

# **THE HEPTAMERON: Second Day**

Marguerite de Navarre (d'Angoulême) Duchesse d'Alençon

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Marguerite de Navarre (d'Angoulême) Duchesse d'Alençon

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## SECOND DAY.

IN the morning they rose early, eager to return to the spot where they had had so much pleasure. Every one had his tale ready, and was impatient to bring it forth. After having heard Madam Oisille's reading and attended mass, dinner was the next affair, during which they also recalled to mind many a story.

After dinner they went to rest in their chambers, and at the appointed hour every one repaired to the meadow, where it seemed that the weather and the day expressly favored their design. After they were all seated on verdant couches prepared by nature's own hands, Parleme said, "Since I was the last speaker yesterday, it is for me to select the lady who shall begin this day's proceedings. Those of yesterday having been opened by Madame Oisille, the sagest and eldest lady present, I give my vote to-day to the youngest,-I do not say to the most light-witted, for I am sure that if we all follow her example, the monks will not have to wait so long to say vespers as they did yesterday. I call upon you, Nomerfide, but I beg you will not make us begin the day with tears.

"There was no need to give me that caution," said Nomerfide; "for one of our companions has made me choose a tale which I have set so fast in my head that I could not tell any other; and if it engenders sadness in you, why then your nature must be very melancholy."

## NOVEL XI.

A Nasty Adventure which befel Madam De Roncex at the Franciscan Monastery of Thouars.

IN the household of Madame de La Tremouille there was a lady named Roncex, who one day when her mistress had gone to the Cordeliers, had a pressing need to go to the place to which she could not send her waiting-woman. She took with her a girl named La Mothe to keep her company, but from bashfulness and desire of secrecy, left her in the chamber, and entered alone into a very dark privy, which was common to all the

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Cordeliers; and they had rendered such good account there of all their victuals, that the whole place, the seat and the floor, were covered with must of Bacchus and Ceres, passed through the bellies of the Cordeliers. The poor woman, who was so hard pressed that she had scarcely time to tuck up her skirts to sit down, unluckily seated herself on the filthiest spot in the whole place, and there she stuck as if she had been glued to it, and her poor buttocks, garments, and feet were so bewrayed, that she durst not step or turn any way for fear of making herself still worse. Thereupon she began to cry out, as loud as she could, "La Mothe, my dear, I am undone and dishonored!" The poor girl, who had heard sundry tales of the wickedness of the Cordeliers, suspecting that some of them were hid there, and wanted to violate the lady, ran as fast as she could, saying to every one she met, "Come and help Madame de Roncex; the Cordeliers want to ravish her in that privy." They ran to the place with all speed, and found the poor dame De Roncex crying for help, desiring to have some woman who could clean her, and with her hinder parts all uncovered, for she was afraid to touch them with her garments lest she should befoul them. Rushing in at her cries, the gentlemen beheld that fine spectacle, and found no Cordelier molesting her, but only the ordure with which all her posteriors were glued. This did not pass without laughter on their part or great shame on hers; for instead of having women to clean her, she was waited on by men, who saw her naked in the worst condition in which a woman could show herself. Thereupon she dropped her clothes, and so dirtied what was still clean, forgetting the filth she was in for the shame she felt at seeing men. When she was out of that nasty place, it was necessary to strip her stark naked, and change all her clothes before she left the monastery. She was very much disposed to resent the help which La Mothe had brought her, but understanding that the poor girl believed her case was still worse, she forgot her anger and laughed like the rest.

Methinks, ladies, this story has been neither long nor melancholy, and that you have had from me what you expected.

The company laughed heartily at her story, and Oisille said to her, "Though the tale is nasty and dirty, we cannot object to it, knowing the persons to whom it happened. Well, I should have been very glad to see the faces worn by La Mothe and by her to whom she brought such good aid. But since you have ended so soon, give your voice to some one who does not think with such levity."

"If you would have my fault repaired," replied Nomerfide, "I give my voice to Dagoucin, who is so discreet that for his life he would not utter a folly."

Dagoucin thanked her for the favorable opinion she entertained of his good sense, and said, "The story I propose to relate will serve to show how love infatuates the greatest and worthiest hearts, and how difficult it is to overcome wickedness by dint of kindness."

## DEUXIÈME JOURNÉE

Nouvelle XIe

[The preceding novel and epilogue, which are found in all the manuscripts consulted by the Bibliophiles Français, are the nineteenth of the edition of 1558. They are suppressed in that of 1559 and in all the subsequent editions except that of 1853, and the following substituted for them.] FACETIOUS SAYINGS OF A CORDELIER IN HIS SERMONS.

NEAR the town of Bleré, in Touraine, there is a village named Martin la Beau, where a Cordelier of Tours was called on to preach the Advent and Lent sermons. This Cordelier, who had more gabble than learning, finding himself sometimes short of matter, would contrive to eke out his hour by telling tales which were not altogether disagreeable to the good villagers. Preaching on Holy Thursday on the Pascal Lamb, when he had to state that it was eaten by night, seeing among the congregation some handsome young ladies newly arrived from Amboise with the intention of spending Easter at the village, he wished to surpass himself, and asked all the women if they knew what it was to eat raw meat at night. "If you don't, I will tell you, ladies," said he. The young men of

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Amboise, who had come, some with their wives, others with their sisters and nieces, and who were not acquainted with the pilgrim's humor, began to be scandalized; but after having heard him further, instead of being shocked, they laughed, especially when he told them that to eat the Pascal Lamb it was necessary to have one's loins girt, one's feet in one's shoes, and a hand on one's staff. The Cordelier seeing them laugh, and guessing why, immediately corrected himself. "Well, then, shoes on one's feet, and one's staff in his hand," said he. "Buttered bread, and bread buttered—is it not all one?" How this was received I leave you to guess. The Cordelier, perceiving that his hour was nearly out, made new efforts to divert the ladies, and gave them reason to be pleased with him. "By—and—by, ladies," he said to them, "when you are chatting with your gossips, you will ask them, 'Who is this master friar who speaks so boldly? He is a jovial companion, I warrant.' I tell you ladies, be not astonished—no, be not astonished if I speak boldly, for I am of Anjou, at your service. "So saying he ended his sermon, leaving his audience more disposed to laugh at his absurdities than to weep over the Passion of our Lord, the commemoration of which they were then celebrating.

His other sermons during the holidays were pretty much of the like efficacy. You know that the brethren of that order do not forget to go about making their collections to get them their Easter eggs, as they say. Not only have they no lack of these, but people give them besides many other things, such as linen, yarn, chitterlings, hams, chines, and so forth. On Easter Tuesday, when he was making his exhortations to charity, of which people of his sort are no niggards, he said, "I am bound, ladies, to thank you for the charities you have bestowed on our poor convent, but I cannot help remarking to you that you have not duly considered our wants. You have given us, for the most part, nothing but chitterlings, of which, thanks be to God, we have no scarcity, the convent being choke—full of them. What shall we do, then, with such lots of chitterlings? Do you know what we shall do with them? It is my advice, ladies, that you mix your hams with our chitterlings, and you will make a fine alms."

Then continuing his sermon, he contrived to introduce the subject of scandal. After having expatiated upon it and adduced some examples, he cried out, with warmth, "I am surprised, ladies and gentlemen of St. Martin, that you are scandalized at a thing that is less than nothing, and that you make a talk of me everywhere without reason, saying, 'Who would have thought it of the father, that he should have got his landlady's daughter with child?' That is a thing to be astonished about, truly. A monk has got a girl with child. What a wonder! But hark you, fair ladies, would you not have reason to be much more surprised if the girl had got the monk with child?"

Such, ladies, were the precious viands with which this good shepherd fed the Lord's flock. So shameless was he, that after the commission of his sin, he had the impudence to speak of it in the pulpit, where nothing should be uttered but what is edifying to one's neighbor, and tends, in the first place, to the glory of God.

"That was what you may call a master—monk," said Saffredent. "I should be at loss to choose between him and Friar Angebaut, at whose door were laid all the facetious things that were said in good company."

"I see no matter for laughter in all this," said Oisille, "nor is the circumstance of the time to the monk's advantage."

"You omit to say, madam," observed Nomerfide, "that at that time, although the thing happened not very long ago, your honest villagers, nay, most of the people even of the good towns, who think themselves cleverer than the others, had more regard for such preachers than for those who preached to them the holy gospel purely and simply."

"Be that as it may," said Hircan, "he was not far wrong in asking for hams in exchange for chitterlings, for there is a great deal more eating in them. If any devout dame had understood the thing amphibologically, as I believe the monk intended, neither he nor his brethren would have been badly off, any more than the young wench who had her bag full."

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"What effrontery!" exclaimed Oisille, "to pervert the sense of the text according to his caprice, thinking he had to do with people as brutalized as himself, and impudently endeavoring to corrupt silly women, in order to teach them to eat raw meat at night."

"Ay," said Simontault, "but then he had before him those young tripesellers of Amboise, in whose tub he would fain have washed his- Shall I say what? No, you understand me. He would gladly have given them a taste of it, not roasted, but all stirring and frisking, to give them the more pleasure."

"Gently, gently, Seigneur Simontault," said Parlamente; "you forget yourself. Where is your usual modesty, of which you can make such good use at need?"

"True madam; but the foul-mouthed monk made me equivocate. To return to our first proceedings, I beg that Nomerfide, who is the cause of my error, will give her voice to some one who will make us forget our common fault."

"Since you will have it that I am a sharer in the fault," said Nomerfide, "I will chose one who will set all right again; and that is Dagoucin, who is so well behaved that he would rather die than say anything improper."

Dagoucin thanked her for her good opinion. "The story I am going to relate," he said, "is calculated to show you how love infatuates the greatest and the best, and how difficult it is to overcome wickedness by dint of kindness."

### NOVEL XII.

Incontinence and Tyranny of a Duke of Florence-Just punishment of his Wickedness.

TEN years ago there was at Florence a duke of the house of Medicis, who had married Madame Margaret, natural daughter of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. As the princess was still very young, and the duke would not sleep with her until she was of more mature age, he treated her very tenderly; and to spare her he amused himself with some other ladies of the city, whom he used to visit by night whilst his wife slept. Among others, he took a fancy to a lady as beautiful as she was good and virtuous, the sister of a gentleman whom the duke loved as himself and to whom he conceded such authority, that he was obeyed like the duke himself. The latter had no secrets which he did not communicate to him, so that, in a manner, he might be called his second self. The duke, knowing that the gentleman's sister was a lady of the highest virtue, durst not at first speak to her of his passion; but after having tried every other expedient, he at last addressed his favorite on the subject.

"If there was anything in the world my friend," he said, "which I would not do for you, I should be afraid to tell you what is in my thoughts, and still more to ask your aid. But I have so much friendship for you, that if I had a wife, a mother, or a daughter who could save your life, you may be assured you should not die. I am persuaded that you love me as much as I love you. If I, who am your master, have such an affection for you, that which you should have for me should be no less. I have a secret, then, to tell you. Through trying to conceal it, I have fallen into the state in which you now see me, from which I have no hope of escaping but by death, or by the service you may render me, if you will."

Touched by these representations on the part of his master, and seeing his face bathed in tears, the gentleman felt so much pity, that he said: "I am your creature, my lord; it is from you I hold all my wealth, and honors, and you may speak to me as to your own soul, being sure that whatever I can do is at your command."

The duke then declared the passion with which he was possessed for his favorite's sister, and told him it was impossible he should live long unless the brother enabled him to enjoy her; for he was quite sure that prayers or presents would be of no avail with her. "If, then," said the duke, in conclusion, "you love my life as much as I

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love yours, find means to secure to me a bliss I can never obtain but through your aid." The gentleman, who loved his sister and the honor of his house more than his master's pleasure, remonstrated with him, and implored him not to reduce him to the horrible necessity of soliciting the dishonor of his family, protesting there was nothing he would not do for his master, but that his honor would not suffer him to perform such a service as that. The duke, inflamed with intolerable anger, bit his nails, and replied furiously, "Since I find no friendship in you, I know what I have to do." The gentleman, who knew his master's cruelty, was alarmed, and said, "Since you absolutely insist on it, my lord, I will speak to her." "If you set store by my life, I will set store by yours," were the duke's last words as he went away.

The gentleman knew well what this meant, and remained a day or two without seeing the duke, pondering over the means of extricating himself from so bad a dilemma. On the one hand he considered the obligations he was under to his master, the wealth and honors he had received from him; on the other hand, he thought of the honor of his house and the virtue and chastity of his sister. He knew very well that she never would consent to such infamy, unless she were overcome by fraud or violence, which he could not think of employing, considering the shame it would bring upon him and her. In fine, he made up his mind that he would rather die than behave so vilely to his sister, who was one of the best women in Italy; and he resolved to deliver his country from a tyrant who was bent on disgracing his house; for he saw clearly that the only means of securing the lives of himself and his kindred was to get rid of the duke. Resolved, then, without speaking to his sister, to save his life and prevent his shame by one and the same deed, he went after two days to the duke, and told him that he had labored so hard with his sister, that at last, with infinite difficulty he had brought her to consent to the duke's wishes; but on condition that the affair should be kept secret, and that no one should know of it but they three. As people readily believe what they desire, the duke put implicit faith in the brother's words. He embraced him, promised him everything he could ask, urged him to hasten the fulfilment of his good tidings, and appointed a time with him for that purpose.

When the exulting duke saw the approach of the night he so longed for, in which he expected to conquer her whom he had thought invincible, he retired early with his favorite, and did not forget to dress and perfume himself with his best care. When all was still, the gentleman conducted him to his sister's abode, and showed him into a magnificent chamber, where he undressed him, put him to bed, and left him, saying, "I am going, my lord, to bring you one who will not enter this room without blushing; but I hope that before day dawns she will be assured of you." He then went away to his own room, where he found one trusty servant awaiting him by his orders. "Is thy heart bold enough," he said to him, "to follow me to a place where I have to revenge myself on the greatest of my enemies?" "Yes, my lord," replied the man, who knew nothing of the matter in hand, "though it were upon the duke himself." Thereupon, without giving the man time for reflection, the gentleman hurried him away so abruptly that he had not time to take any other weapon than a poniard with which he was already armed.

The duke, hearing his favorite's footsteps at the door, believed that he was bringing him the object of his passion, and threw open the curtains to behold and welcome her; but instead of her he saw her brother advance upon him with a drawn sword. Unarmed, but undaunted, the duke started up, seized the gentleman round the middle, saying, "Is this the way you keep your word?" and for want of other weapons used his nails and his teeth, bit his antagonist in the thumb, and defended himself so well that they fell together beside the bed. The gentleman not feeling confident in his own strength, called his man, who, seeing his master and the duke grappling each other so desperately that he could not well distinguish which was which in that dark spot, dragged them both out by the heels into the middle of the room, and then set about cutting the duke's throat with his poniard. The duke defended himself to the last, until he was exhausted by loss of blood. Then the gentleman and his man laid him on the bed, finished him with their poniards, drew the curtains upon the body, and left the room, locking the door behind them.

Having slain his enemy and liberated the republic, the gentleman thought that his exploit would not be complete unless he did the same by five or six near relations of the duke. To this end he ordered his man to go and fetch them one by one; but the servant, who had neither vigor nor boldness enough, replied, "It strikes me, my lord, that

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you have done enough for the present, and that you had much better think of saving your own life than of taking that of others. If every one of them should take as long to despatch as the duke, it would be daylight before we had finished, even should they be unarmed." As the guilty are easily susceptible of the contagion of fear, the gentleman took his servant's advice, and went with him alone to a bishop, whose place it was to have the gates opened and to give orders to the postmasters. The gentleman told the prelate he had just received intelligence that one of his brothers was at the point of death; that the duke had given him leave to go to him, and therefore he begged his lordship would give him an order to the postmasters for two good horses, and to the gatekeepers to let him pass. The bishop, to whom his request seemed almost equivalent to a command from the duke his master, gave him a note, by means of which he at once obtained what he required; but instead of going to see his brother, he made straight for Venice, where he had himself cured of the bites inflicted by the duke, and then passed over into Turkey.

Next morning the duke's servants, not seeing or hearing anything of him, concluded that he had gone to see some lady; but at last becoming uneasy at his long absence, they began to look for him in all directions. The poor duchess, who was beginning to love him greatly, was extremely distressed at hearing that he could not be found. The favorite also, not making his appearance, some of the servants went for him to his house. They saw blood at his chamber door, but no one could give any account of him. The trace of blood led the duke's servants to the chamber where he lay, and finding the door locked, they broke it open at once, saw the floor covered with blood, drew the curtains, and beheld the poor duke stark dead on the bed. Picture to yourselves the affliction of these poor servants, as they carried the body to the palace. The bishop arrived there at the same time, and told them how the gentleman had fled in the night, under pretence of going to see his brother. This was enough to lead every one to the conclusion that it was he who had done the deed. It clearly appeared that his sister had known nothing about it. Though she was surprised at so unexpected an event, she loved her brother for it, since, without regard to his own life, he had delivered her from a tyrant who was bent on the ruin of her honor. She continued always to lead the same virtuous life; and though she was reduced to poverty by the confiscation of all the family property, her sister and she found husbands as honorable and wealthy as any in Italy. Both of them have always lived subsequently in the best repute. \*

Here is a fact, ladies, which should make you beware of that little god, who delights in tormenting princes and private persons, the strong and the weak; and who so infatuates them that they forget God and their conscience, and even the care of their own lives. Princes and those who are in authority ought to fear to outrage their inferiors. There is no man so insignificant but he can do mischief when it is God's will to inflict vengeance on the sinner, nor any so great that he can do hurt to one whom God chooses to protect.

This story was listened to by the whole company, but with very different sentiments. Some maintained that the gentleman had done well in securing his own life and his sister's honor, and delivering his country from such a tyrant. Others, on the contrary, said that it was enormously ungrateful to take the life of a man who had loaded him with wealth and honors. The ladies said he was a good brother and a virtuous citizen; the gentlemen, on the contrary, maintained that he was a traitor and a bad servant. It was amusing to hear the opinions and arguments delivered on the one side and on the other; but the ladies, as usual, spoke more from passion than from judgment, saying that the duke deserved death, and that blessed was the brother who had slain him. "Ladies," said Dagoucin, who saw what a lively controversy he had excited, "pray do not put yourselves in a passion about a thing that is past and gone; only take care that your beauties do not occasion murders more cruel than that which I have related."

"The Fair Lady without Compassion," \* said Parlamente, has taught us to say that people hardly ever die of so agreeable a malady."

"Would to God, madam," rejoined Dagoucin, "that every lady here knew how false is this notion. They would not then, I imagine, desire the reputation of being pitiless, or like to resemble that incredulous fair one who let a good servant die for want of responding favorably to his passion."

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"So then," said Parlamente, "to save the life of a man who says he loves us, you would have us violate our honor and our conscience?"

"I do not say that," replied Dagoucin, "for he who loves thoroughly would be more afraid of hurting the honor of his mistress than she herself. Hence it seems to me that a gracious response, such as is called for by a seemly and genuine love, would only give more lustre to the honor and conscience of a lady. I say a seemly love, for I maintain that those who love otherwise do not love perfectly."

"That is always the upshot of your orisons," said Ennasuite. "You begin with honor, and end with its opposite. If all the gentlemen present will tell us the truth of the matter, I will believe them on their oaths."

Hircan swore that he had never loved any one but his wife, and that it was far from his wish to make her offend God. Simontault spoke to the same effect, and added that he had often wished that all women were ill-natured except his own wife. "You deserve that yours should be so," retorted Geburon; "but for my part, I can safely swear that I loved a woman so much that I would rather have died than have made her do anything capable of diminishing the esteem in which I held her. My love was so founded upon her virtues, that I would not have seen a stain upon them for the most precious favors I could have obtained from her."

"I thought, Geburon," said Saffredent, laughing, "that the love you have for your wife, and the good sense with which nature has endowed you, would have saved you from playing, the lover elsewhere; but I see I was mistaken, for you use the very phrases which we are accustomed to employ to dupe the most subtle of dames, and under favor of which we obtain a hearing from the most discreet. Where is the lady, indeed, who will not lend us an ear when we begin our discourse with honor and virtue? But if we were all to lay open our hearts before them just as they are, there is many a man well received by the ladies, whom then they would not condescend so much as to look upon. We hide our devil under the form of the handsomest angel we can find, and so receive many a favor before we are found out. Perhaps, even, we lead the ladies so far, that thinking to go straight to virtue, they have neither time nor opportunity to retreat when they find themselves face to face with vice."

"I thought you quite a different sort of man," said Geburon, "and imagined that virtue was more agreeable to you than pleasure."

"Why," said Saffredent, "is there any greater virtue than to love in the way God has ordained? To me it seems much better to love a woman as a woman, than to make her one's idol, as many do. For my part, I am convinced that it is better to use than to abuse."

All the ladies coincided in opinion with Geburon, and bade Saffredent hold his tongue. "Very well," said he; "I am content to say no more on the subject, for I have fared so badly with regard to it that I don't want to have any more to do with it."

"You may thank your own bad thoughts for having fared badly," said Longarine; "for where is the woman with a proper sense of decorum who would have you for a lover after what you have just said?"

"There are those," he retorted, "who did not think me intolerable, and who would not have exchanged their own sense of decorum for yours. But let us say no more about it, in order that my anger may shock no one, and may not shock myself. Let us think to whom Dagoucin will give his voice."

"I give it to Parlamente," he replied at once, "persuaded as I am that she must know better than any one what is honorable and perfect friendship."

"Since you elect me to tell a story," said Parlamente, "I will relate to you one which occurred to a lady who had always been one of my good friends, and has never concealed anything from me."

**NOVEL XIII.**

A Captain of a Galley, under the cloak of devotion, fell in love with a Demoiselle. What happened in consequence.

THERE was in the household of the regent, mother of King Francis, a very devout lady, married to a gentleman of the same character. Though her husband was old, and she young and fair, nevertheless she served him and loved him as though he had been the handsomest young man in the world. To leave him no cause of uneasiness, she made it her care to live with him like a woman of his own age, shunning all company, all magnificence in dress, all sorts of dances and diversions such as women are usually fond of, and making the service of God her sole pleasure and recreation. One day her husband told her that from his youth upwards he had longed to make the journey to Jerusalem, and he asked her what she thought of the matter. She, whose only thought was how to please him, replied, "Since God has deprived us of children, my dear, and has given us wealth enough, I should be strongly inclined to spend a part of it in performing that sacred journey; for, whether you go to Jerusalem or elsewhere, I am resolved to accompany, and never forsake you." The good man was so pleased with this reply, that he fancied himself already standing on Mount Calvary.

Just at this time there arrived at court a gentleman who had served long against the Turks, and who was come to obtain the king's approval for a projected enterprise against a fortress belonging to the Ottomans, the success of which was likely to be very advantageous to Christendom. The old devotee talked with him about his expedition, and learning from him that he was resolved upon it, asked him if he would be disposed, after it was accomplished, to make another journey to Jerusalem, which himself and his wife had a great desire to see. The captain highly approving of so good a design, promised to accompany him, and to keep the thing secret. The old gentleman was impatient to see his wife, to tell her what he had done. As she had scarcely less longing than her husband to perform the journey, she talked of it often to the captain, who, paying more attention to her person than to her words, became so much in love with her, that in talking to her of the voyages he had made by sea, he often confounded the port of Marseilles with the Archipelago, and said horse when he meant to say ship, so much was he beside himself. He found her, however, of so singular a character that he durst not let her see that he loved her, much less tell her so in words. The fire of his passion became so violent by dint of his concealing it, that it often made him ill. The demoiselle, who regarded him as her guide, took as much care of him as of the cross, and sent to inquire after him so often, that the interest she evinced for him cured the patient without the aid of physic. Several persons who knew that the captain had always had a better reputation for valor than for devotion, were surprised at the great intercourse between him and this lady; and seeing that he had changed from white to black, that he frequented the churches, attended sermons, and performed all the devoirs of a devotee, they doubted not that he did so to ingratiate himself with the lady, and could not even help hinting as much to him. The captain, fearing lest this should come to the ears of the lady, withdrew from society, and told her husband and her that, being on the point of receiving his orders and quitting the court, he had many things to say to them; but that for the greater secrecy he would only confer with them in private, to which end he begged they would send for him when they had both retired for the night.

This proposal being quite to the old gentleman's liking, he failed not to go to bed early every night and make his wife undress. After everybody had gone to rest he used to send for the captain to talk about the journey to Jerusalem, in the course of which the good man often fell asleep devoutly. On these occasions, the captain seeing the old gentleman sleeping like the blessed, and himself seated in a chair at the bedside, close to her whom he thought the most charming woman in the world, felt his heart so hard pressed between his fear and his desire to declare himself, that he often lost the use of his tongue. But that she might not perceive his perplexity, he launched out upon the holy places of Jerusalem, where are to be seen the memorials of the great love which Jesus Christ had for us. What he said of that love was only uttered to conceal his own; and while he expatiated upon it he kept his eyes fixed on the lady, wept and sighed so à propos that her heart was quite penetrated with piety. Believing from this outward appearance of devotion that he was quite a saint, she begged him to tell her how he

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had lived, and how he had come to love God with such fervor? He told her he was a poor gentleman, who to acquire wealth and honors had forgotten his conscience, and married a lady who was too nearly related to him; one who was rich, but old and ugly, and whom he did not love at all; that after having drawn all his wife's money from her, he had gone to seek his fortune at sea, and had sped so well that he had become captain of a galley; but that since he had had the honor of her acquaintance, her holy converse and her good example had so changed him, that he was resolved, if by God's grace he came back alive from his expedition, to take her and her husband to Jerusalem, there to do penance for his great sins which he had forsaken, after which it would only remain for him to make reparation to his wife, to whom he hoped soon to be reconciled. This account which he gave of himself was very pleasing to the pious lady, who congratulated herself much on having converted a sinner of such magnitude.

These nocturnal confabulations continued every night until the departure of the captain, who never ventured to declare himself. Only he made the fair devotee a present of a crucifix from Our Lady of Pity, beseeching her, whenever she looked upon it, to think of him. The time of his departure being come, and having taken leave of the husband, who was falling asleep, he had last of all to take leave of the fair one, in whose eyes he saw tears, drawn forth by the kind feeling she entertained for him. His impassioned heart so thrilled at the sight, that he almost fainted as he bade her farewell, and burst into such an extraordinary perspiration, that he wept, so to speak, not only with his eyes, but with every part of his body. Thus he departed without any explanation, and the lady, who never before had seen such tokens of regret, was quite astonished at his emotion. She had not the less good opinion of him for all that, and her prayers accompanied him on his way. A month afterwards, as she was returning to her own house one day, she was met by a gentleman, who delivered a letter to her from the captain, begging her to read it in private, and assuring her that he had seen him embark, fully resolved to perform an expedition which should be pleasing to the king and advantageous to the faith. At the same time the gentleman mentioned that he was going back to Marseilles to look after the captain's affairs. The lady went to the window and opened the letter, which consisted of two sheets of paper written all over. It was an elaborate declaration of the feelings which the writer had so carefully concealed, and in it was enclosed a large handsome diamond mounted in a black enameled ring, which the lady was supplicated to put on her fair finger.

Having read the enormously long letter from beginning to end, the lady was the more astonished as she had never suspected the captain's love for her. The diamond caused her much perplexity, for she knew not what to do with it. After thinking over the matter all that day, and dreaming of it at night, she rejoiced that she could abstain from replying for want of a messenger, saying to herself, that as the bearer of the letter had taken such pains on the writer's behalf; she ought to spare him the mortification of such a reply as she had resolved to give him, but which she now thought fit to reserve till the captain's return. The diamond was still a cause of much embarrassment to her, as it was not her custom to adorn herself at any one's expense but her husband's. At last her good sense suggested to her that she could not employ it better than for the relief of the captain's conscience, and she instantly despatched it by the hands of one of her servants to the captain's forlorn wife, to whom she wrote as follows, in the assumed character of a nun of Tarrascon :

"MADAM,-Your husband passed this way a little before he embarked. He confessed, and received his Creator like a good Christian, and declared to me a fact which lay heavy on his conscience, namely, his regret for not having loved you as he ought. He begged me at his departure to send you this letter with this diamond, which he begs you to keep for his sake, assuring you that if God brings him back safe and sound, he will make amends for the past by all the love that you can desire. This diamond will be for you a pledge of his word. I ask of you on his behalf the aid of your good prayers; for all my life he shall have part in mine."

When the captain's wife received this letter and the diamond, it may well be imagined how she wept with joy and sorrow; joy at being loved by her husband, and sorrow at being deprived of his presence. She kissed the ring a thousand times, washing it with her tears, and praised God for having restored her husband's affection to her at the close of her days, and when she least expected it. The nun who under God had wrought such a blessing for her was not forgotten in her grateful acknowledgments. She replied to her by the same man, who made his mistress

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laugh heartily when he told her how the captain's wife had received her communication. The fair devotee congratulated herself on having got rid of the diamond in so pious a manner, and was as much rejoiced at having re-established the good understanding between the husband and wife as though she had gained a kingdom.

Some time afterwards news arrived of the defeat and death of the poor captain. He had been abandoned by those who ought to have supported him, and the Rhodians, who had most interest in concealing his design, were the first to make it known. Nearly eighty men who had made a descent on the land were cut off almost to a man. Among them there was a gentleman named Jean and a converted Turk, for whom the fair devotee had been godmother, and whom she had given to the captain to accompany him on his expedition. Jean fell along with the captain; the Turk, wounded in fifteen places with arrows, escaped by swimming to the French vessels, and it was from his report that it was known exactly how the thing had happened. A certain gentleman whom the captain believed to be his friend, and whose interests he had advanced with the king and the greatest personages in France, after the captain had landed stood off shore with his vessels. The captain, seeing that his scheme was discovered, and that he was opposed by four thousand Turks, set about retreating. But the gentleman in whom he put such confidence, considering that after his death he himself would have the command and the profit of that great fleet represented to the officers that it was not right to risk the king's vessels and the lives of so many brave men on board them in order to save eighty or a hundred persons. The officers, as spiritless as himself, coincided with him in opinion. The captain, seeing that the more he called to them the more they drew off from the shore, faced round against his foes, and though he was up to his knees in sand, he defended himself so valiantly, that it almost seemed as if his single arm would defeat the assailants. But at last he received so many wounds from the arrows of those who durst not approach him within less than bowshot distance, that he began to grow weak from loss of blood. The Turks, seeing that the Christians were nearly spent, fell upon them with the scimitars; but notwithstanding the overwhelming numbers of the foe, the Christians defended themselves as long as they had breath. The captain called to him the gentleman named Jean, and the Turk whom the devotee had given him, and planting his sword in the ground, kissed and embraced the cross on his knees, saying, "Lord, receive the soul of him who has not spared his life for the exaltation of thy name." Jean, seeing him droop as he uttered these words, took him and his sword in his arms, wishing to succour him; but a Turk cut both his thighs to the bone from behind. "Come, captain," he cried, as he received the stroke, "let us go to Paradise to see him for whose sake we die." As he had been united with the captain in life, so was he also in death. The Turk, seeing that he could be of no use to either of them, and that he was pierced with arrows, made his way to the vessels by swimming; and though he was the only one who had escaped out of eighty, the perfidious commander would not receive him. But being a good swimmer, he went from vessel to vessel, till at last he was taken on board a small one, where in the course of a little time he was cured of his wounds.

It was through this foreigner that the truth became known respecting this event, glorious to the captain, and shameful to his companion in arms. The king, and all good people who heard of it, deemed the act of the latter so black towards God and man; that there was no punishment too bad for him. But on his return he told so many lies, and made so many presents, that not only did his crime remain unpunished, but he succeeded to the post of him whose lackey he was not worthy to be. When the sad news reached the court, the regent-mother, who highly esteemed the captain, greatly mourned his loss. So did the king and all who had known him. When she, whom he had so passionately loved, heard of his strange, piteous, and Christian end, the obduracy she had felt towards him melted into tears, and her lamentations were shared by her husband, whose pilgrim hopes were frustrated by the catastrophe.

I must not forget to mention that a demoiselle belonging to this lady, who loved the gentleman Jean better than herself, told her mistress the very day the captain and he were killed, that she had seen in a dream him whom she loved so much, that he had come to her in white raiment to bid her farewell, and told her that he was going to Paradise with his captain. But when she learned that her dream was true, she made such piteous moans that her mistress had enough to do to console her. Some time after the court went into Normandy, of which province the captain was a native, and his wife failed not to come and pay her respects to the regent-mother, intending to be introduced by the lady with whom her husband had been so much in love. Whilst waiting for the hour when she

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could have audience, the two ladies entered a church, where the widow began to laud her husband, and make lamentations over his death. "I am, madam, the most unhappy of women," she said. "God has taken my husband from me at the time when he loved me more than ever he had done." So saying, she showed her the diamond she wore on her finger as a pledge of his perfect affection. This was not said without a world of tears; and the other lady, who saw that her good-natured fraud had produced so excellent an effect, was so strongly tempted to laugh in spite of her grief, that not being able to present the widow to the regent, she handed her over to another, and retired into a chapel, where she had her laugh out. \*

Methinks, ladies, that those of our sex to whom presents are made, ought to be glad to employ them as usefully as did this good lady; for they would find that there is pleasure and joy in doing good. We must by no means accuse her of fraud but praise her good sense which enabled her to extract good out of a bad thing.

"You mean to say, then," said Nomerfide, "that a fine diamond worth two hundred crowns is a bad thing? I assure you, if it had fallen into my hands, neither his wife nor his relations would ever have set eyes on it. Nothing is more one's own than a thing that is given. The captain was dead, no one knew anything of the matter, and she might well have abstained from making the poor old woman cry."

"Good faith, you are right," said Hircan, "for there is many a woman who, to show that she is better than others, does acts contrary to her nature. In fact, do we not all know that nothing is more covetous than a woman? Yet vanity often prevails with them over avarice, and makes them do things in which their hearts have no share. In my opinion, the lady who set so little store by the diamond did not deserve it."

"Gently, gently," said Oisille; "I think I know her, and I pray you not to condemn her unheard."

"I do not condemn her, madam," replied Hircan; "but if the gentleman was so gallant a man as he has been represented to have been, it was a glorious thing for her to have a lover of such merit and to wear his ring. But perhaps some one less worthy to be loved held her so fast by the finger that the ring could not be placed on it."

"Truly," said Ennasuite, "she might fairly keep it, since no one knew anything about it."

"What!" exclaimed Geburon, "is everything allowable for those who love, provided nobody knows of it?"

"I have never," said Saffredent, "seen anything punished as a crime except imprudence; in fact, no murderer, robber, or adulterer, is ever punished by justice, or blamed amongst men, provided they are as cunning as they are wicked. But wickedness often blinds them so that they become witless. Thus it may be truly said that it is only fools who are punished and not the vicious."

"You may say what you will," said Oisille, "but it is for God to judge the heart of the lady; for my part, I see nothing in her conduct but what is comely and virtuous, and to put an end to this dispute, I beg you, Parlemeute, to call on some one to follow you."

"I have great pleasure in calling on Simontault," replied Parlemeute, "and I am mistaken if, after these two sad novels, he will not give us one which will not make us weep."

"That is almost as good as saying that I am a buffoon," said Simontault. "By way of revenge, I will let you see that there are women who make a show of being chaste with regard to certain people, or for a certain time; but the end unmasks them, as you will see by this true story."

**NOVEL XIV.**

Subtlety of a Lover who, counterfeiting the real Favorite, found means to recompense himself for his past troubles.

IN the time when the grand-master of Chaumont was governor of the duchy of Milan, there was a gentleman named Bonnavet, whose merits afterwards raised him to the rank of admiral of France. As his rare endowments made him liked by everybody, he was often a welcome guest at banquets and entertainments where ladies were present, and he was better received by them than ever was Frenchman before or since, both because he was a handsome, agreeable man, and spoke well, and because he had the reputation of being one of the ablest and most resolute soldiers of his time. One day during the carnival, when he was among the maskers, he danced with a lady, one of the handsomest and finest women in Milan. At every pause in the music he failed not to entertain her with the language of love, in which no one was such an adept as he; but the fair one; not thinking herself bound to respond to his most humble supplications, cut him short, told him flatly that she neither loved nor ever would love any one but her husband, and that he had better address his tender speeches elsewhere. Nothing daunted by this reply, which he would by no means take for a refusal, Bonnavet stuck to the lady, and continued to press his suit with great vivacity until Mid-Lent. In spite of all his endeavors he found her steadfast in the resolution she had expressed, yet could not persuade himself that all this was real earnest, seeing the hard favor of the husband and the beauty of the wife.

Convinced, then, that she practised dissimulation, he resolved to have recourse to the same art, and thenceforth desisted from his solicitations. He narrowly inquired into her conduct, and found that she loved an Italian gentleman of good parts and accomplishments. Bonnavet gradually insinuated himself into the Italian's acquaintance, and did so with such adroitness that the latter never suspected his motive, but conceived such an esteem for him, that next to his fair one he was the person he loved best in the world. In order to extract the Italian gentleman's secret from his breast, Bonnavet pretended to unlock his own, and told him that he loved a lady, naming one whom he scarcely ever thought of; at the same time begging him to keep the secret, that they might both have but one heart and one thought. The Italian, in return for the confidence which Bonnavet reposed in him, informed him, without reserve, of his passion for the lady before mentioned, on whom Bonnavet wanted to be revenged. The two friends met every day, and mutually recounted the good fortunes of the last four-and-twenty hours, with this difference, however, that one lied and the other told the truth. The Italian confessed that he had loved the lady in question for three years, without ever having obtained from her more than fair words and assurances that he was loved. Bonnavet gave him his very best advice; the Italian acted upon it, and prospered by it so well, that in a few days the lady consented to fulfil all his desires. Nothing remained now but to contrive means for their meeting; but as Bonnavet was fertile in expedients, this was soon done.

"I am more obliged to you than to any man living," said the Italian to him one evening before supper, "for, thanks to your excellent advice, I expect this night to enjoy what I have been longing for so many years."

"Pray let me know the nature of your enterprise," said Bonnavet, "so that if there is any risk in it, or it requires any artifice, I may aid and serve as your friend."

He then learned that the lady had an opportunity for leaving the great door of the house open, under the pretext of enabling one of her brothers, who was ill, to send out at any hour of the night for what he might require. The Italian was to enter the court-yard through that door, but was not to ascend the main staircase. He was to turn to the right to a small staircase, go up it to the first gallery, on which the chambers of her father-in-law and her brother-in-law opened. He was to take the third door from the stairs, push it gently, and if he found it locked, he was to go away at once, for he might conclude for certain that her husband had returned, though he was not expected back for two days; but if he found the door open, he was to come in softly, and lock the door behind him, being assured that there was no one in the room but herself. Above all, he was to wear felt shoes that he

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might make no noise, and not leave home till two hours after midnight, for her brothers-in-law, who were much addicted to play, never went to bed till past one o'clock. Bonnivet congratulated his friend, wished him good speed, and bade him not hesitate to command his services if he could be of any use to him. The Italian thanked him, said that in affairs such as this one could not be too much alone, and went off to make his preparations.

Bonnivet, on his side, did not sleep; and seeing that the time was come to be revenged on the cruel fair one, he went to bed early, had his beard trimmed after the fashion of the Italian's, and his hair cut so that she might not recognize the difference if she touched him. The felt shoes were not forgotten, nor any of the other things which the Italian was accustomed to wear. As he was held in high consideration by the lady's father-in-law, he did not hesitate to go early to the house, being prepared, in case any one perceived him, to go straight to the chamber of the old gentleman, with whom he had some business.

He reached the house at midnight; met several people in it passing to and fro, but no one noticed him, and he made his way into the gallery. He touched the first two doors, and found them shut; the third being open he entered it, and locked it behind him. The chamber was all hung with white and there was a bed with a drapery of the same color, of such fine stuff and so excellently wrought with the needle, that nothing could be handsomer. The lady was alone in bed, dressed in the most exquisite night-gear, as he could perceive (himself unseen) through a corner of the curtain, for there was a large wax candle burning in the room. For fear of being recognized, he first put out the light; then he undressed and went to bed to her. The fair one, believing him to be the man she had loved so long, received him with all possible caresses; but he, well knowing that he owed all this to her mistake, took good heed not to say one word to her, his only care being to revenge himself at the cost of her honor, and without being under any obligation to her; but she liked that sweet revenge so well, that she thought she had recompensed him for all his sufferings. This lasted till the clock struck one, when it was time to leave her. Then he asked her, in a very low whisper, if she was as well satisfied with him as he was with her. She, thinking still that he was her lover, replied that she was not only satisfied, but even surprised at the excess of his love, which had kept him an hour without speaking. Upon this he could restrain himself no longer. "Now, madam," he said, laughing outright, "will you refuse me another time, as you have hitherto done?"

"The lady, recognizing him too late by his voice and his laughter, was overwhelmed with shame and vexation, and called him a thousand times impostor, cheat, traitor, villain! She would have sprung out of bed to look for a knife with which to kill herself for having been so unhappy as to lose her honor for a man whom she did not love, and who, to be revenged upon her, might make known this affair to the whole world. But he held her fast, and vowed so hard that he would love her better than the other, and would faithfully keep her secret, that at last she believed him, and was pacified. He then told her how he had contrived to find himself where he then was, and related to her all the pains he had taken to win her; whereupon she praised his ingenuity, and vowed that she would love him better than the other, who had not been able to keep her secret. She was now convinced, she said, how false were the prejudices that prevailed against the French, who were better men, more persevering and more discreet than the Italians; and from that moment she would cast off the erroneous opinions of her countrypeople, and attach herself heartily to him. Only she entreated him that for some time he would forbear from showing himself at any entertainment or in any place where she might be, unless he were masked; for she knew well she should be so much ashamed, that her countenance would tell tales of her to everybody. Having, promised this, he begged her in his turn to receive his friend well when he should come about two o'clock, and afterwards get rid of him by degrees. She made great difficulties about this, and only yielded at last under the strong coercion of her love for Bonnivet, who on taking leave of her behaved so much to her satisfaction that she would gladly have had him stay a little longer.

Having risen and put on his clothes, he went out of the room, and left the door ajar, as he had found it. As it was near two o'clock, he withdrew into a corner near the head of the stairs, lest he should meet the Italian; and soon afterwards saw him pass along the gallery and enter the fair one's chamber. Bonnivet then went home to rest after the fatigues of the night, and remained in bed till nine next morning. The Italian failed not to come to him when he was getting up, and gave him an account of his adventure, which had not turned out quite so agreeably as he

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had expected; for, said he, "I found the lady out of bed in her dressing-gown, and in a high fever, her pulse beating violently, her face all on fire, and such a great perspiration breaking out upon her, that she begged me to go away for fear she should be obliged to call her women to her. She was so ill, in short, that she had more need to think of death than of love, and to be put in mind of Heaven rather than of Cupid. She was very sorry, she told me, that I had run such a hazard for her sake, since she could not make me any requital in this world, being about, as she hoped, to find herself soon in a better one. I was so shocked at a mischance I so little anticipated, that my fire and my joy were changed to ice and sadness, and I instantly withdrew. At daylight this morning I sent to inquire for her, and have received word that she is extremely ill."

As he delivered this sad report he wept so piteously that one would have thought his soul would have been washed out with his tears. Bonnivet, who was as much disposed to laugh as the other was to weep, consoled him as well as he could, and bade him recollect that things of long duration always seem to have an untoward beginning, and that love had caused this delay only to enhance his future enjoyment. Thereupon the two friends parted. The lady kept her bed for some days, and was no sooner out of it once more than she dismissed her first lover, alleging as her reason the fear of death in which she had been, and the terror of her conscience. She devoted herself wholly to Bonnivet, whose love lasted, as usual, about as long as the bloom and beauty of the flowers.

It strikes me, ladies, that Bonnivet's sly manoeuvres were a fair set-off against the hypocrisy of the Milanese lady, who, after playing the prude so long, at last let her lasciviousness be seen.

"You may say what you please of women," said Ennasuite; "but Bonnivet's conduct was anything but that of a man of honor. If a woman loves a man, is that any reason why another should have her by trickery?"

"Set it down for certain," said Geburon, "that when that sort of goods is for sale, they are always carried off by the highest and last bidder. Do not imagine that those who serve ladies take such a word of trouble for their sakes. No, it is for themselves, and for their own pleasure."

"Of that I entertain no manner of doubt," said Longarine; "for, to be frank with you, all the lovers I have had have invariably begun by talking of my interests, and telling me that they loved my life, my welfare, and my honor, and the upshot of it all has no less invariably been their own interest, their own pleasure, and their own vanity. So it is best to dismiss them before they have finished the first part of their sermon; for when you come to the second, you cannot refuse them with so much credit to yourself, since declared vice is a thing to be rejected as a matter of course."

"According to your doctrine, then," said Ennasuite, "one ought to rebuff a man as soon as he opens his mouth, without knowing what he has to say."

"Not so," replied Parlamente. "Every one knows that, at the outset, a woman ought not to let it appear that she understands, still less that she believes, the declaration made to her by a lover; but when he comes to strong oaths, it strikes me that it is more becoming in the lady to leave him in the middle of that fine road than to go with him all the way to the bottom."

"Nay, but are we always to assume that they love us with a criminal passion?" said Nomerfide. "Is it not sinful to think ill of one's neighbor?"

"You may believe this or not, as you please," said Oisille; "but there is so much reason for fearing that such is the case, that the moment you discover the least inkling of it, you cannot be too prompt in getting away from a fire which is too apt to burn up a heart before even it is once perceived."

"That is a very hard law you lay down," replied Hircan, "If women, whom gentleness becomes so well, were all as rigorous as you would have them to be, we men would lay aside meekness and supplication, and have recourse to

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stratagem and violence."

"The best thing," said Simontault, "is, that every one should follow the bent of his nature, and love or not, as he pleases, but always without dissimulation."

"Would to God," exclaimed Saffredent, "that the observance of this law were as productive of honor as it would be of pleasure!"

But Dagoucin could not refrain from observing, "Those who would rather die than make known their sentiments, could not endure your law."

"Die!" cried Hircan. "The good knight is yet unborn who would die for any such cause. But let us say no more of what is impossible, and see to whom Simontault will give his voice."

"To Longarine," replied the gentleman thus appealed to; "for I observed her just now talking to herself. I suspect she was conning over some good thing, and she is not wont to disguise the truth either against man or woman."

"Since you think me such a friend to the truth," said Longarine, "I will tell you a story, which, though not quite so much to the credit of our sex as I could wish, will, nevertheless, show you that there are women who have as much spirit and as sound wits as men, and are not inferior to them in cunning. If my story is somewhat long, I will endeavor to make you amends by a little gaiety."

### NOVEL XV.

A lady of the Court, seeing herself neglected by her husband, whose love was bestowed elsewhere, retaliated upon him.

THERE was at the court of King Francis the First a gentleman whom I could name if I would. He was poor, not having five hundred livres a year; but the king prized him so highly for his great endowments, that he bestowed upon him a wife so wealthy that a great lord might have been satisfied with such a match. As his wife was still very young, the king requested one of the greatest ladies of the court to take her into her household, which she did with great willingness. The gentleman was so well-bred and so good-looking, that he was greatly esteemed by all the court ladies, especially by one of them, whom the king loved, and who was neither so young nor so handsome as his wife. The gentleman loved this lady so passionately, and made so little account of his wife, that he hardly shared her bed one night in the year; and to add to the poor creature's mortification, he never spoke to her, or showed her any token of kindness; a sort of treatment which she found it very hard to bear. Meanwhile he spent her income for his own gratification, and allowed her so small a share of it, that she had not wherewithal to dress as became her quality. The lady with whom she resided often complained of this to the husband. "Your wife," she said, "is handsome, rich, and of a good family, yet you neglect her. Her extreme youth has enabled her hitherto to endure this neglect; but it is to be feared that when she comes to maturer years, her mirror, and some one who is no friend to you, will so set before her eyes her beauty which you disdain, that resentment will prompt her to do what she would not have dared to think of if you had treated her better." But the gentleman, whose heart was set elsewhere, made light of these judicious remonstrances, and went on in his old ways.

After two or three years, the young wife began to be one of the finest women in France. Her reputation was so great that it was commonly reported at court that she had not her equal. The more sensible she became that she was worthy to be loved, the more poignantly she felt her husband's contemptuous treatment, and but for the efforts of her mistress to console her, she would almost have sunk into hopeless melancholy. After having tried in vain every means to please her husband, she came to the conclusion that it was impossible he should so ill respond to the love she bore him unless he were captivated elsewhere. With this idea in her mind, she set to work

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so carefully and so shrewdly that she found out where it was he was so occupied every night as to forget his conscience and his wife. When she had thus got certain evidence of the life he led, she fell into such deep despondency that she would wear nothing but black, and shunned all places of amusement. Her mistress perceived this, and omitted nothing by which she could hope to raise her out of that gloomy mood; but, all her kind efforts were unavailing. Her husband was made acquainted with her condition, but instead of caring to relieve it, he only laughed at it.

A great lord who was nearly related to the young wife's protectress, and who paid her frequent visits, having one day been informed of the husband's hard-hearted behavior, was so shocked at it, that he would fain try to console the wife; but he was so charmed with her conversation and manners, and thought her so beautiful, that he had far more desire to make her love him than to talk to her of her husband, except it was to let her know how little cause she had to love such a man. As for the young lady herself, forsaken by him who ought to have loved and cherished her, and wooed by a lord who had everything to recommend him, she thought herself fortunate in having made such a conquest. Though she desired always to preserve her honor, nevertheless she took great pleasure in talking to him, and in seeing that she was loved, a thing whereof she had, so to speak, a famishing need. This tender friendship lasted some time, but at last the king became aware of it, and as he had a great regard for the husband, and would not have any one affront or annoy him, he begged the prince to discontinue his attentions, on pain of incurring the royal displeasure. The prince, who prized the king's good graces above all the ladies in the world, promised to forego his designs, since such was the king's wish, and to go that very evening and bid farewell to the lady.

That evening the husband, being at his window, saw the prince come in and enter his wife's chamber, which was beneath his own. The prince saw him too, but did not turn back for all that. On saying farewell to her whom he was but beginning to love, the only reason he alleged for this change in him was the king's command. After many tears and lamentations, which lasted nearly until one o'clock in the morning, the lady said to him at parting, "I thank God, my lord, for the grace he confers upon me in depriving me of your friendship, since it is so little and so weak that you take it up and lay it down at the commands of men. As for me, I did not consult either mistress, or husband, or myself, whether I should love you or not. Your engaging manners and your good looks won my heart; but since yours is less amorous than timid, you cannot love perfectly, and the friend who is not true and staunch to the uttermost is not the friend for me to love thoroughly, as I had resolved to love you; farewell, then, my lord, you whose timidity does not deserve a love so frank and so sincere as mine."

The prince went away with tears in his eyes, and looking back, he again saw the husband, who had watched him in and out. Next day the prince told him why he had gone to see his wife, and acquainted him with the commands laid upon him by the king, whereat the gentleman was greatly pleased, and gave much thanks to his sovereign. But seeing that his wife was becoming more beautiful every day, and he himself older and less good-looking, he began to change his part, and to assume that which he had long made his wife play; for he sought her more than he had been wont, and took much more notice of her. But the more he sought her the more she shunned him, being very glad to pay him back a part of the distress he had caused her by his indifference. At the same time, not to miss the pleasure which love was beginning to afford her, she cast her eyes on a young gentleman whose person and manners were so engaging, that he was a favorite with all the ladies of the court. By complaining to him of the unkind treatment she had experienced, she inspired him with such pity for her, that he left nothing untried to console her. On her part, to indemnify her for the prince she had lost, she loved this new friend so heartily, that she forgot her past griefs, and thought only of the means of adroitly carrying on her intrigue; and in this she succeeded so well, that her mistress never perceived it, for she took good care never to speak in her presence to her lover. When she had anything to say to him, she went to see certain ladies of the court. Among these was one with whom her husband seemed to be in love.

One dark night after supper she stole away alone, and entered the ladies' room, where she found him whom she loved more than herself. She sat down beside him, and leaning over a table they conversed together, whilst they pretended to be reading a book. Some one whom the husband had set on the watch came and told him whither his

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wife was gone; and he, like a sensible man as he was, said nothing, but followed her quickly, entered the room, and saw her reading a book. Pretending not to see her, he went straight up to the ladies who were at the other side of the room; whilst so disconcerted was she at being found by him with a man to whom she had never spoken in his presence, that she scrambled over a table and ran away as if her husband was pursuing her sword in hand, and went to her mistress, who was just about to retire for the night.

After her mistress was undressed and she had left the room, she met one of her own women coming to tell her that her husband wanted her. She said flatly she would not go to him, for he was so strange and harsh, that she was afraid he would do her some mischief. Nevertheless, she went at last, for fear of worse. Her husband said not a word to her about what had occurred until they were in bed; but then as she could not help crying, he asked her the cause of her tears? She cried, she said, because she was afraid he was angry at having found her reading with a gentleman. The husband replied that he had never forbidden her to speak to anybody; but that he had been surprised at seeing her run away as if she had done something wrong; and that this had made him believe she loved the gentleman. The end of the matter was, that he forbade her thenceforward to speak to any man, either in public or in private, assuring her that otherwise he would kill her without mercy. But to forbid things we like is the surest way to make us desire them more ardently, and it was not long before this poor woman had forgotten her husband's threats and her own promises.

The very same evening, having gone back to sleep with other demoiselles and her attendants, she sent to invite the gentleman to visit her at night. Her husband, whose jealousy kept him awake, and who had heard that the gentleman used to visit his wife at night, wrapped himself up in a cloak, took a valet de chambre with him, and went and knocked at his wife's door. Up she got, and seeing her women all asleep, she went alone in her mantle and slippers to the door, never in the least suspecting who was there. Her inquiry, who was there? was answered in her lover's name; but for her better assurance, she half opened the wicket and said, "If you are the person you say, give me your hand, and I shall know if you speak truly." The moment she felt her husband's hand, she recognized him, and slamming the wicket, cried out, "Ha, monsieur! it is your hand."

"Yes," cried her husband, in a great passion, "it is the hand that will keep word with you. So fail not to come when I send for you."

With that he went away, and she returned to her chamber more dead than alive. "Get up, my friends," she cried to her women; "get up. You have slept too long for me. I thought to trick you, and I have been tricked myself," and saying this, she fainted away. Her women, thus suddenly roused from their sleep, were astonished at her words, and still more when they saw her lying like a corpse, and they ran hurriedly to and fro in search of means to revive her. When she had recovered her speech, she said to them, "You see before you, my friends, the most wretched creature in the world." Then she related to them her adventure, entreating them to stand by her, for she looked upon herself already as a dead woman. While her women were endeavoring to comfort her, a valet de chambre arrived with a message from her husband, ordering her to come to him instantly. Thereupon she embraced two of her women, and began to cry and shriek, beseeching them not to let her go, for she was sure she should never return. The valet de chambre, however, bade her not be afraid, for he would answer for it with his life that no harm should happen to her. Seeing, then, that resistance was useless, she threw herself into the valet's arms, saying, "Since it must be so, my friend, carry this wretched body to death;" and in fact he carried, rather than led her away, for she was almost in a swoon. The moment she entered her husband's room, she fell on her knees, and said, "Have pity on me, monsieur, I beseech you; and I swear to you before God that I will tell you the whole truth."

"That I am determined you shall," replied the husband in a furious tone, and ordered every one to quit the room. As his wife had always seemed to him very devout, he thought she would not perjure herself if he made her swear on the cross. He therefore sent for a very handsome one he had, and when they were alone he made her swear on that cross that she would speak the truth as to such questions as he should put to her. By this time she had been able to rally her spirits, and having partly recovered from her first terror, she resolved to conceal nothing, but at

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the same time not to say anything which could compromise her lover. Her husband then put the questions he deemed necessary, and this was how she replied to them:

"I will not attempt to justify myself, monsieur, or to make little of the love I have entertained for the gentleman who is the cause of your jealousy. Whatever I might say to that effect, you could not and ought not to believe it after what has occurred; but I must tell you what has occasioned this love. Never wife so loved her husband as I loved you; and but for your unkindness I should never have loved any one but you. You know that while I was yet a child, my parents wished to marry me to a man of higher birth than you; but they could never make me consent to it from the moment I had spoken to you. I declared for you in spite of all they could say, and without caring for your poverty. You know in what manner you have treated me hitherto. This has caused me such grief and vexation, that but for the support of the lady with whom you have placed me, I should have sunk under my despair. But at last, seeing myself full-grown, and esteemed fair by every one but you, I began to feel so acutely the wrong you did me, that the love I had for you turned into hatred, and the desire of pleasing you, into that of revenging myself. While in this desperate mood, I had opportunity to see a prince who, more obedient to the king than to love, forsook me at a time when I was beginning to derive consolation from an honorable love. After I had lost the prince, I found one who had no need to be at any pains to woo me, for his good looks, his deportment, and his excellent endowments, are enough to make him an object of interest to all women of sense. At my solicitation, and not at his own, he has loved me with such propriety that he has never asked of me anything inconsistent with my honor. Though the little cause I have to love you might induce me to make light of my wedded faith, yet my love for God and my own honor have hitherto prevented me from doing anything I have need to confess, or which can make me apprehensive of infamy. I do not deny that, under pretence of going to say my prayers, I have retired as often as I could into a garderobe to converse with him; for I have never confided the conduct of this affair to any one. Nor yet do I deny, that being in such a private place, and safe from all suspicion, I have kissed him with more hearty good-will than I kiss you; but may God never show me mercy if anything else ever happened in our tête-à-têtes, or if he ever asked me for more, or my own heart ever harbored a thought of granting anything besides; for I was so happy, that it seemed to me there could not be in the world a greater pleasure than that which I enjoyed.

"But you, sir, who are the sole cause of my misfortunes, would you desire to be revenged for conduct of which you have so long been setting me an example, with this difference, that what you have done you have done without honor and without conscience? You know, and I know too, that she whom you love does not content herself with what God and reason command. Though the laws of men condemn to infamy women who love any others than their husbands, the law of God, which is infinitely more venerable and more august, condemns men who love any other women than their own wives. If the faults we have both committed be weighed in the balance, you will be found more guilty than I. You are a wise man; you have age and experience enough to know evil, and shun it; but I am young, and have no experience of the force and might of love. You have a wife who loves you, and to whom you are dearer than her own life; and I have a husband who shuns me, hates me, and treats me with such harshness as he would not show to a servant woman. You love a woman in years, lean and lanky, and not so handsome as I am; and I love a gentleman, younger than you, handsomer, and more agreeable. You love the wife of your best friend and the mistress of your sovereign, thus violating friendship and the respect you owe to both; and I love a gentleman who has no other ties than his love for me. Judge now, sir, without partiality, which of us two is the more to be condemned or excused. I do not believe there exists a man of sense and knowledge of the world who would not give his verdict against you, seeing that I am young and ignorant, despised by you and loved by the handsomest and best-bred gentleman in France, and that notwithstanding all that, I love him only because I despair of being loved by you."

Hearing such home truths as these delivered by the lips of a beautiful woman, with such grace and assurance that it was easy to see she did not think herself deserving of any punishment, the husband was so confounded that he knew not what to reply, except that a man's honor and a woman's were different things. Nevertheless, as she swore that nothing criminal had taken place between her and her lover, it was not his intention to love her less; but he begged that she would offend no more, and that they should both forgive and forget the past. She gave a

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promise to that effect, and the reconciliation being effected, they went to bed together.

Next morning an old demoiselle, who was greatly alarmed for her mistress's life, came to her bedside, and said, "Well, madam, how do you find yourself?" "There is not a better husband in the world than mine," she replied, laughing, "for he believed me on my oath." In this way five or six days passed in apparent harmony between the married pair; meanwhile, however, the husband, whose jealousy was not at all allayed, had his wife narrowly watched night and day; but in spite of all this vigilance his spies could not hinder the lady from again entertaining her lover in a dark and very suspicious place. Nevertheless, she managed the matter so secretly, that no one could ever know the truth for certain; only some valet set a story afloat that he had found a gentleman and a lady in a stable which was under the chamber occupied by the mistress of the lady in question. Upon this doubtful evidence the husband's jealousy became so increased that he resolved to have the gallant assassinated; and he assembled for that purpose a great number of relations and friends, who were to despatch him in case they met him. But it happened that one of the principal persons among the confederates was an intimate friend of the man whose death they plotted; and instead of surprising him, he put him fully on his guard; and the gentleman was such a general favorite, and always had such a good escort of friends, that he did not fear his enemy; nor was he ever assailed.

He thought it right, however, to have a conference with the lady under whose protection his fair one resided, and who had never heard a word of the whole affair, for he had never spoken with the young lady in her presence. Going to a church where he knew that she was, he acquainted her with the husband's jealousy, and the design he had formed against his life, and told her, that although he was innocent, he was resolved to go and travel in foreign countries, in order to extinguish the false report that was beginning to gather strength. The princess was greatly astonished at hearing such news, and vowed that the husband did very wrong to suspect so virtuous a woman as his wife, and one in whom she had never seen anything but virtue and propriety. However, considering the husband's influence, and in order to put an end to this scandalous report, she advised him to withdraw for some time, assuring him she would never believe any such idle fancies and suspicions. Furthermore, she advised him to speak to the husband before his departure.

He took her advice, and meeting the husband in a gallery near the king's chamber, he said to him with an assured countenance, and with the respect due to a man of his rank, "I have all my life desired, monsieur, to render you service, and I learn that in return you laid wait, yesterday evening, for my life. I beg you to consider, monsieur, that although you have more power and authority than I, nevertheless I am a gentleman as well as you, and I should be very loth to part with my life for nothing. I entreat you also to consider that you have a virtuous wife, and if any one chooses to say the contrary, I will tell him that he foully lies. For my part, I am not conscious of having done anything that should give you cause for wishing me ill; therefore, if it so please you, I will remain your obedient servant; or if not, I am the king's, and that is enough for me."

The husband replied, that true it was he had suspected him; but he thought him so gallant a man that he would rather be his friend than his enemy; and, taking leave of him, hat in hand, he embraced him as his friend. You may imagine what was said by those who had been commissioned on the preceding evening to kill the gentleman, when they witnessed these demonstrations of esteem and friendship. The lover then set out on his travels; but as he had less money than good looks, his mistress gave him a ring her husband had given her, worth three thousand crowns, which he pawned for fifteen hundred.

Some time after his departure the husband waited on the princess, and begged leave for his wife to pass some months with one of his sisters. The princess was much surprised at this unexpected request, and pressed him so much to tell her the reason of it, that he partially explained it to her. The young lady then having taken her leave of her mistress and the whole court, without shedding tears, or showing the least sign of grief, set out for the place to which her husband chose to send her, under the care of a gentleman who had express orders to watch her carefully, and above all, not to suffer her to speak on the road with the suspected person. Being aware of the nature of the orders given to her escort, she every day gave them alarms, and made game of their vigilance. On the day she began her journey, she fell in with a Cordelier on horseback, and chatted with him from dinner almost

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till bedtime. When they were within a good league of the inn, she said to him, "Here, father, are two crowns for the consolations you have afforded me; I have wrapped them in paper as you see, for otherwise I know you would not venture to touch them. Do me the favor to set off at a gallop across the country the moment you quit my side, and take care that you are not seen by the people about me. I say this for your good and for the obligation I am under to you."

Off went the Cordelier accordingly; and no sooner had he gone, than she said to her attendants, "Good servants you are, forsooth, and very vigilant guards. Properly you fulfil the orders of your master who confided in you. The very person with whom you have been commanded not to suffer me to speak, has been conversing with me the whole day, and you have let him alone. You deserve the stick, and not wages." The gentleman to whose care the fair lady had been entrusted was so vexed at hearing this, that he could not answer her a single word. Taking two men with him, he set spurs to his horse and galloped after the Cordelier, who did his best to escape, seeing himself pursued; but as they were better mounted they overtook him. The good father, who had no idea why they treated him in that manner, roared for mercy, and in suppliant humility took off his hood and remained bareheaded. They then perceived that he was not the person they had taken him for, and that their mistress had made fools of them; which she did more cruelly still when they came back from their chase. "You are proper men," she said, "to be entrusted with the care of women. You let them talk without knowing to whom, and then believing anything they choose to tell you, you go and insult God's servants."

After several other pranks as humorous as this, she reached the place of her destination, where her two sisters-in-law and the husband of one of them kept her in great subjection. By this time the husband learned that her ring was pledged for fifteen hundred crowns. To save the honor of his wife and recover the ring, he sent her word to redeem it, and that he would pay the money. Caring nothing for the ring since her lover had the money for it, she wrote to him that her husband constrained her to reclaim it, and lest he should suppose that she loved him less than before, she sent him a diamond which her mistress had given her, and which she prized more than all her other jewels. Her lover cheerfully sent her the merchant's obligation, thinking himself well off to have fifteen hundred crowns and a diamond; but glad above all things at being assured that his mistress loved him still. As long as the husband lived, they remained apart, and could only correspond in writing. Upon the husband's death, the lover, supposing that his mistress still retained the same feelings towards him which she had always professed, lost no time in demanding her hand in marriage; but found that long absence had given him a rival who was preferred to himself. He was so mortified at this, that, shunning all intercourse with ladies, he wooed danger, and died at last, after having distinguished himself as much as ever young man did.

This tale, ladies, in which our sex is not spared, conveys this lesson to husbands: that wives of high spirit suffer themselves to be led astray by resentment and vindictiveness, rather than by the charms of love. The heroine of this novel long resisted that sweet passion, but at last gave way to her despair. A good woman should not do like her, for there is no excuse for a bad action. The more one is exposed to do wrong the more virtue there is in overcoming one's self and doing well, instead of rendering evil for evil, especially as the ill one thinks to do to another often recoils upon the doer. Happy those women in whom God manifests the virtues of chastity, meekness, and patience.

"It strikes me, Longarine," said Hircan, "that the lady you have been telling us of was inspired by resentment more than by love; for had she loved the gentleman as much as she pretended, she would never have quitted him for another; and therefore she may be called spiteful, vindictive, obstinate, and fickle."

"You talk at your ease on such matters," said Ennasuite; "but you know not what a heart-break it is to love without being loved."

"It is true I have little experience in that way," said Hircan; "for only let a lady show the least coldness towards me, and at once I bid adieu to love and her."

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"That is all very well," said Parlamente, "for a man like you, who loves only his own pleasure; but an upright wife ought not to forsake her husband."

"And yet," observed Simontault, "the fair one in question forgot for awhile that she was a woman; for a man could not have revenged himself more signally."

"It is not fair," said Oisille, "to conclude from one instance of a naughty woman, that all others are like her."

"You are all women, however," replied Saffredent; "and however bravely adorned you may be, any one who looked carefully under your petticoats would find that you are so."

"We should do nothing but wrangle all day, if we were to listen to you," said Nomerfide. "But I so long to hear another story, that I beg Longarine to call on some one."

Longarine cast her eyes on Geburon, and said, "If you have a story to tell of some good lady, pray do so now."

"Since you call upon me," replied Geburon, "I will relate to you a thing that happened at Milan."

### NOVEL XVI.

A Milanese lady tested her lover's courage, and afterwards loved him heartily.

AT the time when the Grand-Master of Chaumont was governor of Milan, there was a lady there who passed for one of the most respectable in the city. She was the widow of an Italian count, and resided with her brothers-in-law, not choosing to hear a word about marrying again. Her conduct was so correct and guarded, that she was highly esteemed by all the French and Italians of the duchy. One day, when her brothers and sisters-in-law entertained the Grand-Master of Chaumont, the widow could not help being present, contrary to her custom of never appearing at any festive meeting. The French could not see her without praising her beauty and her grace; one among them especially, whom I will not name. It is enough to inform you that there was not a Frenchman in Italy more worthy to be loved, for he was fully endowed with all the beauties and graces which a gentleman could have. Though he saw the widow dressed in black crape, apart from the young people, and withdrawn into a corner with several old ladies, yet, being one who had never known what it was to fear man or woman, he accosted her, took off his mask, and quitted the dance to converse with her. He passed the whole evening with her and the old ladies her companions, and enjoyed himself more than he could have done with the youngest and sprightliest ladies of the court. So charmed was he with this conversation, that when it was time to retire he hardly believed he had had time to sit down. Though he talked with the widow only upon common topics, suited to the company around her, she failed not to perceive that he was anxious to make her acquaintance, which she was so resolute to prevent, that he could never afterwards meet with her in any company, great or small.

At last, having made inquiries as to her habits of life, and learned that she went often to the churches and religious houses, he set so many people on the watch that she could not go to any of those places so secretly but that he was there before her, and stayed as long as he could see her. He made such good use of his time, and gazed at her with such hearty good-will, that she could not be ignorant of his passion; and to prevent these encounters she resolved to feign illness for some time, and hear mass at home. This was a bitter mortification to the gentleman, for he was thus deprived of his only means of seeing her. At last, when she thought she had baffled his plans, she returned to the churches as before, and Love took care forthwith to make this known to the gentleman, who then resumed his habits of devotion. Fearing lest she should throw some other obstacle in his way, and that he should not have time to make known to her what he felt, one morning, when she was hearing mass in a little chapel, where she thought herself snugly concealed, he placed himself at the end of the altar, and turning to her at the moment when the

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priest was elevating the host, said, in a voice of deep feeling, "I swear to you, madam, by Him whom the priest holds in his hands, that you are the sole cause of my death. Though you deprive me of all opportunity to address you, yet you cannot be ignorant of the passion I entertain for you. My haggard eyes and death-like countenance must have sufficiently made known to you my condition." The lady pretended not to understand him, and replied, "God's name ought not to be taken in vain; but the poets say that the gods laugh at the oaths and falsehoods of lovers, wherefore women who prize their honor ought neither to be credulous nor pitiful." So saying, she rose and went home.

Those who have been in the like predicament will readily believe that the gentleman was sorely cast down at receiving such a reply. However, as he did not lack courage, he thought it better to have met with a rebuff than to have missed an opportunity of declaring his love. He persevered for three years, and lost not a moment in which he could solicit her by letters and by other means; but during all that time she never made him any other reply, but shunned him as the wolf shuns the mastiff; and that not by reason of any aversion she felt for him, but because she was afraid of exposing her honor and reputation. The gentleman was so well aware that there lay the knot of the difficulty, that he pushed matters more briskly than ever; till, after a world of trouble, refusals, and sufferings, the lady was touched by his constancy, took pity on him, and granted him what he had so long desired and waited for.

The assignation having been made, and the requisite measures concerted, the gentleman failed not to present himself at the rendezvous, at whatever risk of his life, for the fair widow resided with her relations. But as he was not less cunning than handsome, he managed so adroitly, that he was in the lady's chamber at the moment appointed. He found her alone in a handsome bed; but as he was undressing in eager haste he heard whisperings outside the chamber door, and the noise of swords clashing against the walls. "We are undone," cried the widow, more dead than alive. "Your life and my honor are in mortal peril. My brothers are coming to kill you. Hide yourself under the bed, I beseech you; for then they will not find you, and I shall have a right to complain of their alarming me without cause."

The gentleman, who was not easily frightened, coolly replied, "What are your brothers that they should make a man of honor afraid? If their whole race was assembled at the door, I am confident they would not stand the fourth lunge of my sword. Remain quietly in bed therefore, and leave me to guard the door."

Then, wrapping his cloak around his left arm, and with his sword in his hand, he opened the door, and saw that the threatening weapons were brandished by two servant maids. "Forgive us, monsieur," they said. "It is by our mistress's orders we do this; but you shall have no more annoyance from us." The gentleman, seeing that his supposed antagonists were women, contented himself with bidding them go the devil, and slamming the door in their faces. He then jumped into bed to his mistress without delay. Fear had not cooled his ardor, and without wasting time in asking the meaning of the sham alarm, he thought only of satisfying his passion.

Towards daylight he asked his bedfellow why she had so long delayed his happiness, and what was her reason for making her servants behave so oddly? "I had resolved," she said, laughing, "never to love; and I have adhered to that resolution ever since I became a widow. But the first time you spoke to me, I saw so much to admire in you, that I changed my mind, and began from that hour to love you as much as you loved me. It is true that honor, which has always been the ruling principle of my conduct, would not suffer love to make me do anything which might blemish my reputation. But as the stricken deer thinks to change its pain by change of place, so did I go from church to church, hoping to fly from him whom I carried in my heart, the proof of whose perfect love has reconciled honor with love. But to be thoroughly assured that I gave my heart to a man who was perfectly worthy of it, I ordered my women to do as they have done. I can assure you, if you had been frightened enough to hide under the bed, my intention was to have got up and gone into another room, and never have had anything more to do with you. But as I have found you not only comely and pleasing, but also full of valor and intrepidity to a degree even beyond what fame had reported you; as I have seen that fear could not appal you, nor in the least degree cool the ardor of your passion for me, I have resolved to attach myself to you for the rest of my days; being well assured that I cannot place my life and my honor in better hands than in those of him whom of all men

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in the world I believe to be the bravest and the best." \*

And if human will could be immutable, they mutually promised and vowed a thing which was not in their power-I mean, perpetual affection-which can neither grow up nor abide in the hearts of men, as those ladies know who have learned by experience what is the duration of such engagements. Therefore, ladies, if you are wise, you will be on your guard against us, as the stag would be against the hunter if the animal had reason; for our felicity, our glory, and delight, is to see you captured, and to despoil you of what ought to be dearer to you than life.

"Since when have you turned preacher, Geburon?" said Hircan. "You did not always talk in that fashion."

"It is true," replied Geburon, "that I have all my life long held a quite different language; but as my teeth are bad, and I can no longer chew venison, I warn the poor deer against the hunters, that I may make amends in my old age for the mischiefs I have desired in my youth."

"Thank you, Geburon, for your warning," retorted Nomerfide; "but after all, we doubt that we have much reason to be obliged to you; for you did not speak in that way to the lady you loved so much; therefore, it is a proof that you do not love us, or yet wish that we should love. Yet we believe ourselves to be as prudent and virtuous as those you so long chased in your young days. But it is a common vanity of the old to believe that they have always been more discreet than those who come after them."

"When the cajolery of one of your wooers," retorted Geburon, "shall have made you acquainted with the nature of men, you will then believe, Nomerfide, that I have told you the truth."

"To me it seems probable," observed Oisille, "that the gentleman whose intrepidity you extol so highly must rather have been possessed by the fury of love, a passion so violent, that it makes the greatest poltroons undertake things which the bravest would think twice before attempting."

"If he had not believed, madam," said Saffredent, "that the Italians are readier with their tongues than with their hands, methinks he must have been frightened."

"Yes," said Oisille, "if he had not had a fire in his heart which burns up fear."

"Since you do not think the courage of this gentleman sufficiently laudable," said Hircan, "I presume you know of some other instance which seems to you more worthy of praise."

"It is true that this gentleman's courage deserves some praise," said Oisille, "but I know an instance of intrepidity that is worthy of higher admiration."

"Pray tell us it, then, madam," said Geburon.

"If you so much extol," said Oisille, "the bravery of a man who displayed it for the defence of his own life and of his mistress's honor, what praise is too great for another, who, without necessity, and from pure valor, behaved in the manner I am about to relate?"

## NOVEL XVII.

King Francis gives a signal proof of his courage in the case of Count Guillaume, who designed his death.

A GERMAN Count named Guillaume, of the House of Saxe, to which that of Savoy is so closely allied that anciently the two made but one, came to Dijon, in Burgundy, and entered the service of King Francis. This count,

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who was considered one of the finest men in Germany, and also one of the bravest, was so well received by the king, that he not only took him into his service, but placed him near his person, as one of the gentlemen of his chamber. The Seigneur de la Tremouille, Governor of Burgundy, an old knight and a faithful servant of the king, being naturally suspicious and attentive to his master's interests, had always a good number of spies among his enemies to discover their intrigues; and he conducted himself with such wariness that little escaped his notice. One day he received a letter, informing him among other things that Count Guillaume had already received certain sums of money, with promises of more, provided he would have the king put to death in any way in which it could be done. The Seigneur de la Tremouille instantly communicated the intelligence to the king, and made no secret of it to Madame Louise, of Savoy, his mother, who, putting out of consideration that she was related to the German, begged the king to dismiss him forthwith. Instead of doing so, the king begged Madame Louise to say no more about it, declaring it impossible that so gallant a man could be guilty of so villainous an act.

Some time after a second dispatch was received, confirmatory of the former one. The governor, burning with zeal for the preservation of his master's life, begged permission of him either to expel the count from the realm, or to take precautionary measures against him; but the king expressly commanded him to make no stir in the matter, doubting not that he should come at the truth by some other means.

One day the king went to the chase, armed with no other weapon than a very choice sword, and took Count Guillaume with him, desiring him to keep close up with him. After having hunted the stag for some time, the king, finding himself alone with Count Guillaume, and far from his suite, turned aside, and rode into the thick of the forest. When they had advanced some way he drew his sword, and said to the count, "What think you? Is not this an excellent sword?" The count, taking it by the point, replied that he did not think he had ever seen a better. "You are right," rejoined the king; "and it strikes me that if a gentleman had conceived the design of killing me, and knew the strength of my arm, the boldness of my heart, and the temper of this good sword, he would think twice of it before he attacked me; nevertheless, I should regard him as a great villain, if, being alone with me, man to man, he durst not attempt to execute what he had dared to undertake."

"The villainy of the design would be very great, sire," replied the astounded count; "but not less would be the folly of attempting to put it in execution."

The king sheathed his sword with a laugh, and hearing the sound of the chase, set spurs to the horse, and galloped in the direction from which the sound came.

When he rejoined his suite he said not a word of what had passed, satisfied in his own mind that Count Guillaume, for all his vigor and bravery, was not the man to strike so daring a blow. The count, however, making no doubt that he was suspected, and greatly fearing a discovery, went the next day to Robertet, the secretary of finance, and told him that, on considering the profits and appointments the king had proposed to make him for remaining in his service, he found they would not be sufficient to maintain him for half the year; and that unless his majesty would be pleased to double them, he should be under the necessity of retiring. He concluded by begging that Robertet would ascertain the king's pleasure in the matter, and make him acquainted with it as soon as possible. Robertet said he would lose no time, for he would go that instant to the king: a commission which he undertook the more readily, as he had seen the information obtained by La Tremouille. As soon as the king was awake, Robertet laid his business before him, in presence of Monsieur de la Tremouille and Admiral de Bonnavet, who were not aware of what the king had done the day before.

"You want to dismiss Count Guillaume," said the king, laughing, "and you see he dismisses himself. You may tell him, then, that if he is not satisfied with the terms he accepted when he entered my service, and which many a man of good family would think himself fortunate in having, he may see if he can do better elsewhere. Far from wishing to hinder him, I shall be very glad to have him find as good a position as he deserves."

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Robertet was as prompt in carrying this reply to the count as he had been in laying the latter's proposals before the king. "That being the case, I must retire from his majesty's service," said the count. Fear made him so eager to be gone, that twenty-four hours sufficed for the rest. He took leave of his majesty as he was sitting down to table, and affected extreme regret at the necessity which compelled him to quit that gracious presence. He also took leave of the king's mother, who let him go with no less gladness than she had welcomed him as a kinsman and friend. The king, seeing his mother and his courtiers surprised at the count's sudden departure, made known to them the alarm he had given the count, adding, that even if he were innocent of what was laid to his charge, he had had a fright sufficient to make him quit a master whose temper he did not yet know. \*

I see no reason, ladies, which could have obliged the king thus to expose his person against a man who was reckoned so formidable an adversary, had he not chosen, from mere greatness of soul, to quit the company in which kings find no inferiors to offer them simple combat, in order to put himself upon an equal footing with a man whom he regarded as his enemy, and to prove in person his daring and high courage.

"He was certainly right," said Parlamente; "for the praises of all mankind are not so satisfying to a great heart, as its own experience of the virtues with which God has endowed it."

"The ancients long ago represented," said Geburon, "that one cannot arrive at the temple of Fame without passing through that of Virtue. As I know the two persons of whom you have related this tale, I know perfectly well that the king is one of the most intrepid men in his dominions."

"When Count Guillaume came to France," said Hircan, "I should have been more afraid of his sword than of those of the best four among the Italians who were then at court."

"We all know," said Ennasuite, "that all the praises we could bestow on the king would fall far short of his merits, and that the day would be gone before every one should have said all he thinks of him. Therefore, madam, give your voice to some one who may again tell us something to the advantage of men, if any such thing there be."

"I imagine," said Oisille to Hircan, "that as you are so much in the habit of speaking ill of women, you will not find it difficult to tell us something good of your own sex."

"That I can the more easily do," replied Hircan, "as it is not long since I was told a tale of a gentleman whose love, fortitude, and patience were so praiseworthy, that I must not suffer their memory to be lost."

### NOVEL XVIII.

A Lady tests the fidelity of a young student, her lover, before granting him her favors.

THERE was in one of the good towns of France a young seigneur of good family, who was attending the schools, desiring to acquire the knowledge which endows those of quality with honor and virtue. Though he had already made such progress in his studies, that at the age of seventeen or eighteen he was a pattern for other students, Love failed not, nevertheless, to teach him other lessons. To make them more impressive and acceptable, that sly instructor concealed himself under the face and in the eyes of the handsomest lady in the country, who had come to town on business connected with a lawsuit. Before Love employed the charms of this lady to subjugate the young seigneur, he had gained her heart by letting her see the perfections of the gentleman, who for good looks, pleasing manners, good sense, and a winning tongue, was not surpassed by any one. You who know what way this fire makes in a little time, when once it has begun to burn the outworks of a heart, will easily imagine that Love was not long in rendering himself master of two such accomplished subjects, and so filling them with his light, that their thoughts, wishes, and words, were but the flame of that love. The natural timidity of youth made the gallant press his suit with all possible gentleness. But it was not necessary to do violence to the fair one, since

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love had already vanquished her. Modesty, nevertheless, that inseparable companion of the ladies, obliged her to conceal the sentiments of her heart as long as she could. But at last the citadel of the heart, wherein honor has its dwelling, was so breached, that the poor lady gave her consent to what she had never been loth to. Still, in order to put the patience, fortitude, and passion of her lover to the proof, she surrendered only on one very difficult condition; on his fulfilling which, she assured him that she would always love him most truly; but if he failed in it, she would do quite the reverse. The condition she proposed was this: she would condescend to talk with him, both being in bed together en chemise, but he was to ask nothing of her beyond kisses and sweet words; and he, thinking there was no joy comparable to that which she offered him, accepted the condition without hesitation.

That night the compact was filled. It was in vain she caressed him; he would never break his word, however sharply he felt the promptings of nature. Though he was fully assured that the pains of purgatory were not a whit worse than those he endured, yet his love was so great, and his hopes so strong, that, counting on the perpetual affection it cost him so much to secure, he triumphed by his patience, and got up from beside her just as he laid down. The fair one, more astonished, I rather think, than pleased at such extraordinary forbearance, took it into her head either that his love was not so great as he said, or that he had not found in her all the attractions he had expected; for she made no account at all of the propriety, patience, and religious fidelity of her lover. She resolved therefore, before she surrendered, to put the love he professed for her once more to the proof. To this end she requested him to gallant a girl she had in her service, one who was very good-looking, and much younger than herself, in order that persons who saw him come so often to her house, might suppose that he came for the sake of the girl and not of herself. The young seigneur, who flattered himself that he had inspired as much love as he harbored in his own bosom, did all that was required of him, and made love to the girl in obedience to her mistress's desire; and the girl, pleased with the addresses of so handsome a youth, who had such a seductive tongue, believed all he said to her, and was in love with him in earnest.

The mistress, seeing that things had come to this pass, and that her lover desisted none the more from pressing her to fulfil her promise, admitted to him that, after having put his love to such severe proofs, it was but just that she should recompense his constancy and submissiveness; accordingly, she promised to meet him an hour after midnight. I need not tell you whether or not the impassioned lover was transported with joy, and was punctual to the assignation. But the fair one, in order to put the force of his passion to a new trial, said to her demoiselle, "I know the love of Seigneur Such-a-one for you, and I know that you are no less in love with him. I take such an interest in your happiness, that I have resolved to contrive means for you both to enjoy a long conversation together in private and at your ease." The demoiselle was in such ecstasy, that she could not dissemble her passion, and in obedience to her mistress's directions, lay down alone on a handsome bed. The mistress then, leaving large candles lighted, the better to display the girl's beauty, and the door open, pretended to go away, but contrived to hide herself near the bed so cunningly, that she could not be discovered. The lover, expecting to find her as she had promised, stole softly into the room at the appointed hour, shut the door, undressed, and got into bed. No sooner had he stretched out his arms to embrace his mistress as he supposed, than the poor girl, who believed him to be all her own, threw her arms about his neck, and spoke to him with such affection, and with such a charming countenance, that there is not a holy hermit in the world but would have forgotten his paternosters for her sake. But when he recognized her form and her face, the love that had made him get so quickly into bed made him jump out of it still more hastily, on finding that his bedfellow was not she who had made him sigh so long. Vexed then alike with the mistress and the maid, "Your folly," he said, "and the malice of her who put you there, cannot make me other than I am. Try to be an honest woman; for you shall not lose your good name through me." So saying, he flung himself out of the room in huge dudgeon, and it was a long time before he again visited his mistress.

Love, however, who is never without hope, suggested to him that the greater his constancy and the more it was made known by such decisive experiments, the longer and more blissful would be his enjoyment. The lady, who had witnessed all, was so delighted and so surprised at the excess and firmness of his love, that she was impatient to see him again, in order to make amends for the sufferings she had inflicted upon him in testing his affection. The moment she saw him she spoke to him so graciously and with such tenderness, that he not only forgot all he

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had undergone, but even rejoiced at it, seeing that his mistress honored his constancy, and was convinced of the sincerity of his love. He had no more disappointments to complain of; his services and his love were crowned, and he obtained from the fair one thenceforth all his heart could wish for.

Show me, ladies, if you can, a woman who has evinced the same firmness, patience, and fidelity in love as this gentleman. Those who have been exposed to the like temptations, think those which painters assign to St. Anthony very trivial in comparison. For he who can be chaste and patient in spite of the temptations of beauty, love, opportunity, and the absence of all hindrance, may rely on having virtue enough to overcome all the devils in hell.

"It is a pity," said Oisille, "that the gentleman did not address his love to a lady as virtuous as himself; it would then have been the most decorous and perfect I ever heard of."

"Tell me," said Geburon, "which of this gentleman's two trials do you think was the more difficult?"

"The last, I think," said Parlamente; "for resentment and anger are the most terrible of all temptations.

Longarine said she thought that the first was the most arduous of the two; for in order to keep his promise, he had to be victorious over love and over himself.

"You talk at random," said Simontault; "but we, who know something about the matter, may be allowed to say what we think of it. For my part I say that he was a fool the first time, and a blockhead the second. It is my belief, that in keeping his word to his mistress, he made her suffer as much as himself, or more. She only exacted that promise from him to make herself appear a better conducted woman than she really was; for she could not but know that there is no command, or oath, or anything else in the world, which is capable of stopping the headlong impulses of a violent love. She was very glad to cover her vice under an appearance of virtue, and make believe that she was accessible for nothing beneath a heroic virtue. He was a blockhead the second time to leave her who loved him, and was worth more than the other, especially when he had so good an excuse as the provocation he had received."

"I say quite the contrary," interrupted Dagoucin. "The first time he showed himself firm, patient, and a man of his word; and the second time faithful, and loving to perfection."

"And who knows," said Saffredent, "but he was one of those whom a chapter names *de frigidis et maleficiatis*? \* But that nothing might be wanting to the glory of this hero, Hircan ought to have acquainted us if he did his duty when he got what he wanted. We should then have been able to judge whether he was so chaste through virtue or through impotence."

"You may be sure," said Hircan, "that if I had been told this, I should not have concealed it any more than the rest. But knowing as I do the man and his temperament, I attribute his conduct to the force of his love, and not at all to impotence or coldness."

"If that is the case," said Saffredent, "he ought to have laughed at his promise. Had the fair one been offended at his doing so, it would not have been very hard to appease her."

"But, perhaps," said Ennasuite, "she would not then have consented."

"That's a fine idea!" cried Saffredent. "Was he not strong enough to force her, since she had given him the opportunity?"

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"Holy Mary!" exclaimed Nomerfide, "how you talk! Is that the way to win the good graces of a lady who is believed to be chaste and modest?"

"It seems to me," replied Saffredent, "that one cannot do more honor to a woman of whom one desires to have that sort of thing than to take it by force, for there is not the pettiest demoiselle of them all but dearly loves to be long wooed and entreated. There are some who can only be won by dint of presents; others are so stupid that they are hardly pregnable on any side. With those latter one must think of nothing but how to hit upon the means of having them. But when one has to do with a dame so wary that one cannot deceive her, and so good that she is not to be come at either by presents or by fair words, is it not allowable to try all possible means of success? Whenever you hear that a man has forced a woman you may be sure that she had left him no other means to accomplish his ends; and you ought not to think the worse of a man who has risked his life to satisfy his love."

"I have seen in my time," said Geburon, laughing, "places besieged and taken by storm, because there was no means of bringing the governors to terms either by money or threats; for they say that a fortress which treats is half taken."

"One would think," said Ennasuite, "that love is built only upon these follies. There have been many who have loved constantly with other intentions."

"If you know one such instance," said Hircan, "tell it us."

"I know one," said Ennasuite, "which I will willingly relate."

### NOVEL XIX.

Two Lovers, in despair at being hindered from marrying, turn Monk and Nun.

IN the time of the Marquis of Mantua, who had married the sister of the Duke of Ferrara, there was in the service of the duchess a demoiselle named Pauline, so much loved by a gentleman who was in the service of the marquis that every one was surprised at the excess of his passion; for, being poor, but a handsome man, and, moreover, in great favor with the marquis, it was thought that he ought to attach himself to a lady who had wealth enough for them both: but he regarded Pauline as the greatest of all treasures, which he hoped to make his own by marriage. The marchioness, who loved Pauline, and wished that she should make a wealthier match, dissuaded her from this one as much as she could, and often hindered the lovers from seeing each other, telling them, that if they married they would be the poorest and most miserable couple in Italy. But the gentleman could not admit the validity of this argument. Pauline, on her part, dissembled her love as much as she could; but she only thought of it the more for all that. Their courtship was long, and they hoped their fortune would mend in time.

While they were awaiting this happy change, war broke out, and the gentleman was made prisoner, along with a Frenchman who was as much in love in his own country as the other was in Italy. Being fellows in misfortune, they began reciprocally to communicate their secrets. The Frenchman told his companion that his heart was captive, without saying to whom; but as they were both in the service of the Marquis of Mantua, the Frenchman knew that his comrade loved Pauline, and, having his interest at heart, advised him to abandon that connexion. This the Italian vowed it was impossible for him to do, and added that, unless the Marquis of Mantua, in recompense for his imprisonment and his good services, bestowed his mistress upon him at his return, he would turn Cordelier, and never serve any other master than God. The Frenchman, who saw in him no signs of religion, with the exception of his devotion to Pauline, could not believe that he spoke in earnest. At the end of nine months the Frenchman was set at liberty, and exerted himself to such effect that he procured that of his comrade also, who immediately on his liberation renewed his importunities to the marquis and the marchioness for their sanction to his marriage with Pauline. It was in vain they represented to him the poverty to which they would both

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be reduced; the relations on both sides, who would not consent to the match, forbade him to speak any more to Pauline, in hopes that absence and impossibility would cure him of his headstrong passion: but all this was unavailing to change his feelings. Seeing himself forced to submit, he asked leave of the marquis and marchioness to bid farewell to Pauline, after which he would see her no more, and his request was forthwith granted.

"Since heaven and earth are against us," said he to Pauline when they met, "and we are not only forbidden to marry, but even to see each other, the marquis and marchioness, our master and mistress, who exact such a cruel kind of obedience of us, may boast of having with one word smitten two hearts, whose bodies can henceforth only languish to death. By so unfeeling a mandate they plainly show that they have never known love or pity. I know well that their purpose is to see us both prosperously established in wealthy marriages; but they know not that people are truly rich only when they are content. However, they have so wronged and incensed me, that it is impossible I should remain in their service. I have no doubt, that if I had never talked of marrying you, they would not have carried their scruples so far as to forbid our speaking to each other; but as for me, I can assure you, that having long loved you so honestly and truly, I shall continue to love you all my life. And forasmuch as seeing you I could not endure the monstrous hardship of not being allowed to speak to you, and not seeing you, my heart, which could not remain void, would be filled with a despair which might end fatally for me, I have for a long time resolved to retreat into a cloister. Not but that I well know one may work out his salvation in any condition of life; but I believe that in these retreats one has more leisure to meditate on the greatness of the Divine goodness, which will have pity, I trust, on the faults of my youth, and dispose my heart to love the things of heaven as much as I have loved those of earth. If God gives me the grace to be able to obtain his, my continual occupation will be to pray for you. I entreat you, by the faithful and constant love we have borne to one another, to remember me in your prayers, and to beseech the Lord to give me as much constancy when I cease to see you, as he gave me gladness in beholding you. As I have hoped all my life to have from you through marriage what honor and conscience allow, and have contented myself with that hope, now that I lose it, and can never be treated by you as a husband, I entreat, that in bidding me farewell, you will treat me as a brother, and let me kiss you."

Poor Pauline, who had manifested rigor enough towards him, seeing the extremity of his grief and the reasonableness of his request, which was so moderate under such circumstances, could only reply by throwing herself in tears on his neck. So overcome was she, that speech, sense, and motion failed her, and she fainted in his arms, whilst love, sorrow, and pity produced the same effect on him. One of Pauline's companions, who saw them fall, called for help, and they were recovered by force of remedies. Pauline, who wished to hide her affection, was ashamed when she was aware how vehemently she had suffered it to display itself; however, she found a good excuse in the commiseration she had felt for the gentleman. That heart-broken lover, unable to utter the words, "Farewell forever!" hurried away to his chamber, fell like a corpse on his bed, and passed the night in such bitter lamentations, that his servants supposed he had lost all his relations and friends, and all he was worth in the world. Next morning he commended himself to our Lord, and after dividing the little he possessed among his domestics, only retaining a very small sum of money for his immediate use, he forbade his servants to follow him, and wended his way alone to the convent of the Observance, to ask for the monastic habit, with the determination of wearing none other as long as he lived. The warden, who had known him formerly, thought at first that he was joking, or that he himself was dreaming; indeed, there was not a man in all the country who had less the look of a Cordelier, or was better gifted with the graces and endowments, which one could desire to see in a gentleman. But after having heard him, and seen him shed floods of tears, the source of which was unknown to him, the warden kindly received him as a guest, and soon afterwards, seeing his perseverance, he gave him the robe of the order, which the poor gentleman received with great devotion.

The marquis and marchioness were made acquainted with this event, and were so much surprised at it that they could hardly believe it. Pauline, to show that she was without passion, did her best to dissemble her regret for her lover, and succeeded so well that everybody said she had forgotten him, whilst all the time she would fain have fled to some hermitage, to shun all commerce with the world. But one day, when she went to hear mass at the Observance with her mistress, when the priest, the deacon, and sub-deacon issued from the vestry to go to the high altar, her lover, who had not yet completed the year of his noviciate, served as acolyte, and led the

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procession, carrying in both hands the two canettes covered with silk-cloth, and walking with downcast eyes. Pauline, seeing him in that garb, which augmented rather than diminished his good looks, was so surprised and confused, that, to conceal the real cause of her heightened color, she began to cough. At that sound, which he recognized better than the bells of his monastery, the poor lover durst not turn his head; but as he passed before her, he could not hinder his eyes from taking the direction to which they had so been long used. Whilst gazing sadly on his mistress, the fire he had thought almost extinct blazed up so fiercely within him, that, making an effort beyond his strength to conceal it, he fell full length on the floor. His fear lest the cause of this accident be known prompted him to say that the floor of the church, which was broken at that spot, had thrown him down. Pauline perceived from this circumstance that he had not changed his heart along with his habit; and believing that, as it was now so long since he had retired from the world, every one imagined she had forgotten him, she resolved to put into execution her long-meditated design of following her lover's example.

Having now been more than fourteen months privily making all necessary arrangements previous to her taking the veil, she one morning asked leave of the marchioness to go to hear mass at the convent of St. Claire. Her mistress granted this request without knowing why it was preferred. Calling at the Franciscan monastery on her way, Pauline begged the warden to let her see her lover, whom she called her relation. She saw him in private, in a chapel, and said to him: "If I could with honor have retired to the cloister as soon as you, I should have been there long ago. But now that by my patience I have prevented the remarks of those who put a bad construction upon everything rather than a good one, I am resolved to renounce the world, and adopt the order, habit, and life which you have chosen. If you fare well, I shall have my part; and if you fare ill, I do not wish to be exempt. I desire to go to paradise by the same road as you, being assured that the Being who is supremely perfect, and alone worthy to be called Love, has drawn us to his service by means of an innocent and reasonable affection, which He will convert entirely to himself through His Holy Spirit. Let us both forget this perishing body, which is of the old Adam, to receive and put on that of Jesus Christ who is our spirit."

The cowled lover wept with joy to hear her express such a holy desire, and did his utmost to confirm it. "Since I can never hope for more than the satisfaction of seeing you," he said, "I esteem it a great blessing that I am in a place where I may always have opportunity to see you. Our conversations will be such that we shall both be the better for them, loving as we shall do with one love, one heart, one mind, led by the goodness of God, whom I pray to hold us in His good hands, in which no one perishes." So saying, and weeping with love and joy, he kissed her hands; but she stooped her face as low as her hand, and they exchanged the kiss of love in true charity.

From the Franciscan monastery Pauline went straight to the convent of St. Clair, where she was received and veiled. Once there, she sent word to her mistress, who, hardly crediting such strange news, went to see her next day, and did all she could to dissuade her from her purpose. The only reply she received from Pauline was, that she ought to be satisfied with having deprived her of a husband of flesh, the only man in the world she had ever loved, without seeking likewise to separate her from Him who is immortal and invisible, which neither she nor all the creatures on earth could do. The marchioness, seeing her so strong in her pious resolution, kissed her, and left her in her convent with extreme regret.

These two persons lived afterwards such holy and devout lives, that it cannot be doubted that He whose law is charity, said to them at the end of their course, as to Mary Magdalen, "Your sins are forgiven, since you have loved so much," and removed them in peace to the blessed abode, where the recompense infinitely surpasses all human merits.

You cannot but own, ladies, that the man's love was the greater of the two; but it was so well repaid, that I would all those who love were so richly recompensed.

"In that case there would be more fools than ever," said Hircan.

"Do you call it folly," said Oisille, "to love virtuously in youth, and then to center all our love in God?"

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"If despite and despair are laudable," replied Hircan, laughing, "then I must say that Pauline and her lover are worthy of high praise."

"Yet God has many ways of attracting us to Him," said Geburon; "and though their beginnings seem bad, their end is, nevertheless, very good."

"I believe," said Parlamente, "that no one ever perfectly loved God who did not perfectly love some of his creatures in this world."

"What do you call loving perfectly?" said Saffredent. "Do you believe that those enamored cataleptics who worship ladies at a hundred paces' distance, without daring to speak out, love perfectly?"

"I call perfect lovers," replied Parlamente, "those who seek in what they love some perfection, be it goodness, beauty, or charming demeanor; who aim always at virtue, and whose hearts are so noble and so spotless that they would rather lose their lives than devote them to low things forbidden by honor and conscience; for the soul which is created only to return to its sovereign good, so long as it is imprisoned in the body, does but long to arrive at that high destination. But because the senses, which can give it views thereof, are obscured and carnal since the sin of our first parents, they can only present to it those visible objects which approach nearest to perfection. In that direction the soul rushes forth, and thinks to find in outward beauty, in visible graces, and in moral virtues, the supreme beauty, grace, and virtue. But after having sought and proved them, and not found what it loves, the soul lets them go, and passes on its way, like the child who loves apples, pears, dolls, and other trivial things the handsomest it can see, and thinks that to amass little pebbles is to be wealthy; but as it grows up it loves living dolls, and amasses things necessary to human life. After a longer experience has shown it that there is neither perfection nor felicity in the things of this earth, it seeks the true felicity, and Him who is its source and principle. Still, if God did not open the eyes of its faith, it would be in danger of passing from ignorance to infidel philosophy; for it is faith alone that demonstrates and makes the soul receive that good which the carnal and animal man cannot know."

"Do you not see," said Longarine, "that even the uncultivated ground which produces only trees and useless herbs, is, nevertheless, an object of desire, in the hope that when it is well cultivated and sown it will produce good grain? In like manner the heart of man, which is conscious only of visible things, will never arrive at the condition of loving God but through the seed of the Word; for that heart is a sterile, cold, and corrupted soil."

"Thence it comes," said Saffredent, "that most doctors are not spiritual, because they never love anything but good wine and ugly sluts of chambermaids, without making trial of what it is to love honorable ladies."

"If I could speak Latin well," said Simontault, "I would quote St. John to you, who says: 'He who loves not his brother whom he sees, how shall he love God whom he doth not see?' In loving visible things, one comes to love things invisible."

"Tell us where is the man so perfect as you describe, et laudabimus eum," said Ennasuite.

"There are such men," replied Dagoucin; "men who love so strongly and so perfectly, that they would rather die than entertain desires contrary to the honor and conscience of their mistresses, and who yet would not have either them or others be aware of their sentiments."

"These men are like the chameleon, who lives on air," observed Saffredent. "There is no man in the world but is very glad to have it known that he loves, and delighted to know that he is loved. Also, I am convinced, that there is no fever of affection so strong but passes off as soon as one knows the contrary. For my part, I have seen palpable miracles in that way."

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"I beg, then," said Ennasuite, "that you will take my place, and tell us a story of some one who has been restored from death to life, by having discovered in his mistress the reverse of what he desired."

"I am so much afraid," said Saffredent, "of displeasing the ladies, whose most humble servant I have always been, and always shall be, that without an express command I should not have dared to speak of their imperfections. But, in token of obedience, I will speak the truth."

### NOVEL XX.

A Gentleman finds his cruel fair one in the arms of her groom, and is cured at once of his love.

THERE was a gentleman in Dauphiné named the Seigneur De Riant, of the household of King Francis I., and one of the best-looking and best-bred men of his day. He paid his court for a long time to a widow, whom he loved and respected so much, that, for fear of losing her good graces, he durst not ask of her that which he longed for with the utmost passion. As he was conscious of being a handsome man and well worthy of being loved, he firmly believed what she often swore to him—namely, that she loved him above all men in the world; and that if she were constrained to do anything for any one, it would be for him alone, who was the most accomplished gentleman she had ever known. She begged he would content himself with this, and not attempt to exceed the limits of decorous friendship, assuring him, that upon the least symptom of his craving anything more, she should be lost to him forever.

The poor gentleman not only contented himself with these fine words, but even deemed himself happy in having won the heart of a person he believed to be so virtuous. It would be an endless affair to give you a circumstantial detail of his love, of the long intercourse he had with her, and of the journeys he made to see her. Enough to say, that this poor martyr to a fire so pleasing, that the more one is burned by it the more one likes to be burned, daily sought the means of aggravating his martyrdom. One day he was seized with a desire to travel post to see her whom he loved better than himself, and whom he prized above all the women in the world. On arriving at her house he asked where she was. They told him she had just come back from vespers, and was gone to take a turn in the warren to finish her devotions. He dismounts, goes straight to the warren, and meets her woman, who tells him that she is gone to walk alone in the great alley. Upon this he began to hope more than ever for some good fortune, and continued to search for her as softly as possible, desiring above all things to steal upon her when she was alone. But on coming to a charming pleached arbor, in his impatience to behold his adored, he darted into it abruptly, and what did he see then but the lady stretched on the grass, in the arms of a groom, as ugly, nasty, and disreputable, as De Riant was all the reverse. I will not pretend to describe his indignation at so unexpected a spectacle; I will only say it was so great, that in an instant it extinguished his long-cherished flame. "Much good may it do you, madam," cried he, as full of resentment as he had been of love. "I am now cured and delivered of the continual anguish which your fancied virtue had caused me;" and without another word he turned on his heel and went back faster than he had come. The poor woman had not a word to say for herself, and could only put her hands over her face, that as she could not cover her shame she might at least cover her eyes, and not see him who saw her but too plainly, notwithstanding her long dissimulation.

So, ladies, unless you choose to love perfectly, never think of dissembling with a proper man, and giving him displeasure for sake of your own glory; for hypocrisy is paid as it deserves, and God favors those who love frankly. \*

"It must be confessed," said Oisille, "that you have kept something good in reserve for us to the end of the day. If we were not pledged to tell the truth, I could not believe that a woman of such station could have forgotten herself so much as to quit so handsome a gentleman for a nasty groom."

"If you knew, madam," replied Hircan, "the difference there is between a gentleman who has all his life worn

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harness and followed the army, and a servant who has led a sedentary life and been well fed, you would excuse this poor widow."

"Say what you will," rejoined Oisille, "I doubt that you would admit any excuse for her."

"I have heard," said Simontault, "that there are women who are very glad to have apostles to preach up their virtue and their chastity; they treat them with the most gracious kindness and familiarity, and assure them that they would grant them what they sue for, did conscience and honor permit it. When the poor dupes are in company they talk of these excellent ladies, and swear they would put their hands in the fire if they are not women of virtue, relying on the proof they think they have personally obtained for their assertion. But the ladies thus praised by these simple gentlemen show themselves in their real colors to those who are like themselves, and choose for the objects on whom they bestow their favors men who have not the boldness to tell tales, and of so abject a condition, that even, were they to blab, they would not be believed."

"I have heard the same thing said before by extravagantly jealous folk," said Longarine. "But surely this is what may be called painting a chimera; for though such a thing may have happened to one wretched woman, is it thence to be inferred that all women do the same thing?"

"The more we talk on this subject," said Parlamente, "the more we shall be maligned. We had better go hear vespers, that we may not keep the monks waiting for us as we did yesterday." This proposal was unanimously agreed to.

"If any one," said Oisille, as they were walking back to the monastery, "gives thanks to God for having told the truth to day, Saffredent ought to implore his pardon for having told such a villainous tale against the ladies."

"I give you my oath," said Saffredent, "that although I have only spoken upon hearsay, what I have told you is, nevertheless, the strict truth. But if I chose to tell you what I could relate of women from my own knowledge, you would make more signs of the cross than they do in consecrating a church."

"Since you have so bad an opinion of women," said Parlamente, "they ought to banish you from their society."

"There are some who have so well practised what you advise," he replied, "that if I could say worse of them, and do worse to them all, to excite them to avenge me on her who does me so much injustice, I should not be slow to do so."

While he was speaking, Parlamente put on her half-mask and went with the rest into the church, where they found that although the bell had been rung for vespers there were no monks to say them. The fathers had been apprised of the agreeable manner in which the company spent their time in the meadow, and being fonder of pleasure than of their prayers, they had gone and crouched down there in a ditch behind a very thick hedge, and had listened to the tales with so much attention that they had not heard the vesper-bell. The consequence was, that they came running in with such haste that they were quite out of breath when they should have begun vespers. After service, some of the company inquiring of them why they had come in so late and chanted so badly, they confessed the cause; and for the future they were allowed to listen behind the hedge, and to sit at their ease. The supper was a merry one; and during it were uttered such things as any of the company had forgotten to deliver in the meadow. This filled up the rest of the evening, until Oisille begged them to retire that they might prepare for the morrow, saying that an hour before midnight was better than three after it. Thereupon they sought their respective chambers, and so ended the second day.