclination to continue her journey, was well aware that she was no longer in a situation permitting her to support the fatigues of travelling: for the moment approached when she was to become a mother, and when she should press to her bosom the pledge of her love for Frederick. This reflection somewhat softened her afflictions: the hope of seeing her child frequently diverted her soul from the contemplation of her sorrows; and at the farm-house every one endeavoured to restore her mind to tranquillity, and bring back smiles to her lips. The inmates of that abode were very worthy people, who entertained the most lively attachment for the young mute; and even if they had not been recompensed by the Count for their attention to the poor girl, they would have treated her with equal kindness. But gold never does any harm; and the sum, which M. de Montreville placed in their hands as the reward for their care of Sister Anne, was to them a fortune. The young girl, feeling the necessity of prolonging her stay at the farm-house, proffered the purse which the nobleman had presented to her a few moments previous to his departure: but it was at once refused.

"Keep your gold, my dear child," said the farmer's wife: "the excellent nobleman whom you saved from the hands of robbers, has provided for everything. Indeed, he has paid us far too well. We did not require any such munificence to induce us to render you a service: you are so amiable—so pretty—and so unfortunate! Poor girl! I can surmise a portion of your history! Some seducer took advantage of your inexperience and your innocence: he deceived and abandoned you! That is the history of all the young women who have no parents to protect them from the nets which such fine gentlemen throw in their way. Do not weep, my dear child, I am far from blaming you! You are much less guilty than any other woman who ever yielded to the same wiles. But he who deserted you, is the wretch that deserves punishment! To abandon you in the situation in which you now are —Oh! his heart must indeed be of stone!"

As these words fell upon the ears of Sister Anne, she made a motion of impatience, to impose silence upon the farmer's wife: she placed her finger to her lip, shook her head violently, and seemed to contradict all that she had heard in the shape of upbraiding.

"She will not allow any one to utter a word against her lover," said the farmer's wife: "she loves him still! Such is ever the custom of women!—they are always ready to excuse those who have done them the most harm! But do not concern yourself, my dear child, about the future. Remain with us—we will treat you as our daughter—we will leave nothing untried to promote your happiness. Here you shall for ever be insured against misery and want!"

Sister Anne pressed the hand of the farmer's wife with the most unfeigned gratitude: but her eyes did not make that promise which her heart had not the intention of fulfilling. The image of Frederick still reigned in her memory; and never did the young girl renounce the fondly cherished hope of meeting him once more.

A short time after the departure of the nobleman, Sister Anne, recollecting that he had left his address with her, took it from the purse in which she had placed it, and presenting it to the farmer's wife requested her to decipher it for her. The kind-hearted woman hastened to comply with her demand, and read the following words:—

"COUNT DE MONTREVILLE.
Rue de Provence, Paris."

The paper contained nothing more: but Sister Anne was far from suspecting that the name she had just heard was that of Frederick's father; for he had never pronounced it in her presence. She was however overjoyed when she heard the word "PARIS" mentioned; and she endeavoured to make the farmer's wife comprehend that it was thither she was desirous of proceeding as soon as she should be enabled to resume her travels. She replaced the address in her purse, and felt more tranquil than she had lately been.

"That is the name of the nobleman!" exclaimed the farmer's wife: "his very manners bespoke him to be a great lord! He does not resemble the rest of the world—he is grateful, and will never forget the service you rendered him! I am certain, if you went to Paris, he would receive you well. But what could you do in that great city? Believe me, my dear child, you had better remain with us: you will be far more happy!"

Sister Anne was enchanted at possessing the paper on which the name of the city of her destination was written. With that address she could make herself understood; and she returned thanks to heaven for the succour thus sent her in a moment when she stood in such deep need of it.

At the expiration of about two months from the day she arrived at the farm, Sister Anne

was blessed with a son. Oh! how delicious were her transports as she contemplated her child; and how enraptured was her heart when its first cries met her attentive ears! A mother only can understand the full extent of the joy thus experienced by Sister Anne. Already in the features of her child, did she fancy that she contemplated those of Frederick. Every moment she contemplated it, covered it with kisses, and pressed it to her bosom; and in spite of her weakness, it was she who nourished it! The tenants of the farm did not oppose her wishes in this respect; because to a mother the power of suckling her own infant is a delight which never languishes—and Sister Anne seemed to appreciate all its value. She was so happy and so proud when she held her infant to her heart, that all her sorrows were forgotten in those moments of ineffable joy. She did not forget Frederick: but her soul was no longer a prey to that sombre grief which had once oppressed her: the presence of her child often recalled smiles to her lips—and she felt that for her offspring a mother can support everything.

A few weeks after her confinement, Sister Anne intimated her desire to resume her journey: but the inhabitants of the farm opposed themselves to that project.

"You cannot think of it!" remonstrated the farmer's wife: "it is impossible to travel while you are nourishing your child! Remember, it is not only your own life that you are exposing,—it is the existence of your little son which is also involved in danger! Do you suppose that if you again rush into dangers and difficulties, you can offer to that innocent being a bosom from which it may imbibe the means of existence? No—it is impossible! Your infant would speedily lose its health and perhaps its life, if you were rash enough to resume your journey at this moment."

The mere thought of compromising the safety of her child made the young mother tremble. There was no sacrifice in the world that she would not have made for her infant! It was a great disappointment to her to be compelled to postpone her journey; but the remonstrances of the farmer's wife decided her to remain at the farm till her son should be strong enough not to feel the effects of the sufferings of his mother.

"You will stay—you will stay!" exclaimed the farmer's wife, who read assent in the eyes of Sister Anne. "You do well, my dear child! In a year or eighteen months, if your infant is healthy and strong, we will see about the propriety of such a journey: but at present all idea of it must be renounced!"

Sister Anne had resolved to listen to the good advice that was offered her; and, while she still continued to think of Frederick, she was unremitting in her attentions to her child! But she was well recompensed for her care. The infant acquired fresh strength and beauty with each successive day: health was stamped upon his cheeks—a sweet smile upon his rosy lips—and already did his little arms seem to embrace with gratitude the neck of the tender mother who had borne him! By tracing with a piece of chalk the word "FREDERICK" upon the deal table, Sister Anne made the farmer understand that such was the name she was desirous of bestowing upon her son. The ceremony of baptism accordingly took place; and from that moment the infant was called by no other name. The young mother experienced a new feeling of delight every time that much loved word fell upon her ears; and she thought within herself how much greater would be her joy when her child should be able to answer to it!

The poor dumb girl had been six months at the farm, when one morning a courier arrived with a parcel containing twenty-five louis, and a letter in which the Count de Montreville announced his intention of forwarding a similar sum every half-year for the use of Sister Anne. The farmer's wife hastened to inform the young mother of these tidings; and Sister Anne's eyes were filled with tears of gratitude.

"What an excellent nobleman!" cried the good woman, to whose maternal care the poor girl had been entrusted. "I was certain he would not forget you! Oh! I repeat once more, that if you persist in going to Paris, you must address yourself first to this Count! A Count, my dear, is a great lord—a powerful peer. He is immensely rich, no doubt; and if your seducer is in Paris, he will soon discover him for you. It may also happen that, by the good advice he can give your lover, he will so arrange matters that you may be married yet."

Sister Anne made a sign to intimate that her opinions coincided with those of the farmer's wife, and that she would follow her advice in everything. She then persuaded the excellent woman to accept the sum which the Count had remitted, and felt herself more happy when she knew that she was not a charge upon the kind people who treated her with every attention.

Time passed away—and Sister Anne idolized her child. That sweet infant recompensed her for all she had gone through: in him she saw the little brother she had once so deeply loved, and whose death caused her misfortune; in her son also did she behold the counterpart of that Frederick whom she adored! She studied the slightest wishes of her child—considered its looks and its smiles—and, while thus occupied in the most delicious employments, she found that the time glided more rapidly away than it had hitherto done since the departure of her lover from Vizille. And we may observe, that little Frederick promised to possess all the beauty and amiability of her to whom he was indebted for life; and already did he murmur that name which is so sweet to the ear of a mother. Sister Anne then felt how deeply necessary it was not to deprive her child of those comforts which it enjoyed at the farm. If her infant had known but her, he would never have spoken: for speech is an art in which a master is required!

At the period which he had specified, the Count remitted a second supply of money; and his messenger inquired after the health of Sister Anne and her infant. He moreover implored her, on the part of her master, not to leave the farm where she enjoyed the delights of a quiet existence, and where every attention

would be paid to herself and offspring. But Sister Anne had not given up the idea of repairing to Paris. In spite of the remonstrances of the farmer's wife, she was determined to dare everything in order to discover Frederick. The love which she experienced for her son, did not diminish the regrets she felt at being separated from her lover: on the contrary,—whenever she considered the features of her child, whose beauty she so much admired, it seemed to her as if she ought to present him to his father!

"Were he to see the lovely infant," thought Sister Anne, "how could he prevent himself from idolizing it? No—he would no longer wish to separate himself from me."

Little Frederick was now twenty months old. For some time he had ceased to imbibe his nourishment from the bosom of his mother; and he now began to walk. Every day his steps were less feeble; and Sister Anne took delight in guiding and supporting him. She remarked with pleasure the increase of his strength and the growth of his intellectual faculties. Like the gardener who examines in the morning the progress made by his plants during the preceding night, a mother attentively watches the daily improvement in her child. Relieved of all fear relative to the health of her son, possessed of the sum which the Count de Montreville had given her on his departure, and feeling confident that on her arrival in Paris she should find a protector and a friend in his lordship, Sister Anne was determined to resume her travels. Accordingly, she one morning presented to the farmer the paper on which the Count's address was written; and this was a sign of her intentions that was not to be mistaken! The inhabitants of the farm once more endeavoured to make her change her resolution: but this time Sister Anne was firm. She was determined to depart, and to proceed to Paris, where her heart assured her she should find Frederick.

"Wherefore take your son with you?" asked the farmer's wife: "leave him with us—you know how fondly we love him!"

But Sister Anne did not believe that a mother could separate herself for one moment from her son: she pressed little Frederick to her bosom, and made a sign that she would never part from him!

"As you are determined to go to Paris," said the farmer, "you shall not travel on foot like a mendicant. I will take you in my own chaise-cart as far as Lyons; and there I will see you safe in a coach which will bear you and your child to the place of your destination. On your arrival in Paris, you must show that paper which you carry in your purse; and by those means you will find your way to the house of the Count de Montreville, who will not abandon you. When you choose to return to us, his lordship will take care that you shall reach the farm in safety."

Sister Anne testified as well as she was able all the gratitude she felt for this additional kindness. The journey being decided upon, the preparations were soon made. The farmer's wife had already purchased for the young mother, linen, garments, and every kind of necessary for herself and son; and she was even anxious to force her to accept a portion of the money the Count had remitted by his courier. But Sister Anne possessed a purse containing fifty louis: that sum appeared to her enormous, and much more than she should require for her immediate wants, even in case she should not at once find the Count de Montreville upon her arrival in Paris. She would not therefore accept the offer of her kind friends; and even the clothing which they purchased for her seemed to her magnificent in comparison with that which she had worn in the wood. Her heart bounded with joy when she gazed upon her neat but modest wardrobe; and she thought, as she surveyed the garments provided for her, that Frederick would find her more attractive than before, and would perhaps love her better.

All her preparations were terminated; and the farmer harnessed his horse to the covered cart which was to conduct Sister Anne to Lyons. The young mother held her child upon her knees; and they departed from the farm at an early hour in the morning. The same day they arrived at Lyons in the evening. The farmer took a place for Sister Anne in a diligence which was to leave for Paris on the following morning; and he took the precaution of bespeaking the good offices of the conductor, or guard, in behalf of the poor dumb girl. The moment of separation arrived; and it was not without many tears that Sister Anne could prevail upon herself to bid farewell to those who had treated her so kindly; for the farmer's wife had also insisted upon accompanying her young friend to Lyons.

"You were determined to leave us, my dear child," said the good woman to Sister Anne: "and I am afraid you have done wrong! You are going to an immense city, where you will not meet with the same sympathy which you excited in our village. But do not forget us. The Count de Montreville, who appears to have taken a great interest in your welfare, will let us know how you are; and if ever you should be again unfortunate—Oh! pray return to us; and you may be sure we shall receive you as if you were our own child!"

Sister Anne embraced the excellent female with the utmost tenderness—bade adieu with tears in her eyes to her husband—and stepped into the diligence with her son in her arms.

* * * * * *
* * * * *

A young female who up to the age of sixteen has never left her cottage,—and who, on account of the peculiarity of her situation, is less acquainted with the world and its usages than any other,—naturally experiences a thousand new sensations, when she finds herself for the first time surrounded by strangers in one of those moving houses which bear so many individuals through town and country. Such was the situation of Sister Anne, who had only numbered eighteen years and a half, when she departed for Paris with her son who was twenty-three months old. Seated in the *interieur*, or central compartment of the diligence—and holding her child upon her knees—she dared not raise her eyes to gaze on the in-

No. 37.—The Empress Eugenie.

dividuals who travelled with her; and blushed when she perceived that they had noticed her.

Her youth, her beauty, and her fondness towards her child must have rendered her an object of interest in the eyes of all compassionate people: but little sympathy is ever to be met with in a diligence; and the persons with whom Sister Anne found herself, did not seem very abundantly supplied with that sentiment. On her left hand was a tradesman who did nothing but talk about his business with an old merchant who was seated opposite to him. The prices of stocks, of sugar, coffee, and corn, and the transactions at the late fairs which had taken place in the neighbourhood of Lyons, so deeply interested those persons, that they had not even time to apologize to their fellow-travellers when in the heat of their conversation they thrust their elbows into their sides or their snuff-boxes under their noses. On her right was a gentleman of forty, who was very silent himself, but who paid great attention to the conversation of the others, and endeavoured to create their acquaintance. He was moreover troubled with a peculiar obliquity of vision which did not add to his personal attractions. Opposite to Sister Anne was an old woman of fifty—in a faded silk gown—a miserable velvet bonnet, from which dangled a few broken feathers—and whose face was covered with rouge, patches, and snuff. This lady, before the diligence had been ten minutes on the road, had already informed her fellow-passengers, that she had performed *Heroines* at Strasbourg, *Princesses* at Caen, *Dowagers* at St. Malo, *Shepherdesses* at Quimber, *Queens* at Nantes, *Mothers* at Noisy-le-Sec, *Figurantes* at Troyes, and that she was then on her way to Paris to undertake the part of *Coquettes* at some fifth-rate house, whence she was in great hope of removing to a higher theatre—an honour she ought to have had conferred upon her thirty years ago.

On the left of the actress was a merchant; and on her right a very fat gentleman, who slept nearly all the time, and only awoke every now and then to exclaim, "Heavens! we are going to be upset! I really thought we were all over!" so that this individual was a very comfortable companion in a diligence!

During the first few minutes of the journey, Sister Anne heard nothing but a confused murmur of words, of which she scarcely understood a syllable, the tradesmen's conversation upon indigo and coffee mingling with the adventures which had happened to the old actress, who only ceased talking from time to time to indulge in a pinch of snuff, and cry out to her neighbour, "Take care, sir! You throw yourself against me! Do have some regard for the fair sex!"

"Heavens! we are turning over!" exclaimed the gentleman, rubbing his eyes as he woke up.

In the meantime the individual, who was troubled with the obliquity of vision, had already paid a compliment to Sister Anne upon the beauty of her child; and the young mother rewarded him with a sweet smile—for a parent is invariably certain to be pleased when her offspring is the subject of praise and admiration. The old actress now regarded Sister Anne in her turn.

"She is very pretty, indeed—the little lady opposite," said the actress; "and possesses an interesting countenance. She has just the same dress that I wore in 1792, when I performed *Annette*. How nice I looked in that attire, to be sure! I am determined to play the same character over again in Paris."

The two tradesmen also cast a look upon the young mother and her child: but as the latter held in his hand a lump of sugar, they were naturally reminded of the fluctuations experienced by the prices of that article of colonial produce.

"The child is very pretty—very pretty indeed," exclaimed the actress, "and already has a most interesting expression of countenance. If it was my child, I would make him go upon the stage. In a couple of years or so he might very well play *Punch*. Parents have now-a-days an excellent way of bringing up their children. It is really wonderful to think how well those who resist their mother's wishes, when compelled to go upon the stage, perform little *Furiosos* at twelve years of age."

Sister Anne did not comprehend one word that was meant by this rhodomontade concerning *Furiosos* and *Punch*; but she perceived that her child was the object of universal attention, and her heart experienced that emotion of joy and delight which is so natural in the bosom of a mother. A few minutes had scarcely elapsed, however, before questions were addressed to her.

"You are going to Paris?" said the old actress.

"Is it to vaccinate your child?" inquired the merchant.

"Or has he been vaccinated in the place where you live?" asked the tradesman.

"What are you going to do in Paris?" asked the gentleman who squinted.

"Has your husband gone on before you?" cried the actress.

"Heavens! we are going to overturn!" exclaimed the stout gentleman, half asleep.

To these questions and remarks, no answer was returned; and the old actress became very angry at what she considered to be the insolent pride of Sister Anne.

"Do you not hear us?" she demanded in a tone of sarcasm. "When I speak to you, I think you might at least condescend to favour me with a reply."

Sister Anne shook her head sorrowfully, and cast down her eyes.

"Well, what is the meaning of all this?" exclaimed the actress: "I really believe she wishes me to understand that she will not speak to me! But you must learn, my little piece of affectation, that I can soon make you treat me with more civility, and that Madame Nathalie Euphemie Berenice de Follencourt (which is my name) is not likely to put up with an insult. I have fought more than once in my life—upon the stage! I have also played the parts of men, and can fence with a sword as well as a light cavalry soldier. Do you hear, you impertinent creature?"

Sister Anne, terrified by the tone of the old

woman and the angry glances she darted at her, raised her eyes in a suppliant manner towards her neighbour on the right hand, who looked at her with curiosity, and then addressed himself to the old actress.

"Madam, you are wrong to fly into a passion," said he reprovingly.

"What do you mean, sir?" cried the old lady.

"I mean, madam, that the silence of this poor young woman is not natural," returned the gentleman. "From the moment she first stepped into the diligence, she has not uttered a word—even to her child. I think she must be dumb!"

"Dumb!" cried the actress. "A woman dumb! that is impossible, sir! There never was such a thing. A man—yes! But a woman—never!"

But Sister Anne hastened to intimate by a sign that it was the truth; whereupon the old lady gave such a scream of astonishment that the stout gentleman awoke in a terrible fright.

"She is dumb! is it possible? a woman dumb!" cried the actress. "Do you hear, sir—she is dumb!"

"Aye! I really thought we were overturning!" ejaculated the stout gentleman, sinking to sleep once more.

"Oh! what a terrible man you are!" said the old lady: "you make me quite nervous with your overturnings! Poor creature—poor girl! you are mute—you cannot speak! What a terrible calamity! Oh! how I pity you—I, who was angry with you, just now! I would much rather be deaf and blind than dumb! Poor creature! what an interesting object you have become in my eyes! Not to be able to speak! And how did this happen to you, my dear?"

Sister Anne, now as deeply astonished at the kindness of the old woman's manners, as she had previously been alarmed by her anger, drew her purse from her bosom, extracted the little piece of paper which contained the Count's address, and presented it to the actress.

"Ah! this is the address of the house to which you are going!" cried the old lady: "doubtless to be wet-nurse in this great nobleman's family! Oh! how much better would it be for you to play in a pantomime! You would look so well as *Columbine*."

"Heavens! are we safe?" cried the stout gentleman. "I actually fancied we were all in the ditch!"

The squinting individual made no answer to the observations of the old actress: he seemed plunged into a deep reverie since his eyes had encountered the purse filled with gold which the young mute had drawn from her bosom in order to exhibit the address of M. de Montreville. From that moment he redoubled his attentions and politeness to Sister Anne: he caressed little Frederick, and even carried his gallantry so far as to purchase barley-sugar and ginger-bread nuts for him at the first station where the horses were changed. Sister Anne—whose pure and unsuspicious soul did not perceive the hypocrisy and deceit which reigned in the eyes of her new friend, and who supposed that all his attention was the result of disinterested pity,—was inclined to make him comprehend as well as she was able all her history, her hopes, and her designs. Poor girl! the reader must tremble when he thinks what will become of her in Paris!

The second day of the journey, the gentleman who squinted was more polite to Sister Anne than he had been on the previous one; and he seized a convenient opportunity to whisper in her ear, "I know the Count de Montreville well—he is an intimate friend of mine; and if you will allow me, I shall have the greatest pleasure in conducting you to his house."

The poor girl accepted this offer with a smile expressive of the liveliest gratitude; and the old actress, who noticed the understanding which seemed to prevail between her and the gentleman, screwed up her lips in a disdainful manner, and muttered between her teeth, "Acquaintances are soon made in a diligence!" It is thus that some people invariably give their neighbours credit for evil intentions, especially when they themselves have done nothing but evil all their lives. As for Sister Anne, she gazed upon the actress with astonishment, and was at a loss to understand how a person in four-and-twenty hours could thus manifest towards her three such different sentiments as indignation, friendship, and contempt.

At length the diligence arrived in the great city; and Sister Anne was dazzled and astonished by all she saw. She fancied that she was in a new world; for having arrived at Lyons at night, and left it on the following morning at an early hour, she had not obtained a just impression of the grandeur, wealth, and extent of a city which would have enabled her to form a tolerably correct idea of Paris. The gentleman with the obliquity of vision, continued to treat the young mother and her child with the greatest attention. He aided them to alight from the diligence, and summoned a hackney-coach. The old actress arranged her bonnet and feathers, which had been somewhat tumbled in the vehicle; the two tradesmen hastened to the Exchange; and the stout gentlemen departed to his own house, muttering to himself, "Well—we have not overturned—that is very singular! I really thought we should have been upset!" The hackney-coach arrived; the officious friend, whom Sister Anne implicitly confided in, placed all her baggage in the vehicle—handed her into it—followed her himself—and whispered his orders to the driver.

As the coach rolled rapidly away from the vast court-yard of the diligence-office, the gentleman said to Sister Anne, "We are going to the house of M. de Montreville at once. I am very glad that he happens to be such an intimate friend of mine; otherwise, not being able to make yourself understood, you would have experienced a considerable degree of difficulty in discovering his lordship's residence."

Sister Anne poured forth, by signs, all her gratitude to the individual whom she did not

know to be a miserable thief, an adventurer, and a villain, and who, having plundered a variety of individuals at the various towns in the south of France where he had been staying, had now returned to Paris, hoping that an absence of eight years would have obliterated his villanies from the memory of his former dupes, and that he should be enabled to encounter fresh ones. But it was natural that the poor orphan should fall into the first snare that was spread for her. Mild, unaffected, ignorant of the duplicity of this world, and unsuspicious of evil, she reposed the utmost confidence in her new companion. Her adventure in the forest would have made her dread to meet with robbers in a wood: but she had not learned to mistrust those whom she encountered in the guise of friends, and whom it is very difficult to recognise, because they assume the mask of probity—a circumstance that renders them more dangerous than those who attack their victims upon the high road.

The hackney-coach, which contained the rogue, the poor orphan, and her child, stopped at the gate of a handsome house. The gentleman hastened to alight, saying to Sister Anne at the same time, "Wait for me here one moment: this is the Count's mansion;—but I must first ascertain if he is at home."

The villain went into the house, stayed there for a few moments, and returned with disappointment depicted upon his countenance.

"My poor creature," said he, "what I dreaded has actually occurred. The Count de Montreville is gone out of town, and will not return for some days."

The countenance of Sister Anne seemed to say, "What can I do in the meantime? whither shall I go?"

"But calm yourself," continued the obliging individual: "I am determined not to leave you till I see you safe in some comfortable abode. I will myself conduct you to a house where every attention shall be paid to you. Two days soon pass away; and by that time the Count will be in Paris."

Sister Anne again testified her gratitude to the kind stranger, and was touched by all the trouble he gave himself on her behalf, without however being surprised at it; for she imagined it was thus that the inhabitants of great cities were accustomed to behave. The hackney-coach again moved on. The motion of the vehicle pleased little Frederick: he laughed, jumped, and played a thousand pranks upon the knees of his mother, who on her part testified her delight and surprise at the great houses, the vast crowds, the magnificent shops, and the enormous display of wealth, which met her eyes in every direction.

"Oh! you will soon see something that will astonish you much more than all this!" exclaimed her companion. "You will be surprised in a thousand different ways. Depend upon it, this journey will be of the greatest benefit to you."

The hackney-coach stopped this time at the door of a miserable lodging-house in the Faubourg Saint Jacques; and Sister Anne, when she entered the premises, could not help thinking that the "comfortable abode" was very wretched and very dirty. She however followed her guide, who carried her bundles for her, into a room to which the landlady of the house conducted them; and as soon as she was alone with the gentleman, he addressed her as follows:—"Before I take my leave of you, it is necessary that I should inform you of a little ceremony to which every one, who comes to lodge in a hotel at Paris, is obliged to submit. You must name the amount of the ready money you possess about you. This is an arrangement made by the police, so that nothing may be lost in the city. For instance, if you have forty *louis* in your purse to-day, and if one is stolen from you, the gendarmes will count the contents of every purse in Paris to-morrow morning; and the person who has a *louis* too much is the thief. What do you think of that plan? Admirably conceived, is it not?"

Sister Anne did not fully understand all that the gentleman said to her; and she seemed to wait for a more complete explanation.

"Will you go yourself and make your declaration to the mistress of the house?" said the stranger: "or shall I do it for you? Perhaps I can fulfil the ceremony better than you. Give me your purse — that will be the best plan!"

The poor young woman drew her purse from her bosom, and the obliging gentleman took it, saying, "I will count the contents in the presence of the landlady, and then return to you."

He left the room, hurried down stairs, gave a piece of gold to the mistress of the house, and desired her to consider it as an advance which the young female up-stairs, who was dumb, had sent her. Having thus settled the affair, the villain disappeared from the house, flattering himself that this last feat had been arranged with the greatest delicacy. He hastened to a gambling-house in the Palais Royal—where, finding greater rogues than himself, he soon lost every *sou* of the sum he had just stolen from an unfortunate girl. Not meeting any more dupes to present him with a purse, he picked one from the pocket of a gentleman, who, perceiving his loss, gave the robber in charge to the police. He was forthwith conducted to the Prefecture—thence to the Bicêtre—and lastly to the galleys, where he exercised his ingenuity by robbing his comrades. But let us leave him there!

Sister Anne waited for the individual who had gone away with her purse, without entertaining the slightest suspicion of the real truth. Indeed, so far from feeling any apprehension, she played quietly with her son, occasionally casting a glance from the window into the street, and thence returning terrified back to the middle of the room, because her apartment was on the third storey, and she had never found herself so high before. The gentleman did not however return; and Sister Anne was surprised by his long absence. In a short time, the landlady made her appearance; and the poor mute held out her hand to receive her purse, but saw it not.

"What would you like to order for dinner?" inquired the woman: "you can doubtless write

down the name of anything you require? I will take great care of you: the gentleman who brought you hither, gave me the *louis* you sent me in advance, which will pay all your expenses for the two days that you intend, as he informed me, to stay in my house!"

The stranger was gone! A terrible suspicion now flashed across the brain of Sister Anne, and she endeavoured to make the hostess understand that she had entrusted her purse to the gentleman who conducted her to the house.

"I tell you that I am perfectly satisfied with the money I have received," said the landlady, who did not comprehend Sister Anne's signs; "I shall ask you for nothing more, my dear girl—and will now send you up some dinner."

Sister Anne was stupified by this new calamity. It was not her money that she regretted—for as yet she did not altogether comprehend the value of it: but in her purse was the address of the Count de Montreville, and the villain had carried it away with her gold. What would become of her? How could she discover the abode of the nobleman who would befriend her? During the whole day, the young woman preserved some hope. She flattered herself that the stranger would return: but night came, and the officious gentleman did not make his appearance. Sister Anne wept as she pressed her child to her bosom: it was not for herself that she felt the slightest apprehension—and therefore her affliction was the more poignant. She already fancied that she saw her son deprived of necessaries and nourishment—and she shuddered! She fancied the horror of her situation, and repented of having left the farm: for the thought that her child would suffer, deprived her of all her courage.

She passed the whole of the second day in her chamber. The wretch who had plundered her, had assured her that M. de Montreville was only absent for two days; and she anxiously waited for the third morning to repair to his abode. She fancied that she should recognise the house at which the hackney-coach had stopped. The poor girl hoped to discover one dwelling alone out of that assemblage of thousands of houses, amongst which she found herself for the first time; and she did not suspect that the robber who had plundered her, had ordered the driver of the coach to stop at the gate of a house which was not that of the Count de Montreville.

On the morning of the third day, she took her son in one arm, and carried her bundle on the other, and left the lodging-house where the landlady did not seek to retain her, because her expenses were only paid for two days. Sister Anne recommended herself to the care of Providence, and endeavoured to sustain her courage as she wandered forth into the immense city which she did not know. Every moment the noise of the vehicles alarmed her—the horses frightened her—the cries of itinerant venders of fruit and other articles bewildered her—and the multitudes of people coming, going, and running about in all directions, troubled her to such an extent, that she scarcely knew where she was. The poor creature stepped under a gateway, and began to cry. The portress of the house asked her the reasons of her grief: but Sister Anne could only reply with signs and tears; and the portress retired to her lodge, muttering in an angry tone, "That is all I get for inquiring into people's distress! What is the use of meaning to relieve them, if they won't say what is the cause of their sorrows?"

Sister Anne wept long and bitterly, and at length resumed her walk: but she had already roamed about Paris for four long hours, and had not succeeded in her aims. She saw streets, houses, and shops without number: but she did not know which direction to take, and frequently found herself after a long circuit, in the same place where she was an hour before. How was she to discover the Count's abode! She began to think it was impossible! Fatigue overcame her, for she was compelled to carry her child perpetually in her arms: in a short time hunger seized upon them both, and augmented the horrors of her situation.

She sat herself down upon a stone bench; and the people, who passed by, cast a look upon her, and continued their way. They would have stopped, perhaps, had Punch and Judy attracted their attention; but a weeping woman was not calculated to gather a crowd. Fortunately for the poor girl, it was the warm season, and the weather was beautiful. She went into a pastry-cook's shop, gave some cakes to her child, and presented one of her garments with a sorrowful countenance as a meet remuneration; but the confectioner returned it to her, gazing upon her at the same time with pity and surprise—for he could not comprehend how a well-dressed young woman could happen to be without money. She endeavoured to resume her walk, but the approach of night redoubled her alarms; and in spite of the lamps which lighted the streets, the noise of the horses' hoofs appeared to her to be more menacing than before. She was every moment afraid of being run over, together with her son, by the vehicles which at times hemmed her in on all sides; and she again adopted the safer plan of sitting down upon a stone bench.

Sister Anne was then in the Rue Montmartre. Often and often during the day had she passed up and down the Rue de Provence and before the mansion of M. de Montreville; but the poor girl knew not where she was. It was impossible for her to discover his abode, and she was ready to give herself up to despair: she however pressed her son to her bosom, and as she covered him with kisses, endeavoured to gather fresh courage. The child smiled upon her, and played with her hair: he was of that age when grief is unknown to an infant in the arms of its mother. The evening advanced—the shops were shut—the people in the streets were less numerous—and a longer interval succeeded the passage of each successive vehicle up the street. Sister Anne raised her eyes, and glanced around her with a little more assurance than she had till that moment possessed. Where could she implore an asylum for the night? She was lost in that wilderness of houses, and dared not address herself to a soul! Her eyes fell upon

the people who passed by, and some men from time to time stopped and considered her.

"She is very pretty," said they to themselves: but she presented her child to them, and then they moved on.

"Great God!" thought the poor girl to herself; "the inhabitants of Paris do not like children! They shun me the moment I show them mine!"

About midnight, a patrol passed along the street: and the soldiers approached Sister Anne, who trembled from head to foot.

"What are you doing there with your child?" cried they. "Return home, or walk about, or else we shall be obliged to take you to the guard-house."

The harsh tones of the patrol that had just spoken to her, made her tremble: she rose precipitately, and hurried away from the seat, clasping her child closer to her bosom than ever. Scarcely had she walked a hundred yards, when she recollected that she had left her bundle of clothes upon the bench: she hastened back to the place—but alas! her clothes were gone! The unfortunate girl—they were her last resource!

She could not find tears sufficient to testify her grief for this new misfortune. A terrible weight seemed to lie upon her chest—she dared not give way to reflection—but walked onwards, with her child in her arms. Hasty was her step—and yet she knew not whither she was going! She held her child to her bosom—a nervous convulsion seemed to possess itself of all her members—and she nearly forgot her sorrows! She emerged from the Rue Montmartre upon the Boulevards; the trees met her eyes, and her heart dilated with joy. The poor girl hoped that she was beyond the walls of the city where an evil genius seemed to pursue her: she fancied that she was once more amongst her woods and fields; she hastened towards the first tree that she saw, and almost clung to it in the wildness of her delight. Her tears then flowed plentifully. She seated herself at the foot of that tree, the aspect of which inspired her with new courage: she covered her child with the apron she wore, and resolved upon passing the remainder of the night in that place.

Morning dawned upon the mighty city and on the head of the poor orphan, who had not tasted one instant's repose during the whole night. She had pondered on the probable fate that awaited her, and had made up her mind to implore public charity for herself and her son. Were she alone, she would have put an end to her miserable existence: but she felt the necessity of living for her child. After having been so comfortable at the farm, and surrounded by individuals who loved and cherished both her and her son, to be now reduced to beg her bread! Oh! the idea was maddening; and deeply, deeply did she repent having left that tranquil asylum! But it was chiefly when she gazed upon her child that she reproached herself.

"Poor little creature," thought the distracted mother, "all that you suffer is caused by me! But am I so guilty, when everything I have done has originated in my wish to restore you to your father? Oh! if I could only discover that happy asylum—if I could but find my way back to those kind friends who treated me like their own daughter, I would never abandon them more! I see that I must give up all hopes of finding Frederick: but if distress kill me, what will become of you, sweet boy, in this immense city?"

The poor mother wept as she considered the features of little Frederick, who was still sleeping. Some peasants on their way to the markets, offered her bread and fruits; and a milk-woman gave her and her child some of her refreshing beverage. Every heart is not insensible to the call of misery in Paris—the Parisians are munificent to the poor; and if they do not give alms more frequently, it is because they are afraid of being moved to tears by the tales of impostors and hypocrites.

During a portion of the day, Sister Anne walked about the city, and endeavoured to discover the abode of her protector. Often did she think that she saw an individual at a distance with the same gait and figure possessed by Frederick; and then she hastened rapidly on, redoubled her steps to overtake him, and when she was near him, she discovered her mistake! The people whom she thus followed, surveyed her, some with astonishment, and some with an ironical smile; and she retired to a distance, ashamed and heart-broken.

"O God!" she thought, "I shall never discover him!"

Towards evening the provisions, which had been given to her in the morning, were all exhausted; and she was obliged to hold out her hand and implore charity of those who passed by. Sister Anne was obliged to gaze upon her child in order to collect sufficient courage to ask for bread in that humiliating manner. If they who distributed alms, were at least to do so with kindness, the unhappy mendicant would be relieved in a twofold sense: but it is usually with a harsh remonstrance or a severe countenance that those who are styled "charitable" drop a small coin into the hand of the indigent.

"Alas!" reflected Sister Anne, shedding bitter tears, "why do they seem to treat me as a criminal because I am poor?"

She was anxious to leave Paris, for the inhabitants of the country appeared to be much more charitable and humane; and with them she was less ashamed and timid. But what road could she take to discover the hospitable farm-house? She felt that she must submit herself to the guidance of Providence, which hitherto had been far from favourable to her. Poor creature! may that Providence at length extricate you from all your misfortunes!

Ignorant of the road she ought to take, but determined to leave the city, Sister Anne made up her mind to follow a man who was walking by the side of a vehicle covered with oil-cloth. In a short time this individual turned into one of the Faubourgs, and issued from the city through its contingent Barrier. By still following the vehicle, which proceeded at a very slow pace, the young mother at length found herself in the country. She breathed more freely, embraced her son, and imploring for him

the succour of heaven, hastened towards the village which she saw in the distance to supplicate charity.

* * * *
* * * * *

Frederick loved Constance with the most sincere and devoted affection—though perhaps with less ardour and enthusiasm than in the first month of their union. But the constant companionship of a wife had not extinguished his attachment: for he discovered each day some new virtues and more endearing qualities in Constance. The beauty of the countenance captivates for a season, but is not sufficient to enchain the heart for ever:—happy, then, is the husband who can find in his wife those attractions which time may never change.

Constance appeared to be susceptible of a single failing—a failing which was calculated to undermine her happiness, because she could not conquer it, although she carefully shut it up in her own bosom. She was jealous: and the excess of her love for Frederick frequently occasioned her to experience secret fears. When he was thoughtful and pensive, Constance became uneasy; and a thousand alarms filled her bosom. What could thus occupy the attention of her husband—make him miserable—and wring sighs from his breast?—for he sighed often, often! Before their marriage, she attributed his melancholy to his love for her: and she was happy in the delusion. But now that they were united—now that they could give themselves up to all their tenderness, and that nothing interrupted their felicity, wherefore should Frederick sigh? wherefore was he so often plunged in a deep reverie! Such were the questions which Constance asked herself in secret:—she would have been disconsolate had her husband perceived her distress. Though she was jealous, she would not torment Frederick: she was resolved upon appearing as tender, as affectionate, and as kind as ever; and if she suffered, she concealed her grief with care, in order not to afflict him whom she loved more than life.

One evening, at a grand entertainment given by the Count de Montreville, Constance was leaning on his lordship's arm as they advanced together to receive some newly-announced guests; and Frederick was at a little distance, chatting with Dubourg. Frederick was struck by the exquisite symmetry of his wife's shape and the grace with which she walked: it seemed to him as if he had all in a moment discovered new elegances and charms about her. He could not help sighing; for he thought to himself, "Oh! that I could love her without ever dreaming of another!"

At that instant she happened to turn round, and their eyes met. She caught his pensive look as he stood gazing at her, with his hand up to his chin; and then she abruptly averted her eyes as if she felt she had surprised that expression on his countenance which he might not wish her to observe. And for the rest of the evening she was melancholy—almost unhappy; for she kept continually asking herself, "What can be the matter with Frederick?"

But, after all, these little incidents which we have been illustrating, were as trifles in comparison with the occurrences that were to follow. The death of General de Valmont was the first really serious event that intruded upon their happiness. He was revered by all who knew him; and was tenderly cherished by his niece to whom he had supplied the place of a father. It was only the affection of her husband which could soothe the grief of Constance for this loss; and the Count de Montreville mingled his tears with those of his daughter-in-law, for he also mourned the death of a sincere friend. In old age, however, we are apt to manifest more fortitude than the young, to support the death of those whom we love. Is it that age makes us selfish? Is it that the heart, having become insensible to the ardour of affection, is also closed against the transports of friendship? Or does this callousness arise from an idea that the separation will be but short, and that we shall soon join those whom we have thus lost?

Constance was the sole heiress of her uncle, who was exceedingly rich, and possessed numerous farms and estates, with which Frederick was desirous of becoming acquainted. He had formed the project of making the tour of his new property; and Constance was to stay at home in order that the Count de Montreville should not be left alone to feel more severely than otherwise the death of his old friend. But how was Frederick to leave his wife, before her grief was also thoroughly assuaged? There was no hurry for the journey, and Frederick postponed it from month to month. Constance herself, having never been separated from her husband for a single day, could not persuade herself to suffer him to depart!

Some time after the death of the General, Frederick,—having learnt that M. Ménard, being tormented with the gout and possessing no more pupils, was far from comfortable,—hastened to visit the old preceptor, and proposed that he should take up his abode with him and Constance.

"I require," said Frederick, "a man who is learned, skilful, and upright, to take charge of my affairs, examine the accounts of my stewards, and superintend all my correspondence. My dear M. Ménard, you are the gentleman who will suit me. At the same time recollect, it is not as intendant, but as a friend, that I ask you to reside with me; and if heaven should send me any children, you shall occupy the same situation with regard to them, as you did in reference to their father."

Ménard accepted this offer with the utmost gratitude, and was speedily installed in Frederick's house—where Constance showed him every respect and attention. She was fond of the old tutor, because he loved her husband; and Ménard deeply touched by her kindness towards him, kissed her hand and said from time to time, "I hope your ladyship will make haste and bless your husband with children! I shall be their tutor; and they will grow up as handsome as his lordship, your husband, who was my pupil, and who does me honour."

Constance smiled at this request: she desired nothing more than to present her husband

with a pledge of their mutual affection; but we do not always obtain what we desire.

The reader must not suppose that Dubourg had abandoned his friend.

"Come to my house as often as you choose," said Frederick to him: "your room is always ready for you."

Dubourg profited by this permission—not to occupy a portion of Frederick's house in Paris, but to pay him an occasional visit in the country. It was especially toward the end of the quarter that Dubourg made his appearance most frequently at Montmorenci: for, as he received his income every three months, he could never manage to make the stipend last more than six weeks—and was therefore obliged to dine with Frederick, if he were in Paris, or go and stay with him altogether in the country, for the remainder of the quarter.

"Thanks to you, my dear friend," said Dubourg to the young Viscount, "with my sixteen hundred francs a-year, I live exactly as if I had the double. I spend my own income in six months, and live with you the other six."

The gay disposition of Dubourg pleased Constance; and Frederick invariably hailed with delight the arrival of his friend; because he was well aware that that friend would never utter one word to his wife which she ought not to hear, and that, in spite of the former looseness of his principles, he was now much more correct in his conduct, and that he looked upon Constance as a sister. We can forgive everything in one who respects friendship. There are so many sincere friends, who, with all their delicacy and virtue, take a delight in disturbing the peace and tranquillity of an entire family!

When Dubourg and Ménard encountered each other at Frederick's house—which invariably happened towards the end of the quarter—the old preceptor seized the opportunity of eulogizing the domestic felicity which reigned between Frederick and Constance.

"They are Orpheus and Eurydice," said Ménard; "they are Deucalion and Pyrrha—Philemon and Baucis—Pyramus and Thisbe."

"Yes, by Jove!" exclaimed Dubourg: "Frederick possesses a lovely wife—a wife who has all the best qualities of woman—a treasure, in short—and it would be deuced extraordinary if he were not happy!"

"Certainly," returned M. Ménard: "but if I had not instilled into the mind of my pupil the most admirable principles of sedateness and morality, although he might have loved his wife, he probably would not have been so steady. The Czar, Peter the Great, adored Catherine, his wife; but that did not prevent him from keeping a hundred mistresses. A number of great princes have been addicted to illicit love, and have had several concubines; but——"

"My dear Ménard," interrupted Dubourg, "do not boast so much of the excellence of the education you gave Frederick! God knows that if he had only you for a guide——"

"Probably you would have made a better tutor," said Ménard: "witness the period when you travelled with us as my Lord Baron Potoski!"

"Hush! M. Ménard!" exclaimed Dubourg; "let that journey be entirely forgotten! We were not any of us very steady in those times; and I sincerely hope that the Viscountess de Montreville will never hear a word concerning the little adventure of the wood—that indiscretion of which Frederick was guilty, you know!"

"What do you take me for?" demanded Ménard: "I know very well that it would be the height of folly to allude to the subject; and although her ladyship could not be angry, as nothing that was done before marriage regards her, it would be prudent to hold one's tongue. At the same time I believe that she possesses too much good sense not to laugh at the follies her husband committed when he was a bachelor."

"In spite of her good sense, my dear Ménard," returned Dubourg, "there are certain things which a woman never hears with pleasure. One must always be careful to avoid saying anything that will make her believe her husband's heart has been possessed by another before herself. Although a young lady is perfectly well aware that young men are apt to be wild previous to their marriage, she still persuades her mind that she alone has captivated the heart of her husband; she hopes that he never loved any one before her, and that she was the first to inspire him with the tender sentiment. It would therefore be useless to destroy so happy and innocent an illusion."

"I understand perfectly," said M. Ménard. "It is just the same as making a cook believe no one can serve up devilled kidneys better than herself."

"Precisely what I mean," returned Dubourg: "you are very sharp in inventing comparisons! But I believe that the Viscountess de Montreville is apt to be jealous, so deeply is she attached to her husband!"

"I actually believe you are right," answered Ménard. "In fact, I noticed that she was one day less sprightly than usual; and I presume that her transient melancholy was caused by her husband who had been caressing a cat for upwards of a quarter of an hour."

"The deuce take your cats!" exclaimed Dubourg. "How could you suspect Constance to be guilty of so great a folly?"

"Folly!" cried Ménard. "Why, there are thousands of individuals who prefer their dogs to their wives, and numbers of women who love their canary-birds much better than their husbands. I do not say that my pupil is one of those persons; or that her ladyship——"

"Has the Viscountess de Montreville ever asked you if you were acquainted with the causes of Frederick's occasional melancholy?" inquired Dubourg.

"Yes. I recollect that the other evening she said to me in a whisper, 'Frederick sighs: can you guess the reason?'"

"And what did you say in reply?" demanded Dubourg, quickly.

"Oh!" replied Ménard: "I said, 'My lady, I believe that your husband is troubled with an indigestion, and that frequently causes people to sigh. I have the same thing myself three or four times a week.'—From that mo-

ment the Viscountess de Montreville has never questioned me any more upon the same subject!"

"That I will answer for," cried Dubourg.

Although Frederick was now happy, he had not forgotten the poor dumb girl of the wood; and it was her image that frequently occasioned him many bitter moments. He was anxious to ascertain the real position of Sister Anne: but he dared not question his father. The Count had assured him that he would protect her—and Frederick knew that his lordship would keep his word. But he was anxious to know what had become of her, and whether she loved him still! The ungrateful young man dared to doubt the sincerity of her affection:—perhaps he judged Sister Anne by himself? At the same time, the more his affection for Constance became calm and tranquil, the more did the remembrance of Sister Anne intrude upon his mind. A smile—a kiss from his wife easily made him forget the poor dumb girl: but her image soon returned again! It seems as if the heart of man were always in want of hopes or reminiscences!

Frederick had been married to Constance nearly two years. Their only subject for sorrow was the absence of an heir to their rank and wealth. Frederick desired a son—Constance was anxious to present him with a token of her love—and M. Ménard ardently wished that little pupils would soon arrive. The Count de Montreville did not live with his son and daughter-in-law: but he was a frequent visitor at their house. The servant who had accompanied him on his journey to Dauphiny when he was attacked in the forest, was still in his establishment; and his lordship had expressly ordered him not to allude to the subject in the presence of others. But one evening, as Du-

mont (such was the domestic's name) was conversing with the other domestics in the servants' hall, the valet forgot his master's injunctions; and as every one was telling an anecdote connected with robberies and murders, he incautiously spoke of the perils from which he and the Count had escaped through the miraculous intervention of a young female who was deprived of the powers of speech. Frederick's own valet was present when this conversation took place; and on the following morning, as he attended at his master's toilet, he mentioned the circumstances alluded to by Dumont, and inquired if they were founded upon truth. He probably imagined that Dumont was shooting a little with the long-bow, the Count never having uttered a word respecting an attack by robbers and the deliverance through the aid of a dumb girl.

Frederick's attention was immediately excited by what his valet said. A secret presentiment told him that it all bore reference to Sister Anne: he made no answer to his valet, but hastened to the abode of his father. The Count was absent; Dumont was however there: Frederick was desirous of speaking to him in private—and thus were his wishes immediately gratified. But now on the Viscount questioning Dumont, the servant blushed and recollected the injunction of the Count: it was however too late; and in communicating the whole truth to his master's son, he did not think he was doing wrong, especially as he was not aware of the motives which had induced the Count to recommend such implicit secrecy. Frederick ordered Dumont to describe to him the personal appearance of the young girl whom the Count had left at the farm-house: and he was immediately convinced that she was none other than Sister Anne. He asked Dumont for a thousand details; and the domestic replied as well as he was able to all his questions.

"Do you suppose that she remained at the farm-house?" demanded Frederick.

"Yes, my lord," was the reply: "she was too ill to continue her journey."

"Ill!" cried the young nobleman in return.

"Yes, my lord: she was about to become a mother," answered Dumont.

"What do you say, Dumont?" exclaimed Frederick: "that young woman was about to become a mother?" and he was painfully agitated.

"I could not be mistaken as to her position, my lord," was the response.

Sister Anne was then a mother! Frederick now understood wherefore his father had acted with such deep mystery! He ascertained precisely the name of the village, and the situation of the farm at which the poor orphan had been left; and, having remunerated Dumont for his communication, ordered him not to mention to the Count that he had been thus questioned on the subject. Dumont readily promised obedience, and lost himself in conjectures regarding the conduct of both father and son.

From the moment when Frederick knew that Sister Anne had made him a father, he did not taste an instant's repose. The idea haunted him incessantly, and he longed to see his child. His reveries became more frequent—his brow was oftener clouded with melancholy—and with profound grief did Constance hear his sighs. She did not dare question her husband: but in secret she wept, and tormented herself with a thousand useless conjectures. She had hoped to be the centre of all Frederick's ideas, the prominent image in his mind, the sole object of his thoughts: but she sat near him—she pressed his hand in hers—and she saw that it was not she who made him sigh! When she did at length venture to inquire of Frederick the cause of his grief, the young man, forcing himself to smile, pressed her to his heart, and exclaimed, "What more can I desire, now that I possess you?" But Constance perceived something so sickly and sorrowful in that smile, she felt convinced her husband was not entirely happy!

Frederick one morning informed his wife that he was about to undertake the journey which he had postponed so long, but which was now indispensably necessary. Constance had hoped that Ménard would have supplied her husband's place; Frederick had himself suggested the facility of this arrangement: but he had now changed his mind, and appeared determined to depart. Constance dared not detain him, nor would she venture to propose herself as his companion: she was fearful of importuning him—she dreaded to interfere with his plans; and she moreover felt that if Frederick had been desirous for her to accompany him, he need have only uttered one word, and she would have left everything to follow him. That word was not said! Constance sighed in secret; but in the presence of her husband her countenance was serene and her brow placid. Frederick embraced her tenderly—promised to return as speedily as possible—and to be with her for certain at the expiration of a month. The Viscountess endeavoured to sustain her courage: and Frederick departed, having recommended her to the care of Ménard and Dubourg. But Constance did not require friends to amuse her: during Frederick's absence, she felt that his image would always be with her.

It was now the month of August—that fine season of the year when the air of the country is peculiarly healthy and agreeable: and Constance was determined to pass the time of her husband's absence, in the house near Montmorenci. More secluded and quiet there than at Paris, she fancied that she should be more at liberty to think of him, and to calculate the moments which must elapse ere his return. The Count de Montreville frequently visited his daughter-in-law at her country-house: but he did not stay long with her at a time, as his age required certain attentions and cares which he could alone procure at his own mansion in Paris. He moreover had a numerous circle of acquaintances and friends in the metropolis, and was fond of society. Thus, after a week's residence with Constance, he invariably returned to Paris, where he devoted himself to his favourite pleasures and pursuits.

Constance remained alone at Montmorenci, with Ménard and her servants. It was still the beginning of the quarter, and Dubourg did not make his appearance at the country-house.

Constance did not however experience a monotonous dullness; for when the heart is well occupied, the head is never empty. The old preceptor was moreover always with her, and endeavoured to amuse her by quoting Greek and Latin authors, and losing himself in the mazes of ancient history: but when he had left off speaking, although he perceived that Constance had not listened to a word he had uttered, he received a smile as a reward for his attempt to divert her—and that was sufficient. Towards the evening Constance invariably repaired to the terrace, which was her favourite spot. It was there that she and Frederick had first comprehended each other's sentiments: it was there that her heart had experienced the first impressions of love! From that moment the terrace had ever been her favourite retreat.

Constance was one evening seated upon that eminence, gazing upon the valley which she had once sketched in the presence of Frederick,—and considering the open country which surrounded the walls of her garden,—when she suddenly perceived a female at the foot of a tree in the road that intersected the landscape. The poor creature, who held a child in her arms, and seemed to be a prey to the most direful distress, both of mind and body, was gazing sorrowfully upon her infant; and as she kissed the innocent baby, her bosom appeared suffocated by the sighs of deep, deep anguish to which she could scarcely give vent. Constance was sensibly affected; and at that moment M. Ménard joined her upon the terrace.

"Look there!" said she, addressing herself to the old tutor, and pointing towards the object of her commiseration,—"look at that poor woman! how she embraces her child! She seems dreadfully afflicted! Do you observe her?"

"In a minute, my lady," returned Ménard: "I am searching for my spectacles. Where can I have put them?"

At that moment the poor woman raised her eyes; and perceiving Constance, her looks became so expressive and so suppliant, that it was impossible not to comprehend them.

"Ah! she weeps—she weeps!" exclaimed Constance. "Wait, my poor woman,—I will come to you!"

A few paces from the terrace there was a door in the garden-wall, which opened into the road; and in a few moments the Viscountess de Montreville was by the side of the poor creature, whom she hastened to succour. As she drew near the young female, she felt her heart more deeply touched than it ever yet had been; for the features of the woman announced the utmost extent of suffering and despair. It was however for her child that she principally implored the pity of Constance. She held it towards Madame de Montreville, and large tears fell from those eyes which were red with weeping.

"Poor little thing!" said Constance; "how pale and thin he is! But how beautiful!"—and she took the infant in her arms.

"Follow me," said she to the young mother, "and I will order refreshments to be immediately supplied you."

The poor woman attempted to rise, but she fell exhausted again at the foot of the tree, unable to walk.

"Good heavens!" cried Constance; "in what a situation is this unhappy mother! M. Ménard, hasten and assist me to lead her into the house."

"Here I am, my lady—here I am!" exclaimed the old professor, drawing near the tree: "they were in my waistcoat-pocket. But this poor person seems to require an auxiliary!"

"Sustain her—help her," said the Viscountess de Montreville. "Poor woman! my heart bleeds for her! Oh! is it possible there are people in the world so unhappy!"

"Very possible, my lady," answered Ménard. "But we must endeavour to ascertain the cause, since we perceive the effect."

Aided by Ménard and Constance, the latter of whom held the child in her arms while she also supported the young mother, the poor creature reached the house,—where the Viscountess de Montreville hastened to supply her with everything that she thought would be beneficial to her and her son; and while the poor creature partook of the refreshment, Constance regarded her with attention.

"Poor thing," said she to Ménard, "she is still young—and so deeply to be pitied! Her features are beautiful—her countenance is expressive! Poor woman! Whence do you come? What do you intend to do?"

The wretched creature could not answer those questions; and the reader doubtless guesses wherefore! It was Sister Anne, with her child, whom Constance had thus succoured! Yes—Sister Anne! Ten days had elapsed since the young mute had left Paris; and for ten days had she wandered about in the country. Compelled to beg her daily bread and implore her nightly asylum—frequently driven away from an inhospitable door—and often depriving herself of food to supply the wants of her son, Sister Anne felt her courage and her strength gradually fail. Despair threatened to deprive her of her reason; and the miserable mother anxiously awaited the approach of death to terminate her sufferings,—when accident threw her in the way of one who hastened to her assistance like a guardian angel sent from heaven.

Constance, astonished at not receiving any reply to her questions, renewed them; and Sister Anne placed her fingers upon her lips, shook her head sorrowfully, and made signs to explain her cruel situation.

"O heavens! she cannot speak!" exclaimed the Viscountess de Montreville. "Poor creature—alone, without money, and without a guide,—without even the power of asking the way. Oh! this is too much for one individual to suffer at a time—it is too cruel, too cruel!"—and as she uttered these words, Constance gave free vent to the tears which the aspect of the unfortunate creature drew from her eyes; while the young mute, deeply affected by the pity with which she inspired her benefactress, and to which she had been so unaccustomed, took her ladyship's hand, covered it with kisses, and pressed it to her heart.

"Really," said the old preceptor, applying his handkerchief to his eyes, for he could not witness this sorrowful picture without being affected,—"I do not hesitate to admit that the position is a critical one. The tongue is exceedingly necessary in our journey through this life; and he who has no tongue, or who cannot make use of it, is like a fox without a tail, a butterfly without wings, or a fish without fins."

Constance continued to pay every attention to Sister Anne and her child. Little Frederick already played and laughed in her arms; for he was at that age when all sorrow vanishes in the presence of a cake or a toy. Constance was never wearied of embracing the little child; and she called M. Ménard to notice how it smiled.

"I am not at all surprised," said the preceptor: "you give him sugar-plums. We captivate men with sugared words, and children with sugar separated from the words. Children in this respect are wiser than men."

"What beautiful features! what eyes!" exclaimed the Viscountess de Montreville. "I really do not know if it be an illusion, but it seems to me that this child has my husband's eyes."

"The eyes of my pupil!" ejaculated Ménard. "It is rather singular for the eyes of two years to resemble those of two or three-and twenty!"

"Poor little thing! I feel that I already love it," said the Viscountess de Montreville. "How happy should I be to possess a child like this."

"It will come in time, my lady," returned the old preceptor. "Sarah was ninety years old when she blessed Abraham with Isaac; and you are not quite ninety yet."

Sister Anne experienced the most lively pleasure when she saw Constance embrace her child. The Viscountess did not feel wearied of contemplating the features of one whom she already fancied to resemble her husband. M. Ménard gazed upon Sister Anne with commiseration; but he was very far from suspecting that the poor creature was the young girl whom he had seen with Frederick in the wood at Vizille. How could he have recognised her? He had only beheld her for one moment; and *then* her countenance was radiant with love and joy, and her features were not disfigured by tears and grief. The fatigues of wandering about, the sufferings she had endured, and the privation of necessaries to which she had been compelled to submit, had worked a sad change in the poor dumb orphan! Ménard had, moreover, never known that Frederick's mistress was a mute: he therefore did not for one instant suspect that she was now before him!

"Do you know how to write?" inquired Constance of Sister Anne; and having received a negative sign in reply, she added, "What a pity! I should like to know the name of this pretty child!"

The young mute gazed anxiously around her. She was in a room on the ground-floor, looking upon the garden; and starting from her seat, she made a sign to Constance to follow her. Arrived in the garden, she broke a sprig off a tree, stooped towards the earth, and wrote the name of her child upon the gravel-walk.

"*Frederick!*" ejaculated Constance, when she read the word which Sister Anne traced upon the ground. "What! your infant is called Frederick! Ah, now I feel that he will be still more dear to me than ever! Frederick is the name of my own husband! Is not this singular, M. Ménard?"

"I do not think it is so very extraordinary," returned the preceptor. "As there are great numbers of Martins, Peters, and Pauls in the world, there may also be a considerable quantity of Fredericks. I only know one name which is not common, and that was invented by Plautus: it is THESAUROCHRYSONICOCHRYSIDES; and if I had a son, I should bestow this name upon him, although the word be not very euphonious."

Constance again seized the little child in her arms, and pressed it to her heart. She called the boy "Frederick!" and in reply to the name, which he had often heard pronounced at the farm-house, he murmured the word "Mamma!" looking round at the same time to discover the worthy tenants of that hospitable abode.

"I am determined that my husband shall see this beautiful child!" cried Constance; and having reflected for some minutes, she approached Sister Anne, took her hand, observed her slightest signs, and endeavoured to comprehend them. "Whither were you going?" asked her ladyship. "She does not know! Poor woman, you have then neither parents nor friends? They are dead! And the father of this child—your husband—wherefore is he not with you? Ah! she weeps bitterly! He has abandoned you? Oh, how vile to abandon such a lovely child—so interesting a wife—and one who is so unfortunate! He must possess a very hard heart! But console yourself—dry your tears—I will not abandon you! I am determined to take care of you and your child. You shall not leave me—you shall live with me here. I will find you employment by working with your needle—I will teach you how to embroider—and I will rear your son as if he were mine own! My husband is kind, generous, and charitable; and I feel certain that he will not blame me for what I am doing. He will love the little child, and will not suffer you to roam about the world in want. Do you hear, poor woman? Do not weep—do not vex yourself in future for your child! Henceforth poverty shall cease to be your lot. Do you see, M. Ménard!—she throws herself at my feet, she kisses my hand, as if I were a goddess! But of what use would riches be to us, if we did not know how to do good with them?"

"My lady, to do good is one of the precepts of the gospel," returned the old tutor. "Unfortunately every one does not put those excellent maxims in practice as your ladyship does."

"It is time to think of preparing an apartment for that young woman," said Constance, again leading Sister Anne into the house. "After all the fatigue she has endured, she must be in need of rest. Where shall we lodge her? Oh! I recollect. We will give her the

rooms that project from the main building towards the summer-house in the garden. My husband intended to convert them into a study: but he can carry on his correspondence in his own room. M. Ménard, have the kindness to give the necessary orders. Let a bed and everything necessary for this evening be carried to the pavilion immediately; and to-morrow I will have those rooms properly fitted up. There she will be quiet and tranquil: and as early as she chooses in the morning she can walk in the garden with her son."

M. Ménard hastened to order the servants to prepare a lodging for Sister Anne in the pavilion of the garden. During the interval necessary for such arrangements, Constance remained with Sister Anne, who knew not in which way to testify her gratitude to her benefactress, and whose countenance already begun to wear an expression of joy. Constance found her every moment more and more interesting; for the poor girl had nothing about her which characterizes those beggars who seem to be desirous of obtaining by complaints and importunities the succour which they receive with indifference. Sister Anne was timid and bashful: she was astonished at the interest which she inspired, and in her eyes was read all the gratitude which she cherished in her bosom. There was moreover something about her person and her dress which, in spite of her penury, seemed to announce that she did not belong to the lowest class of society.

"The longer I look at you, the more I am astonished that any one could have abandoned you," said Constance. "Your countenance is delicate and amiable, and your eyes are full of softness and innocence. How much better will you look in other clothing! And you, dear little child, what care will I take of you!"

M. Ménard returned to inform her ladyship that everything was prepared in the pavilion for the reception of Sister Anne and her son. Constance took the poor creature's hand, conducted her to her lodging, examined the rooms to see that nothing was wanting, and left her to enjoy that repose of which she stood so deeply in need. Sister Anne pressed the hand of her benefactress to her heart; and Constance retired, saying to Ménard, "Now I shall not think the absence of Frederick so long. I find the best mode of abstracting us from the contemplation of our sufferings, is to comfort those of others."

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

When Sister Anne awoke in the morning, she was for a moment fearful that all she saw was an illusion. Having suffered everything that human nature can endure, short of death—having so long wandered about without an asylum for herself and her child—and having experienced all that can be felt by a mother who trembles each moment for the days of her infant,—now suddenly to find herself in a comfortable room, in an excellent bed, and with the assurance of bread in future for herself and son,—instead of the cold disdain of pity, to receive the greatest attention at the hands of a kind-hearted lady, who doubled the extent of the boon she conferred by the manner in which she tendered it,—Oh! all this was to pass from a state of unparalleled woe to a situation of such perfect bliss, that her heart was actually afraid to resign itself to a feeling of happiness in which it could scarcely yet believe! Fondly —Oh! how fondly did Sister Anne embrace her child; and then she rose and carried him out to enjoy the fresh air of the garden that surrounded the pavilion in which she was lodged. What a delicious place! What happiness to dwell in that paradise, and there to sustain the first steps of her son! Little Frederick could already run alone in the avenues of evergreens and rose-trees: when he fell down the thick sand broke his fall; and the child waited with a smile till his mother hastened to raise him and enable him to run again.

Constance also rose at an early hour; for all night long had she dreamt of the young mute and her little boy. The good she intended to do them did not permit her to enjoy the full delights of repose; for pleasure and virtue are frequently sleepless as well as misery and crime; and women invariably infuse into all they undertake more ardour and warmth than men are wont to display. If for a new gown or some frivolous object, they occasionally appear pre-occupied and out of humour,—what zeal and what soul do they manifest in the accomplishment of a good action! Yes—assuredly, Woman, thou art an angel!

The Viscountess de Montreville hastened into the garden to see her guest. She found Sister Anne and her son in an arbour at one end of the grounds: the child was playing at the feet of its mother; and when Sister Anne espied Constance, she hastened to meet her, seized one of her hands, and pressed it for a long time to her heart.

"Already risen?" cried Constance, as she embraced little Frederick. "And how have you passed the night? Well—very well! so much the better! After such fatigues as you must have undergone, rest was indeed necessary! This poor little child smiles upon me, as if he already recognised me. But I cannot suffer you to retain those clothes: come, come with me, and I will give you one of my own dresses. I am sure it will fit you, for we are nearly of the same height. I will not allow you to refuse me; so make haste—or I shall be angry!"

Constance led Sister Anne and carried the child to her own apartment, where she chose the most simple dress she could select for her *protegée*. In this new garb, the poor mute seemed to resume her former powers of fascination; and her timidity and embarrassment had nothing of that awkwardness which is displayed by so many in garments that are not made for them.

"She is really charming," cried Constance; and summoning her maid, she ordered her to dress Sister Anne's hair in the most simple but tasteful manner. "How well she looks thus!" continued the Viscountess de Montreville. "And in a few days, when entirely recovered from her fatigues, and when her cheeks have regained their colour, she will look better still!

Behold yourself in the glass, and do not be so bashful! Must we be ashamed of ourselves, because we are pretty?"

Constance led Sister Anne to a mirror. The mute looked at herself after a little hesitation; but in a short time she gathered courage and smiled. A sentiment of pleasure animated her features:—is there any woman in the world who knows not when she looks well? Sister Anne, having gazed upon her image for some time, hastened to throw herself at the feet of Viscountess de Montreville.

"I will not have you thus humble yourself," said Constance, raising her from the floor. "I am anxious that you should love me and be happy—and that is all! As for your son, I am also determined that he shall be well dressed; and I will send to Paris to procure everthing requsite for him."

M. Ménard, whom the recollection of the poor young woman had not prevented from sleeping as usual, descended at length to the breakfast-parlour—and remained stupified when he saw Sister Anne so different from what she was the night before.

"Well, Ménard, how do you find her?" asked Constance of the old preceptor.

"I really think she looks so well, my lady, that I scarcely recognise her," returned Ménard.

"Beneath the other garments, you only beheld her misfortunes, without noticing her features," observed the Viscountess de Montreville.

"It is very certain that distress makes one very ugly," said the tutor. "Besides, elegance adds to the beauty of everything. We do not dine so well when the cloth is dirty; and the poorest wine seems better in a glass than in a cup."

Throughout the day Constance was occupied with those arrangements which might conduce to the comfort of Sister Anne. The first floor in the pavilion was ornamented and furnished with everything calculated to make it agreeable; and by the orders of the Viscountess de Montreville, a beautiful cradle was procured and placed by the side of Sister Anne's bed. The windows were garnished with boxes filled with flowers; for Constance fancied it was only necessary to minister to the pleasures of Sister Anne's sight: books and music were useless to her; the poor young woman was incapable of diverting herself like the rest of her sex; and it was therefore necessary to surround her with all that was calculated to delight her. Sister Anne knew not how to return her thanks for such an accumulation of kindnessess. Constance amused herself in contemplating the astonishment which these arrangements caused the mute to experience. It was particularly in hearing the sound of the piano that Sister Anne was affected even to tears. Constance mingled her sweet voice with the notes of the instrument; and her *protegée*, who heard those dulcet tones for the first time, was in a rapture of delight. The powers of music were deeply felt by that impassioned mind which could not conceal its sensations. When Sister Anne saw the Viscountess de Montreville embroider and sew, she could not conceal her distress at being so entirely ignorant of all useful accomplishments. But Constance undertook to teach her; and the poor creature was so anxious to profit by the kindness of her benefactress, that in a short time she was enabled to imitate all that she saw done.

Thus a week passed away; and every moment seemed to increase the attachment which the Viscountess de Montreville entertained for Sister Anne and the amiable little child. The infant Frederick soon learned to love Constance, who overwhelmed him with kindness; and Sister Anne, ever attentive, grateful, and submissive to her ladyship, endeavoured to prove that she was not unmindful of the numerous benefits for which she was indebted to that lady. We said that a week passed away; and one morning Dubourg arrived at the house while Sister Anne and little Frederick were walking in the garden. It was already the middle of the quarter; and Constance, who was partially acquainted with Dubourg's habits from the few hints inadvertently thrown out by her husband, was astonished that he had not made his appearance sooner.

"You are welcome, M. Dubourg," said the Viscountess de Montreville. "You promised my husband to call and see me during his absence, and I already began to be angry with you for this delay in fulfilling your pledge."

"My lady," returned Dubourg, with a smile, "I am not one of those friends who pretend to perform wonders: but if I be able to divert you from the presence of *ennui* in the slightest degree, I am at your service till the next quarter—and indeed for the whole year, if my presence were really necessary."

"You will see something new here now," observed Constance: "there is a guest staying with me at present! During Frederick's absence, I have formed an acquaintance."

"Indeed!" cried Dubourg. "I am very certain that it cannot be one that will displease your ladyship's husband."

"I hope so, too," rejoined Constance.

"My dear Dubourg," said Ménard, "her ladyship does not tell you that she has afforded shelter to a poor woman and her son: the Viscountess will not boast of the good she has done."

"Silence, silence, M. Ménard!" cried Constance, with a smile. "Does not the poor creature merit all I have done for her? Could I better bestow my bounty elsewhere?"

"I admit that she has learnt to darn stockings admirably well," said Ménard; "and I hope soon to be able to teach her to read."

"You will see, M. Dubourg, how beautiful and interesting she is!" resumed the young lady. "And her son—a child of two years of age—is charming also!"

"Ah! she has a son?" said Dubourg.

"Yes,—and I am certain that you will find the little boy excessively like——But I am determined you shall discover the resemblance for yourself. I will hasten and fetch them."

"The amiable lady!" cried Dubourg, when Constance had left the room: "how happy Frederick ought to be with her! And yet he is already on his travels again!"

"Business before everything, my dear Dubourg," said Ménard. "A pinch of snuff, if you please. My pupil inherits, in right of his wife, numerous estates, which he is obliged to visit."

"And why does he not take his wife with him?" exclaimed Dubourg. "Do you not think she would have been glad to accompany her husband?"

"I do not say anything to the contrary," returned Ménard. "The snuff is good: you always buy it at the same place?"

"Provided that this journey does not embrace some new project," said Dubourg. "I know that Frederick would be disconsolate were he to cause his wife the slightest pain: but I am also aware that those very sentimental individuals take fire if they only hear a sigh."

"I tell you that my pupil is gone to visit his estates," said Ménard. "What the deuce makes you preach in this way now? You had better talk on matters that suit your taste. How do you get on with dominoes? Are you tolerably skilful at the game now?"

"Much more skilful than you, who can never guess where the double six is," answered Dubourg. "But let us hasten and rejoin the Viscountess. I am anxious to see the woman of whom she has taken such care."

"The female in question is one with whom it would be difficult not to agree," observed Ménard. "Now a quarrel can only result as the issue of a discussion; but, if there be no discussion, there is no quarrel. In this case there can be no discussion, because——"

But Dubourg did not listen to the logical inferences of Ménard. He was already in the garden, and perceived Constance at a distance, holding a child in her arms. Near her was a young woman, clad in a modest white gown, and with her hair neatly dressed. He advanced towards the group: that young woman perceived him. She ran—she flew up to him—she caught hold of his arms—she gazed upon his countenance with the most intense anxiety; and Dubourg remained stupified upon the spot—for he at once recognised Sister Anne but too well!

"Heavens! what is the matter?" cried Constance, drawing near to Dubourg, who could scarcely contain his surprise when he found the young mute in such a costume and in the society of the Viscountess. "What an effect your presence has produced on her! How she gazes upon you! She seems to question you with signs! Her very eyes appear to interrogate your's! Do you know this poor young woman?"

"I!" exclaimed Dubourg. "Oh!—no—I—that is—I have seen her—elsewhere. But she was then so different! This dress—that child ——Upon my word, I did not recognise her!"

Dubourg was troubled and embarrassed—he knew not what he said: and Sister Anne continued to hold him by the arm, while her eyes seemed to implore him to speak.

"Oh! you know her!" cried Constance, in astonishment. "But what does she require of you now? Cannot you guess her motive for wishing you to speak to her?"

"I beg your pardon, my lady!" exclaimed Dubourg. "I begin to understand her! I knew the lover of this poor girl; and she is anxious to ascertain what has become of him!"

"Answer her then quickly!" cried Constance. "See! her eyes are filled with tears!"

"Indeed," said Dubourg, "I have nothing agreeable to tell her. Her seducer has gone to a foreign country, and I fear that we shall never see him more!"—then addressing himself to Sister Anne, he added, "I know not what has become of him. Like you, I have not seen him lately; and therefore, my dear young woman, you must endeavour to forget him."

Sister Anne, who had paid the deepest attention to every word uttered by Dubourg, suffered her head to fall upon her bosom when he had finished speaking; and giving free vent to her tears, she hastened to a neighbouring arbour, where she abandoned herself to all the excess of her grief.

"Poor woman!" said Constance: "alas! she still loves him who has abandoned her! But what wretch could have taken advantage of her innocence and youth?"

"My lady," returned Dubourg, "he was—a—young artist, I believe, and was at that period travelling to perfect himself in his profession. It happened that he met with Sister Anne—for that is the name she bears; she is the daughter of poor, but honest people—to the best of my recollection. I do not however know her family: but, in a word, my friend saw her, and fell deeply in love with her. Those artists are blessed with a vivid imagination; and that child is probably the result of their amour. This is all I know; for I never met that poor young woman but once—and that was when I was walking with my friend!"

"He is very culpable in my eyes," said Constance. "But you gentlemen treat those matters with great levity. To ruin a female—to leave her to despair and sorrow,—this is only one of your wild freaks, of which indeed you are often proud!"

"Ah! my lady, such, I can boldly affirm, has never been an episode in my biography!" exclaimed Dubourg.

"I speak of men generally," continued the Viscountess de Montreville: "but I am very certain that my dear Frederick can safely pronounce himself to be as immaculate as you, M. Dubourg, upon this score. Frederick is too feeling and too affectionate to attempt to abuse a young heart. See what terrible results attend upon such crimes! This poor girl, perceiving that she could no longer conceal her shame, probably abandoned the peaceful home of her parents, and fled the place of her birth! Without resources—deprived of that organ which is so necessary in this world—and cast upon the cold charity of men, she has wandered about at hazard in town and country, a prey to all the horrors of want. The unfortunate being must have suffered more than we can imagine! Oh! had you seen her when she was first received into this house, you would have wept, M. Dubourg—I feel convinced! But henceforth she shall find in me a friend who will not abandon her; and if I cannot entirely restore her to happiness, I

will at least place her beyond the reach of want and misery!"

Dubourg made no reply: the presence of Sister Anne had provided him with ample food for reflection.

"Your arrival has renewed her grief," continued Constance, "by recalling her seducer to her mind. Retire from the garden for a short time; and I will endeavour to comfort her—although I feel well persuaded that for such grief there is no consolation! If Frederick were to abandon me, do you suppose I could ever taste another moment of happiness? But she is blessed with a child; and the caresses of her infant can assuage her sorrows!"

Constance hastened to raise little Frederick in her arms, and carry him to the knees of his mother. During that time, Dubourg returned into the house with a hurried step, and sought for the old tutor, who did not know what to understand by the horror-stricken countenance of his friend.

"All is lost, M. Ménard!" cried Dubourg, stepping up to the worthy tutor, and standing bolt upright before him.

"What is lost?" exclaimed Ménard. "Is it the carriage of King Stanislas once more? or the snuff-box of the King of Prussia? You know that I am not to be deceived any longer with these stories."

"For heaven's sake leave that nonsense alone," said Dubourg. "The event to which I allude is a very serious one——"

"Another fifteen thousand francs, perhaps!" cried Ménard.

"Silence! do you not see that I am serious? At this moment the repose and happiness of Frederick and his wife are in the greatest jeopardy!" exclaimed Dubourg.

"I'll be bound it's all false!" said Ménard. "He has come to tell me another of his tales."

"Will you listen to me, M. Ménard?" demanded Dubourg. "How the deuce is it that a man of your age has not foreseen the dangers of such an event?"

"What is this allusion to my age, M. Dubourg?" cried the old tutor. "I beg you will explain yourself."

"Why do you suffer the Viscountess de Montreville to receive and lodge in her house——" began Dubourg.

"Who?" interrupted Ménard, with alarm now pictured on his countenance.

"Who? Why, the girl that turned Frederick's head at Vizille—for whom he committed a thousand follies—and with whom he lived upwards of a month in a miserable wood! That person whom he adored—whom he probably loves still, for the heart of man is undefinable—that Sister Anne—that dumb girl of the wood, is she whom her ladyship at this moment harbours in the pavilion!"

"What do say, Dubourg? It is impossible!" cried Ménard.

"And you did not recognise her?" demanded Dubourg.

"No," answered the tutor. "How could I be expected to recognise a female whom I only perceived for one moment, and who did not even know me again? I am not in the habit of staring at every young girl like you: and could I suspect, could I guess that she was dumb? Did any one tell me of her misfortune? Was not every particular connected with her, religiously concealed from me? Oh, you young men of the present age are extraordinary beings! Do you suppose that I should ever have been acquainted with Latin if I had not been taught it?"

"At all events you are now aware of everything," said Dubourg.

"Yes—but I was well enough flogged before I could comprehend three words of the classics," continued Ménard. "Oh! how I was caned for Xenophon and pulled by the ears for Phædrus!"

"In the name of heaven, leave your Xenophon and Phædrus to themselves for a moment!" cried Dubourg. "It is of Sister Anne that I am speaking—of the young woman who is at this instant in Frederick's house!"

"Or rather in the garden," said Ménard.

"When Frederick returns, he will see her," resumed Dubourg impatiently; "and her tears—her emotions—her caresses will discover all. Think of what Constance will suffer, when she sees her husband, whom she adores and whom she imagines to be the very pattern of fidelity, flying into the arms of a mistress and embracing his child? And that child——"

"Yes, yes—I am picturing the whole scene to my imagination," interrupted Ménard.

"What is to be done?" demanded Dubourg.

"I really do not know," returned Ménard.

"We cannot suffer Sister Anne to continue under the same roof with Frederick."

"It is certainly a most embarrassing position: but she was so very unhappy! And, then, you must recollect that Leonidas, although in a considerable difficulty at Thermopylæ, managed to ward off the danger for a season!"

"You cannot think that I would abandon the poor young woman to her fate?" cried Dubourg. "I have only sixteen hundred francs a year: but I would willingly make over my whole income to Sister Anne, so that her presence should no longer menace the repose of Frederick and his wife. Oh! I would even work, if necessary: or I should pass all my quarters at Frederick's house. Happen what may, this poor creature shall never want bread for herself and child."

"You speak like a man, my dear Dubourg," said Ménard; "and if I possessed anything, I would willingly bestow it upon Sister Anne. But I have nothing save my old classics; and they are not the slightest use to her, because she does not know how to read."

"How can we prevail upon Sister Anne to leave the house?" asked Dubourg.

"The task would be most difficult," rejoined Ménard. "The Viscountess de Montreville already loves her to excess, and is particularly attached to the child, between whom and my pupil she perceives a great resemblance. And now, by the bye, I can account for that likeness, which I did not however notice myself."

"I am at a loss what scheme to adopt!"

PERE LA CHAISE.

No. 39.—The Empress Eugenie.

cried Dubourg. "When does Frederick return?"

"In about a week," resumed Ménard. "We have still plenty of time before us."

"Time, Ménard! That week will pass very rapidly away; and if he should return and find Sister Anne here——"

"And yet I think we might advise the young woman not to speak to him," observed Ménard.

"Indeed, I know very well that she will not *speak*," cried Dubourg: "but her signs, and the expression of her countenance will betray the secret far too well!"

"Well, upon my word," said Ménard, "I very often cannot understand her signs, do all I will!"

Dubourg racked his imagination in vain to discover some plan by which he might avert the threatened evil, and remove Sister Anne and her son from the house. M. Ménard remained with his eyes fixed upon his snuff-box, appearing to ponder also upon the best means to be adopted in the dilemma, but in reality thinking of a game-pie which, having arrived that morning from Paris, was to be served up amongst other dainties at dinner-time. Constance now joined the gentlemen, accompanied by Sister Anne, and carrying the child in her arms. The countenance of the poor mute announced the extent of her grief: but she was evidently more resigned and calm than before. As soon as she saw Dubourg, she smiled sorrowfully; and taking her child from Constance, presented it to him. Dubourg gazed upon it with anxiety: for he was astounded at the striking resemblance it already bore to its father.

"Is not the dear child charming?" asked Constance.

"Beautiful!" returned Dubourg, embracing the little innocent with unaffected kindness.

"Does he resemble his father?" inquired the Viscountess de Montreville.

"Very much," answered Dubourg.

"And do you not think he is very much like Frederick?"

"Oh! not in the least, my lady!" he exclaimed.

"Such, however, was my impression!" observed Constance. "His name is also Frederick: and that very circumstance will endear him to me the more."

Thus speaking, Constance took the child in her arms: Sister Anne gazed upon her with the greatest attention—and Dubourg averted his head to conceal the emotions which he experienced. During the remainder of that day, Dubourg wearied himself with inventing schemes to remove Sister Anne from the house: but every project seemed to him to be impracticable. How could he take the young woman away from an abode where all kindnesses were lavished upon her, and where her son was the object of universal attention? Sister Anne, so far from consenting to such a project, would only see in it the most shameful ingratitude; and her tender heart would be incapable of cherishing the idea. To inform her that the husband of Constance was her seducer, would not be the best nor the safest method of obtaining his wishes; for the desire of meeting Frederick once again would conquer every other feeling in the bosom of the poor orphan. She considered herself united to her lover by the mutual vows they had pledged to each other:—could she be made to understand that another woman enjoyed those rights, which, if not more just, were at least more sacred than her own? Dubourg dared not risk such an experiment, and vainly did he rack his brain to invent another.

"Well," said he to Ménard, "have you discovered any expedient to induce Sister Anne to leave the house?"

"I really can think of nothing," answered Ménard, when he had taken a pinch of snuff and reflected very seriously for about five minutes.

In a conversation with the Viscountess de Montreville, Dubourg endeavoured to persuade her to send Sister Anne and the child to one of Frederick's estates at a considerable distance from Paris; but Constance rejected the idea at once.

"Why," said she, "should I deprive myself of the society of the young woman and of her son whom I already love so tenderly? Were she away from me, would strangers manifest the same kindness towards her? No—I will never separate from her: I will do all that lies in my power to soothe her sorrows—and every day I feel that I become more attached to her. Oh! if you only knew how grateful she is for all I do for her! I have read the secrets of her soul—I have not placed my affections upon an unworthy friend—and I feel convinced Frederick will not blame me."

"Well," said Dubourg to himself, "I have done all I can in this business; and even if I were to reflect till I had a headache, upon the best method of removing Sister Anne, I do not think I should succeed. But let us wait patiently, and watch the progress of events. All that I can do, will be to forewarn Frederick when he returns."

In the evening, the Viscountess de Montreville said to Dubourg, "I am desirous that you should witness the pleasing emotions which music seems to produce in the mind of my *protegée*. Whenever I sing, or play upon the piano, it would almost appear that she is about to speak."

Constance took Sister Anne by the hand, and led her to a chair near the piano. The young mute was more melancholy than she had lately been: the presence of Dubourg had awakened all her sorrows; she, however, smiled upon her benefactress, and made every effort to appear gay. The Viscountess de Montreville played several airs upon the piano, and suddenly exclaimed, "But I have not yet sung that pretty song which my husband loves so much, and which he always made me sing before our marriage?"

Constance turned towards the piano-forte once more, and prepared to sing. Dubourg paid but little attention to the music—he was entirely occupied with the singular events which had lately occurred, and which threatened to destroy the felicity of his friend; M. Ménard was seated in a corner of the room,

where he did all he could to understand the measure; and little Frederick was playing at the feet of his mother. Scarcely had Constance began the first few words of the song, when Sister Anne experienced an emotion which became more violent every instant. She leant towards the Viscountess de Montreville—listened—breathed with difficulty—and all her faculties, her entire frame, and her whole soul appeared absorbed and influenced by some powerful reminiscence which the music had awakened. Constance had not accomplished the first couplet, ere a dreadful paleness spread itself over the countenance of the young girl; and with a low moan she fell senseless upon the floor. Entirely occupied by the music-book before her, Constance had not at first remarked the trouble which agitated Sister Anne; but the moment she heard the moan, she stopped and flew towards her, exclaiming, "O heavens! what ails her? She has fainted!"

Dubourg hastened to support the unfortunate young woman; and Ménard ran to procure salts and summon the domestic to her assistance.

"What can have thus agitated her?" cried Constance. "She was listening to me with pleasure—and suddenly she swooned away!"

"My lady," said Dubourg, who was anxious to profit by this opportunity, "do you not observe that there are times when the poor creature does not appear to possess the faculties of reason?"

"No—I have not noticed it," replied Constance. "Ever since she has been in this house, she has appeared quite rational and collected. Her melancholy is natural, and does not cause me any apprehension. Poor young woman! she does not open her eyes!"

"It will be nothing," said Dubourg. "The emotion she experienced when she saw me this morning was doubtless the principal cause of her illness."

"I am of the same opinion," rejoined Constance.

Ménard returned, bearing a dozen bottles of various essences and salts: but for a long time every attention that was paid to Sister Anne appeared to be totally ineffectual—and Constance began to despair of reviving her young *protegée*. At length a deep sigh issued from the lips of the poor girl; and in a few moments she opened her eyes. Her first glance was towards her son,—who, too young to comprehend the danger that had overtaken his mother, had not desisted from the infantine sports in which he vas engaged. Sister Anne took him in her ·ms—embraced him tenderly—and cast a look on those around her to thank them for their lness and their care.

"You must repose yourself a little," said the «untess de Montreville to Sister Anne. yoday has revived all your sorrows; and sleeuld now endeavour to forget them in

Bt

mutestead of following Constance, the piano,her hand, and led her back to the her to ing a sign at the same moment for "No–herself before the instrument.

·orrow," said Constance: "music produces too serious an effect upon you this evening. I will play and sing to you again to-morrow."

The poor mute joined her hands together and her eyes expressed her wishes so feelingly, that Constance could not resist the request thus tacitly but forcefully solicited. She accordingly sat down at the piano once more; and Ménard said to himself, "this young woman is passionately fond of music: it is a great pity that she has not been taught to play upon the hurdy-gurdy."

Constance began a song; but Sister Anne stopped and shook her head violently, as much as to say, "It is not the one I wish to hear!" The Viscountess de Montreville commenced another; and the mute was again dissatisfied with it. At length Constance called to mind the favourite air she was singing when she was interrupted in the manner before described; and she began it again. The expression of Sister Anne's countenance, and the deep, deep attention she paid to the song, proved that she was this time satisfied with the selection.

"How this air affects her!" said Constance. "It is the one that Frederick loved so well!"

Constance had scarcely made this observation, when the young mute seized her hands, pressed them vehemently, and made a sign to intimate an affirmative. But the Viscountess de Montreville did not comprehend her, and glanced inquiringly towards Dubourg.

"I assure your ladyship," said he, "that there are moments when this poor creature knows not what she is doing. She fancies she hears or sees her lover everywhere: her misfortunes have distracted her imagination."

Sister Anne was now more calm; and the tears forced a passage from her eyes. She wept—and this facility of giving vent to her grief consoled her. Constance gazed upon her attentively, and murmured from time to time, "Poor girl! how guilty is the wretch who has abandoned you!"

For a few moments all those who surrounded Sister Anne, maintained a deep silence; and Constance in order to solace the afflicted creature, hastened to take little Frederick in her arms and carry him to her. Sister Anne glanced towards her benefactress in a manner expressive of her sincere gratitude; and having covered her child with kisses, rose and prepared to return to her own room in the pavilion. Constance was however determined to conduct her thither; and having accompanied her into the garden, she left her, saying, "Endeavour to support your courage: your grief will soon subside—at least we must hope so! Your seducer will probably return to those sentiments of honour which ought to animate the man you love; for he cannot have entirely forgotten you! Perhaps M. Dubourg is not well informed? Dry your tears—I am sure your lover will return; and were he once to see you, he would never leave you more, if you were to place that dear child in his arms!"

These soothing words penetrated like balm to the wounded soul of Sister Anne. She resigned herself to the sweet hopes which Constance had encouraged in her bosom, and ex-

pressed her gratitude to her benefactress with smiles. Constance returned slowly to her own room: the sorrows of one whom she had saved from the most deplorable misery, instilled a deep grief into her heart—and Frederick was not there to console her! Never had she yet been so long separated from him, since the happy day of their union; and that absence did not help to diminish her melancholy.

"This has been a very stormy day," said Ménard to Dubourg, ere those gentlemen retired to rest.

"And I am afraid we must anticipate more terrible storms still," returned Dubourg. "If that young woman fainted because she heard an air which Frederick has probably sung to her, what will become of her when she sees her lover—and particularly when she understands that he is the husband of another! Ah! M. Ménard, this idea occupies my mind incessantly."

"I can very well believe it," exclaimed the old tutor: "for it has nearly deprived me of all appetite."

"Let us endeavour to avert the blow!" said Dubourg.

"Yes—let us avert it," repeated Ménard. "I should like nothing better."

"Remember that the tranquillity and happiness of the young couple depends upon this event," continued Dubourg; "and that the honour of your pupil is not only compromised, but that his disgrace will redound upon you!"

"Nay—excuse me!" cried Ménard: "I will plead guilty to a fault in syntax or in Latin verses, if he committed one: but I never advised him to ruin young women. This is rather the result of your bad advice and vicious example."

"M. Ménard!"

"M. Dubourg!"

"Let us retire to our chambers," said Dubourg.

"It is the best thing we can do," answered the tutor.

* * * * * *
* * * * *

Ten days had already elapsed since the arrival of Dubourg; and incessantly did he rack his imagination to discover some plan to counteract the effect calculated to be produced upon the mute by the return of Frederick. He observed that the attachment of Constance towards her young *protegée* augmented each day; and the gratitude of Sister Anne increased in proportion. To separate them appeared more difficult than ever. Constance frequently declared that she could not exist without the mute and her son; and Sister Anne seemed to forget all her sorrows in the society of the Viscountess de Montreville.

Frederick was now anxiously expected every day; and his prolonged absence was the subject of astonishment on the part of Constance. She lost much of her natural gaiety: tears often moistened her eyelashes; and her only consolation was the artless attempt of Sister Anne to comfort her. The poor orphan endeavoured to persuade her by signs that her husband would soon return again; and less frequently did the Viscountess de Montreville murmur the words, "Perhaps he no longer loves me!" Sister Anne would then take Constance by the hand, lead her to a mirror, and appear to say to her, "Look at yourself in the glass: can he do otherwise than love you?"

"Alas!" returned Constance; "you were forgotten by *your* lover—and you are as beautiful as I."

The Count de Montreville, who had promised to pass a few days with his daughter-in-law, was detained at home in Paris by the gout. Dubourg was not sorry for this circumstance: he did not wish his lordship to be a spectator of Frederick's interview with Sister Anne—and he was not aware that the Count was already acquainted with her.

At length Constance received a letter from her husband, in which she was informed that unforeseen delays had occurred in his arrangements with his several intendants and stewards—but that he would endeavour to terminate his business as speedily as possible. Frederick's letter was tender and affectionate: and Constance felt assured she was as dear to him as ever. She was not however pleased with this long absence: nor was she entirely satisfied with the excuses that were tendered as a reason for it. Frederick was not there—and she could weep without restraint: were he present she would have been compelled to hide her tears. It was invariably to Sister Anne that she poured forth her grief; and from her it was that she received mute consolation.

Dubourg only perceived in this delay a procrastination of a fatal moment which must arrive; and he said to Ménard, "Let us endeavour to forewarn Frederick of his danger."

"Yes—let us forewarn him," said Ménard: "that is also my advice."

"For upwards of ten days I have been thinking of something and can discover nothing," observed Dubourg.

"Well," returned the old tutor, "I am more fortunate than you; for it was only yesterday that I discovered something important."

"Oh! speak—speak!" cried Dubourg: "what was it?"

"My receipt for making milk punch," answered Ménard, "which I was afraid I had lost."

"Pshaw!" ejaculated Dubourg, turning upon his heel.

But let us now return to Frederick. When he left his wife, he repaired straight to the farm-house to see Sister Anne and her child, whom he longed to embrace. But when he arrived at the dwelling in which his father had le her, he learnt that the poor dumb mother a her son had long before set out for P Frederick knew not what course to pu as and that which reduced him to despa a that a few days after his arrival at the nce messenger from his father made his app rom, with money and clothes, according to This for the use of Sister Anne and her at his circumstance convinced Frederick of her father did not know what had be t Sister whom he styled his saviour, an ring his Anne had not succeeded in d erick was lordship's mansion in Paris. ication of almost heartbroken at this

evil tidings; and the inmates of the farm-house shared all his grief. They repented of having permitted Sister Anne to depart alone: but how could they have opposed her design? What had become of her? what could she have done in Paris, without friends or protectors? Had they known that the poor orphan had been shamefully plundered of all she possessed, they would have been more grieved still!

Frederick stayed some days at the farm, and then returned to Paris. But all along the road on his way back to that city, he endeavoured to obtain some tidings of the houseless wanderer whom he sought. On his arrival in Paris, he did not go at once to his own house; he was desirous that his return should be a secret, in order that his wife might not hear of it; and he required time to endeavour to trace the victim of his fatal passion and her son. For upwards of a week he walked about that immense city, seeking the most deserted as well as the most populous quarters—visiting the attics of the poor—and everywhere using the utmost endeavours to discover Sister Anne. But all his searches were vain: he could not succeed in hearing one word concerning her. With a heart almost broken by remorse and sorrow, he at length resolved upon returning to Constance; though very far was he from thinking that in his own house was he destined to find the unfortunate girl and the child whom he had so vainly sought elsewhere!

Every day did Dubourg mount guard in one of the roads communicating with the country residence near Montmorenci; and Ménard did the same in another, so as to apprise Frederick of the danger which awaited him. As there were only these two roads leading to the dwelling, Dubourg imagined that it was impossible to miss the young Viscount. But one morning, M. Ménard, who had carried a meat-pie with him, did not observe, as he discussed it, that he whom he was placed there to watch, passed him by. Such, however, was the fact; and Frederick hastened towards the house. Constance beheld him from the window: she darted down stairs—she met him on the threshold of the portico—uttered an exclamation of delight—and flew into his arms. All the pangs occasioned by absence were forgotten on the bosom of her husband. Frederick responded with tenderness to these marks of attachment: and for a moment he was also supremely happy.

When the first transports of bliss were over, Constance addressed him on the subject of her new acquaintance.

"During your absence," said she, "I have received an unfortunate creature into the house; and I hope that you will not disapprove of my conduct, when you see the object of my charity."

"Everything that you do, Constance," returned Frederick, "is certain to please me. Your heart could not lead you astray; and I am certain, before I see your *protegée*, that your kindness is well placed."

"Oh! it is a young woman—so interesting—and so beautiful," exclaimed Constance,—"the victim of an illicit love! But we must not be severe upon the weaknesses of others! Her seducer has abandoned her and her child, who is as interesting as herself, and of whom I am already excessively fond! His name is also Frederick. But—what is the matter with you, my dear husband? You turn pale—you tremble——"

"Fatigue, perhaps—the haste with which I returned to you," stammered Frederick, as he sat down, for he was not able to sustain himself upon his legs: the communications made to him by Constance had awakened in his bosom those emotions of which he was not the master.

"And that child—that woman?" said he, glancing around him with a shudder, and speaking in a trembling tone of voice.

"She lodges in the pavilion," answered Constance. "But I perceive her in the garden at this moment. Come—come quick, my dear friend," cried the young lady, hastening from the apartment, and running towards Sister Anne. "My husband has returned, and I am so happy! Nothing now is wanting to complete my joy!"

Constance took the dumb girl by the hand, and conducted her to the room in which her husband was seated. But the moment she perceived Frederick, Sister Anne uttered a loud scream — ran — flew to his arms — and fainted upon his breast!

Frederick sustained the inanimate head of the unfortunate young woman with one hand, and with the other he shaded his eyes as if he dared not venture to glance around him! His child was at his feet, holding the hand of its mother; and Constance, pale and trembling, stood before them, a mute spectatress of the whole scene! In one moment a thousand different sensations agitated the mind of Frederick's wife. She changed colour—her eyes expressed astonishment mingled with uneasiness; she trembled, and seemed desirous of repulsing the thought which had seized upon her soul. But her looks were by turns fixed upon Sister Anne and on her husband—and she endeavoured to gather the truth from the countenance of the latter. Her first impulse was to rush forward and withdraw Sister Anne violently from the arms of Frederick—but she did not.

"What ails her? what means the emotions your presence has occasioned?" demanded Constance, in a trembling tone, as she glanced upon her husband. "Answer me, Frederick! Do you know that young woman?"

Frederick had not the courage either to reply to his wife, or to look towards her: but he perceived his son, and taking the innocent being in his arms, covered it with kisses. At that moment a terrible weight fell upon the heart of Constance: all the truth stood denuded of mystery before her! Dubourg, followed by Ménard, made his appearance at this crisis; and as soon as he noticed Frederick, he divined everything that had occurred. Hastening to render assistance to the unfortunate cause of this untoward scene, he exclaimed, "She has fainted once more! Another delusion in reference to her lover, I'll be bound! Oh! I was well aware that there were moments when she knew not what she did!"

Constance made no answer. She abandoned Sister Anne to the care of Dubourg and Ménard—and approaching her husband, who still held the child in his arms, watched his countenance with painful anxiety.

"He is beautiful—very beautiful—is he not?" said she, in a voice rendered almost inaudible by deep emotions.

Frederick remained silent. Constance snatched the child rudely from his arms: but suddenly repenting of this blind obedience to the impulse of the moment, she covered the innocent little being with kisses, exclaiming at the time, "Poor child! you at least are not guilty!"

Dubourg and Ménard carried Sister Anne to the pavilion; and Frederick and Constance remained alone with the child. Frederick kept his eyes cast towards the ground, and appeared unable to encounter those of Constance, who was seated at a little distance from him with the boy upon her knees. She endeavoured to restrain her tears, but could not: neither could she speak! For some moments a painful silence prevailed. At length Frederick raised his eyes, and perceiving his wife caressing Sister Anne's child, he was on the point of rising and throwing himself at the feet of Constance and confessing everything—when suddenly turning round, he saw Dubourg hastening towards him.

"It will be nothing—at least I hope so," said he, looking significantly at Frederick, and making him a sign not to betray himself. "This poor dumb creature is troubled with occasional fits of delirium, and under their influence she fancies every one she sees to be her lover! I have already several times advised her ladyship not to keep her here!"

"On my part," stammered Frederick, "I really cannot understand the meaning of this singular scene! But I was so alarmed—so affected by the aspect of the poor girl—that I myself hardly knew what I was doing!"

Constance said nothing: she contented herself with regarding her husband and Dubourg.

"I will carry her son back to her," said Dubourg, advancing to receive the innocent child from the hand of the Viscountess Montreville.

"Leave him," said Constance: "Frederick will take upon himself that task!"

The Viscount was again disheartened; he could not support the glances of Constance.

"Courage, courage!" vainly whispered Dubourg. "Remember that the happiness of your wife is now involved, and that we *must* deceive her!"

At this moment, M. Ménard made his appearance with a most anxious countenance, exclaiming, "She has recovered her senses: but she will not be prevailed upon to stay in her room. She is a very demoness, and is determined to come hither! She is now running wildly about the garden——"

"Why did you leave her?" demanded Dubourg: and with these words, he rushed from the room.

"What is the matter with her?" asked Constance: "is she worse?"

"No, my lady," returned Ménard, who knew not what to say or what to do; "but I am very much afraid—that her head—when women are—in love—I really don't know——"

"I will attend to her immediately," said Constance; "and perhaps the sight of her son may operate favourably upon her mind. Will you not accompany me, Frederick? will you not mingle your attentions with mine, to aid that poor unfortunate young woman."

Frederick hesitated: he knew not what to do. He longed to see Sister Anne once more—her terrible situation had touched him to the soul—but were he to find himself again in her presence, he was fearful of betraying himself. At that moment loud cries were heard. Sister Anne was running across the garden, with the servants and Dubourg in pursuit of her. The domestics, perceiving her agitation, and observing her in the garden, wandering about with her long dishevelled hair over her shoulders, were persuaded that she had lost her senses; and Dubourg encouraged them in this belief, because he did not choose them to suspect the real truth. But Sister Anne had perceived Frederick through the windows of the room on the ground-floor. Light as the fawn, she ran towards the house—rushed into the apartment where her lover was seated—threw herself into his arms—repulsed Constance, who was near her—and, regarding him with an anxious expression of countenance, seemed to say, "It is I—and I only, who have a right to occupy this place upon your bosom!"

All the servants stood at the door of the room, contemplating this singular picture. Constance experienced a most agonizing emotion when she saw the dumb girl in the arms of her husband: she however preserved a sufficiency of her presence of mind to approach her servants, and addressing them in a trembling voice, said, "Retire. This poor creature is at times unconscious what she does; but we shall endeavour to compose her."

The servants withdrew; and Ménard hastened to seek Dubourg, to whom he invariably had recourse in the moment of difficulty or embarrassment. Sister Anne remained with her son in her arms, between Frederick and Constance. The poor mute seemed desirous of staying close by Frederick, who had not the courage to repulse her. She smiled upon him, took his hand, pressed it to her heart, and presented his son to him! But at the same time her anxious glances were cast towards the Viscountess de Montreville, who, seated at a little distance, concealed her face in her hands, unable to support the view of that picture—while the tears, which had before suffocated her, at length forced a passage. She sobbed in the most heart-wrung anguish—and Sister Anne shuddered from head to foot! Frederick was unable to bear the aspect of his wife's affliction. He could not contain himself, but hastened to throw himself at the feet of Constance. She however repulsed him gently, exclaiming, "Go—go! That unfortunate woman has greater claims upon you than I! *Her* child is *your's*. Console her for what she has suffered since you abandoned her! I can now read the truth of all that was hitherto unaccountable!—No—she has not lost the use of her reason: she has found her seducer—the father of her child!"

Frederick was now a prey to the most poignant grief! Pale, trembling, he remained at the feet of Constance; and Sister Anne, with her eyes fixed upon him, seemed to wait for him to speak to decide between herself and her rival. But Frederick seized the hand of Constance, and covered it with kisses and tears. At the sight of this instance of affection, Sister Anne uttered a loud groan, and fell on the carpet in a state of unconsciousness. Constance hastened to render her every assistance in her power.

"Retire for a while," said she to her husband; "your presence has already made her experience emotions too strong for her to support. You may safely confide her to me: I shall still be the same towards her as I always was!"

Frederick made no answer: but rushing like a madman from the room, he encountered Ménard and Dubourg in the garden.

"The attempt at deception is useless," said he: "Constance has guessed everything! She now knows all!"

"Since she knows all," observed Ménard, "it would be useless to conceal the truth from her."

In the mean time, Constance bestowed all possible care and attention upon Sister Anne; and at length the poor mute opened her eyes. When she perceived Frederick's wife, her first impulse was to push her aside, and gaze around her to see if her lover were still near. Constance presented her child to the unfortunate mother; and the little innocent extended its arms to embrace the parent who cherished it so tenderly. Sister Anne was affected by the conduct of the Viscountess: she gazed upon her with less jealousy than before—but her whole frame trembled—her teeth chattered with violence—her eyes closed—and a dreadful paleness overspread her countenance. Constance immediately ordered the servants to transport her to the pavilion. She was placed in her bed: a burning fever was consuming her—and a real delirium now seized upon her brain. She cast vague and wild glances around—did not recognise any one—and even repulsed her son!

"Poor creature!—Oh I will never abandon you!" exclaimed Constance: and she passed the entire day by the side of Sister Anne's bed.

It was only towards the evening, that, perceiving her patient to be somewhat more tranquil, she could be prevailed upon to leave her; and then only would she consent to withdraw from the pavilion, when the most attentive of the female servants was left with the invalid. Constance returned to the apartment where Frederick anxiously awaited her. But how different was this day, which united the young couple once more, from those which they had passed previous to the Viscount's departure. Constance maintained a profound silence: a thousand varied emotions agitated her bosom—her heart palpitated violently,—and she suffered the more, because she was compelled to suppress all she felt, and to appear calm in the presence of her husband. Frederick, like a criminal awaiting the judgment about to be pronounced upon him, was motionless before his wife, whose kindness to Sister Anne affected him more deeply than all the rest. At length he approached her; but not daring to speak, cast himself at her feet.

"What are you doing?" asked Constance: "why do you assume so humiliating an attitude?" she continued, with kindness in her accent. "You are not culpable towards me! Oh! it is at the feet of her whom you deceived and abandoned that you ought to throw yourself! I have no right to complain: your fault is unhappily of too frequent occurrence amongst men! You were acquainted with this unfortunate woman before your marriage—and she became a mother. In the world, your conduct would appear very natural; and, so far from being blamed, you would find many to approve of your conduct, and to support your notion that you could not marry a woman who had been your mistress. At the same time, I must confess that I imagined you were not like those young men who laugh at the tears which are shed for their faults. What terrible consequences have resulted from your guilt! Oh! if you only knew what that poor creature must have suffered! A prey to all the most hideous tortures of misery and want, she would have died at the foot of a tree when I repaired to her assistance; and your son would have perished also! Ah! Frederick—do you feel all the remorse to which you would have been the victim? You weep! My dear, dear Frederick, let those tears flow freely: I would rather lose your heart altogether, than fancy it could be coldly callous and indifferent!"

The Viscountess paused for a few moments, and then resumed as follows:—

"Listen to me! You have found the mother of your child, and you must not abandon her! If you leave her future lot to me, I will not treat her harshly. I will purchase a beautiful house for her in a gay and smiling part of the country, and she shall want for nothing. Her child is a beautiful boy—and I should wish to supply the place of a mother to him: but we cannot separate a parent from her offspring. We will take measures to ensure him a good education; and when he is grown up, you will then settle him advantageously in life. Believe me that I shall never reproach you for doing too much for him. This is what I would propose on behalf of her whom you once loved! But—it may be—that this plan does not meet your views! Probably the presence of this unfortunate girl has revived your former affection—perhaps you adore her still! Ah! Frederick! I implore you, speak with sincerity! Let me penetrate into the depths of your soul: to render you happy, there is no sacrifice I would not make for you! Yes—my dear husband—I could support everything, save the sight of your regret for the love of another! If you are still fond of her—if she be still dear to you—I will depart—I will hasten to bury myself in one of our distant estates: you shall never see me again—and you will be able to enjoy the presence of your child and of its mother!"

Constance could no longer restrain the tears which suffocated her She had made a despe-

rate effort to preserve her calmness; but all her courage abandoned her, when she proposed to separate herself from Frederick for ever!

"I leave you!" cried the young man, catching her frantically to his bosom. "Oh! Constance—could you imagine that I have for one moment ceased to love you? No—I swear that you alone possess my heart! I feel all my guilt towards Sister Anne and am determined to repair its effects to the utmost of my power. When I saw her again, could I prevent myself from experiencing the most lively emotions? And her child—Oh! I love him, I frankly admit—and am resolved to ensure his happiness. I approve of all your plans—all your projects; for I well know the excellence of your heart, and the nobility of your nature! Oh, how few wives would conduct themselves thus! Act as you choose—let Sister Anne depart—to-morrow morning even——"

"To-morrow!" interrupted the Viscountess de Montreville. "Oh! no—not to-morrow! The poor creature is unhappy and ill; she must not leave this place until quite well! As long as she remains here, you must avoid her: for your presence affects her deeply. You will not see her more: that is the only sacrifice I require of you!"

"Oh! I will do all you wish!" cried Frederick enthusiastically.

"When she is entirely recovered, I will myself accompany her to her new abode," resumed Constance; "and I will not leave her until I have seen that she wants for nothing."

Frederick pressed his wife to his heart: for the kindness of her disposition endeared her to him more than ever. A woman should never employ any other weapons: reproaches and complaints only widen the distance between herself and her husband; but indulgence and amiability will effectually bring back the heart she feared to lose! In the arms of her husband, Constance was again happy. He vowed that he loved *her* alone, and she believed his assertions. Could she exist without the possession of his attachment?

On the following morning, she repaired at a very early hour to the pavilion in the garden; and Frederick hastened to make his friend acquainted with the noble conduct of his wife.

"She resembles no other woman existing," said Dubourg. "Take care of her—you cannot love her too much: it is a priceless treasure which you possess!"

"No one can deny that the conduct of her ladyship is worthy a heroine of Plutarch," said Ménard; "and after the wife of the Emperor Henry II, who took up a piece of iron red hot to prove her chastity, I know no one better calculated to embellish history."

Sister Anne was still in a most dangerous condition. She did not recognise a soul; and yet the poor creature appeared to look around her for some one to whom she stretched out her arms in vain. Constance paid the most minute attention to all her wants: a physician was sent for from Paris; and a faithful old servant was placed at the bedside of the invalid, and with strict orders not to leave her for a moment. Constance then took the child in her arms, and carried him to her husband.

"Love him well," said she; "for it must be in securing the happiness of this child that you will repair the wrongs you have done the mother. Oh! I feel that I also love him as if he were my own son! From the moment that I first saw him, a secret yet incomprehensible presentiment told me that he was yours; and now so far from loving him the less, I love him all the more tenderly."

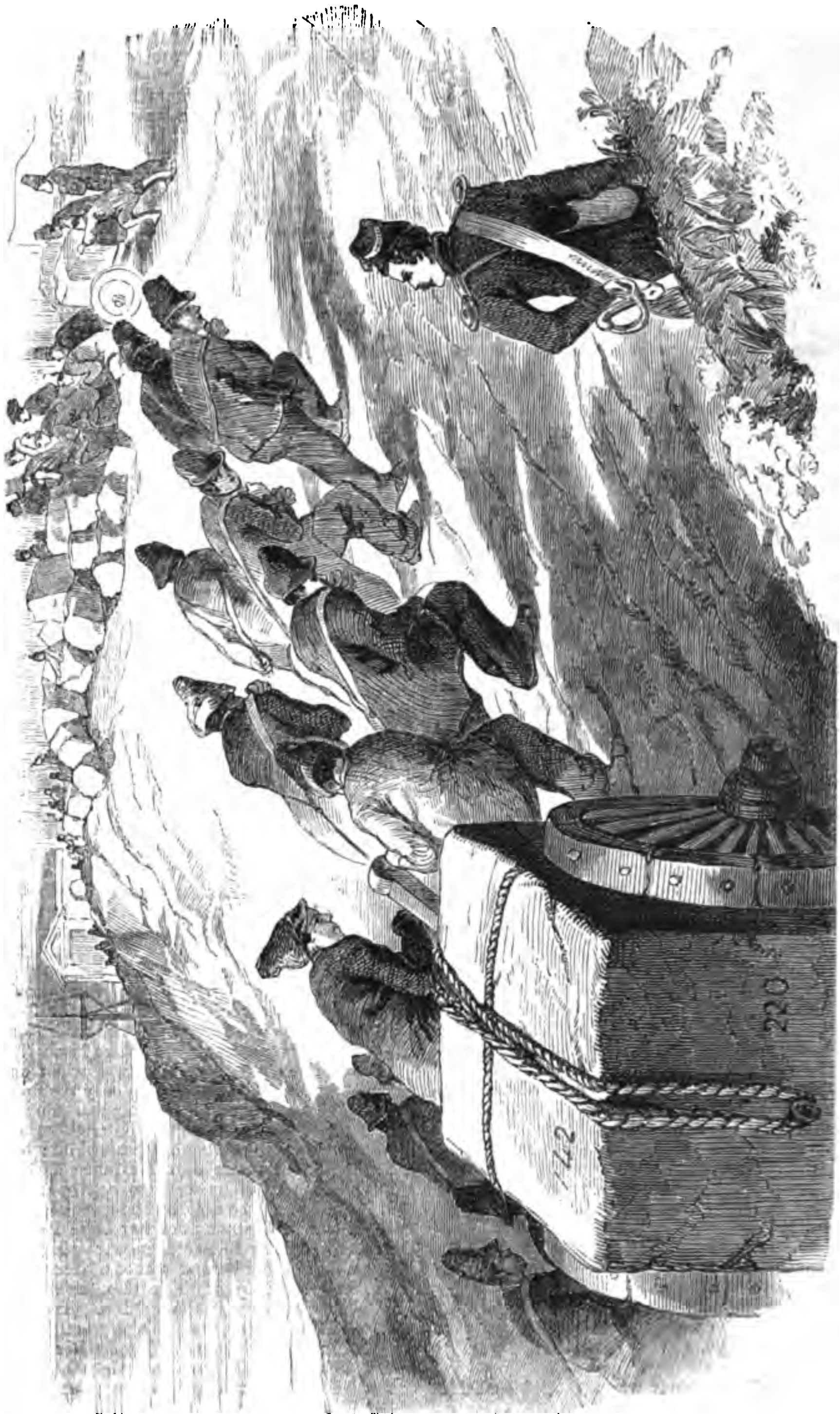
Frederick embraced his son, and the child passed the greater portion of the day with his father: for the poor little being could not receive any caresses from its mother, who was still a prey to the most violent delirium; and for upwards of a fortnight, Sister Anne was upon the verge of the grave. During that time, Constance passed whole days, and frequently entire nights in the pavilion: she would not allow others to perform those duties which she could accomplish in reference to the invalid; and it was she who watched and supported her in the most critical periods of her affliction. She did not feel wearied with such unremitting attention — she only thought of Sister Anne! It was in vain that Frederick each day implored her to be careful of her own health, and take necessary repose.

"Let me watch her," was the invariable reply. "In administering to her wants, it seems as if I were repairing a portion of the evil which you have done her."

Frederick did not enjoy a moment's peace so long as he knew that Sister Anne was in danger. He longed to see her once more: but he had promised not to seek her presence—and how could he break his promise after all that his wife had done for him! Frequently did he approach the pavilion in which the unfortunate creature lay; and anxiously did he wait till some one issued thence to inform him of her state of health. When Constance came to meet him in the garden, he endeavoured to conceal a portion of his agitation, fearful of suffering her to perceive how deeply he was interested in the fate of the poor mute! At length the physician declared that the life of Sister Anne was no longer in peril. Her delirium had ceased—she recognised her child—she again pressed the lovely boy to her bosom, and would not separate herself from him. When she saw Constance for the first time after her convalescence, she trembled violently; but in another moment, having subdued the first impulse, she caught hold of the hand of her benefactress, covered it with kisses and with tears, and seemed to demand pardon for the affliction she caused her.

"Poor creature!" exclaimed Constance, pressing the invalid's hand affectionately. "Oh, I will be always the same towards to you! It is for me to repair the wrongs you have experienced at the hands of my husband: your child is mine,—and henceforth the lot of both of you is assured! You must not refuse me—it is only a debt which I am paying. Your son is beautiful: his happiness will make you one day forget all your sufferings. Do not despair—a serene bliss yet awaits you in this life!"

Sister Anne sighed: and her looks seemed to convey a contradiction to these hopes. Constance did not herself believe that it was pos-



No. 40.—The Empress Eugenie.

sible for the poor sufferer to forget Frederick; but in order to console a fellow creature, we may occasionally descend to a falsehood. The young mute cast her eyes for a moment round the room; and then turning them upon her benefactress, appeared to be resigned, while her countenance indicated her determination to obey everything that Constance wished. The Viscountess de Montreville informed her husband that the life of Sister Anne was saved, but that she would long languish in a most precarious state. The physician had declared that some time must elapse before the invalid could support the fatigues of a journey, and that the garden would be the most favourable spot for her to essay the return of her strength.

Frederick learnt with joy that his victim was beyond danger; and every day did the desire to see her once more, were it only for a moment, torment him. Another circumstance also encouraged this wish. While the poor mute was at the point of death, the child was frequently entrusted to the care of Frederick for a considerable portion of each day. He was habituated to see the little innocent, and he had felt the delights of paternal affection—a sentiment which neither time nor absence can destroy. Frederick, who dared not suffer his wife to perceive the ardour of his wish to see Sister Anne again, was not however afraid to inquire after his son.

"My dear Frederick," returned Constance, "the child is now the poor mother's only consolation: and would you seek to deprive her of it? In a few days, when reflection shall have somewhat diminished her mental sufferings, she will consent to allow me to bring the child to you: but at present she will have him constantly near her."

Frederick made no answer. He endeavoured to dissemble what he felt; for Constance was gazing upon him, and she seemed to read the secret thoughts that were passing in his mind.

Sister Anne recovered slowly, and it was only at the termination of several days that, supported by the arm of Constance, she was enabled to walk in the garden, with her son. While she was thus aiding the young mute to essay her returning powers, Constance cast uneasy glances around her. She was afraid of beholding Frederick near: but she had previously informed him that Sister Anne was about to breathe the fresh air of the garden—and that announcement was a hint for him not to attempt to join them. Frederick was perfectly aware that his presence would only produce an effect dangerous to the health of the invalid; he therefore remained shut up in his own apartment. Sister Anne was more calm; and yet that tranquillity was rather the result of a profound dejection than an entire resignation. She did not glance around her: her eyes were either bent upon the ground, or from time to time turned upon her son; she did not weep—but the expression of her countenance betokened the sufferings of her mind. In a very few days, however, her physical energies became stronger; and she was enabled to walk out alone with her child in the neighbourhood of the pavilion.

In another week it was arranged that Madame de Montreville should proceed with Sister Anne and little Frederick to the house in which her ladyship intended to install them. Frederick approved the project his wife had formed: he however burned with the desire once more to see her whom he had once so tenderly loved, and whom he was not far from loving still. He knew that every morning, shortly after daybreak, Sister Anne, with her son in her arms, proceeded to seat herself in an arbour at a little distance from the pavilion. Taking advantage of the hour when Constance was asleep, he arose one morning—day was just peeping over the eastern horizon—and he could not resist his inclination to see Sister Anne once again. He determined not to speak to her—not even to discover himself to her: he would merely contemplate her for the last time from a distance. She was to depart the next day, and that was the last opportunity he could expect to find to gratify his wishes.

Frederick dressed himself cautiously and in silence. He drew near the bed in which Constance reposed; she seemed agitated—but her eyes were closed. She was asleep—and her husband was anxious to profit by the occasion. He descended softly into the garden: the grey dawn of morning scarcely penetrated the mists of the night—and everything was tranquil around. He walked with hurried steps towards the arbour in which Sister Anne was usually seated—his heart beat violently—and it seemed to him that it was still the period when, entering the wood at Vizille, his eyes were accustomed to seek for the young mute upon the banks of the stream, where they met in those happy times!

She was not yet in the arbour—and a quarter of an hour must elapse before it would be light enough for her to venture out. Frederick threw himself upon the bench where she was in the habit of sitting; and from that spot he could contemplate at his ease the pavilion in which she and her son reposed! The eyes of Frederick were fixed upon that abode of all he had once loved: his heart was full—and he experienced the same emotions he had been accustomed to feel when in former times he contemplated the hut of Dame Margaret. But at this moment he forgot all that had passed since those times: he waited only for Anne's appearance in the garden—and he would then imagine that she was running towards him from her cottage, driving her goats before her.

The minutes passed rapidly away when occupied in such thoughts. Suddenly the door of the pavilion opened—a child appeared upon the threshold—it was his son! Frederick was on the point of running to embrace his child: but the promise he had made to Constance flashed across his mind. If he were to approach the pavilion, he might be seen by Sister Anne, who could not be far distant from her boy: it was therefore necessary to avoid encountering her glances. He passed behind a knot of trees, and there, concealed by a thick elm, anxiously awaited her presence in the garden. Scarcely had he left the arbour, when the young mute issued from the pavilion, and took her son's hand. Frederick did not lose sight of her: she was attired in a modest white gown—and

her hair descended in negligent ringlets upon her shoulders. On her countenance was depicted an expression of the deepest grief: she however smiled upon her son—then stopped—cast a sorrowful glance around her—and sighed deeply!

Frederick was not wearied of contemplating her. He could now gaze upon her at his ease —for in the presence of his wife he did not dare examine her with attention: and her new attire seemed to enhance her charms and embellish her natural beauty. She soon resumed her walk—she seated herself upon the bench—she was now near him—a few branches of the trees alone separated them: but he could hear her sighs, and count the palpitations of her heart. How profound was the sorrow upon her countenance! Alas! who could console her now? It was he who had caused all her woes —and he was not allowed to alleviate them! The child passed his little arms around the neck of his mother, and seemed by his caresses to be desirous of dissipating her sorrows. She pressed him to her bosom—and her tears still flowed plentifully. Oh! could he longer brook that scene of sadness? Her sobs fell upon his ears—his promise to his wife was forgotten—the burning drops from the eyes of Sister Anne appeared to fall like molten lead upon his heart! He pushed aside the boughs that separated them—he threw himself at her feet—he kissed her hand—and exclaimed, "Forgive—forgive me!"

The moment she saw Frederick, Sister Anne made a motion as if she would rise and fly away from him. But her courage failed her—she fell upon the seat—she endeavoured to avert her eyes—and an invincible power compelled her to turn them upon her lover! He was at her feet—he implored her pardon! She could not repulse him—she placed her son in his arms—and in a moment she held him to her bosom! At that moment a loud cry was heard from a little distance. Frederick, alarmed and terrified, rushed from the arbour, gazed all around him—and seeing no one, returned to Sister Anne. But already had she resumed the path to the pavilion with her son in her arms;—Frederick endeavoured to retain her—she escaped from him—her eyes addressed a tender farewell to her lover—she had tasted a moment of happiness, but she would not be guilty of ingratitude towards her benefactress in remaining any longer with Frederick.

Sister Anne and her son were out of sight—and Frederick was alone in the garden. He was overjoyed at the pleasure which he had experienced in seeing his mistress once more: but that pleasure was mingled with alarm. The cry which he had heard, tormented him. He walked round the garden—he looked about him on all sides—and he saw no one. He therefore persuaded himself that he was deceived, or that the cry emanated from the fields. For a moment he bethought himself of his wife! Was it possible that Constance had seen him in the arms of Sister Anne? No—it was not likely: for Constance slept when he left the room. He returned towards the house; the servants were rising from their beds; and Ménard and Dubourg met him in the garden. Frederick did not dare encounter his wife at that moment: he waited for the hour of breakfast to see her—and in the meantime he walked round the garden with his friends: but he was pensive and melancholy.

"Are you unhappy on account of the approaching departure of Sister Anne?" asked Dubourg. "My dear friend, that departure is absolutely necessary! A man cannot live under the same roof with his wife and mistress, although the latter be indifferent to him; for the former will invariably dread interviews, meetings, and renewals of love. If she be attached to her husband, she will not sleep in tranquillity!"

"It is very evident," said Ménard, "that we cannot live with the wolf and the goat at the same time. It is the same thing as if you were to put a hawk and a canary into the same cage. I do not however make this observation for the Viscountess de Montreville: she is an angel of generosity and amiability—and most decidedly the other young woman will never utter a cross word. But the Greek philosopher truly said, 'If you be desirous of having a hell upon earth, you must let your wife and mistress live together.'"

"My dear M. Ménard," said Frederick, "so far from having entertained the idea, I should be happy if the poor creature were already afar from this place. I feel that I must not rely too much upon the strength of my own resolution."

"There is only one thing in the world, upon which we may calculate with certainty," observed Ménard; "and that is an indigestion, if we take a bath immediately after dinner."

The hour of breakfast arrived—the gentlemen sought the parlour—Constance made her appearance; and according to custom hastened to embrace her husband.

"I was deceived; it was not her voice!" said Frederick to himself.

He however noticed that his wife was pale, that her eyes were red and swollen, and that her hand trembled in his. He therefore inquired anxiously concerning her health.

"I am quite well," answered Constance: "I am not ill—I do not suffer:"—but the tone of her voice contradicted her words.

The day passed away; and Frederick saw with surprise that Constance made no preparations for the departure of herself and Sister Anne. He at length ventured to inquire the reasons.

"I have altered my mind," returned the Viscountess de Montreville, endeavouring but vainly to conceal her emotions: "I do not see why the young woman should leave the house: she is so happy with us! Her presence cannot displease you;—her absence, on the contrary, might cause you pain."

"What say you?" cried Frederick in astonishment.

But Constance added in a cold and tranquil tone of voice, and without appearing to notice the emotions of her husband, "No—she shall not depart. It would be useless *now* for her to leave us!"

And having uttered these words, Constance

retreated to her own room, the door of which she locked. Frederick knew not what to think of this new resolution on the part of his wi'e; and in the evening, by order of the Viscountess de Montreville, her lady's-maid repaired to Sister Anne and informed her that she was to continue to reside in the pavilion, and that all idea of departure was abandoned. The young mute learnt these tidings with the most profound astonishment, though her heart experienced a secret joy in being enabled to remain so near Frederick. She was however surprised that the benefactress, who had been so prodigal of her attention and kindness towards her, had not herself personally explained the motives of this change of resolution. Several days passed; and she did not see the Viscountess. Sister Anne and her son were not however neglected: but Constance paid no more visits to the inmates of the pavilion. She passed all her time in her own apartment. She did not address a single reproach to Frederick: but her countenance betrayed the deep sorrow which oppressed her, in spite of all the efforts she made to conceal it. Frederick dared not question her; and when he did, she answered him kindly, "There is nothing the matter with me."

"By heaven!" said Dubourg to the old tutor, "all this is not natural. That young lady is a prey to the most profound grief. She is determined that Sister Anne should remain here; and I candidly confess that I do not understand her motives!"

"Nor I either," said Ménard: "but I am of your opinion—there is a mystery in all this! Tertullian declares that the devil has not so many wiles as woman—and I am inclined to agree with Tertullian."

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

Sister Anne and her son continued to reside in the pavilion. The poor mute seldom ventured to walk in the garden; and when she did quit her abode for a moment, she chose those paths that were nearest to it. She never approached the house; for she was fearful of meeting Frederick, although her heart was still as deeply attached to him as ever. But Frederick himself dared not venture near the pavilion. The conduct of his wife, since the day when he pressed Sister Anne in his arms, did not leave a doubt in his mind that the cry which he heard had issued from her lips. If Constance had seen him at the feet of his mistress, what faith could she put in his promises? She probably now imagined that she was not loved alone! Often was he inclined to throw himself at her feet, and assure her that he loved her still: but he would be obliged to confess that he had broken his promise; and if she were not already acquainted with the fact, he would thus betray it. In this state of incertitude, he held his peace, hoping that he should eventually be able to dissipate all jealous suspicions from the mind of his wife.

Constance did not leave the house: she did not even walk in the garden. Her countenance was changed—her cheeks lost the glow of health: vainly did she endeavour to smile—the sorrow that undermined her, manifested itself in all her actions. She was as amiable and gentle as ever; she was deeply sensible of the attentions of her husband; and, perceiving that he scrupulously avoided all visits to the garden, she begged him to continue his walks there as usual.

"Why should I leave you?" asked Frederick: "can I be better elsewhere than with you?"

Constance pressed his hand tenderly, and averted her head to conceal her tears. She could not dismiss from her mind the scene which she had witnessed in the arbour: she saw Sister Anne in the arms of her husband, in her dreams at night; she believed that his heart was no longer her's, and that he regretted his separation from the young mute: and she fancied his present conduct was only a sacrifice he made to her peace. These cruel thoughts tormented her by day and night—and vainly did she essay to hide her sorrows.

"Things cannot last thus much longer," said Dubourg to Frederick from time to time. "Your wife is dying by inches—and the poor mute is broken-hearted. If those two women continue to dwell together, they will both fall into a consumption."

"What can I do?" asked Frederick. "Sister Anne's fate is in the hands of Constance. When I speak to my wife concerning her, she closes my mouth, or declares that the poor creature shall not depart!"

"It is certainly a very embarrassing situation," observed Ménard; "and if I were in Frederick's place, I know very well what I should do!"

"What would you do?" exclaimed Dubourg. "Speak!"

"Why," returned the old tutor, "I should do as he does—not know what plan to adopt!"

An event which now took place, was calculated to work considerable changes in the house where sorrow and grief prevailed. One morning, the Count de Montreville, whom the gout had at length abandoned, arrived at his son's country residence. Dubourg, although unaware that the Count was acquainted with Sister Anne, was pleased with the arrival of that nobleman, because he hoped that his presence would compel Frederick to adopt some decided measure. The young man was exceedingly troubled by his father's visit, the Count being as yet ignorant of all that had lately occurred. Should he tell his sire the whole truth? should he inform him that Sister Anne was an inmate of that pavilion? But before he met his father, Constance had implored him not to mention the subject to the Count; for she fondly believed that his lordship was ignorant of his son's fault, and she did not wish him to be acquainted with it. On his side, the Count de Montreville had been for a long time uneasy concerning the dumb woman who had saved his life. The last messenger he had despatched to the farm-house, informed him that she had left that dwelling to repair to Paris; and the Count, finding that she did not make her appearance at his mansion, caused the most vigorous searches to be made after her.

On his arrival at his son's house, the Count

de Montreville was struck by the sorrow and affliction which were depicted on the features of Constance. He anxiously inquired the reason of this change; and the young lady avoided farther interrogation, by pretending that she had only just recovered from a severe indisposition. The old nobleman was however a shrewd observer; and he saw that some secret was withheld from him. His son was embarrassed in his presence — M. Ménard avoided him as if he were again fearful of receiving a reprimand — Dubourg alone was charmed by his arrival. Everything seemed to denote a mystery of an extraordinary nature in the house.

Constance was aware that the Count de Montreville was in the habit, during his occasional stay at Montmorenci, of repairing to the pavilion to read: she accordingly hastened to inform him that a young woman and her son were resident in that retreat. The Count did not ask any more questions; he was very far from suspecting that he was so near the object of his long search; nor was it at the house of his son, that he hoped to find her.

On the morning after his arrival, the Count, according to his custom, rose early and went into the garden. It was only when he was close to the pavilion, that he recollected what Constance had told him on the preceding evening: he accordingly turned into another path, and advanced towards the terrace. But scarcely had he walked a few paces, when a child ran out of the pavilion and hurried up to him; and in another moment a young woman was at his feet, covering his hands with kisses. What was the surprise of his lordship when he recognised the dumb girl and her son?

Sister Anne had perceived the Count from the window of the pavilion, and had immediately recognised him. The features of her benefactor were engraven upon her memory, and she had hastened to throw herself at his feet as he turned away from the pavilion. She testified as well as she was able all the pleasure she experienced at seeing him again; but the Count was a considerable time before he could recover from his astonishment.

"What! you are here!" at length exclaimed the old nobleman: "and who received you? Do you not know that you are in the house of your seducer? and are you ignorant that the lady who has granted you an asylum is Frederick's wife?"

Sister Anne made signs to intimate that she was well acquainted with those facts—that she had seen Frederick—and that Constance had urged her to continue to reside in the pavilion. The surprise of the Count augmented every moment. Not being able to obtain from the dumb girl all the information he required, he longed to seek his son.

"Return into the pavilion," said he to Sister Anne; "you shall speedily see me again. Already you have been here too long! But I will not abandon you!"

Sister Anne withdrew to the pavilion; but before she left the Count, his lordship embraced her son tenderly.

Frederick suspected that an interview of this kind would take place. He was therefore on his way to seek his father and confess the entire truth, when he met the Count, whose severe look made him aware that the meeting had already occurred.

"I have just seen the person who dwells in the pavilion," said the Count; "and I am no longer astonished at the altered appearance of your wife, whose manners are entirely changed. Unhappy young man! behold the recompense of so much love and of such exalted virtues! You allow the woman whom you have seduced, to dwell in the same house with your wife——"

"I am not guilty, my lord," returned Frederick: and he recounted to his father all that had taken place during his absence—how his wife had charitably granted an asylum to the poor mute—and how she daily became more attached to her and her son. The old nobleman listened to his son's narrative in silence.

"It is thus," said his lordship, after a long pause, "that your wife knows all! She is aware that you are the seducer of that young woman, and the father of her child: and yet she permits Sister Anne to inhabit the pavilion!"

"Her intention," resumed Frederick, "was at first to send her to one of our estates, and install her in a house which she would have had fitted up for her. The day of departure was fixed—I know not what could have made her change her resolution—but she will not now suffer Sister Anne to leave this place!"

"And you cannot guess the motive?" exclaimed the Count. "My dear son, this behaviour on her part is too remarkable not to be the result of some secret reason! The nature of a woman, who loves and adores her husband, will not suffer her to dwell in the close vicinity of a late rival, and of one who may be a rival still, without some extraordinary motive or design. But Constance possesses a soul capable of making every sacrifice to your happiness: she would immolate herself to procure you a single day of enjoyment! Can you permit her thus to languish? do you not see the change which has taken place in her? She conceals her tears from you—but she cannot hide the deadly pallor of her cheeks, nor the effects of sorrow upon her lovely countenance! Every moment of the day she remembers that you are in the neighbourhood of the mother of your son—that you may speak to her—see her——"

"Oh! my dear father!" exclaimed Frederick; "I swear——"

"I believe all you told me, Frederick," interrupted the Count; "but you must confess that the position of your wife is cruel in the extreme. From to-morrow Sister Anne must cease to dwell in this pavilion!"

"What, my lord?" cried the young man.

"Do you blame my resolution?" demanded his father.

"I—Oh, no!" returned Frederick. "I feel all that I owe you—I need not recommend that unfortunate creature to your care—and—my son——"

"No—I will take such measures that they shall both be happy," continued M. de Montreville. "The excellent intentions of your wife shall be fulfilled. Do you think that the young woman and her child are objects of no interest to me? Because I no longer experience the turbulent passions of youth, do not suppose that my heart is made of ice! Allow me to be the means of restoring peace to yourself and wife; and do you make it your care to recall the bloom to her cheeks by redoubling your kindness and attention to one who is so worthy of all your esteem! It is thus, Frederick, that you may efface the memory of your fault, and reward me for all I intend to do for Sister Anne and her son."

Frederick covered the hand of the worthy old nobleman with his tears; and the Count hastened to rejoin Constance. He did not utter a word concerning the poor mute; but as he contemplated his daughter-in-law, he could not repress his admiration, and he felt that he loved her more dearly than ever. Constance knew not to what to attribute those symptoms of increased attachment upon the part of her father-in-law, who was usually cold to all around him; and she still fondly believed that the Count was ignorant of his son's guilt.

The Count despatched his valet to Paris, with orders to return on the following morning with the travelling carriage, and a pair of excellent horses, and to conduct the equipage to the back-gate of the garden, near the terrace, as he himself resolved upon accompanying Sister Anne to the place whither he intended she should proceed. In the meantime he hastened to the pavilion to inform the poor mute of his arrangements. The movements of the Count backwards and forwards in the house made Dubourg imagine that his lordship had already contemplated certain plans in reference to Sister Anne.

"There will be some changes here soon," said Dubourg to Ménard; "God grant that they may restore happiness and tranquillity to this abode!"

"I admit that for some time past we have not been very gay," exclaimed Ménard. "Her ladyship sighs—my pupil is pensive—the poor mute does not say a word to a soul—and you yourself, my dear Dubourg, are totally changed."

"How would you have me gay, when those whom I love are wretched?" demanded Dubourg. "In spite of my philosophy, I am not indifferent to the sorrows of others."

"You are just like me in this respect," returned the tutor: "I think of nothing but the position of Frederick and his wife all day long."

"And yet it does not deprive you of your appetite."

"Do you suppose that if I were to make myself ill, I should restore them to gaiety?"

"You certainly do not look like a man who is inclined to be ill," answered Dubourg: "you are as stout as a barrel."

"The cook gives us capital dinners," observed Ménard; "and how can I prevent myself from getting fat?"

"I calculate much upon the arrival of Frederick's father," said Dubourg, after a short pause. "He has been to the pavilion—he has seen Sister Anne—and I am sure that a change will shortly be introduced——"

"What!" interrupted the old tutor; "do you think that we shall not have such good dinners in future?"

"Really, M. Ménard, you were not born to live in France; you should go and live in Switzerland, where people eat all day long."

"I was born to dwell anywhere, sir; and when you played *Baron Potoski* with us, you were quite an adept at getting rid of the money with your three courses at dinner. And by the bye, talking of appetite reminds me that I was obliged to give you a hint yesterday that you had eaten all the turbot, and when I applied for some more, there was none."

"Turbot, M. Ménard, is very heavy," said Dubourg. "It is not good for you."

"I beg you not to interfere with my health, sir," returned the old tutor, "and to leave me some turbot when that fish next appears upon table. You ought to know that at my age I may be allowed to give myself an indigestion if I choose."

While every one throughout the house was a prey to his conjectures, the Count hastened to the pavilion. Sister Anne dwelt on the first floor; and it was already night when the Count de Montreville resolved upon making her aware of his intentions. He however stopped a moment at the foot of the stairs, before he sought the presence of the young woman who had saved his life.

"Poor creature!" thought he; "I am about to afflict you deeply! I must separate you from Frederick—separate you for ever from your lover! But it is a duty which I cannot omit—and your soul is too pure not to feel convinced that it is necessary to restore peace, tranquillity, and new life to her who saved you and your son from the horrors of want, and who overwhelmed you with kindness."

The old nobleman at length ascended the stairs, and entered the mute's apartment. Sister Anne, the moment she recognised the Count, rose and hastened to meet him; and her eyes expressed the attachment she felt towards him. He was affected: he contemplated her for some time in silence; but he was aware that it was his duty to inform her of his intentions, so that she might be ready on the following morning.

"My dear child," said he, "as I told you this morning, it is impossible for you to remain any longer in this house: your presence would inflict a mortal blow upon her who received you here. Constance loves her husband tenderly—and I am certain you would not wish to deprive her of repose and happiness for ever. She conceals the torments she experiences; but I have read the secret at the bottom of her heart. You would not wish to send to the grave her who saved you from it!"

Sister Anne intimated by a significant gesture, that she was ready to sacrifice herself for Constance.

"You must depart then," continued the Count: "you must leave this place. To-morrow, at daybreak—without even seeing

your benefactress, you must depart! I will undertake to assure her of your eternal gratitude and love. Nor will it be possible for you to take leave of Frederick. I am convinced it is scarcely necessary to inform you how strictly you must avoid all interview with him!"

Sister Anne was unnerved by these injunctions. To depart so suddenly, without being prepared—and without being allowed to say farewell to Frederick—Oh! this was more than her courage could support. She felt her strength failing her—and her tears flowed copiously. The Count approached her, and took her hand, saying, "Poor creature, this sudden determination on my part afflicts you; but in your position, every moment of delay is a crime! I tear you away from this abode, it is true: I am nevertheless compelled to be severe. Courage, Anne—courage! It is the father of Frederick, whom you saved from the dagger of the banditti—it is he who now demands this sacrifice in order to secure the happiness of his son!"

These words produced upon the young mother the effect which the Count had anticipated. The moment she learnt that he was the father of her lover, she fell at his feet, and her hands were joined together as if to implore his pardon.

"Rise—rise!" said the Count, depositing a kiss upon her forehead. "Unfortunate girl—why cannot I make you happy? All I can do is to ensure a comfortable subsistence for yourself and your son. I shall conduct you to a beautiful farm which I intend to bestow upon you: a pretty house is attached to it—and there you will reside, surrounded by faithful dependants who will love and respect you. There also you will rear your child. I shall frequently visit you in your peaceful retreat; and I sincerely hope that tranquillity may become your guest."

Sister Anne listened to the Count, and was resolved to obey him. She felt that happiness could never again exist for her; but she seemed to say to him, through the medium of her signs, "Dispose of me as you will—I am ready to follow your slightest inclinations."

"To-morrow, then," said the Count, "at daybreak I will come and fetch you. We will depart before any one shall be awake in the house. Prepare everything for your son: you need not take much apparel with you, for all that you require shall be provided for you at your future abode. Adieu for the present, Anne. At daybreak I will be with you."

The Count departed from the pavilion—Sister Anne was again alone—and her son slept. It was night—the last night which she was destined to pass near Frederick! She was to leave him—leave him for ever! The idea was maddening—and the poor creature remained motionless upon a chair near the cradle of her child! One thought alone occupied her mind; and this was the necessity and the certainty of her departure from the vicinity of one whom she had found with such difficulty, and whom she had loved so tenderly! She must leave him who in the arbour had appeared to love her still! The peace, and perhaps the life of her benefactress, demanded this great sacrifice!

The last few hours which she was to pass in the pavilion seemed to glide away with unusual rapidity. A prey to her thoughts, she did not remember that it was necessary to prepare for her departure. Midnight was announced by the village clock; and the mute was still seated near her child's cradle, and in the situation in which the Count left her. The monotonous sound of the clock aroused her from her reverie. She rose—prepared a small bundle of necessaries—and, when her arrangements were completed, several hours of the night still remained to be passed away. Should she deliver herself up to repose? No—she knew that any attempt to woo the approach of slumber would be a vain one. But what sentiment occupied her mind? Every one slept in the house:—might she not profit by that opportunity to cast one last glance upon him she loved so well? She would not arouse him—she felt that were she to seek an interview with him, she should be guilty of ingratitude towards her benefactress and to the Count! But, unknown to Frederick, she might bid him an eternal adieu: she knew which were the windows of his apartment—she could contemplate the room in which he slept—and she fancied that she might then depart less unhappily, and that in his sleep Frederick would hear her farewell.

Sister Anne did not hesitate any longer. She placed upon a chair the bundle of necessaries she had just wrapped up, and then put the candle in the grate. Her son slept tranquilly in his cradle, upon which she shed many tears—for she remembered that he was shortly to be for ever separated from his father! No noise was heard—she issued gently from the pavilion; the night was dark—but she was acquainted with the turnings of the paths in the garden—and her feet scarcely touched the ground. Like a volatile shadow, she flew rapidly along the gravel-walks towards the house. Frederick's room was on the right hand, on the first floor: she fell upon her knees beneath the windows—she stretched out her arms towards the apartment—she addressed her last adieu to her lover! Bathed in tears—supporting her head upon one of her hands—and still reluctant to avert her eyes from the spot which she knew he inhabited, Sister Anne gave herself up to all the wildness of her despair, to her love, and to her regret;—she was some time absent from the pavilion—the moments passed rapidly away—she could not tear herself from the place—and yet she was compelled to leave it!

The unfortunate girl made a last effort. She rose—she withdrew, heart-broken and in despair—she staggered as she threaded the alleys of the garden—and her bosom gave vent to the most violent sobs. Suddenly a strong light illuminated the garden. Sister Anne raised her eyes—she could not conceive whence emanated that unusual brilliancy. She advanced towards the pavilion—the lustre gradually increased—the obscurity of night had yielded to a terrific glare—and broad red flames streamed from the garden into the air.

Seized by a sudden alarm, Sister Anne walked no longer: she ran—she flew towards the pavilion — volumes of fire issued from the windows of the first floor. A terrible cry escaped the lips of Sister Anne; for she thought of her son—her child, whom she had left in the apartment whence emanated the flames of the appalling element!

In her despair she recovered strength and courage at the same time. She reached the pavilion—a thick cloud of smoke enveloped the staircase—but a mother knows not the meaning of danger! She must save her child, and boldly did she rush through the dense mists that obscured even the glare of the flames. She could not find the door of her apartment—the smoke hid it from her view—and her trembling hands sought it in vain! At length the fire burst forth with fearful fury—and its light, for a moment dispelling the smoke, guided the almost heart-broken mother. She penetrated into the room—it was enveloped in flames! Her bundle of clothes had rolled from the chair, and had caught the fire which so rapidly communicated itself to all objects near. Sister Anne rushed to the cradle which contained her son—she caught him in her arms—she sought the door—but she saw not the direction it was necessary for her to take. The flames already hemmed her in on all sides—her strength was gradually failing her—she endeavoured to call for help—she felt that she must summon her vocal power to her aid, or die! At that moment, her voice, yielding to the force of a new effort of nature, broke the bonds which enchained it—and the poor girl fell to the floor, exclaiming distinctly, "*Frederick—hasten and save your son!*"

In the meantime the flames, which enveloped the pavilion, were perceived by the inmates of the house, two or three of whom had not been able to retire to rest. Frederick, yielding to his terror, rushed from his room, calling for assistance. Every one rose and hastened to render prompt aid where it was so much required.

"The pavilion is on fire!" was the general cry.

Thither ran the inmates of the house—but Frederick was the first to gain the dangerous spot. He braved death to succour Sister Anne, and penetrated into her apartment a few moments after she had fainted. With one arm he raised her—in the other he held her son; he traversed the flames—he was once more in the garden—he had saved them both!

Every one had followed Frederick to the terrible scene; and Constance was not the last in the traces of her husband. She received Sister Anne in her arms, and transported her to her own apartment. The young mother was speedily surrounded by every soul that dwelt in the house:—her body exhibited the marks of the fire—but her son had not experienced the slightest effects from the danger in which he had been enveloped. Her recovery was anxiously awaited by all present, in order to present her son to the unhappy mother. At length a profound sigh escaped her bosom; her eyes opened slowly, and Constance placed her child in her arms.

"My son! my son!" exclaimed Sister Anne; and she covered the child with kisses.

These words threw all present into the most unfeigned astonishment. They listened attentively—they gazed upon Sister Anne—they were uncertain if they had heard rightly.

"O God!" cried the young mother; "it is not then a dream! You have restored to me the power of speech! O Frederick, I can now tell you how much—how deeply I have loved you! And you—his tender, his affectionate wife—forgive me! I feel that I shall not long enjoy the blessing which is bestowed upon me. All that I have this day suffered has prostrated my strength! I am about to die—but my son is saved!—Oh! do not deplore my fate!"

The poor young mother had made a violent effort in order to pronounce these words: her eyes became glazed—her hand grew cold—and a fearful pallor already overspread her visage. Frederick had fallen upon his knees by her side, and bathed with tears the hand which she abandoned to him. The Count was overwhelmed with grief; and Constance endeavoured to recall her back to life by imploring her to gaze upon her child. Every one took some part in that distressing scene; and Dubourg—who had never shed tears before, wept bitterly, as he sustained the head of Sister Anne.

"Wherefore do you mourn for me?" she said, making a last effort: "I could not have hoped for happiness in this world—but I die in peace! Take care of my child, Constance—he is so well in your arms! You will be his mother! Adieu, Frederick! And you, my lord—Oh! forgive me for having loved your son so tenderly and so well!"

Sister Anne cast a look towards Constance who held the innocent child in her arms; and, as she smiled upon her son, the young mother closed her eyes for ever!

* * * * *

In the cemetery of Pere la Chaise, there is a marble tomb, of simple architecture—plain, but elegant: and on it are inscribed naught but these words:—"SISTER ANNE."

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

THUS terminated the history of the unfortunate heroine of Paul de Kock's remarkable tale. It must not however be supposed that the entire narrative was read by the Baroness de Cardillac on the same evening upon which it was commenced. On the contrary, it served to wile away several hours for many successive evenings in the boudoir of the Empress; and, as the handsome Juno had prophesied, it at one time elicited peals of laughter, and at another drew forth tears on the part of her Imperial Majesty and her lady-companions. Whether the system of reciting or reading interesting tales and novels has been continued in that boudoir since the period of which we have been writing, we cannot say. Very certain, however, it is that the means

No. 41.—The Empress Eugenie.

whereby we were enabled to obtain an insight into the proceedings of the Empress and her Ladies of Honour, within the walls of the imperial *sanctum*, ceased to exist at the point down to which we have brought these memoirs. Little more therefore have we to say,—unless it be to bestow a passing glance at some of the principal characters, in order that our readers may know how they are faring or what has become of them—and at all events that we may not be accused of closing our volume with abruptness.

First of all, therefore, we will speak of Faustin Marmande and the man Legrand. The former, be it understood, was arrested on a charge of aiding and abetting the escape of the criminal Legrand after this latter had broken violently forth from a felon's gaol. The offence was a serious one, especially when it was considered that Marmande held such a social position,—he being an officer in the army and an aide-de-camp of the Emperor. But still darker were the clouds which speedily gathered over the head of this individual; for in due course it transpired that some few years back Faustin Marmande had been implicated in a serious case of fraud and forgery, along with this self-same Legrand, to whom we have alluded, and likewise with an Englishman of the name of Clive. It however appeared that the affair was by some means hushed up after awhile; and though no legal cognizance could now be taken of it, yet it nevertheless tended to develop the iniquities of Faustin Marmande's career and blacken his character more deeply than it was already stained. On being tried, therefore, for the offence on account of which he had been given into custody, he was sentenced to the Galleys for ten years,—a judgment which was of course immediately followed by an ignominious expulsion from the army and privation of military rank and civil rights.

In consequence of the report of these proceedings, which appeared in the French journals, the attention of the English Government was directed to the name of Clive; and it was quickly discovered that the individual thus alluded to was identical with Captain Clive of the ——th Cavalry Regiment then engaged in front of the walls of Sebastopol. Instructions were immediately sent out to the Crimea to place Captain Clive under arrest, as a preliminary to ulterior proceedings: but on the very same day when the despatches containing that mandate reached the English camp, Clive was killed in a skirmish at the outposts with the Russians.

Returning to the incidents that were taking place in the French metropolis, we must next proceed to state that Legrand was brought to trial for escaping from prison under circumstances of extraordinary violence. He had knocked down a turnkey, whom he left weltering in his blood, and whom indeed he thought he had slain; and he had stunned a sentinel but with a blow of lesser consequence, inasmuch as the man speedily recovered. He was also tried for the robbery of the box of bullion at Lyons; and on account of this complication of offences he was sentenced to the Galleys for life. This man was of a far more hardened and desperate character than Faustin Marmande; and he was therefore less sensible of the hideous degradation to which he had been brought down. We should observe that the term *Galleys* is really a misnomer in respect to the particular punishment which its name still serves to indicate. In fact the Galleys have long ceased to exist; and the word *Bagne* ought by rights to be used to represent the convict-establishments at Toulon, Rochefort, and Brest. The punishments there endured by the galley-slaves are indeed of a character to render the name of the Bagne a terror to all evil-doers; and in the phrase of "working like a galley-slave" there is a terrible degree of truthfulness. We may specially instance the *Grande Fatigue* to which all able-bodied convicts are compelled to submit, and which consists in the dragging of enormous blocks of stone on rude cars up steep ascents; and in this occupation teams of eight or ten panting, exhausted, half-sinking wretches may be seen engaged beneath the sultriness of a noonday sun in July as well as amidst the snows of winter.

And there, in that terrible toil, did Marmande and Legrand often meet,—the former bending upon his companion looks of bitterest reproach, mingled with intensest misery—while Legrand himself responded to them by means of glances full of scorn and contempt, or else of such laughing mockery as could only be equalled by the sardonism of demons. But it was not very long that this hideous companionship existed betwixt Marmande and Legrand: —a terrible tradegy cut it short. For one morning the guillotine was erected in the court-yard of the convict-establishment at Toulon; and a miserable wretch, whose bold hardihood had totally left him, and who was already half dead with terror, was borne up the steps, attended by a priest and awaited by the executioner. A widely ramified plot amongst the convicts, for murdering the guards and making their escape, had been discovered; and the ringleader of it now suffered the penalty of death. This man was Legrand.

It will be refreshing and cheerful to turn from those hideous scenes to a picture of a purer and brighter character. We allude to the nuptials of the chivalrous-minded Henri Vigors and the amiable Julie Talmont; and amongst the numerous and distinguished guests who were present at the ceremony, it was generally whispered that the eye seldom rested on so handsome a bridegroom or so lovely a bride. Captain Vigors was placed upon the Emperor's Staff; and thus as if to render retributive justice as complete as possible against his infamous and unprincipled rival, Faustin Marmande, our gallant young hero succeeded by his honourable conduct to the very post whence the other had been in dishonour hurled down!

The vengeance of the Lorette Artemis was completely consummated; and, as the reader has seen, terrible was the punishment which through her means was brought down upon the head of her seducer, Faustin Marmande. She was all excitement and anxiety until his sentence was pronounced by the criminal tri-

bunal; and then—as if her mind had suddenly experienced an immense relief, or as if every cause of agitation were removed from it—she at once returned to her previous gay mode of life, abandoning herself to the tide of mingled pleasure and dissipation, as if its onward flow had never been for a moment interrupted by ruder circumstances and sterner objects. She is still one of the handsomest and most elegantly dressed denizens of the famous quarter of the Lorettes; and it was recently whispered that an amorous old Field-Marshal whom she had caught fast in her silken chains, had settled upon her an income of ten thousand francs, or 400*l.* a-year.

As for the Countess of Mauleon, she still remains attached to the person of the Empress; and she continues to be very circumspect and cautious in her amours. She shines in the fashionable world with undiminished authority, as well as with a blooming beauty which attracts a host of admirers: but though she smiles with her own special coquettish witchery upon all in their turn, there is only *one* on whom her eyes seem to linger with a real tenderness and a deeper significancy—and this is a young officer of the Imperial Guard, with a tall slender figure, a Grecian profile, and a glossy moustache carefully twisted and curled at the points. Indeed, we may as well add that this was the very same gallant son of Mars who sent the Countess the perfumed billet a short time after everything was broken off between herself and Faustin Marmande.

In respect to the venerable Seadet-Ghirai and his beautiful grand-daughter, Mira, we have only a few words to say. The old man died on the very day on which peace was signed by the Allied Powers and Russia. And his death took place in Florence:—it was under his assumed name of Palestrino that he was travelling at the time; and it is that name only which appears upon his tomb. A few weeks ago we read in the Roman newspapers that "the young, handsome, and wealthy Prince of Avellino had recently conducted to the altar the lovely and accomplished Signora Mira Palestrino, who was supposed to be lineally descended from the extinct dynasty of the Khans of the Crimea."

THE END.