

The Wandering Jew, V8

Eugene Sue

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PART THIRD.--THE REDEMPTION.

CHAPTER I. THE WANDERING JEW'S CHASTISEMENT.

'Tis night—the moon is brightly shining, the brilliant stars are sparkling in a sky of melancholy calmness, the shrill whistlings of a northerly wind—cold, bleak, and evil-bearing—are increasing: winding about, and bursting into violent blasts, with their harsh and hissing gusts, they are sweeping the heights of Montmartre. A man is standing on the very summit of the hill; his lengthened shadow, thrown out by the moon's pale beams, darkens the rocky ground in the distance. The traveller is surveying the huge city lying at his feet—the City of Paris—from whose profundities are cast up its towers, cupolas, domes, and steeples, in the bluish moisture of the horizon; while from the very centre of this sea of stones is rising a luminous vapor, reddening the starry azure of the sky above. It is the distant light of a myriad lamps which at night, the season for pleasure, is illuminating the noisy capital.

"No!" said the traveller, "it will not be. The Lord surely will not suffer it. Twice is quite enough. Five centuries ago, the avenging hand of the Almighty drove me hither from the depths of Asia. A solitary wanderer, I left in my track more mourning, despair, disaster, and death, than the innumerable armies of a hundred devastating conquerors could have produced. I then entered this city, and it was decimated. Two centuries ago that inexorable hand which led me through the world again conducted me here; and on that occasion, as on the previous one, that scourge, which at intervals the Almighty binds to my footsteps, ravaged this city, attacking first my brethren, already wearied by wretchedness and toil. My brethren! through me—the laborer of Jerusalem, cursed by the Lord, who in my person cursed the race of laborers—a race always suffering, always disinherited, always slaves, who like me, go on, on, on, without rest or intermission, without recompense, or hope; until at length, women, men, children, and old men, die under their iron yoke of self-murder, that others in their turn then take up, borne

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from age to age on their willing but aching shoulders. And here again, for the third time, in the course of five centuries, I have arrived at the summit of one of the hills which overlooks the city; and perhaps I bring again with me terror, desolation, and death. And this unhappy city, intoxicated in a whirl of joys, and nocturnal revelries, knows nothing about it—oh! it knows not that I am at its very gate. But no! no! my presence will not be a source of fresh calamity to it. The Lord, in His unsearchable wisdom, has brought me hither across France, making me avoid on my route all but the humblest villages, so that no increase of the funeral knell has, marked my journey. And then, moreover, the spectre has left me— that spectre, livid and green, with its deep bloodshot eyes. When I touched the soil of France, its moist and icy hand abandoned mine—it disappeared. And yet I feel the atmosphere of death surrounding me still. There is no cessation; the biting gusts of this sinister wind, which envelop me in their breath, seem by their envenomed breath to propagate the scourge. Doubtless the anger of the Lord is appeased. Maybe, my presence here is meant only as a threat, intending to bring those to their senses whom it ought to intimidate. It must be so; for were it otherwise, it would, on the contrary, strike a loud-sounding blow of greater terror, casting at once dread and death into the very heart of the country, into the bosom of this immense city. Oh, no! no! the Lord will have mercy; He will not condemn me to this new affliction. Alas! in this city my brethren are more numerous and more wretched than in any other. And must I bring death to them? No! the Lord will have mercy; for, alas! the seven descendants of my sister are at last all united in this city. And must I bring death to them? Death! instead of that immediate assistance they stand so much in need of? For that woman who, like myself, wanders from one end of the world into the other, has gone now on her everlasting journey, after having confounded their enemies' plots. In vain did she foretell that great evils still threatened those who are akin to me through my sister's blood. The unseen hand by which I am led, drives that woman away from me, even as though it were a whirlwind that swept her on. In vain she entreated and implored at the moment she was leaving those who are so dear to me.—At least, O Lord, permit me to stay until I shall have finished my task! Onward! A few days, for mercy's sake, only a few days! Onward! I leave these whom I am protecting on the very brink of an abyss! Onward! Onward!! And the wandering star is launched afresh on its perpetual course. But her voice traversed through space, calling me to the assistance of my own! When her voice reached me I felt that the offspring of my sister were still exposed to fearful dangers: those dangers are still increasing. Oh, say, say, Lord! shall the descendants of my sister escape those woes which for so many centuries have oppressed my race? Wilt Thou pardon me in them? Wilt Thou punish me in them? Oh! lead them, that they may obey the last wishes of their ancestor. Guide them, that they may join their charitable hearts, their powerful strength, their best wisdom, and their immense wealth, and work together for the future happiness of mankind, thereby, perhaps, enabled to ransom me from my eternal penalties. Let those divine words of the Son of Man, "Love ye one another!" be their only aim; and by the assistance of their all-powerful words, let them contend against and vanquish those false priests who have trampled on the precepts of love, of peace, and hope commanded by the Saviour, setting up in their stead the precepts of hatred, violence, and despair. Those false shepherds, supported by the powerful and wealthy of the world, who in all times have been their accomplices, instead of asking here below a little happiness for my brethren, who have been suffering and groaning for centuries, dare to utter, in Thy name, O Lord! that the poor must always be doomed to the tortures of this world, and that it is criminal in Thine eyes that they should either wish for or hope a mitigation of their sufferings on earth, because the happiness of the few and the wretchedness of nearly all mankind is Thine almighty will. Blasphemies! is it not the contrary of these homicidal words that is more worthy of the name of Divine will? Hear, me, O Lord! for mercy's sake. Snatch from their enemies the descendants of my sister, from the artisan up to the king's son. Do not permit them to crush the germ of a mighty and fruitful association, which, perhaps, under Thy protection, may take its place among the records of the happiness of mankind. Suffer me, O Lord! to unite those whom they are endeavoring to divide—to defend those whom they are attacking. Suffer me to bring hope to those from whom hope has fled, to give courage to those who are weak, to uphold those whom evil threatens, and to sustain those who would persevere in well-doing. And then, perhaps, their struggles, their devotedness, their virtues, this miseries might expiate my sin. Yes, mine—misfortune, misfortune alone, made me unjust and wicked. O Lord! since Thine almighty hand hath brought me hither, for some end unknown to me, disarm Thyself, I implore Thee, of Thine anger, and let not me be the instrument of Thy vengeance! There is enough of mourning in the earth these two years past—Thy creatures have fallen by millions in my footsteps. The world is decimated. A veil of mourning extends from one end of the globe to the other. I have traveled from Asia even to the Frozen Pole, and death has followed in my

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wake. Dost Thou not hear, O Lord! the universal wailings that mount up to Thee? Have mercy upon all, and upon me. One day, grant me but a single day, that I may collect the descendants of my sister together, and save them!" And uttering these words, the wanderer fell upon his knees, and raised his hands to heaven in a suppliant attitude.

Suddenly, the wind howled with redoubled violence; its sharp whistlings changed to a tempest. The Wanderer trembled, and exclaimed in a voice of terror, "O Lord! the blast of death is howling in its rage. It appears as though a whirlwind were lifting me up. Lord, wilt Thou not, then, hear my prayer? The spectre! O! do I behold the spectre? Yes, there it is; its cadaverous countenance is agitated by convulsive throes, its red eyes are rolling in their orbits. Begone! begone! Oh! its hand—its icy hand has seized on mine! Mercy, Lord, have mercy! 'Onward!' Oh, Lord! this scourge, this terrible avenging scourge! Must I, then, again carry it into this city, must my poor wretched brethren be the first to fall under it—though already so miserable? Mercy, mercy! 'Onward!' And the descendants of my sister—oh, pray, have mercy, mercy! 'Onward!' O Lord, have pity on me! I can no longer keep my footing on the ground, the spectre is dragging me over the brow of the hill; my course is as rapid as the death-bearing wind that whistles in my track; I already approach the walls of the city. Oh, mercy, Lord, mercy on the descendants of my sister—spare them! do not compel me to be their executioner, and let them triumph over their enemies. Onward, onward! The ground is fleeing from under me; I am already at the city gate; oh, yet, Lord, yet there is time; oh, have mercy on this slumbering city, that it may not even now awaken with the lamentations of terror, of despair and death! O Lord, I touch the threshold of the gate; verily Thou wilt it so then. 'Tis done—Paris! the scourge is in thy bosom! oh, cursed, cursed evermore am I. Onward! on! on!"[34]

[34] In 1346, the celebrated Black Death ravaged the earth, presenting the same symptoms as the cholera, and the same inexplicable phenomena as to its progress and the results in its route. In 1660 a similar epidemic decimated the world. It is well known that when the cholera first broke out in Paris, it had taken a wide and unaccountable leap; and, also memorable, a north-east wind prevailed during its utmost fierceness.

CHAPTER II. THE DESCENDANTS OF THE WANDERING JEW.

That lonely wayfarer whom we have heard so plaintively urging to be relieved of his gigantic burden of misery, spoke of "his sister's descendants" being of all ranks, from the working man to the king's son. They were seven in number, who had, in the year 1832, been led to Paris, directly or indirectly, by a bronze medal which distinguished them from others, bearing these words:—

VICTIM
of
L. C. D. J.
Pray for me!

PARIS,
February the 13th, 1682.

IN PARIS,
Rue St. Francois, No. 3,
In a century and a half
you will be.
February the 13th, 1832.

PRAY FOR ME!

The son of the King of Mundi had lost his father and his domains in India by the irresistible march of the English, and was but in title Prince Djalma. Spite of attempts to make his departure from the East delayed until after the period when he could have obeyed his medal's command, he had reached France by the second month of 1832. Nevertheless, the results of shipwreck had detained him from Paris till after that date. A second possessor of this token had remained unaware of its existence, only discovered by accident. But an enemy who sought to thwart the

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union of these seven members, had shut her up in a mad-house, from which she was released only after that day. Not alone was she in imprisonment. An old Bonapartist, General Simon, Marshal of France, and Duke de Ligny, had left a wife in Russian exile, while he (unable to follow Napoleon to St. Helena) continued to fight the English in India by means of Prince Djalma's Sepoys, whom he drilled. On the latter's defeat, he had meant to accompany his young friend to Europe, induced the more by finding that the latter's mother, a Frenchwoman, had left him such another bronze medal as he knew his wife to have had.

Unhappily, his wife had perished in Siberia, without his knowing it, any more than he did, that she had left twin daughters, Rose and Blanche. Fortunately for them, one who had served their father in the Grenadiers of the Guard. Francis Baudoin, nicknamed Dagobert, undertook to fulfil the dying mother's wishes, inspired by the medal. Saving a check at Leipsic, where one Morok the lion-tamer's panther had escaped from its cage and killed Dagobert's horse, and a subsequent imprisonment (which the Wandering Jew's succoring hand had terminated) the soldier and his orphan charges had reached Paris in safety and in time. But there, a renewal of the foe's attempt had gained its end. By skillful devices, Dagobert and his son Agricola were drawn out of the way while Rose and Blanche Simon were decoyed into a nunnery, under the eyes of Dagobert's wife. But she had been bound against interfering by the influence of the Jesuit confessional. The fourth was M. Hardy, a manufacturer, and the fifth, Jacques Rennepont, a drunken scamp of a workman, who were more easily fended off, the latter in a sponging house, the former by a friend's lure. Adrienne de Cardoville, daughter of the Count of Rennepont, who had also been Duke of Cardoville, was the lady who had been unwarrantably placed in the lunatic asylum. The fifth, unaware of the medal, was Gabriel, a youth, who had been brought up, though a foundling, in Dagobert's family, as a brother to Agricola. He had entered holy orders, and more, was a Jesuit, in name though not in heart. Unlike the others, his return from abroad had been smoothed. He had signed away all his future prospects, for the benefit of the order of Loyola, and, moreover, executed a more complete deed of transfer on the day, the 13th of February, 1832, when he, alone of the heirs, stood in the room of the house, No. 3, Rue St. Francois, claiming what was a vast surprise for the Jesuits, who, a hundred and fifty years before, had discovered that Count Marius de Rennepont had secreted a considerable amount of his wealth, all of which had been confiscated to them, in those painful days of dragooning, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. They had bargained for some thirty or forty millions of francs to be theirs, by educating Gabriel into resigning his inheritance to them, but it was two hundred and twelve millions which the Jesuit representatives (Father d'Aigrigny and his secretary, Rodin) were amazed to hear their nursling placed in possession of. They had the treasure in their hands, in fact, when a woman of strangely sad beauty had mysteriously entered the room where the will had been read, and laid a paper before the notary. It was a codicil, duly drawn up and signed, deferring the carrying out of the testament until the first day of June the same year. The Jesuits fled from the house, in rage and intense disappointment. Father d'Aigrigny was so stupor-stricken at the defeat, that he bade his secretary at once write off to Rome that the Rennepont inheritance had escaped them, and hopes to seize it again were utterly at an end. Upon this, Rodin had revolted, and shown that he had authority to command where he had, so far, most humbly obeyed. Many such spies hang about their superior's heels, with full powers to become the governor in turn, at a moment's notice. Thenceforward, he, Rodin, had taken the business into his own hands. He had let Rose and Blanche Simon out of the convent into their father's arms. He had gone in person to release Adrienne de Cardoville from the asylum. More, having led her to sigh for Prince Djalma, he prompted the latter to burn for her.

He let not M. Hardy escape. A friend whom the latter treated as a brother, had been shown up to him as a mere spy of the Jesuits; the woman whom he adored, a wedded woman, alas! who had loved him in spite of her vows, had been betrayed. Her mother had compelled her to hide her shame in America, and, as she had often said—"Much as you are endeared to me, I cannot waver between you and my mother!" so she had obeyed, without one farewell word to him. Confess, Rodin was a more dextrous man than his late master! In the pages that ensue farther proofs of his superiority in baseness and satanic heartlessness will not be wanting.

CHAPTER III. THE ATTACK.

On M. Hardy's learning from the confidential go-between of the lovers, that his mistress had been taken away by her mother, he turned from Rodin and dashed away in a post carriage. At the same moment, as loud as the rattle of the wheels, there arose the shouts of a band of workmen and rioters, hired by the Jesuit's emissaries, coming to attack Hardy's operatives. An old grudge long existing between them and a rival manufacturer's—Baron Tripeaud—laborers, fanned the flames. When M. Hardy had left the factory, Rodin, who was not prepared for this sudden departure, returned slowly to his hackney-coach; but he stopped suddenly, and started with pleasure and surprise, when he saw, at some distance, Marshall Simon and his father advancing towards one of the wings of the Common Dwelling-house; for an accidental circumstance had so far delayed the interview of the father and son.

"Very well!" said Rodin. "Better and better! Now, only let my man have found out and persuaded little Rose-Pompon!"

And Rodin hastened towards his hackney-coach. At this moment, the wind, which continued to rise, brought to the ear of the Jesuit the war song of the approaching Wolves.

The workman was in the garden. The marshal said to him, in a voice of such deep emotion that the old man started; "Father, I am very unhappy."

A painful expression, until then concealed, suddenly darkened the countenance of the marshal.

"You unhappy?" cried father Simon, anxiously, as he pressed nearer to the marshal.

"For some days, my daughters have appeared constrained in manner, and lost in thought. During the first moments of our re-union, they were mad with joy and happiness. Suddenly, all has changed; they are becoming more and more sad. Yesterday, I detected tears in their eyes; then deeply moved, I clasped them in my arms, and implored them to tell me the cause of their sorrow. Without answering, they threw themselves on my neck, and covered my face with their tears."

"It is strange. To what do you attribute this alteration?"

"Sometimes, I think I have not sufficiently concealed from them the grief occasioned me by the loss of their mother, and they are perhaps miserable that they do not suffice for my happiness. And yet (inexplicable as it is) they seem not only to understand, but to share my sorrow. Yesterday, Blanche said to me: `How much happier still should we be, if our mother were with us!—'"

"Sharing your sorrow, they cannot reproach you with it. There must be some other cause for their grief."

"Yes," said the marshal, looking fixedly at his father; "yes—but to penetrate this secret—it would be necessary not to leave them."

"What do you mean?"

"First learn, father, what are the duties which would keep me here; then you shall know those which may take me away from you, from my daughters, and from my other child."

"What other child?"

"The son of my old friend, the Indian Prince."

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"Djalma? Is there anything the matter with him?"

"Father, he frightens me. I told you, father, of his mad and unhappy passion for Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"Does that frighten you, my son?" said the old man, looking at the marshal with surprise. "Djalma is only eighteen, and, at that age, one love drives away another."

"You have no idea of the ravages which the passion has already made in the ardent, indomitable boy; sometimes, fits of savage ferocity follow the most painful dejection. Yesterday, I came suddenly upon him; his eyes were bloodshot, his features contracted with rage; yielding to an impulse of mad fury, he was piercing with his poinard a cushion of red cloth, whilst he exclaimed, panting for breath, 'Ha blood!—I will have blood!' 'Unhappy boy!' I said to him, 'what means this insane passion?' 'I'm killing the man!' replied he, in a hollow and savage voice: it is thus he designates his supposed rival."

"There is indeed something terrible," said the old man, "in such a passion, in such a heart."

"At other times," resumed the marshal, "it is against Mdlle. de Cardoville that his rage bursts forth; and at others, against himself. I have been obliged to remove his weapons, for a man who came with him from Java, and who appears much attached to him, has informed me that he suspected him of entertaining some thoughts of suicide."

"Unfortunate boy!"

"Well, father," said Marshal Simon, with profound bitterness; "it is at the moment when my daughters and my adopted son require all my solicitude, that I am perhaps on the eve of quitting them."

"Of quitting them?"

"Yes, to fulfil a still more sacred duty than that imposed by friendship or family," said the marshal, in so grave and solemn a tone, that his father exclaimed, with deep emotion: "What can this duty be?"

"Father," said the marshal, after remaining a moment in thoughtful silence, "who made me what I am? Who gave me the ducal title, and the marshal's baton?"

"Napoleon."

"For you, the stern republican, I know that he lost all his value, when from the first citizen of a Republic he became an emperor.

"I cursed his weakness," said Father Simon, sadly; "the demi-god sank into a man."

"But for me, father—for me, the soldier, who have always fought beside him, or under his eye—for me, whom he raised from the lowest rank in the army to the highest—for me, whom he loaded with benefits and marks of affection—for me, he was more than a hero, he was a friend—and there was as much gratitude as admiration in my idolatry for him. When he was exiled, I would fain have shared his exile; they refused me that favor; then I conspired, then I drew my sword against those who had robbed his son of the crown which France had given him."

"And, in your position, you did well, Pierre; without sharing your admiration, I understood your gratitude. The projects of exile, the conspiracies—I approved them all—you know it."

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"Well, then, that disinherited child, in whose name I conspired seventeen years ago, is now of an age to wield his father's sword."

"Napoleon II!" exclaimed the old man, looking at his son with surprise and extreme anxiety; "the king of Rome!"

"King? no; he is no longer king. Napoleon? no; he is no longer Napoleon. They have given him some Austrian name, because the other frightened them. Everything frightens them. Do you know what they are doing with the son of the Emperor?" resumed the marshal, with painful excitement. "They are torturing him—killing him by inches!"

"Who told you this?"

"Somebody who knows, whose words are but too true. Yes; the son of the Emperor struggles with all his strength against a premature death. With his eyes turned towards France, he waits—he waits—and no one comes—no one—out of all the men that his father made as great as they once were little, not one thinks of that crowned child, whom they are stifling, till he dies."

"But you think of him?"

"Yes; but I had first to learn—oh! there is no doubt of it, for I have not derived all my information from the same source—I had first to learn the cruel fate of this youth, to whom I also swore allegiance; for one day, as I have told you, the Emperor, proud and loving father as he was, showed him to me in his cradle, and said: 'My old friend, you will be to the son what you have been to the father; who loves us, loves our France.'"

"Yes, I know it. Many times you have repeated those words to me, and, like yourself, I have been moved by them."

"Well, father! suppose, informed of the sufferings of the son of the Emperor, I had seen—with the positive certainty that I was not deceived— a letter from a person of high rank in the court of Vienna, offering to a man that was still faithful to the Emperor's memory, the means of communicating with the king of Rome, and perhaps of saving him from his tormentors—"

"What next?" said the workman, looking fixedly at his son. "Suppose Napoleon II. once at liberty—"

"What next?" exclaimed the marshal. Then he added, in a suppressed voice: "Do you think, father, that France is insensible to the humiliations she endures? Do you think that the memory of the Emperor is extinct? No, no; it is, above all, in the days of our country's degradation, that she whispers that sacred name. How would it be, then, were that name to rise glorious on the frontier, reviving in his son? Do you not think that the heart of all France would beat for him?"

"This implies a conspiracy—against the present government—with Napoleon II. for a watchword," said the workman. "This is very serious."

"I told you, father, that I was very unhappy; judge if it be not so," cried the marshal. "Not only I ask myself, if I ought to abandon my children and you, to run the risk of so daring an enterprise, but I ask myself if I am not bound to the present government, which, in acknowledging my rank and title, if it bestowed no favor, at least did me an act of justice. How shall I decide?—abandon all that I love, or remain insensible to the tortures of Emperor—of that Emperor to the son of the whom I owe everything—to whom I have sworn fidelity, both to himself and child? Shall I lose this only opportunity, perhaps, of saving him, or shall I conspire in his favor? Tell me, if I exaggerate what I owe to the memory of the Emperor? Decide for me, father! During a whole sleepless night, I strove to discover, in the midst of this chaos, the line prescribed by honor; but I only wandered from

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indecision to indecision. You alone, father—you alone, I repeat, can direct me."

After remaining for some moments in deep thought, the old man was about to answer, when some person, running across the little garden, opened the door hastily, and entered the room in which were the marshal and his father. It was Olivier, the young workman, who had been able to effect his escape from the village in which the Wolves had assembled.

"M. Simon! M. Simon!" cried he, pale, and panting for breath. "They are here—close at hand. They have come to attack the factory."

"Who?" cried the old man, rising hastily.

"The Wolves, quarrymen, and stone-cutters, joined on the road by a crowd of people from the neighborhood, and vagabonds from town. Do you not hear them? They are shouting, `Death to the Devourers!'"

The clamor was indeed approaching, and grew more and more distinct.

"It is the same noise that I heard just now," said the marshal, rising in his turn.

"There are more than two hundred of them, M. Simon," said Olivier; "they are armed with clubs and stones, and unfortunately the greater part of our workmen are in Paris. We are not above forty here in all; the women and children are already flying to their chambers, screaming for terror. Do you not hear them?"

The ceiling shook beneath the tread of many hasty feet.

"Will this attack be a serious one?" said the marshal to his father, who appeared more and more dejected.

"Very serious," said the old man; "there is nothing more fierce than these combats between different unions; and everything has been done lately to excite the people of the neighborhood against the factory."

"If you are so inferior in number," said the marshal, "you must begin by barricading all the doors—and then—"

He was unable to conclude. A burst of ferocious cries shook the windows of the room, and seemed so near and loud, that the marshal, his father, and the young workman, rushed out into the little garden, which was bounded on one side by a wall that separated it from the fields. Suddenly whilst the shouts redoubled in violence, a shower of large stones, intended to break the windows of the house, smashed some of the panes on the first story, struck against the wall, and fell into the garden, all around the marshal and his father. By a fatal chance, one of these large stones struck the old man on the head. He staggered, bent forward, and fell bleeding into the arms of Marshal Simon, just as arose from without, with increased fury, the savage cries of, "Death to the Devourers!"

CHAPTER IV. THE WOLVES AND THE DEVOURERS.

It was a frightful thing to view the approach of the lawless crowd, whose first act of hostility had been so fatal to Marshal Simon's father. One wing of the Common Dwelling-house, which joined the garden-wall on that side, was next to the fields. It was there that the Wolves began their attack. The precipitation of their march, the halt they had made at two public-houses on the road, their ardent impatience for the approaching struggle, had inflamed these men to a high pitch of savage excitement. Having discharged their first shower of stones, most of the assailants stooped down to look for more ammunition. Some of them, to do so with greater ease, held their bludgeons between their teeth; others had placed them against the wall; here and there, groups had formed tumultuously round the principal leaders of the band; the most neatly dressed of these men wore frocks, with caps,

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whilst others were almost in rags, for, as we have already said, many of the hangers-on at the barriers, and people without any profession, had joined the troop of the Wolves, whether welcome or not. Some hideous women, with tattered garments, who always seem to follow in the track of such people, accompanied them on this occasion, and, by their cries and fury, inflamed still more the general excitement. One of them, tall, robust, with purple complexion, blood-shot eyes, and toothless jaws, had a handkerchief over her head, from beneath which escaped her yellow, frowsy hair. Over her ragged gown, she wore an old plaid shawl, crossed over her bosom, and tied behind her back. This hag seemed possessed with a demon. She had tucked up her half-torn sleeves; in one hand she brandished a stick, in the other she grasped a huge stone; her companions called her Ciboule (scullion).

This horrible hag exclaimed, in a hoarse voice: "I'll bite the women of the factory; I'll make them bleed."

The ferocious words were received with applause by her companions, and with savage cries of "Ciboule forever!" which excited her to frenzy.

Amongst the other leaders, was a small, dry pale man, with the face of a ferret, and a black beard all round the chin; he wore a scarlet Greek cap, and beneath his long blouse, perfectly new, appeared a pair of neat cloth trousers, strapped over thin boots. This man was evidently of a different condition of life from that of the other persons in the troop; it was he, in particular, who ascribed the most irritating and insulting language to the workmen of the factory, with regard to the inhabitants of the neighborhood. He howled a great deal, but he carried neither stick nor stone. A full-faced, fresh-colored man, with a formidable bass voice, like a chorister's, asked him: "Will you not have a shot at those impious dogs, who might bring down the Cholera on the country, as the curate told us?"

"I will have a better shot than you," said the little man, with a singular, sinister smile.

"And with what, I'd like to see?"

"Probably, with this," said the little man, stooping to pick up a large stone; but, as he bent, a well-filled though light bag, which he appeared to carry under his blouse, fell to the ground.

"Look, you are losing both bag and baggage," said the other; "it does not seem very heavy."

"They are samples of wool," answered the man with the ferret's face, as he hastily picked up the bag, and replaced it under his blouse; then he added: "Attention! the big blaster is going to speak."

And, in fact, he who exercised the most complete ascendancy over this irritated crowd was the terrible quarryman. His gigantic form towered so much above the multitude, that his great head, bound in its ragged handkerchief, and his Herculean shoulders, covered with a fallow goat-skin, were always visible above the level of that dark and swarming crowd, only relieved here and there by a few women's caps, like so many white points. Seeing to what a degree of exasperation the minds of the crowd had reached, the small number of honest, but misguided workmen, who had allowed themselves to be drawn into this dangerous enterprise, under the pretext of a quarrel between rival unions, now fearing for the consequences of the struggle, tried, but too late, to abandon the main body. Pressed close, and as it were, girt in with the more hostile groups, dreading to pass for cowards, or to expose themselves to the bad treatment of the majority, they were forced to wait for a more favorable moment to effect their escape. To the savage cheers, which had accompanied the first discharge of stones, succeeded a deep silence commanded by the stentorian voice of the quarryman.

"The Wolves have howled," he exclaimed; "let us wait and see how the Devourers will answer, and when they will begin the fight."

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"We must draw them out of their factory, and fight them on neutral ground," said the little man with the ferret's face, who appeared to be the thieves' advocate; "otherwise there would be trespass."

"What do we care about trespass?" cried the horrible hag, Ciboule; "in or out, I will tear the chits of the factory."

"Yes, yes," cried other hideous creatures, as ragged as Ciboule herself; "we must not leave all to the men."

"We must have our fun, too!"

"The women of the factory say that all the women of the neighborhood are drunken drabs," cried the little man with the ferret's face.

"Good! we'll pay them for it."

"The women shall have their share."

"That's our business."

"They like to sing in their Common House," cried Ciboule; "we will make them sing the wrong side of their mouths, in the key of `Oh, dear me!'"

This pleasantry was received with shouts, hootings, and furious stamping of feet, to which the stentorian voice of the quarryman put a term by roaring: "Silence!"

"Silence! silence!" repeated the crowd. "Hear the blaster!"

"If the Devourers are cowards enough not to dare to show themselves, after a second volley of stones, there is a door down there which we can break open, and we will soon hunt them from their holes."

"It would be better to draw them out, so that none might remain in the factory," said the little old man with the ferret's face, who appeared to have some secret motive.

"A man fights where he can," cried the quarryman, in a voice of thunder; "all, right, if we can but once catch hold. We could fight on a sloping roof, or on the top of a wall—couldn't we, my Wolves?"

"Yes, yes!" cried the crowd, still more excited by those savage words; "if they don't come out, we will break in."

"We will see their fine palace!"

"The pagans haven't even a chapel," said the bass voice. "The curate has damned them all!"

"Why should they have a palace, and we nothing but dog-kennels?"

"Hardy's workmen say that kennels are good enough for such as you." said the little man with the ferret's face.

"Yes, yes! they said so."

"We'll break all their traps."

"We'll pull down their bazaar."

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"We'll throw the house out of the windows."

"When we have made the mealy-mouthed chits sing," cried Ciboule, "we will make them dance to the clatter of stones on their heads."

"Come, my Wolves! attention!" cried the quarryman, still in the same stentorian voice; "one more volley, and if the Devourers do not come out, down with the door!"

This proposition was received with cheers of savage ardor, and the quarryman, whose voice rose above the tumult, cried with all the strength of his herculean lungs: "Attention, my Wolves. Make ready! all together. Now, are you ready?"

"Yes, yes—all ready!"

"Then, present!—fire!" And, for the second time, a shower of enormous stones poured upon that side of the Common Dwelling-house which was turned towards the fields. A part of these projectiles broke such of the windows as had been spared by the first volley. To the sharp smashing and cracking of glass were joined the ferocious cries uttered in chorus by this formidable mob, drunk with its own excesses: "Death to the Devourers!"

Soon these outcries became perfectly frantic, when, through the broken windows, the assailants perceived women running in terror, some with children in their arms, and others raising their hands to heaven, calling aloud for help; whilst a few, bolder than the rest, leaned out of the windows, and tried to fasten the outside blinds.

"There come the ants out of their holes!" cried Ciboule, stooping to pick up a stone. "We must have a fling at them for luck!" The stone, hurled by the steady, masculine hand of the virago, went straight to its mark, and struck an unfortunate woman who was trying to close one of the shutters.

"Hit in the white!" cried the hideous creature.

"Well done, Ciboule!—you've rapped her coker-nut!" cried a voice.

"Ciboule forever!"

"Come out, you Devourers, if you dare!"

"They have said a hundred times, that the neighbors were too cowardly even to come and look at their house," squealed the little man with the ferret's face.

"And now they show the white feather!"

"If they will not come out," cried the quarryman, in voice of thunder, "let us smoke them out!"

"Yes, yes!"

"Let's break open the door!"

"We are sure to find them!"

"Come on! come on!"

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The crowd, with the quarryman at their head, and Ciboule not far from him, brandishing a stick, advanced tumultuously towards one of the great doors. The ground shook beneath the rapid tread of the mob, which had now ceased shouting; but the confused, and, as it were, subterraneous noise, sounded even more ominous than those savage outcries. The Wolves soon arrived opposite the massive oaken door. At the moment the blaster raised a sledgehammer, the door opened suddenly. Some of the most determined of the assailants were about to rush in at this entrance; but the quarryman stepped back, extending his arm as if to moderate their ardor and impose silence. Then his followers gathered round him.

The half-open door discovered a party of workmen, unfortunately by no means numerous, but with countenances full of resolution. They had armed themselves hastily with forks, iron bars, and clubs. Agricola, who was their leader, held in his hand a heavy sledge-hammer. The young workman was very pale; but the fire of his eye, his menacing look, and the intrepid assurance of his bearing, showed that his father's blood boiled in his veins, and that in such a struggle he might become fear-inspiring. Yet he succeeded in restraining himself, and challenged the quarryman, in a firm voice: "What do you want?"

"A fight!" thundered the blaster.

"Yes, yes! a fight!" repeated the crowd.

"Silence, my Wolves!" cried the quarryman, as he turned round, and stretched forth his large hand towards the multitude. Then addressing Agricola, he said: "The Wolves have come to ask for a fight."

"With whom?"

"With the Devourers."

"There are no Devourers here," replied Agricola; "we are only peaceable workmen. So begone."

"Well! here are the Wolves, that will eat your quiet workmen."

"The Wolves will eat no one here," said Agricola, looking full at the quarryman, who approached him with a threatening air; "they can only frighten little children."

"Oh! you think so," said the quarryman, with a savage sneer. Then raising his weapon, he shook it in Agricola's face, exclaiming: "Is that any laughing matter?"

"Is that?" answered Agricola, with a rapid movement, parrying the stone-sledge with his own hammer.

"Iron against iron—hammer against hammer—that suits me," said the quarryman.

"It does not matter what suits you," answered Agricola, hardly able to restrain himself. "You have broken our windows, frightened our women, and wounded—perhaps killed—the oldest workman in the factory, who at this moment lies bleeding in the arms of his son." Here Agricola's voice trembled in spite of himself. "It is, I think, enough,"

"No; the Wolves are hungry for more," answered the blaster; "you must come out (cowards that you are!), and fight us on the plain."

"Yes! yes! battle!—let them come out!" cried the crowd, howling, hissing, waving their sticks and pushing further into the small space which separated them from the door.

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"We will have no battle," answered Agricola: "we will not leave our home; but if you have the misfortune to pass this," said Agricola, throwing his cap upon the threshold, and setting his foot on it with an intrepid air, "if you pass this, you attack us in our own house, and you will be answerable for all that may happen."

"There or elsewhere we will have the fight! the Wolves must eat the Devourers. Now for the attack!" cried the fierce quarryman, raising his hammer to strike Agricola.

But the latter, throwing himself on one side by a sudden leap, avoided the blow, and struck with his hammer full at the chest of the quarryman, who staggered for a moment, but instantly recovering his legs, rushed furiously on Agricola, crying: "Follow me, Wolves!"

CHAPTER V. THE RETURN.

As soon as the combat had begun between Agricola and the blaster, the general fight became terrible, ardent, implacable. A flood of assailants, following the quarryman's steps, rushed into the house with irresistible fury; others, unable to force their way through this dreadful crowd, where the more impetuous squeezed, stifled, and crushed these who were less so, went round in another direction, broke through some lattice work, and thus placed the people of the factory, as it were, between two fires. Some resisted courageously; others, seeing Ciboule, followed by some of her horrible companions, and by several of the most ill-looking ruffians, hastily enter that part of the Common-Dwelling-house in which the women had taken refuge, hurried in pursuit of this band; but some of the hag's companions, having faced about, and vigorously defended the entrance of the staircase against the workmen, Ciboule, with three or four like herself, and about the same number of no less ignoble men, rushed through the rooms, with the intention of robbing or destroying all that came in their way. A door, which at first resisted their efforts, was soon broken through; Ciboule rushed into the apartment with a stick in her hand, her hair dishevelled, furious, and, as it were, maddened with the noise and tumult. A beautiful young girl (it was Angela), who appeared anxious to defend the entrance to a second chamber, threw herself on her knees, pale and supplicating, and raising her clasped hands, exclaimed: "Do not hurt my mother!"

"I'll serve you out first, and your mother afterwards," replied the horrible woman, throwing herself on the poor girl, and endeavoring to tear her face with her nails, whilst the rest of the ruffianly band broke the glass and the clock with their sticks, and possessed themselves of some articles of wearing apparel.

Angela, struggling with Ciboule, uttered loud cries of distress, and still attempted to guard the room in which her mother had taken refuge; whilst the latter, leaning from the window, called Agricola to their assistance. The smith was now engaged with the huge blaster. In a close struggle, their hammers had become useless, and with bloodshot eyes and clinched teeth, chest to chest, and limbs twined together like two serpents, they made the most violent efforts to overthrow each other. Agricola, bent forward, held under his right arm the left leg of the quarryman, which he had seized in parrying a violent kick; but such was the Herculean strength of the leader of the Wolves, that he remained firm as a tower, though resting only on one leg. With the hand that was still free (for the other was gripped by Agricola as in a vise), he endeavored with violent blows to break the jaws of the smith, who, leaning his head forward, pressed his forehead hard against the breast of his adversary.

"The Wolf will break the Devourer's teeth, and he shall devour no more," said the quarryman.

"You are no true Wolf," answered the smith, redoubling his efforts; "the true Wolves are honest fellows, and do not come ten against one."

"True or false, I will break your teeth."

"And I your paw," said the smith, giving so violent a wrench to the leg of the quarryman, that the latter uttered a

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cry of acute pain, and, with the rage of a wild beast, butting suddenly forward with his head, succeeded in biting Agricola in the side of the neck.

The pang of this bite forced Agricola to make a movement, which enabled the quarryman to disengage his leg. Then, with a superhuman effort, he threw himself with his whole weight on Agricola, and brought him to the ground, falling himself upon him.

At this juncture, Angela's mother, leaning from one of the windows of the Common Dwelling-house, exclaimed in a heart-rending voice: "Help, Agricola!—they are killing my child!"

"Let me go—and on, my honor—I will fight you tomorrow, or when you will," said Agricola, panting for breath.

"No warmed-up food for me; I eat all hot," answered the quarryman, seizing the smith by the throat, whilst he tried to place one of his knees upon his chest.

"Help!—they are killing my child!" cried Angela's mother, in a voice of despair.

"Mercy! I ask mercy! Let me go!" said Agricola, making the most violent efforts to escape.

"I am too hungry," answered the quarryman.

Exasperated by the terror which Angela's danger occasioned him, Agricola redoubled his efforts, when the quarryman suddenly felt his thigh seized by the sharp teeth of a dog, and at the same instant received from a vigorous hand three or four heavy blows with a stick upon his head. He relaxed his grasp, and fell stunned upon his hand and knee, whilst he mechanically raised his other arm to parry the blows, which ceased as soon as Agricola was delivered.

"Father, you have saved me!" cried the smith, springing up. "If only I am in time to rescue Angela!"

"Run!—never mind me!" answered Dagobert; and Agricola rushed into the house.

Dagobert, accompanied by Spoil-sport, had come, as we have already said, to bring Marshal Simon's daughters to their grandfather. Arriving in the midst of the tumult, the soldier had collected a few workmen to defend the entrance of the chamber, to which the marshal's father had been carried in a dying state. It was from this post that the soldier had seen Agricola's danger. Soon after, the rush of the conflict separated Dagobert from the quarryman, who remained for some moments insensible. Arrived in two bounds at the Common Dwelling-house, Agricola succeeded in forcing his way through the men who defended the staircase, and rushed into the corridor that led to Angela's chamber. At the moment he reached it, the unfortunate girl was mechanically guarding her face with both hands against Ciboule, who, furious as the hyena over its prey, was trying to scratch and disfigure her.

To spring upon the horrible hag, seize her by her yellow hair with irresistible hand, drag her backwards, and then with one cuff, stretch her full length upon the ground, was for Agricola an achievement as rapid as thought. Furious with rage, Ciboule rose again almost instantly; but at this moment, several workmen, who had followed close upon Agricola, were able to attack with advantage, and whilst the smith lifted the fainting form of Angela, and carried her into the next room, Ciboule and her band were driven from that part of the house.

After the first fire of the assault, the small number of real Wolves, who, as Agricola said, were in the main honest fellows, but had the weakness to let themselves be drawn into this enterprise, under the pretext of a quarrel between rival unions, seeing the excesses committed by the rabble who accompanied them, turned suddenly round, and ranged themselves on the side of the Devourers.

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"There are no longer here either Wolves or Devourers," said one of the most determined Wolves to Olivier, with whom he had been fighting roughly and fairly; "there are none here but honest workmen, who must unite to drive out a set of scoundrels, that have come only to break and pillage."

"Yes," added another; "it was against our will that they began by breaking your windows."

"The big blaster did it all," said another; "the true Wolves wash their hands of him. We shall soon settle his account."

"We may fight every day—but we ought to esteem each other." [35]

This defection of a portion of the assailants (unfortunately but a small portion) gave new spirit to the workmen of the factory, and all together, Wolves and Devourers, though very inferior in number, opposed themselves to the band of vagabonds, who were proceeding to new excesses. Some of these wretches, still further excited by the little man with the ferret's face, a secret emissary of Baron Tripeaud, now rushed in a mass towards the workshops of M. Hardy. Then began a lamentable devastation. These people, seized with the mania of destruction, broke without remorse machines of the greatest value, and most delicate construction; half-manufactured articles were pitilessly destroyed; a savage emulation seemed to inspire these barbarians, and those workshops, so lately the model of order and well-regulated economy, were soon nothing but a wreck; the courts were strewn with fragments of all kinds of wares, which were thrown from the windows with ferocious outcries, or savage bursts of laughter. Then, still thanks to the incitements of the little man with the ferret's face, the books of M. Hardy, archives of commercial industry, so indispensable to the trader, were scattered to the wind, torn, trampled under foot, in a sort of infernal dance, composed of all that was most impure in this assembly of low, filthy, and ragged men and women, who held each other by the hand, and whirled round and round with horrible clamor. Strange and painful contrasts! At the height of the stunning noise of these horrid deeds of tumult and devastation, a scene of imposing and mournful calm was taking place in the chamber of Marshal Simon's father, the door of which was guarded by a few devoted men. The old workman was stretched on his bed, with a bandage across his blood-stained white hair. His countenance was livid, his breathing oppressed, his look fixed and glazed.

Marshal Simon, standing at the head of the bed, bending over his father, watched in despairing anguish the least sign of consciousness on the part of the dying man, near whom was a physician, with his finger on the failing pulse. Rose and Blanche, brought hither by Dagobert, were kneeling beside the bed, their hands clasped, and their eyes bathed in tears; a little further, half hidden in the shadows of the room, for the hours had passed quickly, and the night was at hand, stood Dagobert himself, with his arms crossed upon his breast, and his features painfully contracted. A profound and solemn silence reigned in this chamber, only interrupted by the broken sobs of Rose and Blanche, or by Father Simon's hard breathing. The eyes of the marshal were dry, gloomy, and full of fire. He only withdrew them from his father's face, to interrogate the physician by a look. There are strange coincidences in life. That physician was Dr. Baleinier. The asylum of the doctor being close to the barrier that was nearest to the factory, and his fame being widely spread in the neighborhood, they had run to fetch him on the first call for medical assistance.

Suddenly, Dr. Baleinier made a movement; the marshal, who had not taken his eyes off him, exclaimed: "Is there any hope?"

"At least, my lord duke, the pulse revives a little."

"He is saved!" said the marshal.

"Do not cherish false hopes, my lord duke," answered the doctor, gravely: "the pulse revives, owing to the powerful applications to the feet, but I know not what will be the issue of the crisis."

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"Father! father! do you hear me?" cried the marshal, seeing the old man slightly move his head, and feebly raise his eyelids. He soon opened his eyes, and this time their intelligence had returned.

"Father! you live—you know me!" cried the marshal, giddy with joy and hope.

"Pierre! are you there?" said the old man, in a weak voice. "Your hand— give—it—" and he made a feeble movement.

"Here, father!" cried the marshal, as he pressed the hands of the old man in his own.

Then, yielding to an impulse of delight, he bent over his father, covered his hands, face, and hair with kisses, and repeated: "He lives! kind heaven, he lives! he is saved!"

At this instant, the noise of the struggle which had recommenced between the rabble, the Wolves, and the Devourers, reached the ears of the dying man.

"That noise! that noise!" said he: "they are fighting."

"It is growing less, I think," said the marshal, in order not to agitate his father.

"Pierre," said the old man, in a weak and broken voice, "I have not long to live."

"Father—"

"Let me speak, child; if I can but tell you all."

"Sir," said Baleinier piously to the old workman, "heaven may perhaps work a miracle in your favor; show yourself grateful, and allow a priest—"

"A priest! Thank you, sir—I have my son," said the old man; "in his arms, I will render up my soul—which has always been true and honest."

"You die?" exclaimed the marshal; "no! no!"

"Pierre," said the old man, in a voice which, firm at first, gradually grew fainter, "just now—you ask my advice in a very serious matter. I think, that the wish to tell you of your duty—has recalled me—for a moment—to life—for I should die miserable—if I thought you in a road unworthy of yourself and me. Listen to me, my son—my noble son—at this last hour, a father cannot deceive himself. You have a great duty to perform—under pain—of not acting like a man of honor—under pain of neglecting my last will. You ought, without hesitation—"

Here the voice failed the old man. When he had pronounced the last sentence, he became quite unintelligible. The only words that Marshal Simon could distinguish, were these: "Napoleon II.—oath—dishonor—my son!"

Then the old workman again moved his lips mechanically —and all was over. At the moment he expired, the night was quite come, and terrible shouts were heard from without, of "Fire! Fire!" The conflagration had broken out in one of the workshops, filled with inflammable stuff, into which had glided the little man with the ferret's face. At the same time, the roll of drums was heard in the distance, announcing the arrival of a detachment of troops from town.

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During an hour, in spite of every effort, the fire had been spreading through the factory. The night is clear, cold, starlight; the wind blows keenly from the north, with a moaning sound. A man, walking across the fields, where the rising ground conceals the fire from him, advances with slow and unsteady steps. It is M. Hardy. He had chosen to return home on foot, across the country, hoping that a walk would calm the fever in his blood—an icy fever, more like the chill of death. He had not been deceived. His adored mistress—the noble woman, with whom he might have found refuge from the consequences of the fearful deception which had just been revealed to him—had quitted France. He could have no doubt of it. Margaret was gone to America. Her mother had exacted from her, in expiation of her fault, that she should not even write to him one word of farewell—to him, for whom she had sacrificed her duty as a wife. Margaret had obeyed.

Besides, she had often said to him: "Between my mother and you, I should not hesitate."

She had not hesitated. There was therefore no hope, not the slightest; even if an ocean had not separated him from Margaret, he knew enough of her blind submission to her mother, to be certain that all relations between them were broken off forever. It is well. He will no longer reckon upon this heart—his last refuge. The two roots of his life have been torn up and broken, with the same blow, the same day, almost at the same moment. What then remains for thee, poor sensitive plant, as thy tender mother used to call thee? What remains to console thee for the loss of this last love—this last friendship, so infamously crushed? Oh! there remains for thee that one corner of the earth, created after the image of thy mind that little colony, so peaceful and flourishing, where, thanks to thee, labor brings with it joy and recompense. These worthy artisans, whom thou hast made happy, good, and grateful, will not fail thee. That also is a great and holy affection; let it be thy shelter in the midst of this frightful wreck of all thy most sacred convictions! The calm of that cheerful and pleasant retreat, the sight of the unequalled happiness of thy dependents, will soothe thy poor, suffering soul, which now seems to live only for suffering. Come! you will soon reach the top of the hill, from which you can see afar, in the plain below, that paradise of workmen, of which you are the presiding divinity.

M. Hardy had reached the summit of the hill. At that moment the conflagration, repressed for a short time, burst forth with redoubled fury from the Common Dwelling-house, which it had now reached. A bright streak, at first white, then red, then copper-colored, illuminated the distant horizon. M. Hardy looked at it with a sort of incredulous, almost idiotic stupor. Suddenly, an immense column of flame shot up in the thick of a cloud of smoke, accompanied by a shower of sparks, and streamed towards the sky, casting a bright reflection over all the country, even to M. Hardy's feet. The violence of the north wind, driving the flames in waves before it, soon brought to the ears of M. Hardy the hurried clanging of the alarm-bell of the burning factory.

[35] We wish it to be understood, that the necessities of our story alone have made the Wolves the assailants. While endeavoring to paint the evils arising the abuse of the spirit of association, we do not wish to ascribe a character of savage hostility to one sect rather than to the other to the Wolves more than to the Devourers. The Wolves, a club of united stone-cutters, are generally industrious, intelligent workmen, whose situation is the more worthy of interest, as not only their labors, conducted with mathematical precision, are of the rudest and most wearisome kind, but they are likewise out of work during three or four months of the year, their profession being, unfortunately, one of those which winter condemns to a forced cessation. A number of Wolves, in order to perfect themselves in their trade, attend every evening a course of linear geometry, applied to the cutting of stone, analogous to that given by M. Agricole Perdignier, for the benefit of carpenters. Several working stone-cutters sent an architectural model in plaster to the last exhibition.

CHAPTER VI. THE GO-BETWEEN.

A few days have elapsed since the conflagration of M. Hardy's factory. The following scene takes place in the Rue Clovis, in the house where Rodin had lodged, and which was still inhabited by Rose-Pompon, who, without the least scruple, availed herself of the household arrangements of her friend Philemon. It was about noon, and

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Rose-Pompon, alone in the chamber of the student, who was still absent, was breakfasting very gayly by the fireside; but how singular a breakfast! what a queer fire! how strange an apartment!

Imagine a large room, lighted by two windows without curtains—for as they looked on empty space, the lodger had fear of being overlooked. One side of this apartment served as a wardrobe, for there was suspended Rose-Pompon's flashy costume of debardeur, not far from the boat-man's jacket of Philemon, with his large trousers of coarse, gray stuff, covered with pitch (shiver my timbers!), just as if this intrepid mariner had bunked in the forecabin of a frigate, during a voyage round the globe. A gown of Rose Pompon's hung gracefully over a pair of pantaloons, the legs of which seemed to come from beneath the petticoat. On the lowest of several book-shelves, very dusty and neglected, by the side of three old boots (wherefore three boots?) and a number of empty bottles, stood a skull, a scientific and friendly souvenir, left to Philemon by one of his comrades, a medical student. With a species of pleasantry, very much to the taste of the student-world, a clay pipe with a very black bowl was placed between the magnificently white teeth of this skull; moreover, its shining top was half hidden beneath an old hat, set knowingly on one side, and adorned with faded flowers and ribbons. When Philemon was drunk, he used to contemplate this bony emblem of mortality, and break out into the most poetical monologues, with regard to this philosophical contrast between death and the mad pleasures of life. Two or three plaster casts, with their noses and chins more or less injured, were fastened to the wall, and bore witness to the temporary curiosity which Philemon had felt with regard to phrenological science, from the patient and serious study of which he had drawn the following logical conclusion:—That, having to an alarming extent the bump of getting into debt, he ought to resign himself to the fatality of this organization, and accept the inconvenience of creditors as a vital necessity. On the chimney-piece, stood uninjured, in all its majesty, the magnificent rowing-club drinking-glass, a china teapot without a spout, and an inkstand of black wood, the glass mouth of which was covered by a coat of greenish and mossy mould. From time to time, the silence of this retreat was interrupted by the cooing of pigeons, which Rose-Pompon had established with cordial hospitality in the little study. Chilly as a quail, Rose-Pompon crept close to the fire, and at the same time seemed to enjoy the warmth of a bright ray of sunshine, which enveloped her in its golden light. This droll little creature was dressed in the oddest costume, which, however, displayed to advantage the freshness of her piquant and pretty countenance, crowned with its fine, fair hair, always neatly combed and arranged the first thing in the morning. By way of dressing-gown, Rose-Pompon had ingeniously drawn over her linen, the ample scarlet flannel shirt which belonged to Philemon's official garb in the rowing-club; the collar, open and turned down, displayed the whiteness of the young girl's under garment, as also of her neck and shoulders, on whose firm and polished surface the scarlet shirt seemed to cast a rosy light. The grisette's fresh and dimpled arms half protruded from the large, turned-up sleeves; and her charming legs were also half visible, crossed one over the other, and clothed in neat white stockings, and boots. A black silk cravat formed the girdle which fastened the shirt round the wasp-like waist of Rose-Pompon, just above those hips, worthy of the enthusiasm of a modern Phidias, and which gave to this style of dress a grace very original.

We have said, that the breakfast of Rose-Pompon was singular. You shall judge. On a little table placed before her, was a wash-hand-basin, into which she had recently plunged her fresh face, bathing it in pure water. From the bottom of this basin, now transformed into a salad-bowl, Rose-Pompon took with the tips of her fingers large green leaves, dripping with vinegar, and crunched them between her tiny white teeth, whose enamel was too hard to allow them to be set on edge. Her drink was a glass of water and syrup of gooseberries, which she stirred with a wooden mustard-spoon. Finally, as an extra dish, she had a dozen olives in one of those blue glass trinket-dishes sold for twenty-five sous. Her dessert was composed of nuts, which she prepared to roast on a red-hot shovel. That Rose-Pompon, with such an unaccountable savage choice of food, should retain a freshness of complexion worthy of her name, is one of those miracles, which reveal the mighty power of youth and health. When she had eaten her salad, Rose-Pompon was about to begin upon her olives, when a low knock was heard at the door, which was modestly bolted on the inside.

"Who is there?" said Rose-Pompon.

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"A friend—the oldest of the old," replied a sonorous, jovial voice. "Why do you lock yourself in?"

"What! is it you, Ninny Moulin?"

"Yes, my beloved pupil. Open quickly. Time presses."

"Open to you? Oh, I dare say!—that would be pretty, the figure I am!"

"I believe you! what does it matter what figure you are? It would be very pretty, thou rosiest of all the roses with which Cupid ever adorned his quiver!"

"Go and preach fasting and morality in your journal, fat apostle!" said Rose—Pompon, as she restored the scarlet shirt to its place, with Philemon's other garments.

"I say! are we to talk much longer through the door, for the greater edification of our neighbors?" cried Ninny Moulin. "I have something of importance to tell you—something that will astonish you—"

"Give me time to put on my gown, great plague that you are!"

"If it is because of my modesty, do not think of it. I am not over nice. I should like you very well as you are!"

"Only to think that such a monster is the favorite of all the churchgoers!" said Rose—Pompon, opening the door as she finished fastening her dress.

"So! you have at last returned to the dovecot, you stray girl!" said Ninny Moulin, folding his arms, and looking at Rose—Pompon with comic seriousness. "And where may you have been, I pray? For three days the naughty little bird has left its nest."

"True; I only returned home last night. You must have called during my absence?"

"I came, every day, and even twice a day, young lady, for I have very serious matters to communicate."

"Very serious matters? Then we shall have a good laugh at them."

"Not at all—they are really serious," said Ninny Moulin, seating himself. "But, first of all, what did you do during the three days that you left your conjugal and Philemonic home? I must know all about it, before I tell you more."

"Will you have some olives?" said Rose—Pompon, as she nibbled one of them herself.

"Is that your answer?—I understand!—Unfortunate Philemon!"

"There is no unfortunate Philemon in the case, slanderer. Clara had a death in her house, and, for the first few days after the funeral she was afraid to sleep alone."

"I thought Clara sufficiently provided against such fears."

"There you are deceived, you great viper! I was obliged to go and keep the poor girl company."

At this assertion, the religious pamphleteer hummed a tune, with an incredulous and mocking air.

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"You think I have played Philemon tricks?" cried Rose-Pompon, cracking a nut with the indignation of injured innocence.

"I do not say tricks; but one little rose-colored trick."

"I tell you, that it was not for my pleasure I went out. On the contrary—for, during my absence, poor Cephyse disappeared."

Yes, Mother Arsene told me that the Bacchanal-Queen was gone on a journey. But when I talk of Philemon, you talk of Cephyse; we don't progress."

"May I be eaten by the black panther that they are showing at the Porte-Saint-Martin if I do not tell you the truth. And, talking of that, you must get tickets to take me to see those animals, my little Ninny Moulin! They tell me there never were such darling wild beasts."

"Now really, are you mad?"

"Why so?"

"That I should guide your youth, like a venerable patriarch, through the dangers of the Storm-blown Tulip, all well and good—I ran no risk of meeting my pastors and masters; but were I to take you to a Lent-Spectacle (since there are only beasts to be seen), I might just run against my sacristans—and how pretty I should look with you on my arm!"

"You can put on a false nose, and straps to your trousers, my big Ninny; they will never know you."

"We must not think of false noses, but of what I have to tell you, since you assure me that you have no intrigue in hand."

"I swear it!" said Rose-Pompon, solemnly, extending her left hand horizontally, whilst with her right she put a nut into her mouth. Then she added, with surprise, as she looked at the outside coat of Ninny Moulin, "Goodness gracious! what full pockets you have got! What is there in them?"

"Something that concerns you, Rose-Pompon," said Dumoulin, gravely.

"Me?"

"Rose-Pompon!" said Ninny Moulin, suddenly, with a majestic air; "will you have a carriage? Will you inhabit a charming apartment, instead of living in this dreadful hole? Will you be dressed like a duchess?"

"Now for some more nonsense! Come, will you eat the olives? If not, I shall eat them all up. There is only one left."

Without answering this gastronomic offer, Ninny Moulin felt in one of his pockets, and drew from it a case containing a very pretty bracelet, which he held up sparkling before the eyes of the young girl.

"Oh! what a sumptuous bracelet!" cried she, clapping her hands. "A green-eyed serpent biting his tail—the emblem of my love for Philemon."

"Do not talk of Philemon; it annoys me," said Ninny Moulin, as he clasped the bracelet round the wrist of Rose-Pompon, who allowed him to do it, laughing all the while like mad, and saying to him, "So you've been

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employed to make a purchase, big apostle, and wish to see the effect of it. Well! it is charming!"

"Rose-Pompon," resumed Ninny Moulin, "would you like to have a servant, a box at the Opera, and a thousand francs a month for your pin-money?"

"Always the same nonsense. Get along!" said the young girl, as she held up the bracelet to the light, still continuing to eat her nuts. "Why always the same farce, and no change of bills?"

Ninny Moulin again plunged his hand into his pocket, and this time drew forth an elegant chain, which he hung round Rose-Pompon's neck.

"Oh! what a beautiful chain!" cried the young girl, as she looked by turns at the sparkling ornament and the religious writer. "If you chose that also, you have a very good taste. But am I not a good natured girl to be your dummy, just to show off your jewels?"

"Rose-Pompon," returned Ninny Moulin, with a still more majestic air, "these trifles are nothing to what you may obtain, if you will but follow the advice of your old friend."

Rose began to look at Dumoulin with surprise, and said to him, "What does all this mean, Ninny Moulin? Explain yourself; what advice have you to give?"

Dumoulin did not answer, but replunging his hand into his inexhaustible pocket, he fished up a parcel, which he carefully unfolded, and in which was a magnificent mantilla of black lace. Rose-Pompon started up, full of new admiration, and Dumoulin threw the rich mantilla over the young girl's shoulders.

"It is superb! I have never seen anything like it! What patterns! what work!" said Rose-Pompon, as she examined all with simple and perfectly disinterested curiosity. Then she added, "Your pocket is like a shop; where did you get all these pretty things?" Then, bursting into a fit of laughter, which brought the blood to her cheeks, she exclaimed, "Oh, I have it! These are the wedding-presents for Madame de la Sainte-Colombe. I congratulate you; they are very choice."

"And where do you suppose I should find money to buy these wonders?" said Ninny Moulin. "I repeat to you, all this is yours if you will but listen to me!"

"How is this?" said Rose-Pompon, with the utmost amazement; "is what you tell me in downright earnest?"

"In downright earnest."

"This offer to make me a great lady?"

"The jewels might convince you of the reality of my offers."

"And you propose all this to me for some one else, my poor Ninny Moulin?"

"One moment, said the religious writer, with a comical air of modesty, "you must know me well enough, my beloved pupil, to feel certain that I should be incapable of inducing you to commit an improper action. I respect myself too much for that—leaving out the consideration that it would be unfair to Philemon, who confided to me the guardianship of your virtue."

"Then, Ninny Moulin," said Rose-Pompon, more and more astonished, "on my word of honor, I can make nothing of it."

"Yet, 'tis all very simple, and I—"

'Oh! I've found it," cried Rose–Pompon, interrupting Ninny Moulin; "it is some gentleman who offers me his hand, his heart, and all the rest of it. Could you not tell me that directly?"

"A marriage? oh, laws, yes!" said Dumoulin, shrugging his shoulders.

"What! is it not a marriage?" said Rose–Pompon, again much surprised.

"No."

"And the offers you make me are honest ones, my big apostle?"

"They could not be more so." Here Dumoulin spoke the truth.

"I shall not have to be unfaithful to Philemon?"

"No."

"Or faithful to any one else?" "No."

Rose–Pompon looked confounded. Then she rattled on: "Come, do not let us have any joking! I am not foolish enough to imagine that I am to live just like a duchess, just for nothing. What, therefore, must I give in return?"

"Nothing at all."

"Nothing?"

"Not even that," said Ninny Moulin, biting his nail–tip.

"But what am I to do, then?"

"Dress yourself as handsomely as possible, take your ease, amuse yourself, ride about in a carriage. You see, it is not very fatiguing— and you will, moreover, help to do a good action."

"What! by living like a duchess?"

"Yes! so make up your mind. Do not ask me for any more details, for I cannot give them to you. For the rest, you will not be detained against your will. Just try the life I propose to you. If it suits you, go on with it; if not, return to your Philemonic household."

"In fact—"

"Only try it. What can you risk?"

"Nothing; but I can hardly believe that all you say is true. And then," added she, with hesitation, "I do not know if I ought—"

Ninny Moulin went to the window, opened it, and said to Rose–Pompon, who ran up to it, "Look there! before the door of the house."

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"What a pretty carriage! How comfortable a body'd be inside of it!"

"That carriage is yours. It is waiting for you."

"Waiting for me!" exclaimed Rose-Pompon; "am I to decide as short as that?"

"Or not at all."

"To-day?"

"On the instant."

"But where will they take me?"

"How should I know?"

"You do not know where they will take me?"

"Not I,"—and Dumoulin still spoke the truth—"the coachman has his orders."

"Do you know all this is very funny, Ninny Moulin?"

"I believe you. If it were not funny, where would be the pleasure?"

"You are right."

"Then you accept the offer? That is well. I am delighted both for you and myself."

"For yourself?"

"Yes; because, in accepting, you render me a great service."

"You? How so?"

"It matters little, as long as I feel obliged to you."

"True."

"Come, then; let us set out!"

"Bah! after all, they cannot eat me," said Rose-Pompon, resolutely.

With a skip and a jump, she went to fetch a rose-colored cap, and, going up to a broken looking-glass, placed the cap very much cocked on one side on her bands of light hair. This left uncovered her snowy neck, with the silky roots of the hair behind, and gave to her pretty face a very mischievous, not to say licentious expression.

"My cloak!" said she to Ninny Moulin, who seemed to be relieved from a considerable amount of uneasiness, since she had accepted his offer.

"Fie! a cloak will not do," answered her companion, feeling once more in his pocket and drawing out a fine Cashmere shawl, which he threw over Rose-Pompon's shoulders.

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"A Cashmere!" cried the young girl, trembling with pleasure and joyous surprise. Then she added, with an air of heroism: "It is settled! I will run the gauntlet." And with a light step she descended the stairs, followed by Ninny Moulin.

The worthy greengrocer was at her post. "Good-morning, mademoiselle; you are early to-day," said she to the young girl.

"Yes, Mother Arsene; there is my key."

"Thank you, mademoiselle."

"Oh! now I think of it," said Rose Pompon, suddenly, in a whisper, as she turned towards Ninny Moulin, and withdrew further from the portress, "what is to become of Philemon?"

"Philemon?"

"If he should arrive—"

"Oh! the devil!" said Ninny Moulin, scratching his ear.

"Yes; if Philemon should arrive, what will they say to him? for I may be a long time absent."

"Three or four months, I suppose."

"Not more?"

"I should think not."

"Oh! very good!" said Rose-Pompon. Then, turning towards the greengrocer, she said to her, after a moment's reflection: "Mother Arsene, if Philemon should come home, you will tell him I have gone out— on business."

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"And that he must not forget to feed my pigeons, which are in his study."

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Good-bye, Mother Arsene."

"Good-bye, mademoiselle." And Rose-Pompon entered the carriage in triumph, along with Ninny Moulin.

"The devil take me if I know what is to come of all this," said Jacques Dumoulin to himself, as the carriage drove rapidly down the Rue Clovis. "I have repaired my error—and now I laugh at the rest."

CHAPTER VII. ANOTHER SECRET.

The following scene took place a few days after the abduction of Rose-Pompon by Ninny Moulin. Mdlle. de Cardoville was seated in a dreamy mood, in her cabinet, which was hung with green silk, and furnished with an ebony library, ornamented with large bronze caryatides. By some significant signs, one could perceive that Mdlle. de Cardoville had sought in the fine airs some relief from sad and serious thoughts. Near an open piano, was a

harp, placed before a music-stand. A little further, on a table covered with boxes of oil and water-color, were several brilliant sketches. Most of them represented Asiatic scenes, lighted by the fires of an oriental sun. Faithful to her fancy of dressing herself at home in a picturesque style, Mademoiselle de Cardoville resembled that day one of those proud portraits of Velasquez, with stern and noble aspect. Her gown was of black moire, with wide-swalling petticoat, long waist, and sleeve slashed with rose-colored satin, fastened together with jet bugles. A very stiff, Spanish ruff reached almost to her chin, and was secured round her neck by a broad rose-colored ribbon. This frill, slightly heaving, sloped down as far as the graceful swell of the rose-colored stomacher, laced with strings of jet beads, and terminating in a point at the waist. It is impossible to express how well this black garment, with its ample and shining folds, relieved with rose-color and brilliant jet, skin, harmonized with the shining whiteness of Adrienne's and the golden flood of her beautiful hair, whose long, silky ringlets descended to her bosom.

The young lady was in a half-recumbent posture, with her elbow resting on a couch covered with green silk. The back of this piece of furniture, which was pretty high towards the fireplace, sloped down insensibly towards the foot. A sort of light, semicircular trellis-work, in gilded bronze, raised about five feet from the ground, covered with flowering plants (the admirable passiflores quadrangulatoe, planted in a deep ebony box, from the centre of which rose the trellis-work), surrounded this couch with a sort of screen of foliage enamelled with large flowers, green without, purple within, and as brilliant as those flowers of porcelain, which we receive from Saxony. A sweet, faint perfume, like a faint mixture of jasmine with violet, rose from the cup of these admirable passiflores. Strange enough, a large quantity of new books (Adrienne having bought them since the last two or three days) and quite fresh-cut, were scattered around her on the couch, and on a little table; whilst other larger volumes, amongst which were several atlases full of engravings, were piled on the sumptuous fur, which formed the carpet beneath the divan. Stranger still, these books, though of different forms, and by different authors, all treated of the same subject. The posture of Adrienne revealed a sort of melancholy dejection. Her cheeks were pale; a light blue circle surrounded her large, black eyes, now half-closed, and gave to them an expression of profound grief. Many causes contributed to this sorrow—amongst others, the disappearance of Mother Bunch. Without absolutely believing the perfidious insinuations of Rodin, who gave her to understand that, in the fear of being unmasked by him, the hunchback had not dared to remain in the house, Adrienne felt a cruel sinking of the heart, when she thought how this young girl, in whom she had had so much confidence, had fled from her almost sisterly hospitality, without even uttering a word of gratitude; for care had been taken not to show her the few lines written by the poor needlewoman to her benefactress, just before her departure.

She had only been told of the note of five hundred francs found on her desk; and this last inexplicable circumstance had contributed to awaken cruel suspicions in the breast of Mdlle. de Cardoville. She already felt the fatal effects of that mistrust of everything and everybody, which Rodin had recommended to her; and this sentiment of suspicion and reserve had the more tendency to become powerful, that, for the first time in her life, Mdlle. de Cardoville, until then a stranger to all deception, had a secret to conceal—a secret, which was equally her happiness, her shame, and her torment. Half-recumbent on her divan, pensive and depressed, Adrienne pursued, with a mind often absent, one of her newly purchased books. Suddenly, she uttered an exclamation of surprise; the hand which held the book trembled like a leaf, and from that moment she appeared to read with passionate attention and devouring curiosity. Soon, her eyes sparkled with enthusiasm, her smile assumed ineffable sweetness, and she seemed at once proud, happy, delighted—but, as she turned over the last page, her countenance expressed disappointment and chagrin. Then she recommenced this reading, which had occasioned her such sweet emotion, and this time she read with the most deliberate slowness, going over each page twice, and spelling, as it were, every line, every word. From time to time, she paused, and in a pensive mood, with her forehead leaning on her fair hand, she seemed to reflect, in a deep reverie, on the passages she had read with such tender and religious love. Arriving at a passage which so affected her, that a tear started in her eye, she suddenly turned the volume, to see on the cover the name of the author. For a few seconds, she contemplated this name with a singular expression of gratitude, and could not forbear raising to her rosy lips the page on which it was printed. After reading many times over the lines with which she had been so much struck, forgetting, no doubt, the letter in the spirit, she began to reflect so deeply, that the book glided from her hand, and fell upon the carpet.

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During the course of this reverie, the eyes of the young girl rested, at first mechanically, upon an admirable bas-relief, placed on an ebony stand, near one of the windows. This magnificent bronze, recently cast after a plaster copy from the antique, represented the triumph of the Indian Bacchus. Never, perhaps, had Grecian art attained such rare perfection. The youthful conqueror, half-clad in a lion's skin, which displayed his juvenile grace and charming purity of form shone with divine beauty. Standing up in a car, drawn by two tigers, with an air at once gentle and proud, he leaned with one hand upon a thyrsus, and with the other guided his savage steeds in tranquil majesty. By this rare mixture of grace, vigor, and serenity, it was easy to recognize the hero who had waged such desperate combats with men and with monsters of the forest. Thanks to the brownish tone of the figure, the light, falling from one side of the sculpture, admirably displayed the form of the youthful god, which, carved in relievo, and thus illumined, shone like a magnificent statue of pale gold upon the dark fretted background of the bronze.

When Adrienne's look first rested on this rare assemblage of divine perfections, her countenance was calm and thoughtful. But this contemplation, at first mechanical, became gradually more and more attentive and conscious, and the young lady, rising suddenly from her seat, slowly approached the bas-relief, as if yielding to the invincible attraction of an extraordinary resemblance. Then a slight blush appeared on the cheeks of Mdlle. de Cardoville, stole across her face, and spread rapidly to her neck and forehead. She approached still closer, threw round a hasty glance, as if half-ashamed, or as if she had feared to be surprised in a blamable action, and twice stretched forth her hand, trembling with emotion, to touch with the tips of her charming fingers the bronze forehead of the Indian Bacchus. And twice she stopped short, with a kind of modest hesitation. At last, the temptation became too strong for her. She yielded to it; and her alabaster finger, after delicately caressing the features of pale gold, was pressed more boldly for an instant on the pure and noble brow of the youthful god. At this pressure, though so slight, Adrienne seemed to feel a sort of electric shock; she trembled in every limb, her eyes languished, and, after swimming for an instant in their humid and brilliant crystal, were raised, half-closed, to heaven. Then her head was thrown a little way back, her knees bent insensibly, her rosy lips were half opened, as if to give a passage to her heated breath, for her bosom heaved violently, as though youth and life had accelerated the pulsations of her heart, and made her blood boil in her veins. Finally, the burning cheeks of Adrienne betrayed a species of ecstasy, timid and passionate, chaste and sensual, the expression of which was ineffably touching.

An affecting spectacle indeed is that of a young maiden, whose modest brow flushes with the first fires of a secret passion. Does not the Creator of all things animate the body as well as the soul, with a spark of divine energy? Should He not be religiously glorified in the intellect as in the senses, with which He has so paternally endowed His creatures? They are impious blasphemers who seek to stifle the celestial senses, instead of guiding and harmonizing them in their divine flight. Suddenly, Mdlle. de Cardoville started, raised her head, opened her eyes as if awakening from a dream, withdrew abruptly from the sculptures, and walked several times up and down the room in an agitated manner, pressing her burning hands to her forehead. Then, falling, as it were, exhausted on her seat, her tears flowed in abundance. The most bitter grief was visible in her features, which revealed the fatal struggle that was passing within her. By degrees, her tears ceased. To this crisis of painful dejection succeeded a species of violent scorn and indignation against herself, which were expressed by these words that escaped her: "For the first time in my life, I feel weak and cowardly. Oh yes! cowardly—very cowardly!"

The sound of a door opening and closing, roused Mdlle. de Cardoville from her bitter reflections. Georgette entered the room, and said to her mistress: "Madame, can you receive the Count de Montbron?"

Adrienne, too well-bred to exhibit before her women the sort of impatience occasioned by this unseasonable visit, said to Georgette: "You told M. de Montbron that I was at home?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Then beg him to walk in." Though Mdlle. de Cardoville felt at that moment much vexed at the arrival of Montbron, let us hasten to say, that she entertained for him an almost filial affection, and a profound esteem, though, by a not unfrequent contrast, she almost always differed from him in opinion. Hence arose, when Mdlle. de Cardoville had nothing to disturb her mind, the most gay and animated discussions, in which M. de Montbron, notwithstanding his mocking and sceptical humor, his long experience, his rare knowledge of men and things, his fashionable training, in a word, had not always the advantage, and even acknowledged his defeat gayly enough. Thus, to give an idea of the differences of the count and Adrienne, before, as he would say laughingly, he had made himself her accomplice, he had always opposed (from other motives than those alleged by Madame de Saint-Dizier) Adrienne's wish to live alone and in her own way; whilst Rodin, on the contrary, by investing the young girl's resolve on this subject with an ideal grandeur of intention, had acquired a species of influence over her. M. de Montbron, now upwards of sixty years of age, had been a most prominent character during the Directory, Consulate, and the Empire. His prodigal style of living, his wit, his gayety, his duels, his amours, and his losses at play, had given him a leading influence in the best society of his day; while his character, his kind-heartedness, and liberality, secured him the lasting friendship of nearly all his female friends. At the time we now present him to the reader, he was still a great gambler; and, moreover, a very lucky gambler. He had, as we have stated, a very lordly style; his manners were decided, but polished and lively; his habits were such as belong to the higher classes of society, though he could be excessively sharp towards people whom he did not like. He was tall and thin, and his slim figure gave him an almost youthful appearance; his forehead was high, and a little bald; his hair was gray and short, his countenance long, his nose aquiline, his eyes blue and piercing, and his teeth white, and still very good.

"The Count de Montbron," said Georgette, opening the door. The count entered, and hastened to kiss Adrienne's hand, with a sort of paternal familiarity.

"Come!" said M. de Montbron to himself; "let us try to discover the truth I am in search of, that we may escape a great misfortune."

CHAPTER VIII. THE CONFESSION.

Mdlle. de Cardoville, not wishing to betray the cause of the violent feelings which agitated her, received M. de Montbron with a feigned and forced gayety. On the other hand, notwithstanding his tact and knowledge of the world, the count was much embarrassed how to enter upon the subject on which he wished to confer with Adrienne, and he resolved to feel his way, before seriously commencing the conversation. After looking at the young lady for some seconds, M. de Montbron shook his head, and said, with a sigh of regret: "My dear child, I am not pleased."

"Some affair of the heart, or of hearts, my dear count?" returned Adrienne, smiling.

"Of the heart," said M. de Montbron.

"What! you, so great a player, think more of a woman's whim than a throw of the dice?"

"I have a heavy heart, and you are the cause of it, my dear child."

"M. de Montbron, you will make me very proud," said Adrienne, with a smile.

"You would be wrong, for I tell you plainly, my trouble is caused by your neglect of your beauty. Yes, your countenance is pale, dejected, sorrowful; you have been low-spirited for the last few days; you have something on your mind, I am sure of it."

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"My dear M. de Montbron, you have so much penetration, that you may be allowed to fall for once, as now. I am not sad, I have nothing on my mind, and—I am about to utter a very silly piece of impertinence—I have never thought myself so pretty."

"On the contrary, nothing could be more modest than such an assertion. Who told you that falsehood? a woman?"

"No; it was my heart, and it spoke the truth," answered Adrienne, with a slight degree of emotion. "Understand it, if you can," she added.

"Do you mean that you are proud of the alteration in your features, because you are proud of the sufferings of your heart?" said M. de Montbron, looking at Adrienne with attention. "Be it so; I am then right. You have some sorrow. I persist in it," added the count, speaking with a tone of real feeling, "because it is painful to me."

"Be satisfied; I am as happy as possible—for every instant I take delight in repeating, how, at my age, I am free—absolutely free!"

"Yes; free to torment yourself, free to be miserable."

"Come, come, my dear count!" said Adrienne, "you are recommencing our old quarrel. I still find in you the ally of my aunt and the Abbe d'Aigrigny."

"Yes; as the republicans are the allies of the legitimists—to destroy each other in their turn. Talking of your abominable aunt, they say that she holds a sort of council at her house these last few days, a regular mitred conspiracy. She is certainly in a good way."

"Why not? Formerly, she would have wished to be Goddess of Reason, now, we shall perhaps see her canonized. She has already performed the first part of the life of Mary Magdalen."

"You can never speak worse of her than she deserves, my dear child. Still, though for quite opposite reasons, I agreed with her on the subject of your wish to reside alone."

"I know it."

"Yes; and because I wished to see you a thousand times freer than you really are, I advised you—"

"To marry."

"No doubt; you would have had your dear liberty, with its consequences, only, instead of Mdlle. de Cardoville, we should have called you Madame Somebody, having found an excellent husband to be responsible for your independence."

"And who would have been responsible for this ridiculous husband? And who would bear a mocked and degraded name? I, perhaps?" said Adrienne, with animation. "No, no, my dear count, good or ill, I will answer for my own actions; to my name shall attach the reputation, which I alone have formed. I am as incapable of basely dishonoring a name which is not mine, as of continually bearing it myself, if it were not held in, esteem. And, as one can only answer for one's own actions, I prefer to keep my name."

"You are the only person in the world that has such ideas."

"Why?" said Adrienne, laughing. "Because it appears to me horrible, to see a poor girl lost and buried in some ugly and selfish man, and become, as they say seriously, the better half of the monster—yes! a fresh and

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blooming rose to become part of a frightful thistle!—Come, my dear count; confess there is something odious in this conjugal metempsychosis," added Adrienne, with a burst of laughter.

The forced and somewhat feverish gayety of Adrienne contrasted painfully with her pale and suffering countenance; it was so easy to see that she strove to stifle with laughter some deep sorrow, that M. de Montbron was much affected by it; but, dissembling his emotion, he appeared to reflect a moment, and took up mechanically one of the new, fresh-cut books, by which Adrienne was surrounded. After casting a careless glance at this volume, he continued, still dissembling his feelings: "Come, my dear madcap: this is another folly. Suppose I were twenty years old, and that you did me the honor to marry me—you would be called Lady de Montbron, I imagine?"

"Perhaps."

"How perhaps? Would you not bear my name, if you married me?"

"My dear count," said Adrienne, with a smile, "do not let us pursue this hypothesis, which can only leave us—regrets."

Suddenly, M. de Montbron started, and looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with an expression of surprise. For some moments, whilst talking to Adrienne, he had mechanically—taken up two or three of the volumes scattered over the couch, and had glanced at their titles in the same careless manner. The first was the "Modern History of India." The second, "Travels in India." The third, "Letters on India." Much surprised, M. de Montbron had continued his investigation, and found that the fourth volume continued this Indian nomenclature, being "Rambles in India." The fifth was, "Recollections of Hindostan." The sixth, "Notes of a Traveller in the East Indies."

Hence the astonishment, which, for many serious reasons, M. de Montbron had no longer been able to conceal, and which his looks betrayed to Adrienne. The latter, having completely forgotten the presence of the accusing volumes by which she was surrounded, yielded to a movement of involuntary confusion, and blushed slightly; but, her firm and resolute character again coming to her aid, she looked full at M. de Montbron, and said to him: "Well, my dear count! what surprises you?"

Instead of answering, M. de Montbron appeared still more absorbed in thought, and contemplating the young girl, he could not forbear saying to himself: "No, no—it is impossible—and yet—"

"It would, perhaps, be indiscreet in me to listen to your soliloquy, my dear count," said Adrienne.

"Excuse me, my dear child; but what I see surprises me so much—"

"And pray what do you see?"

"The traces of so great and novel an interest in all that relates to India," said M. de Montbron, laying a slight stress on his words, and fixing a piercing look upon the young girl.

"Well!" said Adrienne, stoutly.

"Well! I seek the cause of this sudden passion—"

"Geographical?" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, interrupting M. de Montbron: "you may find this taste somewhat serious for my age my dear count—but one must find occupation for leisure hours—and then, having a cousin, who is both an Indian and a prince, I should like to know something of the fortunate country from which I derive this savage relationship."

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These last words were pronounced with a bitterness that was not lost on M. de Montbron: watching Adrienne attentively, he observed: "Meseems, you speak of the prince with some harshness."

"No; I speak of him with indifference."

"Yet he deserves a very different feeling."

"On the part of some other person, perhaps," replied Adrienne, dryly.

"He is so unhappy!" said M. de Montbron, in a tone of sincere pity. "When I saw him the other day, he made my heart ache."

"What have I to do with it?" exclaimed Adrienne, with an accent of painful and almost angry impatience.

"I should have thought that his cruel torments at least deserved your pity," answered the count gravely.

"Pity—from me!" cried Adrienne, with an air of offended pride. Then restraining herself, she added coldly: "You are jesting, M. de Montbron. It is not in sober seriousness that you ask me to take interest in the amorous torments of your prince."

There was so much cold disdain in these last words of Adrienne, her pale and agitated countenance betrayed such haughty bitterness, that M. de Montbron said, sorrowfully: "It is then true; I have not been deceived. I, who thought, from our old and constant friendship, that I had some claim to your confidence have known nothing of it—while you told all to another. It is painful, very painful to me."

"I do not understand you, M. de Montbron."

"Well then, since I must speak plainly," cried the count, "there is, I see, no hope for this unhappy boy—you love another."

As Adrienne started—"Oh! you cannot deny it," resumed the count; "your paleness and melancholy for the last few days, your implacable indifference to the prince—all prove to me that you are in love."

Hurt by the manner in which the count spoke of the sentiment he attributed to her, Mdlle. de Cardoville answered with dignified stateliness: "You must know, M. de Montbron, that a secret discovered is not a confidence. Your language surprises me.

"Oh, my dear friend, if I use the poor privilege of experience—if I guess that you are in love—if I tell you so, and even go so far as to reproach you with it—it is because the life or death of this poor prince is concerned; and I feel for him as if he were my son, for it is impossible to know him without taking the warmest interest in him."

"It would be singular," returned Adrienne, with redoubled coldness, and still more bitter irony, "if my love—admitting I were in love—could have any such strange influence on Prince Djalma. What can it matter to him?" added she, with almost agonizing disdain.

"What can it matter to him? Now really, my dear friend, permit me to tell you, that it is you who are jesting cruelly. What! this unfortunate youth loves you with all the blind ardor of a first love—twice has attempted to terminate by suicide the horrible tortures of his passion—and you think it strange that your love for another should be with him a question of life or death!"

"He loves me then?" cried the young girl, with an accent impossible to describe.

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He loves you to madness, I tell you; I have seen it."

Adrienne seemed overcome with amazement. From pale, she became crimson; as the redness disappeared, her lips grew white, and trembled. Her emotion was so strong, that she remained for some moments unable to speak, and pressed her hand to her heart, as if to moderate its pulsations.

M. de Montbron, almost frightened at the sudden change in Adrienne's countenance, hastily approached her, exclaiming: "Good heaven, my poor child! what is the matter?"

Instead of answering, Adrienne waved her hand to him, in sign that he should not be alarmed; and, in fact, the count was speedily tranquillized, for the beautiful face, which had so lately been contracted with pain, irony, and scorn, seemed now expressive of the sweetest and most ineffable emotions; Adrienne appeared to luxuriate in delight, and to fear losing the least particle of it; then, as reflection told her, that she was, perhaps, the dupe of illusion or falsehood, she exclaimed suddenly, with anguish, addressing herself to M. de Montbron: "But is what you tell me true?"

"What I tell you!"

"Yes--that Prince Djalma--"

"Loves you to madness?--Alas! it is only too true."

"No, no," cried Adrienne, with a charming expression of simplicity; "that could never be too true."

"What do you say?" cried the count.

"But that woman?" asked Adrienne, as if the word scorched her lips.

"What woman?"

"She who has been the cause of all these painful struggles."

"That woman--why, who should it be but you?"

"What, I? Oh! tell me, was it I?"

"On my word of honor. I trust my experience. I have never seen so ardent and sincere a passion."

"Oh! is it really so? Has he never had any other love?"

"Never."

"Yet I was told so."

"By whom?"

"M. Rodin."

"That Djalma--"

"Had fallen violently in love, two days after I saw him."

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"M. Rodin told you that!" cried M. de Montbron, as if struck with a sudden idea. "Why, it is he who told Djalma that you were in love with some one else."

"I!"

"And this it was which occasioned the poor youth's dreadful despair."

"It was this which occasioned my despair."

"You love him, then, just as he loves you!" exclaimed M. de Montbron, transported with joy.

"Love him!" said Mdlle. de Cardoville. A discreet knock at the door interrupted Adrienne.

"One of your servants, no doubt. Be calm," said the count.

"Come in," said Adrienne, in an agitated voice.

"What is it?" said Mdlle. de Cardoville. Florine entered the room.

"M. Rodin has just been here. Fearing to disturb mademoiselle, he would not come in; but he will return in half an hour. Will mademoiselle receive him?"

"Yes, yes," said the count to Florine; "even if I am still here, show him in by all means. Is not that your opinion?" asked M. de Montbron of Adrienne.

"Quite so," answered the young girl; and a flash of indignation darted from her eyes, as she thought of Rodin's perfidy.

"Oho! the old knave!" said M. de Montbron, "I always had my doubts of that crooked neck!" Florine withdrew, leaving the count with her mistress.

CHAPTER IX. LOVE.

Mdlle. de Cardoville was transfigured. For the first time her beauty shone forth in all its lustre. Until now overshadowed by indifference, or darkened by grief, she appeared suddenly illumined by a brilliant ray of sunshine. The slight irritation caused by Rodin's perfidy passed like an imperceptible shade from her brow. What cared she now for falsehood and perfidy? Had they not failed? And, for the future, what human power could interpose between her and Djalma, so sure of each other? Who would dare to cross the path of those two things, resolute and strong with the irresistible power of youth, love, and liberty? Who would dare to follow them into that blazing sphere, whither they went, so beautiful and happy, to blend together in their inextinguishable love, protected by the proof-armor of their own happiness? Hardly had Florine left the room, when Adrienne approached M. de Montbron with a rapid step. She seemed to have become taller; and to watch her advancing, light, radiant, and triumphant, one might have fancied her a goddess walking upon clouds.

"When shall I see him?" was her first word to M. de Montbron.

"Well—say to-morrow; he must be prepared for so much happiness; in so ardent a nature, such sudden, unexpected joy might be terrible.

Adrienne remained pensive for a moment, and then said rapidly: "To-morrow—yes—not before to-morrow. I

have a superstition of the heart."

"What is it?"

"You shall know. HE LOVES ME—that word says all, contains all, comprehends all, is all—and yet I have a thousand questions to ask with regard to him—but I will ask none before to-morrow, because, by a mysterious fatality, to-morrow is with me a sacred anniversary. It will be an age till then; but happily, I can wait. Look here!"

Beckoning M. de Montbron, she led him to the Indian Bacchus. "How much it is like him!" said she to the count.

"Indeed," exclaimed the latter, "it is strange!"

"Strange?" returned Adrienne, with a smile of gentle pride; "strange, that a hero, a demi-god, an ideal of beauty, should resemble Djalma?"

"How you love him!" said M. de Montbron, deeply touched, and almost dazzled by the felicity which beamed from the countenance of Adrienne.

"I must have suffered a good deal, do you not think so?" said she, after a moment's silence.

"If I had not made up my mind to come here to-day, almost in despair, what would have happened?"

"I cannot tell; I should perhaps have died, for I am wounded mortally here"—she pressed her hand to her heart. "But what might have been death to me, will now be life."

"It was horrible," said the count, shuddering. "Such a passion, buried in your own breast, proud as you are—"

"Yes, proud—but not self-conceited. When I learned his love for another, and that the impression which I fancied I had made on him at our first interview had been immediately effaced, I renounced all hope, without being able to renounce my love. Instead of shunning his image, I surrounded myself with all that could remind me of him. In default of happiness, there is a bitter pleasure in suffering through what we love."

"I can now understand your Indian library."

Instead of answering the count, Adrienne took from the stand one of the freshly-cut volumes, and, bringing it to M. de Montbron, said to him, with a smile and a celestial expression of joy and happiness: "I was wrong—I am vain. Just read this—aloud, if you please. I tell you that I can wait for to-morrow." Presenting the book to the count, she pointed out one passage with the tip of her charming finger. Then she sank down upon the couch, and, in an attitude of deep attention, with her body bent forward, her hands crossed upon the cushion, her chin resting upon her hands, her large eyes fixed with a sort of adoration on the Indian Bacchus, that was just opposite to her, she appeared by this impassioned contemplation to prepare herself to listen to M. de Montbron.

The latter, much astonished, began to read, after again looking at Adrienne, who said to him, in her most coaxing voice, "Very slowly, I beg of you.

M. de Montbron then read the following passage from the journal of a traveller in India: "When I was at Bombay, in 1829, I constantly heard amongst the English there, of a young hero, the son of—"

The count having paused a second, by reason of the barbarous spelling of the name of Djalma's father, Adrienne immediately said to him, in her soft voice: "The son of Kadja-sing."

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"What a memory!" said the count, with a smile. And he resumed: "A young hero, the son of Kadja-sing, king of Mundi. On his return from a distant and sanguinary expedition amongst the mountains against this Indian king, Colonel Drake was filled with enthusiasm for this son of Kadja-sing, known as Djalma. Hardly beyond the age of childhood, this young prince has in the course of this implacable war given proofs of such chivalrous intrepidity, and of so noble a character, that his father has been surnamed the Father of the Generous."

"That is a touching custom," said the count. "To recompense the father, as it were, by giving him a surname in honor of his son, is a great idea. But how strange you should have met with this book!" added the count, in surprise. "I can understand; there is matter here to inflame the coolest head."

"Oh! you will see, you will see," said Adrienne.

The count continued to read: "Colonel Drake, one of the bravest and best officers of the English army, said yesterday, in my presence, that having been dangerously wounded, and taken prisoner by Prince Djalma, after an energetic resistance, he had been conveyed to the camp established in the village of—"

Here there was the same hesitation on the part of the count, on seeing a still more barbarous name than the first; so, not wishing to try the adventure, he paused, and said to Adrienne, "Now really, I give this up."

"And yet it is so easy!" replied Adrienne; and she pronounced with inexpressible softness, a name in itself soft, "The village of Shumshabad."

"You appear to have an infallible process for remembering geographical names," said the count, continuing: "Once arrived at the camp, Colonel Drake received the kindest hospitality, and Prince Djalma treated him with the respect of a son. It was there that the colonel became acquainted with some facts, which carried to the highest pitch his enthusiasm for prince Djalma. I heard him relate the two following.

"In one of the battles, the prince was accompanied by a young Indian of about twelve years of age, whom he loved tenderly, and who served him as a page, following him on horseback to carry his spare weapons. This child was idolized by its mother; just as they set out on the expedition, she had entrusted her son to Prince Djalma's care, saying, with a stoicism worthy of antiquity, "Let him be your brother." "He shall be my brother," had replied the prince. In the height of a disastrous defeat, the child is severely wounded, and his horse killed; the prince, at peril of his life, notwithstanding the perception of a forced retreat, disengages him, and places him on the croup of his own horse; they are pursued; a musket-ball strikes their steed, who is just able to reach a jungle, in the midst of which, after some vain efforts, he falls exhausted. The child is unable to walk, but the prince carries him in his arms, and hides with him in the thickest part of the jungle. The English arrive, and begin their search; but the two victims escape. After a night and a day of marches, counter-marches, stratagems, fatigues, unheard-of perils, the prince, still, carrying the child, one of whose legs is broken, arrives at his father's camp, and says, with the utmost simplicity, "I had promised his mother that I would act a brother's part by him—and I have done so."

"That is admirable!" cried the count.

"Go on—pray go on!" said Adrienne, drying a tear, without removing her eyes from the bas-relief, which she continued to contemplate with growing adoration.

The count continued: "Another time, Prince Djalma, followed by two black slaves, went, before sunrise, to a very wild spot, to seize a couple of tiger cubs only a few days old. The den had been previously discovered. The two old tigers were still abroad. One of the blacks entered the den by a narrow aperture; the other, aided by Djalma, cut down a tolerably large tree, to prepare a trap for one of the old tigers. On the side of the aperture, the cavern was exceedingly steep. The prince mounted to the top of it with agility, to set his trap, with the aid of the other black. Suddenly, a dreadful roar was heard; and, in a few bounds, the tigress, returning from the chase, reached

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the opening of the den. The black who was laying the trap with the prince had his skull fractured by her bite; the tree, falling across the entrance, prevented the female from penetrating the cavern, and at the same time stopped the exit of the black who had seized the cubs.

"About twenty feet higher, upon a ledge of rock, the prince lay flat on the ground, looking down upon this frightful spectacle. The tigress, rendered furious by the cries of her little ones, gnawed the hands of the black, who, from the interior of the den, strove to support the trunk of the tree, his only rampart, whilst he uttered the most lamentable outcries."

"It is horrible!" said the count.

"Oh! go on! pray go on!" exclaimed Adrienne, with excitement; "you will see what can be achieved by the heroism of goodness."

The count pursued: "Suddenly the prince seized his dagger between his teeth, fastened his sash to a block of stone, took his axe in one hand, and with the other slid down this substitute for a rope; falling a few steps from the wild beast, he sprang upon her, and, swift as lightning, dealt her two mortal strokes, just as the black, losing his strength, was about to drop the trunk of the tree, sure to have been torn to pieces."

"And you are astonished at his resemblance with the demi-god, to whom fable itself ascribes no more generous devotion!" cried the young lady, with still increasing excitement.

"I am astonished no longer, I only admire," said the count, in a voice of emotion; "and, at these two noble instances of heroism, my heart beats with enthusiasm, as if I were still twenty."

"And the, noble heart of this traveller beat like yours at the recital," said Adrienne; "you will see."

"What renders so admirable the intrepidity of the prince, is, that, according to the principle of Indian castes, the life of a slave is of no importance; thus a king's son, risking his life for the safety of a poor creature, so generally despised, obeyed an heroic and truly Christian instinct of charity, until then unheard of in this country."

"Two such actions," said Colonel Drake, with good reason, "are sufficient to paint the man;" it is with a feeling of profound respect and admiration, therefore, that I, an obscure traveller, have written the name of Prince Djalma in my book; and at the same time, I have experienced a kind of sorrow, when I have asked myself what would be the future fate of this prince, buried in the depths of a savage country, always devastated by war. However humble may be the homage that I pay to this character, worthy of the heroic age, his name will at least be repeated with generous enthusiasm by all those who have hearts that beat in sympathy with what is great and noble."

"And just now, when I read those simple and touching lines," resumed Adrienne, I could not forbear pressing my lips to the name of the traveller."

"Yes; he is such as I thought him," cried the count, with still more emotion, as he returned the book to Adrienne, who rose, with a grave and touching air, and said to him: "It was thus I wished you to know him, that you might understand my adoration; for this courage, this heroic goodness, I had guessed beforehand, when I was an involuntary listener to his conversation. From that moment, I knew him to be generous as intrepid, tender and sensitive as energetic and resolute; and when I saw him so marvellously beautiful—so different, in the noble character of his countenance, and even in the style of his garments, from all I had hitherto met with—when I saw the impression that I made upon him, and which I perhaps felt still more violently—I knew that my whole life was bound up with his love."

"And now, what are your plans?"

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"Divine, radiant as my heart. When he learns his happiness, I wish that Djalma should feel dazzled as I do, so as to prevent my gazing on my sun; for I repeat, that until tomorrow will be a century to me. Yes, it is strange! I should have thought that after such a discovery, I should feel the want of being left alone, plunged in an ocean of delicious dreams. But no! from this time till to-morrow—I dread solitude—I feel a kind of feverish impatience—uneasy—ardent—Oh! where is the beneficent fairy, that, touching me with her wand, will lull me into slumber till to-morrow!"

"I will be that beneficent fairy," said the count, smiling.

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"And how so?"

"The power of my wand is this: I will relieve you from a portion of your thoughts by making them materially visible."

"Pray explain yourself."

"And my plan will have another advantage for you. Listen to me; you are so happy now that you can hear anything. Your odious aunt, and her equally odious friends, are spreading the report that your residence with Dr. Baleinier—"

"Was rendered necessary by the derangement of my mind," said Adrienne, with a smile; "I expected that."

"It is stupid enough; but, as your resolution to live alone makes many envious of you, and many hostile, you must feel that there will be no want of persons ready to believe the most absurd calumny possible."

"I hope as much. To pass for mad in the eyes of fools is very flattering."

"Yes; but to prove to fools that they are fools, and that in the face of all Paris, is much more amusing. Now, people begin to talk of your absence; you have given up your daily rides; for some time my niece has appeared alone in our box at the Opera; you wish to kill the time till to-morrow—well! here is an excellent opportunity. It is two o'clock; at halfpast three, my niece will come in the carriage; the weather is splendid; there is sure to be a crowd in the Bois de Boulogne. You can take a delightful ride, and be seen by everybody. Then, as the air and movement will have calmed your fever of happiness, I will commence my magic this evening, and take you to India."

"To India?"

"Into the midst of one of those wild forests, in which roar the lion, the panther, and the tiger. We will have this heroic combat, which so moved you just now, under our own eyes, in all its terrible reality."

"Really, my dear count, you must be joking."

"Not at all; I promise to show you real wild beasts, formidable tenants of the country of our demigod—growling tigers—roaring lions—do you not think that will be better than books?"

"But how?"

"Come! I must give you the secret of my supernatural power. On returning from your ride, you shall dine with my niece, and we will go together to a very curious spectacle now exhibiting at the Porte-Saint-Martin Theatre. A most extraordinary lion-tamer there shows you a number of wild beasts, in a state of nature, in the midst of a forest (here only commences the illusion), and has fierce combats with them all—tigers, lions, and panthers. All Paris is crowding to these representations, and all Paris will see you there, more charming than ever."

"I accept your offer," said Adrienne, with childish delight. "Yes, you are right. I feel a strange pleasure in beholding these ferocious monsters, who will remind me of those that my demi-god so heroically overcame. I accept also, because, for the first time in my life, I am anxious to be admired—even by everybody. I accept finally because—" Here Mdlle. de Cardoville was interrupted by a low knock at the door, and by the entrance of Florine, who announced M. Rodin.

CHAPTER X. THE EXECUTION.

Rodin entered. A rapid glance at Mdlle. de Cardoville and M. de Montbron told him at once that he was in a dilemma. In fact, nothing could be less encouraging than the faces of Adrienne and the count. The latter, when he disliked people, exhibited his antipathy, as we have already said, by an impertinently aggressive manner, which had before now occasioned a good number of duels. At sight of Rodin, his countenance at once assumed a harsh and insolent expression; resting his elbow on the chimney-piece, and conversing with Adrienne, he looked disdainfully over his shoulder, without taking the least notice of the Jesuit's low bow. On the other hand, at sight of this man, Mdlle. de Cardoville almost felt surprise, that she should experience no movement of anger or hatred. The brilliant flame which burned in her heart, purified it from every vindictive sentiment. She smiled, on the contrary; for, glancing with gentle pride at the Indian Bacchus, and then at herself, she asked herself what two beings, so young, and fair, and free, and loving, could have to fear from this old, sordid man, with his ignoble and base countenance, now advancing towards her with the writhing of a reptile. In a word, far from feeling anger or aversion with regard to Rodin, the young lady seemed full of the spirit of mocking gayety, and her large eyes, already lighted up with happiness, now sparkled with irony and mischief. Rodin felt himself ill at ease. People of his stamp greatly prefer violent to mocking enemies. They can encounter bursts of rage—sometimes by falling on their knees, weeping, groaning, and beating their breasts—sometimes by turning on their adversary, armed and implacable. But they are easily disconcerted by biting raillery; and thus it was with Rodin. He saw that between Adrienne de Cardoville and M. de Montbron, he was about to be placed in what is vulgarly termed a "regular fix."

The count opened the fire; still glancing over his shoulder, he said to Rodin: "Ah! you are here, my benevolent gentleman!"

"Pray, sir, draw a little nearer," said Adrienne, with a mocking smile. "Best of friends and model of philosophers—as well as declared enemy of all fraud and falsehood—I have to pay you a thousand compliments."

"I accent anything from you, my dear young lady, even though undeserved," said the Jesuit, trying to smile, and thus exposing his vile yellow teeth; "but may I be informed how I have earned these compliments?"

"Your penetration, sir, which is rare—" replied Adrienne.

"And your veracity, sir," said the count, "which is perhaps no less rare—"

"In what have I exhibited my penetration, my dear young lady?" said Rodin, coldly. "In what my veracity?" added he, turning towards M. de Montbron.

"In what, sir?" said Adrienne. "Why, you have guessed a secret surrounded by difficulties and mystery. In a word,

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you have known how to read the depths of a woman's heart."

"I, my dear young lady?"

"You, sir! rejoice at it, for your penetration has had the most fortunate results."

"And your veracity has worked wonders," added the count.

"It is pleasant to do good, even without knowing it," said Rodin, still acting on the defensive, and throwing side glances by turns on the count and Adrienne; "but will you inform me what it is that deserves this praise—"

"Gratitude obliges me to inform you of it," said Adrienne, maliciously; "you have discovered, and told Prince Djalma, that I was passionately in love. Well! I admire your penetration; it was true."

"You have also discovered, and told this lady, that Prince Djalma was passionately in love," resumed the count. "Well! I admire your penetration, my dear sir; it was true."

Rodin looked confused, and at a loss for a reply.

"The person that I loved so passionately," said Adrienne, "was the prince."

"The person that the prince loved so passionately," resumed the count, "was this lady."

These revelations, so sudden and alarming, almost stunned Rodin; he remained mute and terrified, thinking of the future.

"Do you understand now, sir, the extent of our gratitude towards you?" resumed Adrienne, in a still more mocking tone. "Thanks to your sagacity, thanks to the touching interest you take in us, the prince and I are indebted to you for the knowledge of our mutual sentiments."

The Jesuit had now gradually recovered his presence of mind, and his apparent calmness greatly irritated M. de Montbron, who, but for Adrienne's presence, would have assumed another tone than jests.

"There is some mistake," said Rodin, "in what you have done me the honor to tell me, my dear young lady. I have never in my life spoken of the sentiments, however worthy and respectable, that you may entertain for Prince Djalma—"

"That is true," replied Adrienne; "with scrupulous and exquisite discretion, whenever you spoke to me of the deep love felt by Prince Djalma, you carried your reserve and delicacy so far as to inform me that it was not I whom he loved."

"And the same scruple induced you to tell the prince that Mdlle. de Cardoville loved some one passionately—but that he was not the person," added the count.

"Sir," answered Rodin, dryly, "I need hardly tell you that I have no desire to mix myself up with amorous intrigues."

"Come! this is either pride or modesty," said the count, insolently. "For your own interest, pray do not advance such things; for, if we took you at your word, and it became known, it might injure some of the nice little trades that you carry on."

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"There is one at least," said Rodin, drawing himself up as proudly as M. de Montbron, "whose rude apprenticeship I shall owe to you. It is the wearisome one of listening to your discourse."

"I tell you what, my good sir!" replied the count, disdainfully: "you force me to remind you that there are more ways than one of chastising impudent rogues."

"My dear count!" said Adrienne to M. de Montbron, with an air of reproach.

With perfect coolness, Rodin replied: "I do not exactly see, sir, first, what courage is shown by threatening a poor old man like myself, and, secondly—"

"M. Rodin," said the count, interrupting the Jesuit, "first, a poor old man like you, who does evil under the shelter of the age he dishonors, is both cowardly and wicked, and deserves a double chastisement; secondly, with regard to this question of age, I am not aware that gamekeepers and policemen bow down respectfully to the gray coats of old wolves, and the gray hairs of old thieves. What do you think, my good sir?"

Still impassible, Rodin raised his flabby eyelids, fixed for hardly a second his little reptile eye upon the count, and darted at him one of his rapid, cold, and piercing glances—and then the livid eyelid again covered the dull eye of that corpse-like face.

"Not having the disadvantage of being an old wolf, and still less an old thief," said Rodin, quietly, "you will permit me, sir, to take no account of the pursuit of hunters and police. As for the reproaches made me, I have a very simple method of answering—I do not say of justifying myself—I never justify myself—"

"You don't say!" said the count.

"Never," resumed Rodin coolly; "my acts are sufficient for that. I will then simply answer that seeing the deep, violent, almost fearful impression made by this lady on the prince—"

"Let this assurance which you give me of the prince's love," said Adrienne interrupting Rodin with an enchanting smile, "absolve you of all the evil you wished to do me. The sight of our happiness be your only punishment!"

"It may be that I need neither absolution nor punishment, for, as I have already had the honor to observe to the count, my dear young lady, the future will justify my acts. Yes; it was my duty to tell the prince that you loved another than himself, and to tell you that he loved another than yourself—all in your mutual interest. That my attachment for you may have misled me, is possible—I am not infallible; but, after my past conduct towards you, my dear young lady, I have, perhaps, some right to be astonished at seeing myself thus treated. This is not a complaint. If I never justify myself, I never complain either."

"Now really, there is something heroic in all this, my good sir," said the count. "You do not condescend to complain or justify yourself, with regard to the evil you have done."

"The evil I have done?" said Rodin, looking fixedly at the count. "Are we playing at enigmas?"

"What, sir!" cried the count, with indignation: "is it nothing, by your falsehoods, to have plunged the prince into so frightful a state of despair, that he has twice attempted his life? Is it nothing, by similar falsehoods, to have induced this lady to believe so cruel and complete an error, that but for the resolution I have to-day taken, it might have led to the most fatal consequences?"

"And will you do me the honor to tell me, sir, what interest I could have in all this despair and error, admitting even that I had wished to produce them?"

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"Some great interest no doubt," said the count, bluntly; "the more dangerous that it is concealed. You are one of those, I see, to whom the woes of others are pleasure and profit."

"That is really too much, sir," said Rodin, bowing; "I should be quite contented with the profit."

"Your impudent coolness will not deceive me; this is a serious matter," said the count. "It is impossible that so perfidious a piece of roguery can be an isolated act. Who knows but this may still be one of the fruits of Madame de Saint-Dizier's hatred for Mdlle. de Cardoville?"

Adrienne had listened to the preceding discussion with deep attention. Suddenly she started, as if struck by a sudden revelation.

After a moment's silence, she said to Rodin, without anger, without bitterness, but with an expression of gentle and serene calmness: "We are told, sir, that happy love works miracles. I should be tempted to believe it; for, after some minutes' reflection, and when I recall certain circumstances, your conduct appears to me in quite a new light."

"And what may this new perspective be, my dear young lady?"

"That you may see it from my point of view, sir, allow me to remind you of a few facts. That sewing-girl was generously devoted to me; she had given me unquestionable proofs of her attachment. Her mind was equal to her noble heart; but she had an invincible dislike to you. All on a sudden she disappears mysteriously from my house, and you do your best to cast upon her odious suspicions. M. de Montbron has a paternal affection for me; but, as I must confess, little sympathy for you; and you have always tried to produce a coldness between us. Finally, Prince Djalma has a deep affection for me, and you employ the most perfidious treachery to kill that sentiment within him. For what end do you act thus? I do not know; but certainly with some hostile design."

"It appears to me, madame," said Rodin, severely, "that you have forgotten services performed."

"I do not deny, sir, that you took me from the house of Dr. Baleinier; but, a few days sooner or later, I must infallibly have been released by M. de Montbron."

"You are right, my dear child," said the count; "it may be that your enemies wished to claim the merit of what must necessarily have happened through the exertions of your friends."

"You are drowning, and I save you—it is all a mistake to feel grateful," said Rodin, bitterly; "some one else would no doubt have saved you a little later."

"The comparison is wanting in exactness," said Adrienne, with a smile; "a lunatic asylum is not a river, and though, from what I see, I think you quite capable of diving, you have had no occasion to swim on this occasion. You merely opened a door for me, which would have opened of itself a little later."

"Very good, my dear child!" said the count, laughing heartily at Adrienne's reply.

"I know, sir, that your care did not extend to me only. The daughters of Marshal Simon were brought back by you; but we may imagine that the claim of the Duke de Ligny to the possession of his daughters would not have been in vain. You returned to an old soldier his imperial cross, which he held to be a sacred relic; it is a very touching incident. Finally, you unmasked the Abbe d'Aigrigny and Dr. Baleinier: but I had already made up my mind to unmask them. However, all this proves that you are a very clever man—"

"Oh, madame!" said Rodin, humbly.

"Full of resources and invention—"

"Oh, madame!"

"It is not my fault if, in our long interview at Dr. Baleinier's, you betrayed that superiority of mind which struck me so forcibly, and which seems to embarrass you so much at present. What would you have, sir?— great minds like yours find it difficult to maintain their incognito. Yet, as by different ways—oh! very different," added the young lady, maliciously, "we are tending to the same end (still keeping in view our conversation at Dr. Baleinier's), I wish, for the sake of our future communion, as you call it, to give you a piece of advice, and speak frankly to you."

Rodin had listened to Mdlle. de Cardoville with apparent impassibility, holding his hat under his arm, and twirling his thumbs, whilst his hands were crossed upon his waistcoat. The only external mark of the intense agitation into which he was thrown by the calm words of Adrienne, was that the livid eyelids of the Jesuit, which had been hypocritically closed, became gradually red, as the blood flowed into them. Nevertheless, he answered Mdlle. de Cardoville in a firm voice, and with a low bow: "Good advice and frankness are always excellent things."

"You see, sir," resumed Adrienne, with some excitement, "happy love bestows such penetration, such energy, such courage, as enables one to laugh at perils, to detect stratagems, and to defy hatred. Believe me, the divine light which surrounds two loving hearts will be sufficient to disperse all darkness, and reveal every snare. You see, in India—excuse my weakness, but I like to talk of India," added the young girl, with a smile of indescribable grace and meaning—"in India, when travellers sleep at night, they kindle great fires round their ajoupa (excuse this touch of local coloring), and far as extends the luminous circle, it puts to flight by its mere brilliancy, all the impure and venomous reptiles that shun the day and live only in darkness."

"The meaning of this comparison has quite escaped me," said Rodin, continuing to twirl his thumbs, and half raising his eyelids, which were getting redder and redder.

"I will speak more plainly," said Adrienne, with a smile. "Suppose, sir, that the last is a service which you have rendered me and the prince—for you only proceed by way of services—that, I acknowledge, is novel and ingenious."

"Bravo, my dear child!" said the count, joyfully. "The execution will be complete."

"Oh! this is meant for an execution?" said Rodin, still impassible.

"No, sir," answered Adrienne, with a smile; "it is a simple conversation between a poor young girl and an old philosopher, the friend of humanity. Suppose, then, that these frequent services that you have rendered to me and mine have suddenly opened my eyes; or, rather," added the young girl, in a serious tone, "suppose that heaven, who gives to the mother the instinct to defend her child, has given me, along with happiness, the instinct to preserve my happiness, and that a vague presentiment, by throwing light on a thousand circumstances until now obscure, has suddenly revealed to me that, instead of being the friend, you are perhaps, the most dangerous enemy of myself and family."

"So we pass from the execution to suppositions," said Rodin, still immovable.

"And from suppositions, sir, if you must have it, to certainty," resumed Adrienne, with dignified firmness; "yes, now I believe that I was for awhile your dupe, and I tell you, without hate, without anger, but with regret—that it is painful to see a man of your sense and intelligence stoop to such machinations, and, after having recourse to so many diabolical manoeuvres, finish at last by being ridiculous; for, believe me, there is nothing more ridiculous for a man like you, than to be vanquished by a young girl, who has no weapon, no defence, no instructor, but her

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love. In a word, sir, I look upon you from to-day as an implacable and dangerous enemy; for I half perceive your aim, without guessing by what means you will seek to accomplish it, No doubt your future means will be worthy of the past. Well! in spite of all this, I do not fear you. From tomorrow, my family will be informed of everything, and an active, intelligent, resolute union will keep us all upon our guard, for it doubtless concerns this enormous inheritance, of which they wish to deprive us. Now, what connection can there be between the wrongs I reproach you with and the pecuniary end proposed? I do not at all know—but you have told me yourself that our enemies are so dangerously skillful, and their craft so far-reaching, that we must expect all, be prepared for all. I will remember the lesson. I have promised you frankness, sir, and now I suppose you have it."

"It would be an imprudent frankness if I were your enemy," said Rodin, still impassible; "but you also promised me some advice, my dear young lady."

"My advice will be short; do not attempt to continue the struggle, because, you see, there is something stronger than you and yours—it is a woman's resolve, defending her happiness."

Adrienne pronounced these last words with so sovereign a confidence; her beautiful countenance shone, as is it were, with such intrepid joy, that Rodin, notwithstanding his phlegmatic audacity, was for a moment frightened. Yet he did not appear in the least disconcerted; and, after a moment's silence, he resumed, with an air of almost contemptuous compassion: "My dear young lady, we may perhaps never meet again; it is probable. Only remember one thing, which I now repeat to you: I never justify myself. The future will provide for that. Notwithstanding which, my dear young lady, I am your humble servant;" and he made her a low bow.

"Count, I beg to salute you most respectfully," he added, bowing still more humbly to M. de Montbron; and he went out.

Hardly had Rodin left the room than Adrienne ran to her desk, and writing a few hasty lines, sealed the note, and said to M. de Montbron: "I shall not see the prince before to-morrow—as much from superstition of the heart as because it is necessary for my plans that this interview should be attended with some little solemnity. You shall know all; but I write to him on the instant, for, with an enemy like M. Rodin, one must be prepared for all."

"You are right, my dear child; quick! the letter." Adrienne gave it to him.

"I tell him enough," said she, "to calm his grief; and not enough to deprive me of the delicious happiness of the surprise I reserve for to-morrow."

"All this has as much sense as heart in it: I will hasten to the prince's abode, to deliver your letter. I shall not see him, for I could not answer for myself. But come! our proposed drive, our evening's amusement, are still to hold good."

"Certainly. I have more need than ever to divert my thoughts till to-morrow. I feel, too, that the fresh air will do me good, for this interview with M. Rodin has warmed me a little."

"The old wretch! but we will talk further of him. I will hasten to the prince's and return with Madame de Morinval, to fetch you to the Champs-Élysees."

The Count de Montbron withdrew precipitately, as joyful at his departure as he had been sad on his arrival.

CHAPTER XI. THE CHAMPS-ÉLYSEES

It was about two hours after the interview of Rodin with Mdlle. de Cardoville. Numerous loungers, attracted to

the Champs–Elysees by the serenity of a fine spring day (it was towards the end of the month of March) stopped to admire a very handsome equipage. A bright–blue open carriage, with white–and–blue wheels, drawn by four superb horses, of cream color, with black manes, and harness glittering with silver ornaments, mounted by two boy postilions of equal size, with black velvet caps, light–blue cassimere jackets with white collars, buckskin breeches, and top–boots; two tall, powdered footmen, also in light–blue livery, with white collars and facings, being seated in the rumble behind.

No equipage could have been turned out in better style. The horses, full of blood, spirit, and vigor, were skillfully managed by the postilions, and stepped with singular regularity, gracefully keeping time in their movements, champing their bits covered with foam, and ever and anon shaking their cockades of blue and white silk, with long floating ends, and a bright rose blooming in the midst.

A man on horseback, dressed with elegant simplicity, keeping at the other side of the avenue, contemplated with proud satisfaction this equipage which he had, as it were, created. It was M. de Bonneville—Adrienne's equerry, as M. de Montbron called him—for the carriage belonged to that young lady. A change had taken place in the plan for this magic day's amusement. M. de Montbron had not been able to deliver Mdlle. de Cardoville's note to Prince Djalma. Faringhea had told him that the prince had gone that morning into the country with Marshal Simon, and would not be back before evening. The letter should be given him on his arrival. Completely satisfied as to Djalma, knowing that he could find these few lines, which, without informing him of the happiness that awaited him, would at least give him some idea of it, Adrienne had followed the advice of M. de Montbron, and gone to the drive in her own carriage, to show all the world that she had quite made up her mind, in spite of the perfidious reports circulated by the Princess de Saint– Dizier, to keep to her resolution of living by herself in her own way. Adrienne wore a small white bonnet, with a fall of blonde, which well became her rosy face and golden hair; her high dress of garnet–colored velvet was almost hidden beneath a large green cashmere shawl. The young Marchioness de Morinval, who was also very pretty and elegant, was seated at her right. M. de Montbron occupied the front seat of the carriage.

Those who know the Parisian world, or rather, that imperceptible fraction of the world of Paris which goes every fine, sunny day to the Champs– Elysees, to see and be seen, will understand that the presence of Mdlle. de Cardoville on that brilliant promenade was an extraordinary and interesting event.

The world (as it is called) could hardly believe its eyes, on seeing this lady of eighteen, possessed of princely wealth, and belonging to the highest nobility, thus prove to every one, by this appearance in public, that she was living completely free and independent, contrary to all custom and received notions of propriety. This kind of emancipation appeared something monstrous, and people were almost astonished that the graceful and dignified bearing of the young lady should belie so completely the calumnies circulated by Madame de Saint–Dizier and her friends, with regard to the pretended madness of her niece. Many beaux, profiting by their acquaintance with the Marchioness de Morinval or M. de Montbron, came by turns to pay their respects, and rode for a few minutes by the side of the carriage, so as to have an opportunity of seeing, admiring, and perhaps hearing, Mdlle. de Cardoville; she surpassed their expectations, by talking with her usual grace and spirit. Then surprise and enthusiasm knew no bounds. What had at first been blamed as an almost insane caprice, was now voted a charming originality, and it only depended on Mdlle. de Cardoville herself, to be declared from that day the queen of elegance and fashion. The young lady understood very well the impression she had made; she felt proud and happy, for she thought of Djalma; when she compared him to all these men of fashion, her happiness was the more increased. And, verily, these young men, most of whom had never quitted Paris, or had ventured at most as far as Naples or Baden, looked insignificant enough by the side of Djalma, who, at his age, had so many times commanded and combated in bloody wars, and whose reputation for courage and generosity, mentioned by travellers with admiration, had already reached from India to Paris. And then, how could these charming exquisites, with their small hats, their scanty frock–coats, and their huge cravats, compare with the Indian prince, whose graceful and manly beauty was still heightened by the splendor of a costume, at once so rich and so picturesque?

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On this happy day, all was joy and love for Adrienne. The sun, setting in a splendidly serene sky, flooded the promenade with its golden light. The air was warm. Carriages and horsemen passed and repassed in rapid succession; a light breeze played with the scarfs of the women, and the plumes in their bonnets; all around was noise, movement, sunshine. Adrienne, leaning back in her carriage, amused herself with watching this busy scene, sparkling with Parisian luxury; but, in the vortex of this brilliant chaos, she saw in thought the mild, melancholy countenance of Djalma—when suddenly something fell into her lap, and she started. It was a bunch of half-faded violets. At the same instant she heard a child's voice following the carriage, and saying: "For the love of heaven, my good lady, one little sou!" Adrienne turned her head, and saw a poor little girl, pale and wan, with mild, sorrowful features, scarcely covered with rags, holding out her hand, and raising her eyes in supplication. Though the striking contrast of extreme misery, side by side with extreme luxury, is so common, that it no longer excites attention, Adrienne was deeply affected by it. She thought of Mother Bunch, now, perhaps, the victim of frightful destitution.

"Ah! at least," thought the young lady, "let not this day be one of happiness for me alone!"

She leaned from the carriage-window, and said to the poor child: "Have you a mother, my dear?"

"No, my lady, I have neither father nor mother."

"Who takes care of you?"

"No one, my lady. They give me nosegays to sell, and I must bring home money—or they beat me."

"Poor little thing!"

"A sou, my good lady—a sou, for the love of heaven!" said the child, continuing to follow the carriage, which was then moving slowly.

"My dear count," said Adrienne, smiling, and addressing M. de Montbron, "you are, unfortunately, no novice at an elopement. Please to stretch forth your arms, take up that child with both hands, and lift her into the carriage. We can hide her between Lady de Morinval and myself; and we can drive away before any one perceives this audacious abduction."

"What!" said the count, in surprise. "You wish—"

"Yes; I beg you to do it."

"What a folly!"

"Yesterday, you might, perhaps, have treated this caprice as a folly; but to-day," said Adrienne, laying great stress upon the word, and glancing at M. de Montbron with a significant air, "to-day, you should understand that it is almost a duty."

"Yes, I understand you, good and noble heart!" said the count, with emotion; while Lady de Morinval, who knew nothing of Mlle. de Cardoville's love for Djalma, looked with as much surprise as curiosity at the count and the young lady.

M. de Montbron, leaning from the carriage, stretched out his arms towards the child, and said to her: "Give me your hands, little girl."

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Though much astonished, the child obeyed mechanically, and held out both her little arms; then the count took her by the wrists, and lifted her lightly from the ground, which he did the more easily, as the carnage was very low, and its progress by no means rapid. More stupefied than frightened, the child said not a word. Adrienne and Lady de Morinval made room for her to crouch down between them, and the little girl was soon hidden beneath the shawls of the two young women. All this was executed so quickly, that it was hardly perceived by a few persons passing in the side-avenues.

"Now, my dear count," said Adrienne, radiant with pleasure, "let us make off at once with our prey."

M. de Montbron half rose, and called to the postilions. "Home!" and the four horses started at once into a rapid and regular trot.

"This day of happiness now seems consecrated, and my luxury is excused," thought Adrienne; "till I can again meet with that poor Mother Bunch, and from this day I will make every exertion to find her out, her place will at least not be quite empty."

There are often strange coincidences in life. At the moment when this thought of the hunchback crossed the mind of Adrienne, a crowd had collected in one of the side-avenues, and other persons soon ran to join the group.

"Look, uncle!" said Lady de Morinval; "how many people are assembled yonder. What can it be? Shall we stop, and send to inquire?"

"I am sorry, my dear, but your curiosity cannot be satisfied," said the count, drawing out his watch; "it will soon be six o'clock, and the exhibition of the wild beasts begin at eight. We shall only just have time to go home and dine. Is not that your opinion, my dear child?" said he to Adrienne.

"And yours, Julia?" said Mdlle. de Cardoville to the marchioness.

"Oh, certainly!" answered her friend.

"I am the less inclined to delay," resumed the count, "as when I have taken you to the Porte-Saint-Martin, I shall be obliged to go for half-an-hour to my club, to ballot for Lord Campbell, whom I propose."

"Then, Adrienne and I will be left alone at the play, uncle?"

"Your husband will go with you, I suppose."

"True, dear uncle; but do not quite leave us, because of that."

"Be sure I shall not: for I am curious as you are to see these terrible animals, and the famous Morok, the incomparable lion-tamer."

A few minutes after, Mdlle. de Cardoville's carriage had left the Champs-Elysees, carrying with it the little girl, and directing its course towards the Rue d'Anjou. As the brilliant equipage disappeared from the scene, the crowd, of which we before have spoken, greatly increased about one of the large trees in the Champs-Elysees, and expressions of pity were heard here and there amongst the groups. A loungeer approached a young man on the skirts of the crowd, and said to him: "What is the matter, sir?"

"I hear it is a poor young girl, a hunchback, that has fallen from exhaustion."

"A hunchback! is that all? There will always be enough hunchbacks," said the loungeur, brutally, with a coarse laugh.

"Hunchback or not, if she dies of hunger," answered the young man, scarcely able to restrain his indignation, "it will be no less sad—and there is really nothing to laugh at, sir."

"Die of hunger! pooh!" said the loungeur, shrugging his shoulders. "It is only lazy scoundrels, that will not work, who die of hunger. And it serves them right."

"I wager, sir, there is one death you will never die of," cried the young man, incensed at the cruel insolence of the loungeur.

"What do you mean?" answered the other, haughtily.

"I mean, sir, that your heart is not likely to kill you."

"Sir!" cried the loungeur in an angry tone.

"Well! what, sir?" replied the young man, looking full in his face.

"Nothing," said the loungeur, turning abruptly on his heel, and grumbling as he sauntered towards an orange-colored cabriolet, on which was emblazoned an enormous coat-of-arms, surmounted by a baron's crest. A servant in green livery, ridiculously laced with gold, was standing beside the horse, and did not perceive his master.

"Are you catching flies, fool?" said the latter, pushing him with his cane. The servant turned round in confusion. "Sir," said he.

"Will you never learn to call me Monsieur le Baron, rascal?" cried his master, in a rage—"Open the door directly!"

The loungeur was Baron Tripeaud, the manufacturing baron the stock-jobber. The poor hunchback was Mother Bunch, who had, indeed fallen with hunger and fatigue, whilst on her way to Mdlle. de Cardoville's. The unfortunate creature had found courage to brave the shame of the ridicule she so much feared, by returning to that house from which she was a voluntary exile; but this time, it was not for herself, but for her sister Cephyse—the Bacchanal Queen, who had returned to Paris the previous day, and whom Mother Bunch now sought, through the means of Adrienne, to rescue from a most dreadful fate.

Two hours after these different scenes, an enormous crowd pressed round the doors of the Porte-Saint-Martin, to witness the exercises of Morok, who was about to perform a mock combat with the famous black panther of Java, named Death. Adrienne, accompanied by Lord and Lady de Morinval, now stepped from a carriage at the entrance of the theatre. They were to be joined in the course of the evening by M. de Montbron, whom they had dropped, in passing, at his club.

CHAPTER XII. BEHIND THE SCENES.

The large theatre of the Porte-Saint-Martin was crowded by an impatient multitude. All Paris had hurried with eager and burning curiosity to Morok's exhibition. It is quite unnecessary to say that the lion-tamer had completely abandoned his small taste in religious baubles, which he had so successfully carried on at the White Falcon Inn at Leipsic. There were, moreover, numerous tokens by which the surprising effects of Morok's sudden

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conversion had been blazoned in the most extraordinary pictures: the antiquated baubles in which he had formerly dealt would have found no sale in Paris. Morok had nearly finished dressing himself, in one of the actor's rooms, which had been lent to him. Over a coat of mail, with cuishes and brassarts, he wore an ample pair of red trousers, fastened round his ankles by broad rings of gilt brass. His long caftan of black cloth, embroidered with scarlet and gold, was bound round his waist and wrist by other large rings of gilt metal. This sombre costume imparted to him an aspect still more ferocious. His thick and red-haired beard fell in large quantities down to his chest, and a long piece of white muslin was folded round his red head. A devout missionary in Germany and an actor in Paris, Morok knew as well as his employers, the Jesuits, how to accommodate himself to circumstances.

Seated in one corner of the room, and contemplating with a sort of stupid admiration, was Jacques Rennepont, better known as "Sleepinbuff" (from the likelihood that he would end his days in rags, or his present antipathy to great care in dress). Since the day Hardy's factory had been destroyed by fire, Jacques had not quitted Morok, passing the nights in excesses, which had no baneful effects on the iron constitution of the lion-tamer. On the other's features, on the contrary, a great alteration was perceptible; his hollow cheeks, marble pallor, his eyes, by turns dull and heavy, or gleaming with lurid fire, betrayed the ravages of debauchery, his parched lips were almost constantly curled by a bitter and sardonic smile. His spirit, once gay and sanguine, still struggled against the besotting influence of habitual intoxication. Unfitted for labor, no longer able to forego gross pleasures, Jacques sought to drown in wine a few virtuous impulses which he still possessed, and had sunk so low as to accept without shame the large dole of sensual gratification proffered him by Morok, who paid all the expenses of their orgies, but never gave him money, in order that he might be completely dependent on him. After gazing at Morok for some time in amazement, Jacques said to him, in a familiar tone: "Well, yours is a famous trade; you may boast that, at this moment, there are not two men like you in the whole world That's flattering. It's a pity you don't stick to this fine trade."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, how is the conspiracy going on, in whose honor you make me keep it up all day and all night?"

"It is working, but the time is not yet come; that is why I wish to have you always at hand, till the great day. Do you complain?"

"Hang it, no!" said Jacques. "What could I do? Burnt up with brandy as I am, if I wanted to work, I've no longer the strength to do so. I have not, like you, a head of marble, and a body of iron; but as for fuddling myself with gunpowder, instead of anything else, that'll do for me; I'm only fit for that work now—and then, it will drive away thought."

"Oh what kind?"

"You know that when I do think, I think only of one thing," said Jacques, gloomily.

"The Bacchanal queen?—still?" said Morok, in a disdainful tone.

"Still! rather: when I shall think of her no longer, I shall be dead—or stupefied. Fiend!"

"You were never better or more intelligent, you fool!" replied Morok, fastening his turban. The conversation was here interrupted. Morok's aider entered hastily.

The gigantic form of this Hercules had increased in width. He was habited like Alcides; his enormous limbs, furrowed with veins as thick as whipcord, were covered with a close-fitting flesh-colored garment, to which a pair of red drawers formed a strong contrast.

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"Why do you rush in like a storm, Goliath?" said Morok.

"There's a pretty storm in the house; they are beginning to get impatient, and are calling out like madmen. But if that were all!"

"Well, what else?"

"Death will not be able to play this evening."

Morok turned quickly around. He seemed uneasy. "Why so?" he exclaimed.

"I have just seen her! she's crouching at the bottom of her cage; her ears lie so close to her head, she looks as if they had been cut off. You know what that means."

"Is that all?" said Morok, turning to the glass to complete his head-dress.

"It's quite enough; she's in one of her tearing fits. Since that night in Germany, when she ripped up that old hack of a white horse, I've not seen her look so savage! her eyes shine like burning candles."

"Then she must have her fine collar on," said Morok, quietly.

"Her fine collar?"

"Yes; her spring-collar."

"And I must be lady's-maid," said the giant. "A nice toilet to attend to!"

"Hold your tongue!"

"That's not all—" continued Goliath, hesitating.

"What more?"

"I might as well tell you at once."

"Will you speak?"

"Well! he is here."

"Who, you stupid brute?"

"The Englishman!"

Morok started; his arms fell powerless by his side. Jacques was struck with the lion-tamer's paleness and troubled countenance.

"The Englishman!—you have seen him?" cried Morok, addressing Goliath. "You are quite sure?"

"Quite sure. I was looking through the peep-hole in the curtain; I saw him in one of the stage-boxes—he wishes to see things close; he's easy to recognize, with his pointed forehead, big nose, and goggle eyes."

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Morok shuddered again; usually fierce and unmoved, he appeared to be more and more agitated, and so alarmed, that Jacques said to him: "Who is this Englishman?"

"He has followed me from Strasburg, where he fell in with me," said Morok, with visible dejection. "He travelled with his own horses, by short stages, as I did; stopping where I stopped, so as never to miss one of my exhibitions. But two days before I arrived at Paris, he left me—I thought I was rid of him," said Morok, with a sigh.

"Rid of him!—how you talk!" replied Jacques, surprised; "such a good customer, such an admirer!"

"Aye!" said Morok, becoming more and more agitated; "this wretch has wagered an enormous sum, that I will be devoured in his presence, during one of my performances: he hopes to win his wager—that is why he follows me about."

Sleepinbuff found the John Bull's idea so amusingly eccentric, that, for the first time since a very long period, he burst into a peal of hearty laughter. Morok, pale with rage, rushed towards him with so menacing an air, that Goliath was obliged to interpose.

"Come, come," said Jacques, don't be angry; if it is serious, I will not laugh any more."

Morok was appeased, and said to Sleepinbuff in a hoarse voice: "Do you think me a coward?"

"No, by heaven!"

"Well! And yet this Englishman, with his grotesque face, frightens me more than any tiger or my panther!"

"You say so, and I believe it," replied Jacques; "but I cannot understand why the presence of this man should alarm you."

"But consider, you dull knave!" cried Morok, "that, obliged to watch incessantly the least movement of the ferocious beast, whom I keep in subjection by my action and my looks, there is something terrible in knowing that two eyes are there—always there—fixed—waiting till the least absence of mind shall expose me to be torn in pieces by the animals."

"Now, I understand," said Jacques, shuddering in his turn. "It is terrible."

"Yes; for once there, though I may not see this cursed Englishman, I fancy I have his two round eyes, fixed and wide open, always before me. My tiger Cain once nearly mutilated my arm, when my attention was drawn away by this Englishman, whom the devil take! Blood and thunder!" cried Morok: "this man will be fatal to me." And Morok paced the room in great agitation.

"Besides, Death lays her ears close to her skull," said Goliath, brutally. "If you persist—mind, I tell you—the Englishman will win his wager this evening."

"Go away, you brute!—don't vex my head with your confounded predictions," cried Morok: "go and prepare Death's collar."

"Well, every one to his taste; you wish the panther to taste you," said the giant, stalking heavily away, after this joke.

"But if you feel these fears," said Jacques, "why do you not say that the panther is ill?"

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Morok shrugged his shoulders, and replied with a sort of feverish ferocity, "Have you ever heard of the fierce pleasure of the gamester, who stakes his honor, his life, upon a card? Well! I too—in these daily exhibitions where my life is at stake—find a wild, fierce pleasure in braving death, before a crowded assembly, shuddering and terrified at my audacity. Yes, even in the fear with which this Englishman inspires me, I find, in spite of myself, a terrible excitement, which I abhor, and which yet subjugates me."

At this moment, the stage-manager entered the room, and interrupted the beast-tamer. "May we give the signal, M. Morok?" said the stage-manager. "The overture will not last above ten minutes."

"I am ready," said Morok.

"The police-inspector has just now given orders, that the double chain of the panther, and the iron ring riveted to the floor of the stage, at the end of the cavern in the foreground, shall be again examined; and everything has been reported quite secure."

"Yes—secure—except for me," murmured the beast-tamer.

"So, M. Morok, the signal may be given?"

"The signal may—be given," replied Morok. And the manager went out.

CHAPTER XIII. UP WITH THE CURTAIN.

The usual bell sounded with solemnity behind the scenes the overture began, and, to say the truth, but little attention was paid to it. The interior of the theatre offered a very animated view. With the exception of two stage-boxes even with the dress circle, one to the left, the other to the right of the audience, every seat was occupied. A great number of very fashionable ladies, attracted, as is always the case, by the strange wildness of the spectacle, filled the boxes. The stalls were crowded by most of the young men who; in the morning, had walked their horses on the Champs-Elysees. The observations which passed from one stall to another, will give some idea of their conversation.

"Do you know, my dear boy, there would not be so crowded or fashionable an audience to witness Racine's *Athalie*?"

"Undoubtedly. What is the beggarly howling of an actor, compared to the roaring of the lion?"

"I cannot understand how the authorities permit this Morok to fasten his panther with a chain to an iron ring in the corner of the stage. If the chain were to break?"

"Talking of broken chains—there's little Mme. de Blinville, who is no tigress. Do you see her in the second tier, opposite?"

"It becomes her very well to have broken, as you say, the marriage chain; she looks very well this season."

"Oh! there is the beautiful Duchess de Saint-Prix; all the world is here to-night—I don't speak of ourselves."

"It is a regular opera night—what a festive scene!"

"Well, after all, people do well to amuse themselves, perhaps it will not be for long."

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"Why so?"

"Suppose the cholera were to come to Paris?"

"Oh! nonsense!"

"Do you believe in the cholera?"

"To be sure I do! He's coming from the North, with his walking-stick under his arm."

"The devil take him on the road! don't let us see his green visage here."

"They say he's at London."

"A pleasant journey to him."

"Come, let us talk of something else; it may be a weakness, if you please, but I call this a dull subject."

"I believe you."

"Oh! gentlemen—I am not mistaken—no—it is she!"

"Who, then?"

"Mdlle. de Cardoville! She is coming into the stage-box with Morinval and his wife. It is a complete resuscitation: this morning on the Champs-Elysees; in the evening here."

"Faith, you are right! It is Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"Good heaven! how lovely she is!"

"Lend me your eyeglass."

"Well, what do you think of her?"

"Exquisite—dazzling."

"And in addition to her beauty, an inexhaustible flow of wit, three hundred thousand francs a year, high birth, eighteen years of age, and— free as air."

"Yes, that is to say, that, provided it pleased her, I might be to-morrow—or even to-day—the happiest of men."

"It is enough to turn one's brain."

"I am told that her mansion, Rue d'Anjou, is like an enchanted palace; a great deal is said about a bath-room and bedroom, worthy of the Arabian Nights."

"And free as air—I come back to that."

"Ah! if I were in her place!"

"My levity would be quite shocking."

"Oh! gentlemen, what a happy man will he be who is loved first!"

"You think, then, that she will have many lovers?"

"Being as free as air—"

"All the boxes are full, except the stage-box opposite to that in which Mdlle. de Cardoville is seated. Happy the occupiers of that box!"

"Did you see the English ambassador's lady in the dress circle?"

"And the Princess d'Alvimar—what an enormous bouquet!"

"I should like to know the name—of that nosegay."

"Oh!—it's Germigny."

"How flattering for the lions and tigers, to attract so fashionable an audience."

"Do you notice, gentlemen, how all the women are eye-glassing Mdlle. de Cardoville?"

"She makes a sensation."

"She is right to show herself; they gave her out as mad."

"Oh! gentlemen, what a capital phiz!"

"Where—where?"

"There—in the omnibus-box beneath Mdlle. de Cardoville's."

"It's a Nuremburg nutcracker."

"An ourang-outang!"

"Did you ever see such round, staring eyes?"

"And the nose!"

"And the forehead!"

"It's a caricature."

"Order, order! the curtain rises."

And, in fact, the curtain rose. Some explanation is necessary for the clear understanding of what follows. In the lower stage-box, to the left of the audience, were several persons, who had been referred to by the young men in the stalls. The omnibus-box was occupied by the Englishman, the eccentric and portentous bettor, whose presence inspired Morok with so much dread.

It would require Hoffman's rare and fantastic genius to describe worthily that countenance, at once grotesque and frightful, as it stood out from the dark background of the box. This Englishman was about fifty years old; his forehead was quite bald, and of a conical shape; beneath this forehead, surmounted by eyebrows like parenthesis marks, glittered large, green eyes, remarkably round and staring, and set very close to a hooked nose, extremely sharp and prominent; a chin like that on the old-fashioned nutcrackers was half-hidden in a broad and ample white cravat, as stiffly-starched as the round-cornered shirt-collar, which nearly touched his ears. The face was exceedingly thin and bony, and yet the complexion was high-colored, approaching to purple, which made the bright green of the pupils, and the white of the other part of the eyes, still more conspicuous. The mouth, which was very wide, sometimes whistled inaudibly the tune of a Scotch jig (always the same tune), sometimes was slightly curled with a sardonic smite. The Englishman was dressed with extreme care; his blue coat, with brass buttons, displayed his spotless waistcoat, snowy, white as his ample cravat; his shirt was fastened with two magnificent ruby studs, and his patrician hands were carefully kid-gloved.

To any one who knew the eccentric and cruel desire which attracted this man to every representation, his grotesque face became almost terrific, instead of exciting ridicule; and it was easy to understand the dread experience by Morok at sight of those great, staring round eyes, which appeared to watch for the death of the lion-tamer (what a horrible death!) with unshaken confidence. Above the dark box of the Englishman, affording a graceful contrast, were seated the Morivals and Mlle. de Cardoville. The latter was placed nearest the stage. Her head was uncovered, and she wore a dress of sky-blue China crepe, ornamented at the bosom with a brooch of the finest Oriental pearls—nothing more; yet Adrienne, thus attired, was charming. She held in her hand an enormous bouquet, composed of the rarest flowers of India: the stephanotis and the gardenia mingled the dead white of their blossoms with the purple hibiscus and Java amaryllis.

Madame de Morinval, seated on the opposite side of the box, was dressed with equal taste and simplicity; Morinval, a fair and very handsome young man, of elegant appearance, was behind the two ladies. M. de Montbron was expected to arrive every moment. The reader will please to recollect that the stage-box to the right of the audience, opposite Adrienne's, had remained till then quite empty. The stage represented one of the gigantic forests of India. In the background, tall exotic trees rose in spiral or spreading forms, among rugged masses of perpendicular rocks, with here and there glimpses of a tropical sky. The side-scenes formed tufts of trees, interspersed with rocks; and at the side which was immediately beneath Adrienne's box appeared the irregular opening of a deep and gloomy cavern, round which were heaped huge blocks of granite, as if thrown together by some convulsion of nature. This scenery, full of a wild and savage grandeur, was wonderfully "built up," so as to make the illusion as complete as possible; the footlights were lowered, and being covered with a purple shade, threw over this landscape a subdued reddish light, which increased the gloomy and startling effect of the whole. Adrienne, leaning forward from the box, with cheeks slightly flushed, sparkling eyes, and throbbing heart, sought to trace in this scene the solitary forest described by the traveller who had eulogized Djalma's generosity and courage, when he threw himself upon a ferocious tigress to save the life of a poor black slave. Chance coincided wonderfully indeed with her recollections. Absorbed in the contemplation of the scenery and the thoughts it awakened in her heart, she paid no attention to what was passing in the house. And yet something calculated to excite curiosity was taking place in the opposite stage-box.

The door of this box opened. A man about forty years of age, of a yellow complexion, entered; he was clothed after the East Indian fashion, in a long robe of orange silk, bound round the waist with a green sash, and he wore a small white turban. He placed two chairs at the front of the box; and, having glanced round the house for a moment, he started, his black eyes sparkled, and he went out quickly. That man was Faringhea. His apparition caused surprise and curiosity in the theatre; the majority of the spectators not having, like Adrienne, a thousand reasons for being absorbed in the contemplation of a picturesque set scene. The public attention was still more excited when they saw the box which Faringhea had just left, entered by a youth of rare beauty, also dressed Oriental fashion, in a long robe of white Cashmere with flowing sleeves, with a scarlet turban striped with gold on his head, and a sash to correspond, in which was stuck a long dagger, glittering with precious stones. This young man was Prince Djalma. For an instant he remained standing at the door, and cast a look of indifference upon the

immense theatre, crowded with people; then, stepping forward with a majestic and tranquil air, the prince seated himself negligently on one of the chairs, and, turning his head in a few moments towards the entrance, appeared surprised at not seeing some person whom he doubtless expected. This person appeared at length; the boxkeeper had been assisting her to take off her cloak. She was a charming, fair-haired girl, attired with more show than taste, in a dress of white silk, with broad cherry-colored stripes, made ultra-fashionably low, and with short sleeves; a large bow of cherry-colored ribbon was placed on each side of her light hair, and set off the prettiest, sprightliest, most wilful little face in the world.

It was Rose-Pompon. Her pretty arms were partly covered by long white gloves, and ridiculously loaded with bracelets: in her hand she carried an enormous bouquet of roses.

Far from imitating the calm demeanor of Djalma, Rose-Pompon skipped into the box, moved the chairs about noisily, and fidgeted on her seat for some time, to display her fine dress; then, without being in the least intimidated by the presence of the brilliant assembly, she, with a little coquettish air, held her bouquet towards Djalma, that he might smell it, and appeared finally to establish herself on her seat. Faringhea came in, shut the door of the box, and seated himself behind the prince. Adrienne, still completely absorbed in the contemplation of the Indian forest, and in her own sweet thoughts, had not observed the newcomers. As she was turning her head completely towards the stage, and Djalma could not, for the moment, see even her profile, he, on his side, had not recognized Mdlle. de Cardoville.

CHAPTER XIV. DEATH.

The pantomime opening, by which was introduced the combat of Morok with the black panther, was so unmeaning, that the majority of the audience paid no attention to it, reserving all their interest for the scene in which the lion-tamer was to make his appearance.

This indifference of the public explains the curiosity excited in the theatre by the arrival of Faringhea and Djalma—a curiosity which expressed itself (as at this day, when uncommon foreigners appear in public) by a slight murmur and general movement amongst the crowd. The sprightly, pretty face of Rose-Pompon, always charming, in spite of her singularly staring dress, in style so ridiculous for such a theatre, and her light and familiar manner towards the handsome Indian who accompanied her, increased and animated the general surprise; for, at this moment, Rose-Pompon, yielding without reserve to a movement of teasing coquetry, had held up, as we have already stated, her large bunch of roses to Djalma. But the prince, at sight of the landscape which reminded him of his country, instead of appearing sensible to this pretty, provocation, remained for some minutes as in a dream, with his eyes fixed upon the stage. Then Rose-Pompon began to beat time on the front of the box with her bouquet, whilst the somewhat too visible movement of her pretty shoulders showed that this devoted dancer was thinking of fast-life dances, as the orchestra struck up a more lively strain.

Placed directly opposite the box in which Faringhea, Djalma, and Rose-Pompon had just taken their seats, Lady Morinval soon perceived the arrival of these two personages, and particularly the eccentric coquetries of Rose-Pompon. Immediately, the young marchioness, leaning over towards Mdlle. de Cardoville, who was still absorbed in memories ineffable, said to her, laughing: "My dear, the most amusing part of the performance is not upon the stage. Look just opposite."

"Just opposite?" repeated Adrienne, mechanically: and, turning towards Lady Morinval with an air of surprise, she glanced in the direction pointed out.

She looked—what did she see?—Djalma seated by the side of a young woman, who was familiarly offering to his sense of smell the perfume of her bouquet. Amazed, struck almost literally to the heart, as by an electric shock, swift, sharp, and painful, Adrienne became deadly pale. From instinct, she shut her eyes for a second, in

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order not to see—as men try to ward off the dagger, which, having once dealt the blow, threatens to strike again. Then suddenly, to this feeling of grief succeeded a reflection, terrible both to her love and to her wounded pride.

"Djalma is present with this woman, though he must have received my letter," she said to herself,——"wherein he was informed of the happiness that awaited him."

At the idea of so cruel an insult, a blush of shame and indignation displaced Adrienne's paleness, who overwhelmed by this sad reality, said to herself: "Rodin did not deceive me."

We abandon all idea of picturing the lightning-like rapidity of certain emotions which in a moment may torture—may kill you in the space of a minute. Thus Adrienne was precipitated from the most radiant happiness to the lowest depths of an abyss of the most heart-rending grief, in less than a second; for a second had hardly elapsed before she replied to Lady Morinval: "What is there, then, so curious, opposite to us, my dear Julia?"

This evasive question gave Adrienne time to recover her self-possession. Fortunately, thanks to the thick folds of hair which almost entirely concealed her cheeks, the rapid and sudden changes from pallor to blush escaped the notice of Lady Morinval, who gayly replied: "What, my dear, do you not perceive those East Indians, who have just entered the box immediately opposite to ours? There, just before us!"

"Yes, I see them; but what then?" replied Adrienne, in a firm tone.

"And don't you observe anything remarkable?" said the marchioness.

"Don't be too hard, ladies," laughingly interposed the marquis; "we ought to allow the poor foreigners some little indulgence. They are ignorant of our manners and customs; were it not for that, they would never appear in the face of all Paris in such dubious company."

"Indeed," said Adrienne, with a bitter smile, "their simplicity is touching; we must pity them."

"And, unfortunately, the girl is charming, spite of her low dress and bare arms," said the marchioness; "she cannot be more than sixteen or seventeen at most. Look at her, my dear Adrienne; what a pity!"

"It is one of your charitable days, my dear Julia," answered Adrienne; "we are to pity the Indians, to pity this creature, and—pray, whom else are we to pity?"

"We will not pity that handsome Indian, in his red-and-gold turban," said the marquis, laughing, "for, if this goes on, the girl with the cherry-colored ribbons will be giving him a kiss. See how she leans towards her sultan."

"They are very amusing," said the marchioness, sharing the hilarity of her husband, and looking at Rose-Pompom through her glass; then she resumed, in about a minute, addressing herself to Adrienne: "I am quite certain of one thing. Notwithstanding her giddy airs, that girl is very fond of her Indian. I just saw a look that expresses a great deal."

"Why so much penetration, my dear Julia?" said Adrienne, mildly; "what interest have we to read the heart of that girl?"

"Why, if she loves her sultan, she is quite in the right," said the marquis, looking through his opera-glass in turn; "for, in my whole life, I never saw a more handsome fellow than that Indian. I can only catch his side-face, but the profile is pure and fine as an antique cameo. Do you not think so?" added the marquis, leaning towards Adrienne. "Of course, it is only as a matter of art, that I permit myself to ask you the question."

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"As a work of art," answered Adrienne, "it is certainly very fine."

"But see!" said the marchioness; "how impertinent the little creature is!—She is actually staring at us."

"Well!" said the marquis; "and she is actually laying her hand quite unceremoniously on her sultan's shoulder, to make him share, no doubt, in her admiration of you ladies."

In fact, Djalma, until now occupied with the contemplation of the scene which reminded him of his country, had remained insensible to the enticements of Rose–Pompon, and had not yet perceived Adrienne.

"Well, now!" said Rose–Pompon, bustling herself about in front of the box, and continuing to stare at Mdlle. de Cardoville, for it was she, and not the marchioness, who now drew her attention; "that is something quite out of the common way—a pretty woman, with red hair; but such sweet red, it must be owned. Look, Prince Charming!"

And so saying, she tapped Djalma lightly on the shoulder; he started at these words, turned round, and for the first time perceived Mdlle. de Cardoville.

Though he had been almost prepared for this meeting, the prince was so violently affected by it, that he was about involuntarily to rise, in a state of the utmost confusion; but he felt the iron hand of Faringhea laid heavily on his shoulder, and heard him whisper in Hindostanee: "Courage! and by to–morrow she will be at your feet."

As Djalma still struggled to rise, the half–caste added to restrain him: "Just now, she grew pale and red with jealousy. No weakness, or all is lost!"

"So! there you are again, talking your dreadful gibberish," said Rose–Pompon, turning round towards Faringhea. "First of all, it is not polite; and then the language is so odd, that one might suppose you were cracking nuts."

"I spoke of you to my master," said the half–caste; "he is preparing a surprise for you."

"A surprise? oh! that is different. Only make haste—do you hear, Prince Charming!" added she, looking tenderly at Djalma.

"My heart is breaking," said Djalma, in a hollow voice to Faringhea, still using the language of India.

"But to–morrow it will bound with joy and love," answered the half–caste. "It is only by disdain that you can conquer a proud woman. To–morrow, I tell you, she will be trembling, confused, supplicating, at your feet!"

"To–morrow, she will hate me like death!" replied the prince, mournfully.

"Yes, were she now to see you weak and cowardly. It is now too late to draw back; look full at her, take the nosegay from this girl, and raise it to your lips. Instantly, you will see yonder woman, proud as she is, grow pale and red, as just now. Then will you believe me?"

Reduced by despair to make almost any attempt, and fascinated, in spite of himself, by the diabolical hints of Faringhea, Djalma looked for a second full at Mdlle. de Cardoville; then, with a trembling hand he took the bouquet from Rose–Pompon, and, again looking at Adrienne, pressed it to his lips.

Upon this insolent bravado, Mdlle. de Cardoville could not restrain so sudden and visible a pang, that the prince was struck by it.

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"She is yours," said the half-caste, to him. "Did you see, my lord, how she trembled with jealousy?—Only have courage! and she is yours. She will soon prefer you to that handsome young man behind her—for it is he whom she has hitherto fancied herself in love with."

As if the half-caste had guessed the movement of rage and hatred, which this revelation would excite in the heart of the prince, he hastily added: "Calmness and disdain! Is it not his turn now to hate you?"

The prince restrained himself, and drew his hand across his forehead which glowed with anger.

"There now! what are you telling him, that vexes him so?" said Rose-Pompon to Faringhea, with pouting lip. Then, addressing Djalma, she continued: "Come, Prince Charming, as they say in the fairy-tale, give me back my flowers."

As she took it again, she added: "You have kissed it, and I could almost eat it." Then, with a sigh, and a passionate glance at Djalma, she said softly to herself: "That monster Ninny Moulin did not deceive me. All this is quite proper; I have not even that to reproach myself with." And with her little white teeth, she bit at a rosy nail of her right hand, from which she had just drawn the glove.

It is hardly necessary to say, that Adrienne's letter had not been delivered to the prince, and that he had not gone to pass the day in the country with Marshal Simon. During the three days in which Montbron had not seen Djalma, Faringhea had persuaded him, that, by affecting another passion, he would bring Mdlle. de Cardoville to terms. With regard to Djalma's presence at the theatre, Rodin had learned from her maid, Florine, that her mistress was to go in the evening to the Porte-Saint-Martin. Before Djalma had recognized her, Adrienne, who felt her strength failing her, was on the point of quitting the theatre; the man, whom she had hitherto placed so high, whom she had regarded as a hero and a demi-god and whom she had imagined plunged in such dreadful despair, that, led by the most tender pity, she had written to him with simple frankness, that a sweet hope might calm his grief—replied to a generous mark of sincerity and love, by making himself a ridiculous spectacle with a creature unworthy of him. What incurable wounds for Adrienne's pride! It mattered little, whether Djalma knew or not, that she would be a spectator of the indignity. But when she saw herself recognized by the prince, when he carried the insult so far as to look full at her, and, at the same time, raise to his lips the creature's bouquet who accompanied him, Adrienne was seized with noble indignation, and felt sufficient courage to remain: instead of closing her eyes to evidence, she found a sort of barbarous pleasure in assisting at the agony and death of her pure and divine love. With head erect, proud and flashing eye, flushed cheek, and curling lip, she looked in her turn at the prince with disdainful steadiness. It was with a sardonic smile that she said to the marchioness, who, like many others of the spectators was occupied with what was passing in the stage-box: "This revolting exhibition of savage manners is at least in accordance with the rest of the performance."

"Certainly," said the marchioness; "and my dear uncle will have lost, perhaps, the most amusing part."

"Montbron?" said Adrienne, hastily, with hardly repressed bitterness; "yes, he will regret not having seen all. I am impatient for his arrival. Is it not to him that I am indebted for his charming evening?"

Perhaps Madame de Morinval would have remarked the expression of bitter irony, that Adrienne could not altogether dissemble, if suddenly a hoarse and prolonged roar had not attracted her attention, as well as that of the rest of the audience, who had hitherto been quite indifferent to the scenes intended for an introduction to the appearance of Morok. Every eye was now turned instinctively towards the cavern situated to the left of the stage, just below Mdlle. de Cardoville's box; a thrill of curiosity ran through the house. A second roar, deeper and more sonorous, and apparently expressive of more irritation than the first, now rose from the cave, the mouth of which was half-hidden by artificial brambles, made so as to be easily put on one side. At this sound, the Englishman stood up in his little box, leaned half over the front, and began to rub his hands with great energy; then, remaining perfectly motionless, he fixed his large, green, glittering eyes on the mouth of the cavern.

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At these ferocious howlings, Djalma also had started, notwithstanding the frenzy of love, hate, and jealousy, to which he was a prey. The sight of this forest, and the roarings of the panther, filled him with deep emotion, for they recalled the remembrance of his country, and of those great hunts which, like war, have their own terrible excitement. Had he suddenly heard the horns and gongs of his father's army sounding to the charge, he could not have been transported with more savage ardor. And now deep growls, like distant thunder, almost drowned the roar of the panther. The lion and tiger, Judas and Cain answered her from their dens at the back of the stage. On this frightful concert, with which his ears had been familiar in the midst of the solitudes of India, when he lay encamped, for the purposes of the chase or of war, Djalma's blood boiled in his veins. His eyes sparkled with a wild ardor. Leaning a little forward, with both hands pressed on the front of the box, his whole body trembled with a convulsive shudder. The audience, the theatre, Adrienne herself no longer existed for him; he was in a forest of his own lands, tracking the tiger.

Then there mingled with his beauty so intrepid and ferocious an expression, that Rose-Pompon looked at him with a sort of terror and passionate admiration. For the first time in her life, perhaps, her pretty blue eyes, generally so gay and mischievous; expressed a serious emotion. She could not explain what she felt; but her heart seemed frightened, and beat violently, as though some calamity were at hand.

Yielding to a movement of involuntary fear, she seized Djalma by the arm, and said to him: "Do not stare so into that cavern; you frighten me."

Djalma did not hear what she said.

"Here he is! here he is!" murmured the crowd, almost with one voice, as Morok appeared at the back of the stage.

Dressed as we have described, Morok now carried in addition a bow and a long quiver full of arrows. He slowly descended the line of painted rocks, which came sloping down towards the centre of the stage. From time to time, he stopped as if to listen, and appeared to advance with caution. Looking from one side to the other, his eyes involuntarily encountered the large, green eyes of the Englishman, whose box was close to the cavern. Instantly the lion-tamer's countenance was contracted in so frightful a manner, that Lady Morinval, who was examining him closely with the aid of an excellent glass, said hastily to Adrienne: "My dear, the man is afraid. Some misfortune will happen."

"How can accidents happen," said Adrienne, with a sardonic smile, "in the midst of this brilliant crowd, so well dressed and full of animation! Misfortunes here, this evening! why, dear Julia, you do not think it. It is in darkness and solitude that misfortunes come—never in the midst of a joyous crowd, and in all this blaze of light."

"Good gracious, Adrienne! take care!" cried the marchioness, unable to repress an exclamation of alarm, and seizing her arm, as if to draw her closer; "do you not see it?" And with a trembling hand, she pointed to the cavern's mouth. Adrienne hastily bent forward, and looked in that direction. "Take care, do not lean so forward!" exclaimed Lady Morinval.

"Your terrors are nonsensical, my dear," said the marquis to his wife. "The panther is securely chained; and even were it to break its chains (which is impossible), we are here beyond its reach."

A long murmur of trembling curiosity here ran through the house, and every eye was intently fixed on the cavern. From amongst the artificial brambles, which she abruptly pushed aside with her broad chest, the black panther suddenly appeared. Twice she stretched forth her flat head, illumined by yellow, flaming eyes; then, half-opening her blood-red jaws, she uttered another roar, and exhibited two rows of formidable fangs. A double iron chain, and a collar also of iron, painted black, blended with the ebon shades of her hide, and with the darkness of the cavern. The illusion was complete, and the terrible animal seemed to be at liberty in her den.

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"Ladies," said the marquis, suddenly, "look at those Indians. Their emotion makes them superb!"

In fact, the sight of the panther had raised the wild ardor of Djalma to its utmost pitch. His eyes sparkled in their pearly orbits like two black diamonds; his upper lip was curled convulsively with an expression of animal ferocity, as if he were in a violent paroxysm of rage.

Faringhea, now leaning on the front of the box, was also greatly excited, by reason of a strange coincidence. "That black panther of so rare a breed," thought he, "which I see here at Paris, upon the stage, must be the very one that the Malay"—the Thug who had tattooed Djalma at Java during his sleep—"took quite young from his den, and sold to a European captain. Bowanee's power is everywhere!" added the Thug, in his sanguinary superstition.

"Do you not think," resumed the marquis, addressing Adrienne, "that those Indians are really splendid in their present attitude?"

"Perhaps they may have seen such a hunt in their own country," said Adrienne, as if she would recall and brave the most cruel remembrances.

"Adrienne," said the marchioness, suddenly, in an agitated voice, "the lion-tamer has now come nearer—is not his countenance fearful to look at?—I tell you he is afraid."

"In truth," observed the marquis, this time very seriously, "he is dreadfully pale, and seems to grow worse every minute, the nearer he approaches this side. It is said that, were he to lose his presence of mind for a single moment, he would run the greatest danger."

"O! it would be horrible!" cried the marchioness, addressing Adrienne, "if he were wounded—there—under our eyes!"

"Every wound does not kill," replied her friend, with an accent of such cold indifference, that the marchioness looked at her with surprise, and said to her: "My dear girl, what you say there is cruel!"

"It is the air of the place that acts on me," answered Adrienne, with an icy smile.

"Look! look! the lion-tamer is about to shoot his arrow at the panther," said the marquis, suddenly. "No doubt, he will next perform the hand to hand grapple."

Morok was at this moment in front of the stage, but he had yet to traverse its entire breadth to reach the cavern's mouth. He stopped an instant, adjusted an arrow to the string, knelt down behind a mass of rock, took deliberate aim—and then the arrow hissed across the stage, and was lost in the depths of the cavern, into which the panther had retired, after showing for a moment her threatening head to the audience. Hardly had the arrow disappeared, than Death, purposely irritated by Goliath (who was invisible) sent forth a howl of rage, as if she had been really wounded. Morok's actions became so expressive, he evinced so naturally his joy at having hit the wild beast, that a tempest of applause burst from every quarter of the house. Then, throwing away his bow, he drew a dagger from his girdle, took it between his teeth, and began to crawl forward on hands and knees, as though he meant to surprise the wounded panther in his den. To render the illusion perfect, Death, again excited by Goliath, who struck him with an iron bar, sent forth frightful howlings from the depths of the cavern.

The gloomy aspect of the forest, only half-lighted with a reddish glare, was so effective—the howlings of the panther were so furious—the gestures, attitude, and countenance of Morok were so expressive of terror, that the audience, attentive and trembling, now maintained a profound silence. Every one held his breath, and a kind of shudder came over the spectators, as though they expected some horrible event. What gave such a fearful air of truth to the pantomime of Morok, was that, as he approached the cavern step by step, he approached also the

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Englishman's box. In spite of himself, the lion-tamer, fascinated by terror, could not take his eyes from the large green eyes of this man, and it seemed as if every one of the abrupt movements which he made in crawling along, was produced by a species of magnetic attraction, caused by the fixed gaze of the fatal wagerer. Therefore, the nearer Morok approached, the more ghastly and livid he became. At sight of this pantomime, which was no longer acting, but the real expression of intense fear, the deep and trembling silence which had reigned in the theatre was once more interrupted by acclamations, with which were mingled the roarings of the panther, and the distant growls of the lion and tiger.

The Englishman leaned almost out of his box, with a frightful sardonic smile on his lip, and with his large eyes still fixed, panted for breath. The perspiration ran down his bald red forehead, as if he had really expended an incredible amount of magnetic power in attracting Morok, whom he now saw close to the cavern entrance. The moment was decisive. Crouching down with his dagger in his hand, following with eye and gesture Death's every movement, who, roaring furiously, and opening wide her enormous jaws, seemed determined to guard the entrance of her den, Morok waited for the moment to rush upon her. There is such fascination in danger, that Adrienne shared, in spite of herself, the feeling of painful curiosity, mixed with terror, that thrilled through all the spectators. Leaning forward like the marchioness, and gazing upon this scene of fearful interest, the lady still held mechanically in her hand the Indian bouquet preserved since the morning. Suddenly, Morok raised a wild shout, as he rushed towards Death, who answered this exclamation by a dreadful roar, and threw herself upon her master with so much fury, that Adrienne, in alarm, believing the man lost, drew herself back, and covered her face with her hands. Her flowers slipped from her grasp, and, falling upon the stage, rolled into the cavern in which Morok was struggling with the panther.

Quick as lightning, supple and agile as a tiger, yielding to the intoxication of his love, and to the wild ardor excited in him by the roaring of the panther, Djalma sprang at one bound upon the stage, drew his dagger, and rushed into the cavern to recover Adrienne's nosegay. At that instant, Morok, being wounded, uttered a dreadful cry for help; the panther, rendered still more furious at sight of Djalma, made the most desperate efforts to break her chain. Unable to succeed in doing so, she rose upon her hind legs, in order to seize Djalma, then within reach of her sharp claws. It was only by bending down his head, throwing himself on his knees, and twice plunging his dagger into her belly with the rapidity of lightning, that Djalma escaped certain death. The panther gave a howl, and fell with her whole weight upon the prince. For a second, during which lasted her terrible agony, nothing was seen but a confused and convulsive mass of black limbs, and white garments stained with blood—and then Djalma rose, pale, bleeding, for he was wounded—and standing erect, his eye flashing with savage pride, his foot on the body of the panther, he held in his hand Adrienne's bouquet, and cast towards her a glance which told the intensity of his love. Then only did Adrienne feel her strength fail her—for only superhuman courage had enabled her to watch all the terrible incidents of the struggle.